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Thirteenth-Century English Religious Lyrics, Religious Women,
And the Cistercian Imagination

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Thirteenth-Century English Religious Lyrics, Religious Women,
And the Cistercian Imagination

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Nearly all of the brief Middle English lyric poems that began to appear in manuscripts during the first half of the thirteenth century are religious in nature, and nearly all either concern the passion of Christ or are prayers to his mother, Mary. Very often the two motifs appear in tandem, in poems that place both speaker and audience at the foot of Christ's cross where Mary is engulfed in a sorrow that the reader is asked to experience empathetically. This dissertation argues that the lyrics grew out of a prose meditative genre, in particular a Cistercian meditative genre related to twelfth-century exegesis of the Song of Songs, that offered readers a series of visual tableaux of events in the life of Christ to experience imaginatively. The passion of Christ was a central focus of this sort of meditation. The English Cistercian abbot Aelred of Rievaulx's *De institutione inclusarum*, a treatise addressed to his anchoress-sister, offered a model of this genre that was widely copied and imitated, and some of the earliest English religious lyrics appear either as part of those prose meditative texts or as appendices thereto. Eventually both the prose texts and the lyrics became devotional reading for laypeople. This dissertation examines the literary relationship between the lyrics and the prose texts and some of the manuscripts where the earliest Middle English religious lyrics appear.

This dissertation by Charlotte Allen fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in medieval and Byzantine studies approved by Stephen K. Wright, Ph.D., as Director, and by Katherine L. Jansen, Ph.D., and Joan Tasker Grimbert, Ph.D., as Readers.

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Stephen K. Wright, Ph.D., Director

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Katherine L. Jansen, Ph.D., Reader

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Joan Tasker Grimbert, Ph.D., Reader

In loving memory of my father,

Elmer Carlton Low (1907-2000),

and to my husband,

Donald Fraser Allen,

"Till a' the seas gang dry"

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

ANT	*Anglo-Norman Texts*
Brown XIII	Carleton Brown, ed., *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*
Brown XIV	Carleton Brown, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*
Brown XV	Carleton Brown, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century*
CCCM	*Corpus christianorum, continuatio mediaevalis*
CCSL	*Corpus christianorum scriptorum latinorum*
CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*
EETS	*Early English Text Society*
Index	Carleton Brown, *The Index of Middle English Verse*
PL	*Patrologia latina*
SC	*Sources chrétiennes*

Introduction

The year 1982 witnessed the posthumous publication of the last book by Jack A.W.

(J.A.W.) Bennett, a towering mid-twentieth-century scholar who had taught Middle English

literature at Oxford and Cambridge for nearly thirty years before his death in 1981. Bennett's

book was titled *Poetry of the Passion: Studies in Twelve Centuries of English Verse*.[1] It was,

as its title indicated, a survey of poems whose theme was the passion of Christ, beginning

with the Old English *Dream of the Rood*, probably written during the early eighth century,

and ending with the fragmentary *Anathemata* by the Welsh Catholic poet-painter David

Jones (1895-1974), a literary work that is now mostly forgotten but in its day was praised as

a masterpiece by T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, and William Carlos Williams, among others.

Bennett's book was informed by his lifetime of scholarship as a medievalist and

accompanied by detailed and erudite endnotes, but it also reflected a personal and even

polemical concern on Bennett's part. In a brief preface he explained that his purpose in

writing the book had been to combat what he considered the crude and anachronistic

reductionism of "modern theology," with its tendency to dismiss traditional Christian

preoccupation with Christ's passion and the violence done to Jesus' body as an endorsement

of either violence in general or passivity in the face of violence. Bennett declared that

"poems created in the so-called Ages of Faith can still speak to our condition"—that is, that

the suffering of Christ, interpreted through literature of power and beauty, could provide a

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[1] Jack A.W. Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion: Studies in Twelve Centuries of English Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

way of understanding all human suffering, even in a post-Christian age that tends to view

suffering as meaningless and unnecessary.[2]

   The second chapter of *Poetry of the Passion*, dealing with the very earliest of Middle

English passion lyrics dating to the beginning of the thirteenth century, lyrics that are the

subject of this dissertation, was titled "The Meditative Moment." Its opening paragraph

began as follows:

<div style="text-align:center">

i

Nou goth sonne under wod,
Me reweth, Marie, thi faire rode.
Nou goth sonne under tre,
Me reweth, Marie, thi sone and the.

ii

Whyt was his nakede brest and red of blode hys syde,
Bleyc was his fair andled, his wnde dop and wide,
And his armes ystreit hey upon the rode;
on fif studes on his body the stremes ran o blode.

</div>

These two simple thirteenth-century quatrains, wholly English in idiom and
vocabulary, illustrate one of the greatest revolutions in feeling that Europe has
ever witnessed, and each line holds in embryo seeds that will burgeon richly in
devotional verse for four hundred years and more. Beside this phenomenon the
emergence of 'courtly love', so called, is a mere ripple on the surface of literature,
though, as the setting of the first stanza will show, the two developments are not
entirely unrelated.[3]

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[2] *Ibid.*, Preface.

[3] *Ibid.*, 32 and 210, n. 1. For the texts of the two quatrains, both of which are preserved in numerous
manuscripts that bespoke the lyrics' wide circulation during the later Middle Ages, Bennett used the versions
found in Douglas Gray's *Themes and Images in the Medieval English Religious Lyric* (London and Boston:
Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1972) and *A Selection of Religious Lyrics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
(Bennett translated via footnotes archaic words in the lyrics that are now in disuse, but those footnotes are not
included here.) This dissertation uses versions of the texts found in Carleton Brown, ed., *English Lyrics of the
XIIIth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932) and Carleton Brown, ed. *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century*
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), together with variants found by later scholars. The two quatrains that Bennett
quoted are translated as follows: "Now the sun goes under the wood. / I pity, Mary, your fair face. / Now the
sun goes under the tree. / I pity, Mary, your son and you." "White was his naked breast, and red with blood his
side, / Pale was his fair face, his wound deep and wide, / and his arms stretched high upon the cross. / On five
places on his side ran the streams of blood."

These opening lines of Bennett's second chapter are remarkable in two ways. The first is that Bennett clearly selected the two quatrains for his headpiece because they provided the most literarily powerful examples of the point he was arguing: that the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries marked a sea-change in Western Christian devotional practice centering around the passion: from reflection on the crucifixion's theological meaning as victory over Satan and rectification of Adam's fall to an unabashed focus on the physical sufferings of Christ as generators of pity ("me reweth") and empathy that would draw the reader into an emotional appreciation of the sheer love that the sinless son of God displayed for human beings by becoming human himself and undergoing an excruciating death in order to expiate human sin.

It is the aim of this dissertation to explore exactly how and why the above two English lyrics and others like them, all dating from the first half of the thirteenth century, encapsulated and furthered "one of the greatest revolutions in feeling," as Bennett described it: an explosion of intensely affective devotional writing during the later Middle Ages centered around the passion of Christ and the mourning figure of his mother, Mary, as she suffered with her son at the foot of the cross. This dissertation argues that the lyrics grew out of a prose meditative genre focused on the life, and especially, the passion of Christ that flourished in monasteries beginning in the late eleventh century and became devotional reading for laypeople during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. This meditative genre in turn largely grew out of twelfth-century exegesis of the biblical Song of Songs, itself a flourishing genre that treated the Song as a love-poem in which Christ was the chief actor and supreme lover who had laid down his life for his beloved, and his bride was

the human soul, although sometimes a consecrated virgin or even Mary herself. Both of the above lyrics, for example, can be directly traced both textually and contextually to prose meditative texts dating from the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that were widely copied, translated, and imitated during the later Middle Ages. Several of those treatises were specifically addressed to religious women—whose sex was that of the Song's bride—and so it was that a kind of women's literature became a template for texts both prose and poetic embraced by both sexes as the intensely affective spirituality of the monasteries moved out into an increasingly literate lay population as the Middle Ages progressed.

To return to the two thirteenth-century lyrics that Bennett highlighted, each of them presents nothing more than an image, a picture, of the dying God-man on the cross (and in the case of the first quatrain, of his sorrowing mother as well), and they do so in simple, direct language (the "wholly English" idiom and vocabulary that attracted Bennett) that gains its force from strong accentual rhythms (both quatrains employ accented initial words: "Nou," "Whyt," "Bleyc"), numerous stark monosyllables, and anaphoristic repetition. Merely reading the two quatrains aloud—and they would likely have been read aloud even by solitary readers during the Middle Ages—is a powerful performative experience for both reader and listener. The two quatrains are vivid verbal pictures of the dying Christ (with the bloody gash of his side-wound in the second), but pictures created in part by readers' emotional response to what they are provided by the writer. The first lyric is especially oblique: The reader is shown only a setting sun behind the cross and a Mary whose lovely face (as though she were the poet's mistress in a courtly-love lyric) is somehow besmirched and discolored by the sunset. And so the reader, identifying with Mary and understanding

that she grieves for her son, must supply in his own imagination the crucifixion, the

darkness at noon, and the ghastly source of Mary's pain. The second lyric seems more

explicit because it carefully explores various forms of bloody violation of Christ's body—

except that it does not mention either Christ or the crucifixion specifically. Deliberate

understatement, litotes, is a driving rhetorical force in both quatrains. The two verses embody

pictorial meditation, but they also draw the reader into further meditation. The reader must

translate what is seen in the verbal picture into an appreciation of Christ's love in bearing

such suffering for the sake of mankind's redemption, love that is in turn expected to generate

love of Christ and gratitude inside the reader's heart. "Pity and love are the persistent terms of

the new poetry," Bennett wrote.[4]

The second remarkable feature about Bennett's analysis of the two lyrics is that he

selected them for what he regarded as their intrinsic literary beauty. "The simple English

verses are eloquent in their stark economy," he wrote.[5] Bennett's book thus culminated what

was the dominant twentieth-century mode of criticism of medieval religious poetry until the

postmodernist turn of the 1970s: evaluation and analysis based upon the poems' aesthetic

merits as the scholars who edited and criticized the works perceived them. The first scholarly

presentations of the lyrics came in the form of anthologies, collections that typically spanned

several centuries (say, the twelfth through the early sixteenth), and were organized either

thematically or chronologically.

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[4] *Ibid.*, 40.

[5] *Ibid.*, 37.

An example is Frank Allen Patterson's *The Middle English Penitential Lyric*, published in 1911.[6] Patterson's book consists almost entirely of transcriptions from the leading or sole manuscripts that preserve the lyrics, together with copious informative notes that include manuscript variants, the Latin texts of which the English lyrics are translations or adaptations, and the publication history, if any, of the lyrics in question. There is no effort to place the lyrics into the context of either the texts or the manuscripts in which they appear. There is also no effort to sort out the lyrics by date of either composition or earliest manuscript. Patterson assigned titles to the lyrics, some of which probably appeared in the manuscripts as either titles or incipits and others that were clearly of his own making: "General Confession of Sins," "Hymn to the Virgin."

Other anthologies followed in a similar vein: Henry A. Person's *Cambridge Medieval Lyrics* (1953), a collection of secular and religious lyrics from manuscripts in the University of Cambridge's libraries that Person organized thematically (although not chronologically) and to which he attached his own titles;[7] R.T. Davies's *Medieval English Lyrics* (1964), a collection of religious and secular lyrics organized by century to which Davies attached his own titles and which he also translated into modern English;[8] Theodore Silverstein's *Medieval English Lyrics* (1971), a collection of religious and secular poems organized thematically;[9] Douglas Gray's *A Selection of Religious Lyrics* (1975), also organized

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[6] Frank Allen Patterson, ed., *The Medieval Penitential Lyric: A Study and Collection of Early Religious Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911).

[7] Henry A. Person, ed., *Cambridge Middle English Lyrics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1953).

[8] R.T. Davies, ed., *Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology* (Evanston, Ill.: Faber and Faber for Northwestern University Press, 1964).

[9] Theodore Silverstein, ed., *Medieval English Lyrics*, York Medieval Texts (London: Edward Arnold, 1971).

thematically;[10] and, most recently, Thomas G. Duncan's *Medieval English Lyrics, 1200-1400* (1996)[11] and John C. Hirsch's *Medieval Lyric* (2005).[12] None of these anthologies, many of which are aimed at students and lay readers as well as specialists, has attempted to be comprehensive. The poems that their editors chose to include reflected their own aesthetic tastes and their own evaluations of which lyrics seemed most artful, appealing, or representative of their genres.

The possible exceptions are Carleton Brown's *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century* (1932) and *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century* (1924).[13] The publication of Brown's collection of fourteenth-century preceded the publication of his thirteenth-century collection by eight years, and in the former's introduction Brown conceded that his collection "makes no pretension to completeness," probably because of the explosion of literary production in English during the fourteenth century that would have made the assembling of a complete collection a daunting project.[14] Brown did, however, organize his selections chronologically, focusing on important manuscript collections of English lyrics such as British Library, MS Harley 2253 (about thirty lyrics dating to about 1310); the hymns of the Franciscan friar William Herebert (d. 1333) contained in Phillips Library MS 8336; the so-called "preaching book" of sermons and lyrics compiled by another Franciscan friar, John of Grimestone, in 1372 (National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 18.7.21); the so-called "Vernon

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[10] See n. 3.

[11] Duncan, Thomas G., ed., *Medieval English Lyrics,1200-1400* (New York: Penguin, 1996).

[12] John C. Hirsch, ed., *Medieval Lyric: Middle English Lyrics, Ballads, and Carols* (Malden, Mass., <u>et al.</u>: Blackwell, 2005).

[13] See n. 3.

[14] Brown XIV, Introduction.

Manuscript" (Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Eng. poet a.1), a devotional

miscellany compiled in about 1390; and the lyrics inspired by the mystical writings of the

hermit Richard Rolle (1290-1349) and compiled in Cambridge University Library MS Dd.

5.64 toward the end of the fourteenth century. Brown's thirteenth-century anthology, by

contrast, did strive for completeness, clearly because the volume of thirteenth-century

English lyrics is so small compared to that of the fourteenth. He arranged the ninety-one

lyrics he collected in what seemed to him to be strict chronological order, identifying their

various manuscripts and publishing many variants.

Although Brown's specific assignment of some of the lyrics to the thirteenth or

fourteenth centuries was questionable (he placed most of the Harley lyrics in the thirteenth

century even though there are no versions of many of them in thirteenth-century manuscripts,

and he assigned "Whyt was his nakede brest" to the early fourteenth century even though it

indisputably exists in thirteenth-century manuscripts), his collections became and remain

canonical, and the numbers that Brown assigned to the lyrics he collected have become

standard usage among later scholars.[15] Only a handful of thirteenth-century lyrics have been

discovered and published since Brown assembled his thirteenth-century collection, some of

them manuscript variants of verses that he had already published.[16] Brown later collaborated

with Rossell Hope Robbins to produce the equally canonical *Index of Middle English Verse*

in 1943, listing incipits and manuscript citations for and assigning reference numbers to

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[15] This dissertation uses Brown's numbering of the lyrics, as well as his published versions in most cases. Brown also published a collection of fifteenth-century religious lyrics that is equally canonical. Carleton Brown, ed., *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939).

[16] See, e.g., Thomas J. Heffernan,"Four Middle English Religious Lyrics from the Thirteenth Century," *Mediaeval Studies* 43 (1981): 131-50; and Valerie Edden, "Fragment of Verse in Hereford Cathedral Library MS O.III.11," *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 44 (1997): 309-10.

every known Middle English lyric in their purview.[17] As new lyrics were discovered on manuscript pages, Robbins and John J. Cutler added a *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* in 1965,[18] and in 2005 Julia Boffey and Anthony S.G. Edwards published <u>A</u> *New Index of Middle English Verse*, essentially an updating of the work that Brown and Robbins had begun more than forty years earlier.[19]

Many of the anthologies were published during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the era of the ascendancy of New Criticism in university literature departments. The New Critics emphasized close reading of works in order to examine the technical strategies that their authors used to achieve subtle and powerful literary effects. New Critics who were medievalists did not ignore the historical contexts in which the works had been written nor the literary and religious traditions that underlay them, but they tended to focus on the lyrics as self-contained and self-referential units that might or might not have had any connection to the biographies of their authors (who were mostly anonymous anyway) or to the manuscripts where they appeared. The New Critics' interest in literature was primarily aesthetic, and they approached individual works of literature in terms of the author's ability to use language carefully and beautifully in order to express resonating multiple meanings. An example is Peter Dronke's discussion of "Nou goth sonne" in a chapter of his 1968 book *The Medieval Lyric*:

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[17] Carleton Brown and John L. Cutler, *The Index of Middle English Verse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).

[18] Rossell Hope Robbins and Carleton Brown, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* (Lexinton, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1965).

[19] Julia Boffey and Anthony S.W. Edwards, *A New Index of Middle English Verse* (London: British Library, 2005).

> What is new and creative in the English quatrain is to begin *now*: a particular moment at nightfall, as the sun sinks behind a wood, can bring to mind the sunset of Good Friday, and the setting of the greater Sun that it reflects. Any sunset— even the one at this moment—can become the historic and the omnitemporal moment; any tree—or this tree can become the tree of the cross. But the poet particularizes further: the forest sunset evokes not the crucifixion itself but the image of Mary watching; it evokes a surge of pity for a lovely woman's face that has lost its beauty by weeping too much....The English poet does not have to say to Mary 'Let me mourn with you'—his compassionate insight shows itself, without need of protestation. In four moments of vision—the sun among the trees, the beautiful face savaged, the sun beneath one particular tree, the mother with her dead son—he has seen everything, and said all that needs saying.[20]

In characteristically elegant prose Dronke teased rich strands of complexity and artistry out of four brief lines of verse.

In similar fashion Edmund Reiss, in his *The Art of the Medieval Lyric* (1970), wrote brief essays that closely examined twenty-five Middle English poems written over three centuries—in a kind of cherry-picking of the lyrics that struck him as the most accomplished ("Nou goth sonne" among them)—in order "to try to understand what these poems are doing as pieces of literary art, as compositions having a particular relevance to an audience in the late Middle Ages and also a special interest for readers of poetry in the late twentieth century."[21] In *Wisdom and Number* (1962), Stephen Manning argued that most Middle English religious lyrics were songs, formally speaking (although few were accompanied by musical notation in their manuscripts), and he engaged in close textual analysis of their structure, rhythms, imagery, sophistication of thought and diction, and sheer sound.[22]

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[20] Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 64-65.

[21] Edmund Reiss, *The Art of the Middle English Lyric: Essays in Criticism* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1970), xii.

[22] Stephen Manning, *Wisdom and Number: Toward a Critical Analysis of the Middle English Religious Lyric* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1962). See also Manning, "'Nou goth Sonne vnder wod,'" *Modern Language Notes* 74 (1959): 578-81.

Manning forthrightly declared in his preface, "I have generally ignored the historical vagaries of the lyrics, bringing in historical considerations only when these pertain directly to the literary matters at hand."[23] Manning was equally forthright in making aesthetic judgments about the verses he studied. He declared, for example, that the much-anthologized and singularly melodious fifteenth-century Marian lyric "I Syng of a myden" ("I sing of a maiden") was "the supreme achievement of the Middle English religious lyric"[24]—an assessment with which many modern readers of the lyrics would undoubtedly agree.

Not all scholars who adopted the close textual readings characteristic of New Criticism found the lyrics as beautiful or as layered with complex meaning as did Dronke, Reiss, and Manning. In *Poems Without Names* (1970), an examination of eighty-six English lyrics written between 1200 and 1500, Raymond Oliver took note of what he called their "impersonal, generalized, public quality" that "showed no interest in subtle, unique experiences, neither their own nor anyone else's." In contrast to the poems of the thirteenth-century German minnesingers such as Walther von der Vogelweide (ca. 1170-ca. 1230), who imbued their work with "the lyric art of self-expression" and boldly attached their names to their creations, the early English lyrics were deservedly anonymous, Oliver wrote. In the concluding sentence of his book he declared, "[A]nyone who learns the 'rules of the game' can...write Middle English short poems."[25]

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[23] *Widsom and Number*, x.

[24] Ibid., p. 167. "I Syng of a myden" is no. 81 in Brown XV. Manning's analysis of the lyric first appeared in *Publication of the Modern Language Association* 75 (1960): 8-12.

[25] Raymond Oliver, *Poems Without Names: The English Lyric*, 1200-1500 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1970), 124-25, 139-40.

The medievalist New Critics were not unaware of the historical and manuscript contexts in which the lyrics they analyzed had appeared. To the contrary, their commentary, footnotes, and endnotes displayed a thorough knowledge of paleography, medieval rhetorical conventions, and the theological and secular texts that might have served as sources or inspirations for the religious poems they scrutinized. They strove not be anachronistic in their readings and to understand medieval sensibilities, and their studies displayed an impressive sensitivity to the works they examined. Yet their narrow focus on the bare words of the lyrics and how they worked as poems, and their efforts, like those of J.A.W. Bennett in *Poetry of the Passion*, to present the poems as relevant to modernity and to modern aesthetic tastes, led them largely to ignore the literary and historical backgrounds of the poems in favor of their immediate effects upon twentieth-century readers accustomed to the nuances of twentieth-century poetry.

At the same time, however, other scholars tried to establish exactly the historical and literary context for the Middle English religious lyrics that the New Critics largely ignored. The first comprehensive, and also the most influential, of those efforts was Rosemary Woolf's *English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (1968).[26] Woolf's book was in some ways a riposte to the New Critics' aesthetic enthusiasm for medieval verses. She asserted, for example, that "the Middle English religious lyric is not distinctively melodious." She continued: "Although some of the poems have metrical grace, this is an accidental virtue and not one essential to the form. Indeed amongst the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century lyrics there occur many short and slightly clumsy verses, for which the metrical form seems to have

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[26] Rosemary Woolf, *English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

been chosen, not to enhance the meaning by shapeliness and aural beauty, but simply

because verse would make the content easier to memorize than would prose....Like so much

medieval literature the religious lyrics have to be defined in terms of content not form."[27]

Pointing out (possibly *contra* Manning) that only a tiny handful of the lyrics were

accompanied by musical settings in their manuscripts or otherwise indicated that they were

meant to be sung, Woolf asserted that "the lyrics can immediately be recognized as

meditative poems, for their sources are Latin works that are overtly and unmistakably

meditations."[28] In a discussion of the earliest lyrics she observed that aside from a small

number of poems devoted exclusively to the praise and invocation of Mary (just eight from

the end of the twelfth century to the end of the fourteenth), the lyrics centered almost entirely

around Christ's passion and its implications for the human sinners for whom Christ

had suffered:

> The main subjects of the medieval religious lyric are those central to
> medieval meditation, the Passion, and the Last Things, especially death, and the
> the emotions proper to them, love and fear. In order that the reader may feel those
> emotions personally and keenly, he is persuaded by the lyric to imagine himself in
> in a scene which will provoke them, and which is described often in minute visual
> detail. The reader is to imagine that he is present at the Nativity and overhears the
> Virgin comforting her Child, or that he is present at the Crucifixion and that
> Christ on the Cross appeals to him personally for compassion, or that he is present
> at the Entombment, and hears the lamentation of the Virgin; or that he is to
> imagine that a corpse addresses him from its grave, or that he spies upon and
> overhears a dispute between a dead body and its former soul....Sometimes the
> visual outlines of the scene are fully described within the poem, sometimes they
> have in part to be supplied from the meditative tradition outside the poem.[29]

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[27] *Ibid.*, 3.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] *Ibid.*, 19.

Woolf pointed out that of all the meditative themes that thirteenth- and fourteenth-century

English religious lyrics explored, the passion of Christ overwhelmingly predominated. She

traced the poems' authors' preoccupation with emotional responses to the crucifixion

to a sea-change in Western Christian understanding of the doctrine of the redemption during

the late eleventh and the twelfth centuries. During that time, Woolf observed, the focus of

theological and meditative prose literature concerning Christ's death changed from his

victorious release of humankind from bondage to Satan via Adam's fall to his redemptive

work, including, and perhaps especially, the suffering it entailed, as a gift of love that called

for a reciprocal response of love.

Woolf observed that even the iconographic depictions of the crucifixion in Western

European painting and sculpture began to change during that period, so that Christ on the

cross, formerly represented as kingly and heroic, now appeared twisted and sagging, his head

hung low and blood pouring from his wounds. This theological change of emphasis

coincided, Woolf argued, with a new emphasis on natural human feeling found in the

sermons and other Latin works of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and his contemporaries,

especially other Cistercian devotional writers. Bernard, Woolf contented, believed that

human beings could love Christ with the very sort of carnal love that they gave to other

human beings who were dear to them, and that the incarnation itself—God's taking on human

flesh—demonstrated the value of this form of human love, for Christ himself had shown it.

"These two important and complementary conceptions, the first stressing God's display of,

and demand for, love in the work of the Redemption, and the second the potential value of

man's natural feelings, both contributed to the development of the religious lyric,"

Woolf wrote.[30]

Unlike the New Critics who were her contemporaries, Woolf was not persuaded of

the aesthetic merits of many of the lyrics she examined, especially the very earliest ones from

the thirteenth century. She deemed "Whyt was his nakede brest," for example, to have been

an inferior translation (crude, overly literal, and unreflective) that did not retain "the force" of

its Latin prose original, the prose *Candet nudatum pectus* ("His naked breast gleams white")

attributed during the Middle Ages and long afterwards to Augustine of Hippo but identified

during the early twentieth century as a work of the eleventh-century Norman Benedictine

abbot John of Fécamp (d. 1079).[31] Woolf asserted that one of the chief characteristics of

medieval poetry and art was "its complete explicitness" that "[a] its worst...may produce a

specious air of completeness and a thin enumeration of detail, and some of the earliest lyrics

do not quite escape this." As for "Nou goth sonne," Woolf found the lyric "beautiful" in its

terse verbal economy but wondered if it were not actually a fragment of a longer, perhaps

less coherently structured poem, so that "it is possible that it is mere chance that has

conferred this emotive grace."[32] Woolf's theory was that the English religious lyricists of the

early thirteenth century, writing in a literary culture still dominated by Anglo-Norman French

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[30] *Ibid.*, 20-25, especially 23.

[31] *Ibid.*, 29. For an extended discussion of *Candet nudatum pectus*, its authorship, and its relation to "Whyt was his nakede brest" and its variants, see chap. 5 of this dissertation.

[32] *English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages*, 28-29, 242. Woolf's judgments of the aesthetic merits of the lyrics she examined could be said to have been as informed by modern notions of literary value as any of those of the New Critics. She favored poems that she considered complete—that is, exhibiting control and pointed insight—and disfavored what she considered the runaway emotionalism and over-literalism of many fifteenth-century lyrics.

and having few English models to which to turn, had difficulty carving out a "satisfactory style and structure" for their works. She wrote: "The first attempts at an English meditative lyric have in common: a mnemonic brevity and a bare listing of detail to provide the main points of an image for the visual imagination."[33] In Woolf's view many of the lyrics succeeded as aids to affective meditation but failed as works of literary art.

Woolf's linking of early English religious lyrics and Latin prose meditative texts was not entirely original. Frank Patterson in 1911 had linked the lyrics to "the growth and spread of mysticism" during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[34] Patterson classified the penitential poems he anthologized into categories that reflected stages of spiritual progression: from contrition for one's sins to longing for union with God. J.A.W. Bennett's chapter "The Meditative Moment" also rooted the medieval passion poems he discussed in prose devotional works by Bernard and others.

Woolf's meditative paradigm, and her assessment that most medieval religious lyrics primarily served devotional purposes remained influential. Douglas Gray, in his *Themes and images in the Medieval Religious Lyric* (1972),[35] disputed many of Woolf's aesthetic judgments. For example, Gray considered "Whyt was his nakede brest" to be a "best poem," far more successful than its Latin prose model, precisely because the English lyric eliminated all "preaching and reflection" and focused for its effect "on the sharpness of visual impact and of the allusive and impressionistic use of detail." He added, "There is no need to make the emotional appeal explicit; the feeling can be expressed through words which are

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[33] *Ibid.*, 28.

[34] *The Middle English Penitential Lyric* (n. 6), 3.

[35] See n. 3.

traditionally 'charged'—'nakede', bleyc', ystreith', etc."[36] Nonetheless, Gray agreed with

Woolf that the authors of the lyrics intended them "for use by others, whether as song,

meditation or prayer." Although Gray conceded that the corpus of Middle English religious

lyrics contained "many inferior, and to our mind, simple and unquestioning poems," they

gained their strength by precisely the lack of self-conscious artistry with which Woolf had

found fault. The authors of the lyrics, immersed as they were in a wholly Christian mental

world that they and their audiences took for granted, felt no need to display wit or to write

pointedly Christian poetry as have modern Christian poets from the seventeenth-century

metaphysical school to the present day, Gray argued. He wrote, "They [the authors of

medieval religious lyrics] are not primarily concerned with the construction of an enduring

object for other people to admire, but rather for other people to <u>use</u>."[37]

      Sarah Appleton Weber made a somewhat similar argument in *Theology and Poetry in*

the Middle English Lyric (1969).[38] She saw a direct connection between the lyrics and the

medieval liturgy (the Mass and the monastic office of the hours) in that both had as their

organizing structure prayers and meditations concerning the central Christian theological

propositions of Christ's incarnation and redemptive death. Weber found distinct parallels

between many of the lyrics and certain liturgical prayers and hymns that seemed to be their

models. She wrote: "[T]he religious lyric cannot be fully understood or evaluated as a work

of a purely 'poetic imagination' which acts independently from the subject matter it

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[36] *Ibid.*, 128.

[37] *Ibid.*, 59-60.

[38] Sarah Appleton Weber, *Theology and Poetry in the Middle English Lyric: A Study of Sacred History and Aesthetic Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969).

considers....The purpose, the subject matter, the form and structure of the medieval religious lyric can be discovered only through a knowledge of medieval Christian theology which had a unique subject matter and a unique form of knowing."[39] Weber contended that the medieval lyric, like the liturgy, "oriented...the past, present, and future...to the present moment.....None of the events of sacred history is told independently of its relationship to the present....There is no attempt to recreate the past for its own sake, because in sacred history no event has occurred only for its own sake."[40]

A 1975 book, David L. Jeffrey's *The Early English Lyric and Franciscan Spirituality*,[41] offered an entirely different theory of the origins of the Middle English religious lyric: the arrival of the Order of Friars Minor in England in 1224, a year that roughly coincided with the first appearance in manuscripts of religious poetry in Middle English. Jeffrey observed that while Rosemary Woolf and Sarah Appleton Weber had made admirable efforts to link that poetry to medieval meditative literature (Woolf) and medieval liturgical celebration (Weber), neither was able to point to specific meditative or liturgical texts that could have served as sources or models for most of the poems they examined. Jeffrey faulted Weber in particular for failing to demonstrate that any of the English lyrics she analyzed had any liturgical function.

Jeffrey pointed out that the Franciscans, who were not cloistered monastics and who saw their mission as preaching to layfolk, often wandering from town to town in an

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[39] *Ibid.*, 195.

[40] *Ibid.*, 197.

[41] David L. Jeffrey, *The Early English Lyric and Franciscan Spirituality* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975). See also David L. Jeffrey, "Forms of Spirituality in the Middle English Lyric," in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, ed. William F. Pollard and Robert Boenig (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 55-85.

increasingly urbanized late-medieval society, did not use Latin hymns and devotional

materials as their models but, rather, secular songs written in local vernaculars and popular

tunes that they could imitate or adapt to religious use as part of their sermons in order to

move to penance and love of Christ the hearts of listeners whose Latin learning was minimal

to nonexistent. The early Franciscans styled themselves *ioculatores Dei* (God's *jongleurs*).

Their founder, Francis of Assisi (ca. 1182-1226), was schooled in the poetry of the Provençal

troubadours, and his *Cantico al sole* ("Canticle of the Sun") is the earliest surviving lyric

written in the Umbrian dialect spoken in Assisi and its environs.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the *lauda*, or vernacular song,

flourished in Italy as a specifically Franciscan genre (its best-known and arguably most

prolific practitioner was the friar Jacopone da Todi (ca. 1230-1306, to whom about one

hundred *laude* are attributed). The Franciscan *laude* were typically highly emotional, and

their themes were often the sufferings of the crucified Christ and the sorrows of his mother,

presented in direct and moving images. This sort of devotional style became closely

associated with the Friars Minor during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. *Meditationes

de vita Christi*, a series of narrative reflections on the life of Christ and centering around his

passion, attributed to the thirteenth-century Franciscan theologian Bonaventure (1221-1274)

but more likely written in about 1300 by a later-born Franciscan, was one of the most widely

copied and translated devotional texts of the late Middle Ages. Jeffrey argued that the

Franciscans had also created the earliest Middle English religious lyric, imbuing it with their

characteristic aesthetic of moving simplicity. "[T]he friars could wander from town to town

in the manner of minstrels, from market place or street corner sing the old songs which had

become new, and in so doing draw townsfolk for a characteristically simple sermon,"

Jeffrey wrote in *The Early English Lyric and Franciscan Spirituality.*[42]

Jeffrey's linkage of Franciscan preaching to Middle English religious poetry was not

entirely novel. In *The Popular Sermon of the Medieval Friar in England* (1937),[43] Homer G.

Pfander had asserted that some of the English verses found in the sermon collections of John

of Grimestone and others were adaptations of popular secular songs, and that the mendicant

friars probably sang the songs as part of their preaching. Rossell Hope Robbins wrote in 1940

that he believed that "majority of religious lyrics before the middle of the fourteenth

century—in other words, before the Black Death—were made by friars, generally

Franciscans." Robbins listed a number of sermon collections and "miscellanies"—that is,

substantial collections of lyrics in manuscripts—dating from the thirteenth and early

fourteenth centuries that he believed were Franciscan in origin.[44]

The Franciscan thesis proffered by Pfander, Robbins, and, in most extended form,

Jeffrey, has been strongly criticized by other scholars. In a 1986 survey of thirteenth-century

vernacular literature in England, John Frankis pointed out that there are no known thirteenth-

century manuscripts of mendicant origin containing vernacular texts.[45] The first indisputably

Franciscan author of the English Middle Ages, Frankis noted, was Nicholas Bozon, whose

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[42] *Ibid.*, 30.

[43] Homer G. Pfander, *The Popular Sermon of the Medieval Friar in England* (New York: New York University Press, 1937).

[44] Rossell Hope Robbins, "The Authors of the Middle English Religious Lyrics," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 39 (1940): 230-38, 231.

[45] John Frankis, "The Social Context of Vernacular Writing in Thirteenth Century England: The Evidence of the Manuscripts," in *Thirteenth-Century England I: Proceedings of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Conference, 1985* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 1986), 175-86.

verse sermons, poems, and saints' lives date no earlier than the very end of the thirteenth

century and more likely the early fourteenth. Frankis observed that four well-known

manuscript collections of English religious lyrics dating to the second half of the thirteenth

century—Cambridge University, Trinity College MS 323;[46] Oxford University, Jesus

College MS 29; British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix; and Oxford University, Bodleian

Library MS Digby 86—that have been thought to be "friars' miscellanies" actually have only

a hypothetical connection to the Friars Minor: Trinity Cambridge 323 because it contains a

laudatory anecdote about a "predicator" (and so is more likely Dominican rather than

Franciscan, if anything), Jesus Oxford 29 because it contains a lyric ("cantus") called a "Love

Ron,"[47] addressed to a consecrated virgin as bride of Christ and attributed in the manuscript

to a Franciscan friar named "Thomas de hales" about whom almost nothing else is known;

Caligula A.ix because its lyric contents overlap with those of Jesus Oxford 29 (although the

"Love Ron" does not appear in the former), suggesting a textual relationship between the

two; and Digby 86 because it includes a calendar of saints days including the feast days of

Francis of Assisi and Dominic, founder of the Dominicans, and had at one time belonged to

the Franciscan house at Oxford.[48] Frankis found this proffered evidence for Franciscan

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[46] This manuscript now has a new shelf mark: Cambridge University, Trinity College MS B.14.39. It is still widely cited by its older shelf mark, however.

[47] Brown XIII, no. 43.

[48] Frankis might have also mentioned Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 2. This late thirteenth-century manuscript, which contains mostly astrological and other prose texts in Latin, includes three English lyrics. Two of them (Brown XIII, nos. 64 and 65), occupy the recto and verso of fol. 6 and are, respectively, a meditation on Christ's passion in 60 lines and a penitential prayer to Mary in 50 lines, both of which have variants in fourteenth-century manuscripts. The third lyric (Brown XIII, no. 66 and on fol. 15r), which also appears in the Vernon manuscript of the late fourteenth century, features a first-person narrator who resolves to forsake his life of worldliness and "licherie," declaring, "Frere menur i wil me make" {"I will become a Friar Minor") for the sake of "him þat boyht us in þe rode; / fram his side ran þe blode, / so dere he gan us bie" ("him that redeemed us on the cross / from his side the blood ran / so dearly did he undertake to redeem us"). Brown

authorship of the four collections tenuous and contended that there were only two genuine

Franciscan miscellanies of lyrics surviving to the present day—British Library, MS

Additional 46919 and MS Harley 913—both of which date to the mid-fourteenth century, not

the thirteenth century.

More sweeping was the critique of Siegfried Wenzel, editor of the sixty-one brief

Middle English verses (together with likely fragments of other verses) found in the Latin

prose text of *Fasciculus morum*, a widely circulating (with twenty-eight surviving

manuscripts) handbook of topics for preachers conventionally dated to the first half of the

fourteenth century but believed by Wenzel to have been written as early as the fourth quarter

of the thirteenth, not long after the accession of Edward I in 1272.[49] In his copious

introductory material Wenzel agreed that *Fasciculus* was a Franciscan document, partly

because its main subject matter consisted of "vices and virtues, punishment and glory," a

phrase defining the scope of preaching taken from the Second Franciscan Rule that appeared

in other Franciscan works, but also because *Fasciculus* included a long meditation on the

passion of Christ and a review of Christ's entire life, "a central aspect of Franciscan

spirituality and preaching."[50]

Wenzel argued, however, that the verses, which he said were characterized by "lack

of artistry, and general poetic unambitiousness,"[51] were neither the English counterparts of

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argued that the "express mention of the Minorite Friars leave us with no doubt that Digby 2 was a Franciscan book" (Brown XIII, 218, n. 66) and that it was likely that all three lyrics were composed by a Franciscan friar.

[49] Siegfried Wenzel, ed., *Verses in Sermons:* Fasciculus morum *and Its Middle English Poems* (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1978).

[50] *Ibid.*, 10-11.

[51] *Ibid.*, 121.

the carefully crafted, musically based *laude* of the Italian Franciscan poets nor the

meditative works designed for silent reflection that Rosemary Woolf had described. Instead,

they were rhyming commonplaces or punchlines, sometimes meditative, sometimes didactic,

but almost always specifically related in terms of theme to the sermon material where they

appeared. Wenzel believed that many of the English verses appearing in *Fasciculus*, even

those that have no counterparts in other surviving manuscripts, consisted of "common

property" shared and traded among many preachers, although others likely "came from the

very quill of the unknown preacher who compiled" *Fasciculus*.[52] This preacher, like the

authors of numerous other fourteenth-century preaching handbooks and sermon collections

where Middle English occur, likely incorporated the verses into his sermons in order to drive

his points home, Wenzel maintained.

In a second book, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (1986),[53] Wenzel

elaborated his thesis that "medieval preachers created English poems for specific structural

purposes in their prose sermons" to cover a wide range of religious lyrics beyond those found

in *Fasciculus*. Wenzel continued: "With this observation we reach the most significant facet

of the connection between preaching and poetry: that the work of preachers formed, as it

were, a generative center for the production of English lyrics."[54] Wenzel pointed out that the

literary critics who had analyzed the poems during the mid-twentieth century often worked

from published anthologies, not manuscripts, and thus tended to be ignorant of the lyrics'

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[52] *Ibid.*

[53] Siegfried Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[54] *Ibid.*, 13.

manuscript contexts—to the point of reading as complete poems verses whose editors had

published them only in part, or of misinterpreting as secular poetry verses that had appeared

inside sermons in their manuscripts and in that context clearly made specific theological and

moral points. He accused Pfander and Jeffrey, who did examine manuscripts, of making

faulty transcriptions and of misreading texts in order to arrive at their conclusion that the

lyrics had their genesis in popular secular tunes or were sung by friars to their listeners, at

least on a regular basis.[55]

      Although Wenzel conceded that some Middle English lyrics, especially the earlier

ones, had their genesis in a meditative, not a preaching tradition, he argued that there was "no

substantive difference between preaching and the meditative tradition in their impact on the

genesis of and production of religious lyrics" because "the subject matter and ultimate

purpose of both are entirely the same. Moreover, many of the primary sources that tell us

anything about meditation are in effect not recordings of actual meditations but exhortations

and guides on what to reflect upon—exactly like sermons on such topics as Christ's passion

or death"[56] Noting that many so-called meditative lyrics—those that feature a first-person

voice or whose subject matter is something seen and pondered upon by the narrator "are

much quoted in actual sermons," Wenzel argued that distinguishing a particular lyric as

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[55] The strongest documentary support for the proposition that English Franciscans turned secular songs into hymns is the *Red Book of Ossory* (Bishop's Palace, Kilkenny), which includes sixty Latin lyrics, together with an explanation that the bishop of Ossory, the Franciscan friar Richard de Landrede (d. 1360), had composed them as religious *contrafacta*, or alternate versions, of French and English secular songs so that they could be sung in his cathedral. Many of the *Red Book*'s hymns include the initial line of the vernacular song from which they were adapted. The problem is that the *Red Book*, which survives in a single late-fourteenth century manuscript, could not have been written much earlier than the mid-fourteenth century. For this reason the <u>Red Book</u> may offer little evidence concerning the origins of thirteenth-century lyrics.

[56] *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric*, 13, 15.

meditative rather than preaching-focused "may be helpful in analyzing the <u>Gestalt</u> of religious lyrics, but it does not at all coincide with their concrete use and function."[57]

Wenzel tended to assign little aesthetic merit to most Middle English religious lyrics (he made an exception for those composed by John of Grimestone, which he argued were of "far greater lyric power" than most of the others).[58] Many of the lyrics were translations from Latin hymns that often lacked the control, verbal play, dense imagery, supple verbal texture, and careful structure of their Latin originals, Wenzel argued. One case in point, discussed in detail by Wenzel, was *Angelus ad virginem*, a Latin song of five stanzas concerning the angel Gabriel's annunciation of Christ's conception to Mary, composed during the latter half of the thirteenth century, incorporated somewhat later into the church's liturgy, and woven, perhaps thematically, into Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* of the seduction of a carpenter's young wife by a musically talented student at Oxford who knows the song well.[59] Wenzel pointed out that the Latin text, in tightly controlled diction, structure, and imagery, links the incarnation of Christ to his redemptive suffering, elicits a powerful emotional response of gratitude to Mary for her role in salvation history, and delicately hints at the intimacy of Gabriel's entry into Mary's locked room—a feature of the song, that, as Wenzel observed, was probably not lost on Chaucer and his "hende Nicholas." By contrast, Wenzel pointed out that the earliest English translation, "Gabriel, fram evene-king [Gabriel from heaven's king],"[60] found in the earliest

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[57] *Ibid.*, 14-15.

[58] *Ibid.*, 135.

[59] For a review of the numerous manuscripts of *Angelus ad virginem* and its musical history, see John Stevens, "*Angelus ad virginem*: the History of a Medieval Song," in *Medieval Studies for J.A.W. Bennett*, ed. P.L. Heyworth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 297-328.

[60] Brown XIII, no. 44, *Index* 888.

surviving manuscript of *Angelus ad virginem*, British Library, MS Arundel 248, and exactly matched to the Latin song's musical notation and meter, is flaccid, wordy, stuffed with commonplaces where the Latin is alive with supple verbal play, sentimentalized (Wenzel detected a "sweetening of tone" in many of the early lyrics), and oversimplified to the point that the connection with Mary's own participation in Christ's redemptive work is lost, not to mention the frisson between Gabriel and Mary.[61]

With some exceptions, Wenzel argued, the anonymous early English religious poets lacked the craftsmanship and control of the Latin hymnologists, and they tended to write what he called "the expandable lyric": a formless verse that substituted for structure and direction the repetition of its initial point in subsequent stanzas, so that it could easily be made longer or shorter by the preachers and meditative writers who incorporated the lyric into their own creations.[62] Wenzel contended that the early religious poets tended to rely on formulae and commonplaces borrowed from other poetic sources religious and secular and in French and Latin as well as English: praise of a lady, prayer petitions, opening lines consisting of descriptions of nature. He characterized "Nou goth sonne" as a "perfect paradigm of the nature introduction: an objective picture from nature (sunset) is followed by a statement about the emotional state of the speaker (*me reweth*)."[63]

After Wenzel's 1986 book there have been few major studies of Middle English religious lyrics. The brief verses have not been easily amenable to the poststructuralist

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[61] *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric*, 35-41.

[62] *Ibid.*, 53.

[63] *Ibid.*, 57.

analysis that has become the predominant mode of literary criticism during the past three

decades, a mode in which the authorship, aesthetic merits, and theological context of any

particular text are largely irrelevant. Indeed, many poststructuralist theorists have deemed

beauty--a prime concern of the New Critics--to be purely socially constructed, a means of

enforcing and reinforcing political power. One of the few poststructuralist scholars to

examine the verses has been Sarah Stanbury, who in 1991 published a Lacanian analysis of

the reciprocal gaze that passes between Mary and the crucified Christ and between Mary and

the audience in the passion lyrics.[64] Other recent trends in literary scholarship, New

Historicism and cultural studies, have generated efforts to define a historical context for the

lyrics, although that context has typically been in terms of secular social history, not literary

or religious history, with the result that the poems have typically been regarded as

epiphenomenal, propagandistic, or expressive of socio-political resistance to

reigning hegemonies.

A typical example of New Historicism-influenced analysis is Seth Lerer's 1997 essay

"The Genre of the Grave and the Origins of the Middle English Lyric," analyzing a wide

array of early thirteenth-century lyrics as elegiac "cultural commentary" upon the "sudden

displacement" of Anglophone Anglo-Saxon culture in the wake of the Norman Conquest.[65]

Andrew Taylor attempted to understand British Library, MS Harley 978, an eclectic

manuscript dating to shortly after 1260 that includes perhaps the best-known of all thirteenth-

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[64] Sarah Stanbury, "The Virgin's Gaze: Spectacle and Transgression in Middle English Lyrics of the Passion," *PMLA* 106 (1991): 1083-1093. See also Sarah Stanbury, "Gender and Voice in Middle English Religious Lyrics," in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric*, ed. Thomas G. Duncan (Woodbridge, U.K., and Rochester, N.Y, 2005). The latter analysis is less explicitly Lacanian.

[65] Seth Lerer, "The Genre of the Grave and the Origins of the Middle English Lyric," *Modern Language Quarterly* 58 (1997): 127-61.

century lyrics, "Sumer is icumen in,"[66] together with the most complete manuscript of the lais of Marie de France and a variety of medical texts, goliardic verses, and Latin verses by Walter Map (all written in at least three, probably more scribal hands), as a reflection of the tastes, personal concerns, and psychic turmoil of William of Winchester, a thirteenth-century monk of the Benedictine monastery at Reading who might have commissioned the manuscript and who was also disciplined for having repeated sexual relations with a nun from the Augustinian house at Limebrook in Herefordshire.[67] The most sustained of these contemporary analyses is Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou's *"I Have a Yong Suster": Popular Song and the Middle English Lyric*.[68] Boklund-Lagopoulou argues that because Anglo-Norman and not English was the preferred literary language of thirteenth-century and much of fourteenth-century England, the earliest Middle English lyrics were probably orally transmitted folksongs characterized by verbal repetitions, stock narrative devices, and a discarding of material deemed unnecessary.[69]

Meanwhile, Jeffrey's Franciscan paradigm and Wenzel's sermon paradigm remain the predominant theories for accounting for the emergence of the Middle English lyric during the

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[66] Brown XII, no. 6, *Index* 3223.

[67] Amdrew Taylor, *Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers*, Material Texts (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 76-138.

[68] Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou, *"I Have a Yong Suster': Popular Song and the Middle English Lyric* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002). See also Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou, "Yate of Heaven: Conceptions of the Female Body in the Religious Lyrics, " in *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England*, ed. Denis Renevey and Christiana Whitehead (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 133-54.

[69] Boklund-Lagopoulou's analysis of early English lyrics as displaying elements of folksong seems pertinent to a few thirteenth-century religious lyrics, such as the so-called "Judas ballad" (Brown XIII, no. 25, *Index* 1649), preserved on fol. 34r of Trinity Cambridge 323. This imaginative narrative about Judas' betrayal of Christ in order to replace the thirty pieces of silver stolen from him after spending the night with a "soster" who seems to be a prostitute indeed displays the characteristics of folksong that Boklund-Lagopoulou enumerates, but it is one of only a small number of thirteenth-century religious lyrics to do so.

early thirteenth century. Each theory is problematic. It is indisputable that the Franciscan preaching friars who arrived in England in 1224, during the very lifetime of Francis of Assisi, had an immediate influence on the popular religious imagination there as they did elsewhere in Western Europe, and that Franciscan spirituality and Franciscan spiritual writings played an enormous role in the development of popular devotions and the writing of religious poetry in England during the fourteenth century. The near-absence of thirteenth-century Franciscan manuscript repositories of English religious lyrics, however, undercuts Jeffrey's thesis that Franciscans were responsible for the creation of thirteenth-century religious verses or that those verses were the English counterparts of the Italian Franciscan *laude*. Wenzel, similarly unable to provide specific sermon sources for the early thirteenth-century lyrics, tries to overcome this difficulty by blurring the distinction between meditative and sermon lyrics, and by proposing a thirteenth-century (albeit late thirteenth-century) composition date for *Fasciculus morum*, but he is either unable to trace or uninterested in tracing the origins of lyrics that appeared in the earlier decades of the century.

This dissertation argues that Rosemary Woolf was correct in her assignment of the origins of the Middle English religious lyric to the monastic meditative literature of the twelfth century and earlier. It attempts, as Woolf did not, to locate the precise monastic devotional texts that occasionally embedded the lyrics or, more often, inspired them. Chief among those texts is *De institutione inclusarum* by the twelfth-century English Cistercian abbot Aelred of Rievaulx (ca. 1109-1266), a Latin treatise addressed to Aelred's anchoress sister that contains a lengthy meditative section centering around the life of Christ, especially his passion, with an emphasis on his sorrowing mother.

Both Aelred, as a Cistercian monk, and his anonymous sister, as a recluse, exemplified a transformation of Western European monastic culture, and of religious culture in general, a phenomenon that Giles Constable has called "the reformation of the twelfth century": a religious parallel to the innovations in secular political, economic, and juridical institutions, and also in vernacular literature, that marked that time. Describing the period from 1040 to 1160, a period that roughly coincided with the ecclesiastical reforms of Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073-1075) and Aelred's life span, Constable writes, "The second half of the eleventh century and the first half of the twelfth was one of the most significant periods in what may be called the social history of Christianity, when traditional institutions and attitudes were stretched to the maximum and made to accommodate new forms of life and new sentiments."[70] In Constable's view the "twelfth-century reformation," as he calls it, amounted essentially to the dissemination of monastic ideals—the imitation of Christ's poverty and Christ's perfection--and the monastic way of life that centered around asceticism, mortification of the flesh, and meditative contemplation to society as a whole, including lay people. Not only were many of the popes and cardinals of the twelfth century monks themselves, Constable points out, but the "hermits, pilgrims, and wandering preachers" (and also, *pari passu*, although Constable does not mention them, anchorites and anchoresses)

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[70] Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5. Constable challenges the longstanding thesis of Herbert Grundmann: that twelfth-century spirituality and twelfth-century heresy, which rejected the institutional church in favor of a quest for a more primitive and authentic Christianity, were part of a seamless continuum of attempts at religious renewal. Constable argues that that the reformation of the twelfth century was fundamentally orthodox and consonant with Gregory VII's reforms. Bruce L.Venarde reaches a similar conclusion in his study of the eccentric Robert of Arbrissel (ca. 1045-1115), founder of a religious foundation for both sexes at Fontevrault in Anjou that spawned numerous daughter houses. Bruce L. Venarde, Introduction, *Robert of Arbrissel: A Medieval Religious Life*, Medieval Texts in Translation (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), xx-xxi. For Grundmann's thesis, see Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages*, trans. Steven Rowan (Notre Dame and London: Notre Dame University Press, 1996).

who were often objects of popular reverence helped transmit monastic values to

ordinary people.[71]

The twelfth century was famously the century of the invention of the religious

"order," defined as a family of religious communities that followed a distinctive rule

promulgated by a charismatic individual regarded as the order's founder. Before the tail-end

of the eleventh century monasteries in Western Europe were, generally speaking,

independent foundations whose adherents at least notionally followed the Rule of St.

Benedict. The proliferation of distinctive late eleventh- and twelfth-century monastic orders

in Western Europe—Carthusians, Gradmontines, Tironians, Obazines, and others—and, in a

twelfth-century innovation, orders of canons regular, that is, priests who adopted a

communal, quasi-monastic rule such as the Augustinians, Premonstratensians, and

Gilbertines--is well-attested.[72]

Nonetheless, all of those new orders were overshadowed by, and to a greater or lesser

extent influenced by the Cistercians, the most successful religious establishment of the

twelfth century. The Cistercians, named after their motherhouse at Cîteaux in Burgundy,

generated more than 300 monasteries in Europe during the first half of the twelfth century

alone, including thirty-four in England, where the Cistercians created their first foundation at

Ripon in North Yorkshire in 1128 (there were 80 English Cistercian monasteries by the early

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[71] *Ibid.*

[72] Leading studies, especially of twelfth-century religious foundations in England, include: Constable; David Knowles, *The Religious Houses of Medieval England* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1940); David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses in England and Wales* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1972); Brenda Bolton, *The Medieval Reformation*, Foundations of Medieval History (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1983); Colin Platt, *The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1984); and Jane Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300*, Cambridge Medieval Textbooks (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

thirteenth century, mostly in Yorkshire and Wales). That phenomenal growth rate, as Jane

Burton points out, was at least partly due part due to the Cistercians' strong enforcement of

their organizational norms that made the order distinctive and preserved its particularly

austere way of life: its white habit (in contrast to the Benedictine black), its austere

architecture, its simplified liturgy, its insistence that its monks support themselves by their

own labor, eschewing prevailing norms in which monasteries were essentially feudal

landlords, and, perhaps most significantly, the Cistercians' policy of admitting only adult

novices (a repudiation of the longtime Benedictine practice of accepting child oblates placed

in monasteries by their parents).[73] The Cistercians and their admirers believed that those

innovations made the order irresistibly attractive to twelfth-century seekers of an authentic

and intense Christian religiosity.[74] The charismatic Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux in

Burgundy (1090-1153), a prolific writer and intrepid preacher, became one of the most

powerful spiritual, intellectual, and political figures in Western Europe.[75] Although the

twelfth-century religious reformation was diffuse and multi-faceted, encompassing a wide

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[73] *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain*, 65.

[74] The leading standard narrative of early Cistercian history is Louis Julius Lekai, *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1977), 1-51. Constance Hoffman Berman has challenged this narrative, arguing that the rapid growth of the Cistercians during the early twelfth century was largely due to the order's somewhat later assimilation of numerous independent reform monasteries and convents for women that decided to call themselves Cistercian. Constance Hoffman Berman, *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 1-45, 237-241. Berman and Sally Thompson have explored the phenomenon of numerous foundations for nuns who called themselves Cistercian throughout the twelfth century, even though the order did not formally recognize them until 1194. See Constance Hoffmann Berman, "Were There Twelfth-Century Cistercian Nuns?," *Church History* 68 (1999): 824-64; *The Cistercian Evolution*, 42-45; and Sally Thompson, "The problem of the Cistercian Nuns in the Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Centuries," in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Ecclesiastical History: Subsidia 1 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1978), 227-52.

[75] The leading standard biography of Bernard of Clairvaux in English is Watkin Williams, *Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, Publications of the University of Manchester 237, Historical Series 64 (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1935).

and fluid range of paths to personal sanctity, some highly individualistic, some rigidly

corporatist, the Cistercians were undoubtedly its predominant force and iconic face.

Aelred, who had met Bernard early in his monastic career and whose monastery at

Rievaulx in Yorkshire was a daughter house of Clairvaux, was well-placed to create a literary

genre based on monastic spirituality but aimed at a non-monastic audience, including his

sister. That meditative section of *De institutione* not simply a meditation; it was a set of

instructions to Aelred's sister and other readers on how to create their own visual and

participatory meditations. It thus served as a kind of textbook for writing a thirteenth-century

religious lyric, modeling the religious lyric's features of riveting visual detail, blunt

immediacy of experience, and overpowering emotional response.

The thirteenth-century lyrics that survive in manuscript certainly have roots in

religious expression. Nearly all of them are either explicitly religious in subject-matter or are

implicitly religious moral reflections concerning the brevity of life's joys and the finality of

death.[76] Furthermore, the vast majority of the thirteenth-century Middle English religious

verses concern either Christ's passion or his mother. Even the robustly secular "Sumer is

icumen in," celebrating a springtime explosion of agrarian fertility as the cuckoo sings, is in

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[76] Examples of well-known thirteenth-century lyrics that are arguably secular but also arguably religious are "<M>Irie it is while sumer ilast [Merry it is while the summer lasts]," Brown XIII, no. 7), preserved on a partially legible torn sheet that serves as a flyleaf to British Library, MS Rawlinson G.22 and is possibly a fragment of a longer verse; and "Foweles in þe friþ [Birds in the wood]," Brown XIII, no. 8), whose sole manuscript, Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 139, provides musical notes for the text, which appears on fol. 5r. Neither lyric contains any explicit Christian references, but both contain Christian topoi of regretful sorrow for sin and, in the case of the latter, a mournful sense of alienation and exile as a consequence of Adam's fall. This is not to say that purely secular lyrics did not survive in manuscripts from that period. The very earliest known Middle English lyric, dated by Carleton Brown to shortly after 1200 on the basis of linguistic and paleographic evidence, is (in Brown's transcription) "[þe] þet hi can wittes fule-wis," ("That I am scrambled in my wits"), expressing a lover's crazed longing for death because the lady he loves is locked inside a castle (see Brown XIII, xii). Brown described the lyric as written with pencil, its thirteen rhyming lines appearing as prose and "crowded into" the top margin of fol. 25r of British Library, MS Royal 8.D.xiii, a twelfth-century manuscript that had once belonged to the Worcester Cathedral Priory.

fact interlineated on its page of Harley 978 (fol. 11v) with a Latin hymn, *Perspice, christicola*, written by the same hand in liturgical red that also uses agricultural imagery (a farmer and his vineyard) to laud another event of springtime: the Easter story of Christ's death and descent into hell that brought new life to the dead. Both the English and the Latin texts are set to the same musical notation for a six-voice round, or canon, a formal and elaborate kind of notation that, as Andrew Taylor observes, "was originally developed for the liturgy."[77] Musicologists and literary scholars have debated for decades whether the Latin preceded the English or vice versa as the original text for the canon's musical setting.[78] All of the opening folios (2r-15r) of Harley 978 consist of Latin hymns together with their musical notation, most of the hymns addressed to Mary, or else instructions for singing hymns. The final page of that section of the manuscript (fol. 15v) is a liturgical calendar.

Aelred's *De institutione*, especially its Christological meditation, circulated widely in manuscripts through the end of the fifteenth century, and it also served as a model for other devotional texts composed in England, chiefly the Latin *Speculum ecclesie* of Edmund of Abingdon (quickly translated into Anglo-Norman and later into English) and the anonymous Middle English *Ancrene Wisse*. *Speculum ecclesie* and *Ancrene Wisse* appeared nearly simultaneously during the first half of the thirteenth century. Like *De institutione*, they were both repeatedly copied throughout the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. All three texts were cut, expanded, folded into larger works, translated into other languages, or adapted in other significant ways over three centuries as the audiences for them changed and grew: from cloistered monks and female recluses to a broad-based and increasingly literate cohort

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[77] *Textual Situations*, 83.

[78] Ibid., 79-83.

of laypeople hungry for imaginative devotional reading. The growth of the latter group

during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries undoubtedly owed much to the preaching of the

Friars Minor and other mendicant orders; indeed, the Franciscans can be said to have been

among the chief transmitters of monastic spirituality to lay Christians. Bella Millett, the most

recent editor of *Ancrene Wisse*'s leading manuscript, argues that the freedom and creativity

with which scribes and translators adapted *Ancrene Wisse* for their own particular religious

purposes (most of those purposes far removed from the needs of the few dozen anchoresses

living in English enclosures at any given time)—to the point that it is impossible to make a

single critical edition of *Ancrene Wisse* that reconciles all the manuscripts--illustrates Paul

Zumthor's theory of *mouvance*: that many medieval texts were inherently fluid, unstable, and

dynamic rather than static.[79] This quality of *mouvance* accounts for the extensive textual

variations in many medieval works, Zumthor argued, and Millett believed that this was

especially true of devotional works such as *Ancrene Wisse*.

Aelred's *De institutione*, *Speculum ecclesie*, and *Ancrene Wisse* were not only prose

paradigms for the Middle English lyrics; they actually embedded the lyrics in their prose

("Nou goth sonne" is part of a passion meditation in *Speculum ecclesie*), or their scribes

appended the lyrics to the manuscripts along with other prose or verse meditations (as

happened with one important manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*). Other Middle English lyrics

appeared during the thirteenth century in similar places: on previously blank end-pages, in

margins of manuscripts, at the ends of rolls, and on flyleaves. The lyrics sometimes stood

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[79] Bella Millett, "*Mouvance* and the Medieval Author: Re-Editing *Ancrene Wisse*," in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and Their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A.I. Doyle*, ed. Alastair J. Minnis, York Manuscripts Conferences: Proceedings Series (Woodbridge U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1994), 9-20. See also Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1972), 65-75.

alone, but they were also often part of small collections of devotional verse or prose reflections that filled up available empty space on pages. The scribes clearly regarded both the prose and the verse as prayers, and it is likely that they considered their very acts of compiling them and writing them down to be devotional exercises. Because the scribes wrote down the lyrics for their personal religious reasons, textual variants abound. The lyrics, like *Ancrene Wisse*, exactly support Zumthor's theory of *mouvance*: the text's availability for alteration and elaboration.

This dissertation consists in part of tracing the manuscript and textual history of those major prose devotional works—*De Institutione*, *Speculum ecclesie*, and *Ancrene Wisse*—together with other important prose texts that they inspired, and in part of surveying the manuscripts where the earliest Middle English religious lyrics appeared. Some of those verses found their way into sermons, and Siegfried Wenzel's research has fruitfully uncovered in sermon manuscripts previously unknown verses and new texts of verses already known. The examination of margins, flyleaves, and especially end pages of other manuscripts where scribes and readers often left their devotional imprints, is likely to yield new verse texts as well. This writer, in fact, discovered on the end page of a late twelfth-century manuscript, Hereford Cathedral Library, MS O.IX.5, a book of Old Testament scriptural commentary, an unpublished version, written as prose in an attractive thirteenth-century hand, of the much-copied verse known as *Mind of the Passion*,[80] which is thoroughly in the Cistercian meditative tradition that Aelred represented. The English lyric appears at about the midpoint of an entire page filled with brief Latin prose meditations, all written in the same hand, on the passion of Christ and the eucharist (including *Candet nudatum pectus*).

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[80] Brown XIII, no. 56, *Index* 1977.

By the third quarter of the thirteenth century the religious verses began to be collected in "anthology" manuscripts such as Trinity Cambridge 323, Jesus Oxford 29, Cotton Caligula A.ix; and Digby 86. They were so collected, this dissertation argues, because they were treasured for their devotional value.

Many thirteenth-century English lyrics, as Wenzel, Woolf, and Manning have observed, are indeed pedestrian and poetically inferior. Others, however, were clearly believed by the scribes who persisted in recopying them—and likely by their readers as well--to be as beautiful as the New Critics of the mid-twentieth century thought they were. "Nou goth sonne," for example, appears in all but two of the eighty manuscripts of *Speculum ecclesie* transcribed over three centuries in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English. "Whyt was his nakede brest" was also extensively recopied, surviving sometimes alongside its Latin original in various places in seven manuscripts. Those who shaped those lyrics did so for aesthetic as well as religious reasons: to make an English religious artifact, to distill something in English, their mother tongue, out of what they had read in Latin or Anglo-Norman. Thomas G. Duncan has called attention to the metrical regularity of even the earliest and most primitive-seeming lyrics, a characteristic indicating that their authors took care to craft not only meditations but works of literature.[81] The lyrics they produced were not always artistically successful, but their authors clearly conceived of themselves as working in a literary tradition. It is not surprising then, that many of their works proved to be artistic successes in their own time that still resonate movingly to modern readers nearly eight centuries later.

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[81] Duncan, Thomas G., "Middle English Lyrics: Metre and Editorial Practice, " in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric* (n. 64), 19-38.

Furthermore, the authors of the early Middle English religious lyrics were steeped in a monastic exegetical tradition that in itself constituted a literary genre: commentary on the biblical Song of Songs. The Song, a verse dialogue in its original Hebrew that in its Latin Vulgate translation presented images of human and natural beauty couched in language of erotic longing between bride and bridegroom, constituted a supreme poetic example for Christian writers seeking to combine what they deemed to be theologically true with what they found to be alluringly beautiful. Beginning in late antiquity, Christian theologians had produced allegorical exegesis interpreting the Song as the love songs of Christ and his church or of Christ and the Christian soul. Those allegories provided a way to understand God's love as something human and carnal, not unlike the love of human beings for one another.

During late eleventh and twelfth centuries the production of allegorical exegesis of the Song exploded, generating imaginative Latin commentaries, sermons, and meditations on the Song that often displayed literary art themselves. The Cistercians, who became the leading exponents of twelfth-century monastic reform and twelfth-century affective spirituality, produced some of the Song's most eloquent and artistically accomplished commentary, in the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, William of Saint-Thierry (ca. 1075-1148), and many others through the middle years of the thirteenth century. The meditation on Christ's life and passion in Aelred of Rievaulx's *De institutione*, which draws upon the Song for its imagery and its language of love, is a model of elegantly cadenced twelfth-century Latin. Eleventh- and twelfth-century commentary on the Song was multiform, interpreting the Song as expressive not only of a nuptial union between Christ and the soul, but of the bridal relationship between Christ and the consecrated virgin, with Mary as perpetual virgin

offered as prototype. This latter reading of the Song helped foster, in the devotional

literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, an idealization of women who had chosen

virginity, whether as recluses, nuns, or martyrs, for such women seemed to epitomize the

Song's bride. The Song thus generated a kind of women's literature; both *De institutione* and

Ancrene Wisse were addressed to women, even though they were read and used just as avidly

by men. Finally, the Song of Songs came to be viewed in late-eleventh and twelfth-century

exegesis as an allegory of the passion of Christ as an act of love. Both "Whyt was his nakede

brest" and "Nou goth sonne" use imagery from either the Song itself (the former) or its

twelfth-century commentary (the latter). Because the meditation on Christ's life in Aelred's

De institutione is a quintessential example of the varieties of commentary on the Song—

God's bond with the human soul, the consecrated virgin as bride of Christ typified by Mary,

and Christ's passion with Mary as co-sufferer--and also because Aelred's elegant, visually

oriented, and intensely empathetic meditation was widely copied and imitated for more than

two centuries after its composition, this dissertation will examine *De institutione* as a

generator of much of the first religious poetry in Middle English.

This dissertation does not attempt to answer in historical terms the question of why

that "meditative moment," as J.A.W. Bennett called it—that twelfth-century explosion of

affective monastic spirituality centered on Christ's passion that spilled over into the lay

devotion of the later Middle Ages—emerged in the first place. Rachel Fulton attempts to

provide such an answer in her 2002 book, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ

and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200.*[82] Fulton attributes the development to the failure of Christ to

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[82] Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

return in judgment of the world at the end of the first millennium as many Western Christians had expected, a failure that prompted many of them to look inward for judgment and to reflect first upon the enormity of their sins and then upon the sufferings that those sins had inflicted upon the son of God who had accepted a painful death in order to secure their forgiveness.[83]

This writer ventures to suggest something different: that the monks who crafted "the meditative moment" were readers as well as writers, and that they had scriptural models daily before them, such as the Song of Songs, that they regarded as beautiful artifacts that had ultimately come from God's own hand. In his 2006 book, *The Beauty of the Cross*,[84] Richard Viladesau argues for the existence of an "aesthetic theology" that informed the visual and poetic art of the Middle Ages: "an understanding of the faith that is reflective, but whose reflection is embodied in artistic modes of thinking and communicating."[85] In a sense, Viladesau contends, Christianity itself has been an ongoing aesthetic project related to Christianity's own central paradox: seeing the crucifixion of Christ, an excruciating and humiliating felon's death that has not lost its power to scandalize, as something beautiful.

Viladesau's arguments are congruent with Elaine Scarry's effort to rehabilitate a theory of beauty in the wake of its poststructuralist denigration as a mere ideological artifact; she contends that the beautiful is a lens with which to perceive the good.[86] Scarru also argues that beautiful things are so powerfully attractive that the generate a desire to create more

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[83] *Ibid.*, 42-92.

[84] Richard Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts, from the Catacombs to the Eve of the Renaissance* (Oxford *et al.*; Oxford University Press, 2006).

[85] *Ibid.*, 4.

[86] Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

beautiful things: "Beauty brings copies of itself into being." She continues: "It may be that one reason beautiful persons and things invite the desire to creat is so that one can place something of reciprocally great beauty in the shared field of vision."[87]

The literature of interpretation of Christ's passion began with the New Testament letters of Paul of Tarsus, and commentaries upon the Song of Songs began to be written as early as the third century. Those texts generated more texts, and during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, as the audiences for them extended out of the monasteries and into the marketplaces where the friars preached and into the homes of increasingly literate laypeople, the trickle of writings became a flood. It was perhaps inevitable that some of those readers in England would try to craft their own deeply felt works of art, in the form of lyric poems in their own vernacular that strove for, and sometimes attained, beauty.

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[87] *Ibid.*, 3, 77.

Chapter 1

Aelred's Sister and the Birth of a New Devotional Genre

Sometime between the years 1160 and 1162 the English monk and prolific writer

Aelred, who had headed the Cistercian monastery of Rievaulx in northern Yorkshire since his

election in 1147 as the monastery's third abbot at age 37, composed a treatise in Latin

addressed to his sister that loosely followed the form of a "rule" for women who wished to

lead the life of an anchoress by adopting a form of solitary religious enclosure that in

England became increasingly the province of women during the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries.[1] The title, if any, that Aelred himself gave the treatise, is unknown. The Cistercian

monk Walter Daniel, Aelred's pupil at Rievaulx and later his hagiographer, writing not long

after Aelred's death in 1167, said merely that Aelred "wrote a book for his sister the recluse,

the most chaste virgin."[2] Charles H. Talbot listed a variety of titles that the treatise had

assumed in its various manuscripts over the centuries.[3] The title *De institutione inclusarum*

("on the instruction of enclosed women"), taken from one of the three oldest surviving

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[1] The word "rule" (*regulam*) is Aelred's: "certa, tibi regulam tradere curabo [I shall take care to deliver a rule to you]." Aelred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum* 1.10-11, Aelredi Rievallensis opera omnia 1, ed. Anselm Hoste and Charles H. Talbot, CCCM 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), 637. Citations are to this edition throughout this dissertation. Another critical edition of *De institutione* is Charles Dumont, ed., *La vie de recluse*, SC 76. (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1961). All English translations of *De institutione* are this writer's, perhaps influenced by the translation of *De institutione* in *The Works of Aelred of Rievaulx*, vol. 1: *Treatises, The Pastoral Prayer*, introduction by David Knowles, Cistercian Fathers Series 2 (Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1971), 43.

[2] Walter Daniel, *Vita Ailredi, abbatis Rievall'*, ed. Frederick M. Powicke (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), 41. Walter wrote: "[u]num librum scripsit sorori sue incluse / castissime virgini, quo docebat huius professionis sequaces institutum inchoacionis eiusdem feruorum et illius perfectionem [he wrote a book for his sister the recluse, the most chaste virgin, in which he taught the steps of her profession, the initial fervor of its beginning, and its perfection]." Powicke concluded, from a reference on the same page to the "young King Henry of England" ("Regis Anglie Henrici iunioris")—the son of Henry II who was crowned at age fifteen during his father's lifetime but did not survive his father, that Daniel composed his *vita* of Ailred sometime before young King Henry's coronation in 1170.

[3] Charles H. Talbot, "The *De Institutis Inclusarum* of Aelred of Rievaulx," *Analecta Sacri Ordini Cisterciensis* 7 (1951): 167-217.

manuscripts of Aelred's work, all dating from the thirteenth century,[4] was chosen by Talbot

and Anselm Hoste for their critical edition of the treatise published in 1971.[5]

   That title, with its reference to a plural number of recluses, reflects the consciousness,

not only of the scribe who attached the title to the manuscript he copied, but of Aelred

himself, that the anonymous and otherwise unknown sister ("soror")[6] to whom he addressed

his treatise, and whom he addressed intimately as a kind of twin whose earthly fate was

intertwined with his by virtue of their conception by the same father and the fact that a single

maternal womb had "encircled" the two of them and brought forth their infant bodies into the

world ("Hucusque simul concurrimus, soror, quibus una fuit eademque conditio, quos idem

pater genuit, idem uenter complexus est, eadem viscera profuderunt"),[7] was also a

synecdoche for a far wider audience of female readers and possibly men, too. Although

Aelred wrote most of *De institutione* in the second person singular with his sister clearly in

mind, he also often used the third person, generalizing about how the recluse ("inclusa") as a

generic figure ought to live out her days and dispose her mind. Indeed, Aelred made it clear

that other women besides his sister might be reading his treatise or, if unlettered, having it

read to them. Indeed, in a passage advising the recluse to shun even the most innocent

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[4] The manuscript is Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 36. The extant manuscripts and early editions of *De institutione* are listed in Anselm Hoste, *Bibliotheca aelrediana: A Survey of the Manuscripts, Old Catalogues, Editions and Studies Concerning St. Aelred of Rievaulx*, Instrumenta Patristica 2 (The Hague: Martin Nighoff, Steenbrugge: Abbey of St. Peter, 1962), 75-77.

[5] See n. 1.

[6] *De institutione inclusarum* 1 (CCCM, 637).

[7] *Ibid.*, 32 (CCCM, 675-76): "To this point we ran together, sister, we whom the same father conceived, the same womb encircled, the same flesh poured forth."

physical contact with men, even a comforting stroke on the hand from her elderly confessor, [8]

Aelred made it clear that he was not really addressing this warning to his sister, a manifestly

chaste woman who did not need such counsel ("Haec tibi, soror, gratias Deo dicienda non

fuerant"), but rather, the "younger girls" ("adolescentiores") who, Aelred said, were eager to

take up a similar life ("quae similem vitam...arripere gestiunt").[9] *De institutione* was thus

from its very conception in Aelred's mind a work designed for a wider readership.

Despite *De institutione*'s apparently narrow audience--for although the twelfth

century saw a flourishing of female anchorites in England, there were never more than a

dozen or so anchoresses young and old at any given time scattered throughout England in

their solitary or (occasionally) double cells during those hundred years, a number that was to

double during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but still remain pitifully small[10]--the

book proved to be one of Aelred's most widely read works, either in whole or in excerpt, to

the point that it was misattributed to the eleventh-century spiritual master Anselm of

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[8] *Ibid.* 6 (CCCM, 642): "Igitur, si fieri potest, prouideatur in uicino monasterio uel ecclesia, presbyter aliquis senex, maturis moribus et bonae opinionis, cui raro de confessione et animae aedificatione loquatur, a quo consilium accipiat in dubiis, in tristibus consolationem. Verum quia inclusum membris malum illud quod timemus plerumque suscitat et emollit emortuam senectutem, nec ipsi manum suam tangendam praebeat uel palpandam. [Therefore, if it can be accomplished, let there be provided from a nearby monastery or church some elderly priest of mature ways and good reputation, to whom she should speak rarely concerning her confession and the edification of her soul, and from whom she should receive advice when in doubt and consolation when sorrowful. Truly, because that evil which we fear above all contained in our own msle members arouses and enervates even dead old age, let her not even extend her hand to him for touching or stroking.]"

[9] *Ibid.* 7 (CCCM, 642).

[10] Elizabeth Warren, *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1985), 34-36. Using records, Warren counted forty-eight documented anchoresses in England during the twelfth century, contrasting to thirty male anchorites (the sex of twenty-five of the total number of ninety-six documented English anchorites is not known). Given that women typically became anchoresses in adulthood and that few people lived past age sixty during the twelfth century, it is unlikely that more than fifteen women occupied anchorholds at any given time. Warren's figures on English anchoritism and the increasing numbers of women (in contrast to men) who chose that life during the later Middle Ages in England will be discussed more fully in ch. 3 of this dissertation.

Canterbury (ca. 1033-1109) in at least one surviving manuscript,[11] and to Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in two different sixteenth-century printed editions.[12] Besides generating thirteen surviving manuscripts from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, *De institutione* was translated into Middle English during the late fourteenth century as part of the Vernon Manuscript.[13]

Furthermore, by end of the twelfth century, within a few decades after Aelred completed his treatise, large portions of it—specifically an extended meditation on the life of Christ--had been incorporated into meditative works attributed to others: *De arrha animae*, ascribed to Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141),[14] and the compilation *De diligendo Deo*, ascribed to the twelfth-century Cistercian monk Alcher of Clairvaux and also to Augustine himself.[15] According to Charles Talbot, *De diligendo Deo* contains some twelve passages "taken bodily" from Aelred's book.[16] It is thus clear that from the beginning Aelred's work was never read simply as a letter of instruction to his anchoritic sister, or even as a manual for women who wished to become anchoresses, but as a work of affective meditation centered on the cultivation of the love of God and associated with figures revered in the theology of late-medieval Western Europe—Anselm and Augustine—who also had reputations during that time not simply as theologians but as authors of devotional works.

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[11] Paris, Mazarine MS 616, fols. 193r-263r. This manuscript text, dating to the fifteenth century, attributes the treatise to Anselm in both its implicit and explicit.

[12] Talbot (n. 3), 167-68.

[13] See Introduction.

[14] PL 176: 951-70.

[15] PL 40: 847-64.

[16] Talbot (n. 3), 175-76.

Aelred himself, because of the circumstances of his birth and upbringing, occupied a
pivotal position in the trilingual culture of post-Norman Conquest England, bridging his
country's pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon past to a forward-looking present and future
increasingly inundated with Continental literary, ecclesial, and spiritual models, including
that of the Cistercians themselves.[17] Aelred was born in the far north of England, in the town
of Hexham adjacent to Hadrian's Wall in Northumbria, in 1110, less than fifty years after the
Conquest. Northumbria's nobles had fiercely resisted William the Conqueror's claim to
England's throne, and Hexham had been sacked and devastated by William's army in 1069
and 1070. Aelred's very name was probably a contraction of the common Anglo-Saxon name
Aethelred. His father, Eilaf, was one of the last of England's married priests, the father of at
least three other children (two sons and the anchoress-daughter) besides Aelred, the
youngest. The Gregorian reforms of the late eleventh century, associated with papal
supremacy and the enforcement of celibacy in the priesthood of the Western church, came
slowly to England's north. As Aelred Squires noted, those reforms came about largely
because William the Conqueror, Pope Gregory VII's contemporary, enthusiastically
promoted Gregory's movement. The priesthood at Hexham, part of the see of Durham during

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[17] Contemporary sources for Aelred's life and busy public career as a Cistercian abbot are numerous, as are the
sources for the history of Aelred's paternal ancestors, his father, Eilaf, and a grandfather also named Eilaf.
Walter Daniel's *Vita Ailredi*, because it was written shortly after Aelred's death by someone who knew him
well, is perhaps the most important source, although Walter focuses on Aelred's personal holiness and spiritual
leadership (the number of monks and lay brothers at Rievaulx swelled to 600 during Aelred's abbacy, according
to Daniel) rather than on concrete episodes of his life, especially his life before becoming a Cistercian. Reginald
of Durham (fl. 1162-73), the English Cistercian monks Matthew of Rievaulx (ca. 1109-1167), Gilbert of
Hoyland (d. ca. 1172), and Jocelin of Furness (fl. 1199-1214) all preserved first- and second-hand memories of
Aelred. Records of the church at Hexham, Aelred's birthplace, and the Benedictine monastery at Durham are
important sources of information about Aelred's family. Aelred's own writings, which included letters and
sermons as well as his better-known works, also contain autobiographical data. The brief biography of Aelred
that follows in this chapter is based on Maurice Powicke's introduction to the *Vita Ailredi* (n. 2) and Aelred
Squire's modern study of Aelred's life and works, *Aelred of Rievaulx: A Study* (London: S.P.C.K., 1969).
Powicke and Squire pieced together their accounts of Aelred's life from the above contemporary records and
other contemporary sources.

the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was hereditary until the late eleventh century, and Aelred's well-off and well-connected ancestors were prominent landholders as well as transgenerational pastors.

The last three decades of the eleventh century and the first decade of the twelfth were marked by prolonged tension in the Durham diocese between the new Anglo-Norman prelates and the indigenous Anglo-Saxon clergy over the substitution of monks and canons vowed to celibacy for the married secular priests who had held northern churches and collected revenues from the properties of those churches for generations. In 1093 work began on a vast new cathedral in Durham that was robustly Norman-Romanesque in architectural style but to which Durham's Normandy-born bishop, William de St.-Calais, nominated to his see by William the Conqueror, quickly moved to the new cathedral the relics of the seventh-century Northumbrian abbot-saint Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, which had been enshrined since 995 in the cathedral's predecessor-church. The new tomb for Cuthbert, the most revered of the northern saints during the early Middle Ages, carried double symbolic freight, signifying both Norman political domination in northern England and Norman desire to identify with and become a part of the Anglo-Saxon cultural landscape that the Conquest had subdued but not replaced.

In 1113, when Aelred was three years old, Thomas II, the Norman archbishop of York, to which the Durham diocese was juridically subordinate, sent Augustinian canons to take over the church in Hexham. Aelred's father, Eilaf, was able to negotiate a compromise that allowed him to remain a priest at his old church for the rest of his life and to continue to collect at least part of the income from the church's lands, although his sons were barred from ecclesiastical inheritance. In 1138, shortly before his death and four years after Aelred had

joined the Cistercians in 1134, Eilaf renounced his property interests in the church and entered the Benedictine monastery at Durham. Aelred's childhood thus bridged an older, fast-vanishing political and ecclesiastical order rooted in England's Anglo-Saxon past with the new hybrid Anglo-Norman culture that flourished during the twelfth century.

When Aelred was in his teens, his father arranged for the Scottish king David I (ca. 1083-1153), who had ascended to his throne in 1124, to take Aelred into the royal household to be brought up with David's son, Henry, and David's stepson by his queen's prior marriage, Waldef (the latter became an Augustinian canon in Yorkshire and later joined the Cistercians at Rievaulx under Aelred). David had a complex relationship with Norman England. He was the youngest son of Malcolm III of Scotland (1031-1093) and the queen-saint Margaret (1045-1093), sister of Edgar Atheling, a grand-nephew of Edward the Confessor and for a time a claimant against William to the English throne, which made David as Anglo-Saxon as he was Scottish. Still, David spent part of his childhood in exile at the court of the Norman king of England Henry I (1068-1135), the youngest son of William the Conqueror, while a murderous war of succession raged in Scotland involving several of David's older brothers and their offspring and Malcolm's younger brother, Donald III, who seized the Scottish throne in 1094 and reigned until 1097.

Henry became David's patron, marrying David's sister Matilda in 1100 and giving him extensive military aid as he fought a prolonged battle for the throne against one of his nephews that continued until well after his coronation. At Henry's court David absorbed Francophone culture, Norman practices of governance, and the Norman monarchs' enthusiasm for Gregorian reforms, all of which he brought to Scotland on his return. His queen, another Matilda, the mother of Waldef, was a great-niece of William the Conqueror.

On the other hand, after Henry died, David launched a series of largely successful territory-enhancing incursions into northern England against its Anglo-Norman lords until his army was routed in the Battle of the Standard in northern Yorkshire in 1138, the year of Aelred's father's death. David's ostensible reason for the attacks was his support for his niece and Henry's daughter, a third Matilda, in her claim for the English throne against her cousin Stephen of Blois, who reigned from 1135 to 1154.

According to Walter Daniel, who by his own declaration had lived under Aelred's rule as abbot for seventeen years[18] and who wrote his anecdote-filled vita of Aelred shortly after his death, Aelred as a young man rose quickly to a trusted position in David's court. In 1134, when he was in his early twenties and in Yorkshire on business with the Archbishop Thurstan of York (probably at the instigation of David), Aelred spent two nights at the Anglo-Norman baron Walter Espec's castle in Helmsley, on the River Rye in North Yorkshire. It was Walter Espec, ironically, who would lead the Yorkshire forces to victory against David in the Battle of the Standard four years later. The day after Aelred's his arrival in Helmsley, as Walter Daniel narrated the story in his vita, Aelred, accompanied by his host, visited the new, half-built Cistercian abbey of Rievaulx, located in a deep valley two miles upriver from the castle and founded by Walter Espec himself in 1131. Like the Norman Conquest and Gregorian reform, the Cistercians were a Continental import. The first white monks had arrived in England in 1119, sent by Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) himself, and in Yorkshire Thurstan as archbishop become their patron. The next morning, according to Walter Daniel, Aelred set out homeward on horseback to the Scottish court, but as he rode

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[18] *Vita Ailredi* (n. 2), 40.

north along the hillside above the Rievaulx monastery, he made an impulsive downhill detour into the Rye valley and told the monks that he wanted to join them.

Aelred rose quickly to prominence among the Cistercians as both a preacher and an administrator. When Thurstan of York died in 1140, Aelred's abbot sent him as his representative to Rome in an ecclesiastical dispute over the qualifications of Thurstan's successor to the see of York. On his way to or from Rome, he seemed to have stopped at Clairvaux in Burgundy and met the aging Bernard, who encouraged him to write his first treatise, *Speculum caritatis* ("Mirror of Charity"), probably completed by 1142 if Walter's chronology is accurate.[19]

Back at Rievaulx after this Continental journey, Aelred was made novice-master at age thirty-two, and in the next year, 1143, he was sent with a group of monks to a brand-new Cistercian monastery at Revesby in Lincolnshire where he served as first abbot. Four years later, Aelred was back at Rievaulx as its third abbot, and during the twenty years between his election and his death, he produced an extensive body of writing. Best known were a succession of treatises following *Speculum caritatis* (the chronology is Walter Daniel's): *De Jesu puero duodenni* ("Jesus as a Boy of Twelve") composed during the 1150s, *De spiritali amicitia* ("Spiritual Friendship") composed in around 1160, *De institutione inclusarum*, composed in the early 1160s, and *De anima* ("The Soul") probably begun in 1165 and unfinished at his death in 1167. There were also numerous other works that reflected the busy public and even political and diplomatic life at the highest levels of royal and ecclesiastical governance that Aelred continued to lead alongside a religious life that Walter Daniel

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[19] The composition dates ascribed to Aelred's works are derived from Powicke's piecing together their chronology from Walter Daniel's *vita*. See Introduction, *Vita Ailredi* (n. 2), xcvii. Hoste, in his *Bibliotheca aelrediana* (n. 4), follows those dates.

described as one of extreme austerity, contemplation, and mortification. Rievaulx was one of a rapidly growing chain of Cistercian monasteries in Yorkshire (home to five Cistercian houses founded during the twelfth century), elsewhere in northern England, and even on the Scottish side of the border. Aelred, as abbot and gifted administrator, traveled frequently from house to house.

Aelred's non-treatise works thematically straddled the Anglo-Saxon, Celtic, and Francophone Norman cultures of borderland England between which Aelred frequently and adroitly moved. Those works included: a genealogy of English kings dedicated to the future Henry II of England (1133-1189), Henry I's Angevin grandson via his daughter Matilda, apparently written just before the younger Henry's coronation in 1154 with the purpose, at least in part, of furthering the Norman monarchs' aim of legitimizing themselves by insinuating themselves into the Anglo-Saxon royal line, and also of eulogizing the recently deceased Norman protégé David of Scotland; an account of the Battle of the Standard that paradoxically lionized Walter Espec's victory over David; and hagiographical *vitae* whose holy subjects tellingly crisscrossed the same northern English cultural boundaries that Aelred himself negotiated. Over the years Aelred wrote accounts of the life of Ninian, the fifth-century Celtic-British missionary to Scotland first memorialized by Bede, whose work, as Anne Lawrence-Mathers has pointed out, "Aelred knew...very well"[20]; the life of Edward the Confessor, the Anglo-Saxon royal half-uncle of William the Conqueror whose attenuated blood ties to William underlay the claims of William and his offspring to be England's rightful rulers; and the posthumous miracles of the Anglo-Saxon saints buried at Hexham,,

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[20] Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Woodbridge, U.K., and Rochester, N.Y: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 247, n. 61.

the care of whose relics had passed from Aelred's priest-father as part of his patrimony to the Norman-dispatched Augustinians who succeeded to his church. As Anne Lawrence-Mathers has noted, Aelred as Cistercian abbot played a key role in fostering and overseeing a network of Cistercian monasteries in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Cumbria, and Scottish territory just across the border. It was a network that transcended territorial claims and boundaries. David as Scottish king had presided over the founding of a Cistercian house in 1136 near the site of the seventh-century Northumbrian monastery of Melrose alluded to by Bede and also served as patron of a second Cistercian monastery at Dundrennan, founded by monks from Rievaulx in 1142.[21] As Mathers writes, "[W]hat is striking about Aelred is the sense that, for him, Bede's Northumbria was still somehow a reality."[22] Indeed, Reginald of Durham (fl.1162-73), a Benedictine monk and prolific hagiographer in that cathedral city, dedicated his <u>vita</u> of Cuthbert (whose life had also been memorialized by Bede) to Aelred, whom he described as having recounted to him and his fellow monks many wonderful stories about Cuthbert's miracles.[23]

Walter Daniel, Aelred's Cistercian hagiographer, related that as his abbot lay dying of an unspecified but painful illness in January 1167, he took pleasure in repeating the name of Christ in English as he prayed for the release of death. That was because, as Walter explained, unlike the Latin word "Christus," the Middle English "Crist" had only one syllable

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[21] *Ibid.,* 246-49.

[22] *Ibid.*, 250-51.

[23] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de admirandis Beati Cuthberti virtutibus quae novellis patratae sunt temporibus*, Publications of the Surtees Society (London: Nichols and Son, 1835), 4. Reginald wrote of Aelred: "[S]aepius non nulla miracula nobis, beatum Cuthbertum magnificando, retulit [more often, praising the blessed Cuthbert, he told us of his many miracles]."

and was thus "easier to speak and in certain ways sweeter to hear."[24] Aelred's macaronic prayer as recorded by Walter and translated by him into Latin was "Festinate for crist luue": "Hasten for the love of Christ."[25] Aelred's deathbed words were in the language of his Anglo-Saxon ancestors.

At the same time Aelred deliberately made himself part of the new, imported culture of the Anglo-Norman twelfth century, and not simply because he had chosen to align himself with the newly arrived Cistercians instead of the black Benedictine monks whose company his father joined in Durham. As their titles hint, all four of Aelred's religious treatises, and especially *De institutione inclusarum*, reflected his immersion in twelfth-century trends in religious practice that emphasized intense affective and emotional devotion to the human person of Christ and had Continental origins and parallels. The deathbed prayer of Aelred that Walter Daniel recorded, "Festinate for crist luue," and its quality of overwhelming sweetness (reflected in Walter's admiring adjective "dulcius") was a kind of distillation of this new and emotion-centered spirituality that would underly the devotional literature of England during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.

De institutione, and especially its oft-excerpted passion meditation, reflected Aelred's highly original fusion of three separate twelfth-century strands of theological reinterpretation of patristic and early-medieval exegesis of the Song of Songs, the Old Testament epithalamion saturated with longing and desire between bride and bridegroom and often bluntly erotic in imagery that had been read as an allegory of divine love by Jews since well before the birth of Christ. The first strand treated the Song as a nuptial between Christ and a

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[24] *Vita Ailredi* (n. 2), 59-60: "quia nomen Christi hac lingua una sillaba continetur et facilius profertur, et dulcius quodammodo auditur."

[25] *Ibid.*, 60.

consecrated virgin—a nun or anchoress--who was literally his bride by reason of her vows.

In the second strand of allegorical treatment of the Song of Songs, the bride was not just any

holy virgin but Mary, Christ's virgin mother, the most honored of all virgins. The third strand

treated the Song of Songs as an allegory of Christ's passion, with Christ, the bridegroom,

described in the Vulgate Bible as "candidus et rubicundus,"[26] white from the pallor of death,

and reddened by the blood flowing from his wounds, expressing his self-disregarding love

for mankind in his outstretched arms and bloody agony on the cross. All three strands were

associated with an intense focus upon women, who, personified by the Song of Song's bride,

represented an intensely human, even carnal, response to Christ's insistent love. Whatever

disabilities twelfth-century women experienced under law and custom and from a Christian

theological perspective that regarded them as frail daughters of Eve, those three twelfth-

century exegetical traditions exalted them by making them—or at least those among them

who chose lives of consecrated chastity—into idealized creatures as partners and helpmeets

of Christ himself.[27] Furthermore, Aelred, in writing *De institutione*, participated in a

distinctly Cistercian practice of exegesis of the Song of Songs. Bernard of Clairvaux had

written a series of sermons on the Song over the period from 1135 to his death in 1153, and

other Cistercian commentary on the Song abounded during Aelred's lifetime and afterwards.

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[26] Ct 5:10: "dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus electus ex milibus [my beloved is white and red, chosen from the soldiers]."

[27] Anne Clark Bartlett argues to the contrary that Aelred sought to impose upon his sister and other anchoresses an "ascetic norm" based upon "masculine speech and silence." She writes: "Consequently the anchoress conforming to this model of the formation of the self is not shaped as a merely celibate female subject but as a regendered one whose perspective on sexuality comes from masculine norms and male experiences." Ann Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 47, 49. Bartlett does not address Aelred's consistent identification of his sister with the feminine-gender bride of the Song of Songs.

Aelred's *De institutione* was only in the loosest sense a manual of instruction for anchoresses. The treatise contained three parts (the tripartite division was Aelred's own),[28] only the first of which (chs. 1-14 in modern editions) actually dealt with the specifics of the life of a recluse: when and how she should pray, what clothes she should wear and food she should eat, what sort of contact with others (especially men, but also women and children) she should permit herself. Talbot pointed out that the Rule of St. Benedict, modified by Cistercian practice, was Aelred's model for this part,[29] and Paulette L'Hermite-Leclercq has noted Aelred's dependence on two other sources, *Vitae patrum*, the fourth- or fifth-century collection of the lives of the desert fathers sometimes ascribed to Rufinus of Aquileia that circulated widely during the Middle Ages, and *Regula solitariorum*, a rule for male hermits written by the ninth-century Carolingian priest Grimlaic.[30]

The second part of *De institutione* (chs. 15-28 in modern editions), focused on what Aelred called the "inner man" ("interiorem hominem"), in contrast to the "outer man" ("exterioris hominis") for whom he had written this directives in the first part.[31] Here it was clear that Aelred was already reshaping his treatise as something more than a set of guidelines for a woman seeking the solitary ascetic life. The second part consisted of a meditation on virginity, in particular on its paradoxical sensual aspects, for virgin was a bride of Christ and her virginity her supreme nuptial gift to her bridegroom. He wrote:

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[28] *De institutione inclusarum* 33 (CCCM, 681-82).

[29] Talbot (n. 3), 171.

[30] Paulette L'Hermite-Leclercq, "Ælred of Rievaulx: The Recluse and Death according to the *Vita Inclusarum*," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 34 (1999): 183-201.

[31] *De institutione inclusarum* 33 (CCCM, 681).

> Quid hoc pretiosus thesauro, quo caelum emitur, angelus delectatur, cuius Christus ipse cupidus est, quo illicitur ad amandum et prouocatur ad praestandum. Quid? Audeo dicere: seipsum, et omnia sua. Itaque nardus uirginitatis tuae etiam in caelestibus dans odorem suum, facit ut concupiscat rex decorem tuum et ipse est Dominus Deus tuuus. Vide qualem tibi sponsum elegeris, qualem ad te amicum asciueris. Ipse est <u>speciosus forma prae filiis hominum</u>, speciosior etiam sole, et super omnem stellarum pulchritutinem. <u>Spiritus eius super mel dulcis, et haereditas eius super mel et fauum.</u> Longitudo dierum in dextera eius, in sinistra eius, diuitiae et gloria.[32]

This passage is, among other things, a rich mélange of allusions to the Vulgate Bible: Psalm 44,[33] and also the books of Proverbs and Wisdom (both traditionally attributed to Solomon), and the <u>Ecclesiasticus</u> of Jesus son of Sirach.[34] One of Aelred's patristic sources was undoubtedly Jerome's fourth-century letter to the virgin Eustochium,[35] which opened with the eleventh verse of Psalm 44 ("audi filia"), but the dominant scriptural allusions in Aelred's meditation on virginity, which were robustly sensual, came from the Song of Songs, also traditionally attributed to Solomon: the spikenard emitting its fragrance in the bridal chamber, the bridegroom who is a "king" ("rex") and "lover" ("amicus"), beautiful beyond other men in appearance and filled with desire for his beloved bride.

In a later passage in this second part of his treatise Aelred melded the image of Christ as lover with an image of the crucifix that was similarly eroticized, for in Aelred's prose

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[32] *Ibid.*, 15 (CCCM, 650): "What could be more precious than the treasure with which heaven is bought, with which your angel is delighted, for which Christ himself longs, by which he is enticed to love and challenged to offer a gift. What gift? I make bold to say: himself and all that is his. Therefore the spikenard of your virginity gives forth its fragrance even to the heavens, and it causes the king to desire your beauty—he who is the lord your God himself. See what kind of bridegroom you will have chosen, what sort of lover you will have claimed. He is beautiful in appearance exceeding the sons of men, more beautiful even than the sun itself, more than the beauty of the stars. His spirit is sweeter than honey and his inheritance sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Length of days is in his right hand, and in his left hand are riches and glory."

[33] Psalm 45 in modern English Bibles.

[34] *Treatises, the Pastoral Prayer* (n. 1), at p. 63, lists allusions in this passage to Ps 44:3, 12, Prv 3:16, Sap 7:29, and Sir 24:27.

[35] Jerome, Epistle 22, *Ad Eustochium* 25, CSEL 54.1, ed. Isidor Hilburg (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1910, 2nd ed., Adolph Primmer, 1996).

Christ's arms outstretched along the crossbar constituted an invitation for his bride to embrace him, and his exposed breasts were a source of nourishment and consolation for his beloved:

> Sufficiat tibi in altari tuo Saluatoris in cruce pendentis imago, quae passionem suam tibi repraesentet quam imiteris, expansis brachiis ad suos te inuitet amplexus, in quibus delecteris, nudatis uberibus lac tibi suauitatis infundat quo consolieris.[36]

This passage, too, echoes the Vulgate's Song of Songs, whose opening celebrates a kiss on the lips from a royal lover whose male breasts are sweeter than wine: "Osculetur me osculo oris sui / quia meliora sunt ubera tua vino....introduxit me rex in cellaria sua / exultabimus et laetabimur in te / memores uberum tuorum super vinum recti diligunt te."[37] That crucifix, Aelred explained to his sister, was all she needed for her private devotional altar in her cell, which should otherwise be free of ostentatious adornment. Yet that crucifix was not to be simply a depiction of Christ's suffering and sacrifice, which Aelred's anchoress sister was to "imitate" in her solitary asceticism, but also of Christ's superlative capacity for loving, represented in the most physical of language (yearning outstretched arms and naked breasts) and demanding a reciprocal expression of love from her.

Aelred further suggested that his sister might wish to flank her crucifix with images of the virgin Mary and the beloved disciple John, memorializing the passage in John's Gospel in which the crucified Jesus declares that henceforth John is to be Mary's son; and Mary,

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[36] *De institutione inclusarum* 26 (CCCM, 658): "Let there suffice for you on your altar an image of your savior hanging on the cross, which will depict his passion to you for you to imitate; with arms spread out toward yours, he invites your embrace, and the milk of sweetness from his naked breasts pours over you, from which you are consoled."

[37] Ct 1:1, 3: "Let him kiss me with the kiss of his moth, for your breasts are more pleasant than wine....The king led me into his store-rooms. We shall rejoice and be glad in you, mindful of your breasts that are better than wine. The righteous love you."

John's mother:[38] "Et si hoc placet, ad commendandam tibi uirginitatis excellentiam, Virgo Mater in sua et uirgo discipulus in sua iuxta crucem cernatur imagine, ut cogites quam grata sit Christo utriusque sexus uirginitas, quam in Matre et prae caeteris sibi dilecto discipulo consecrauit."[39] Again, this image was not simply a didactic reminder to Aelred's sister that in living the life of a consecrated virgin, she was following the example of the two virginal beings who were so close to Christ that he instituted a familial bond between them. The image was also explicitly nuptial; Aelred used the words "copulauit" (with its sexual connotations) and "foedere" (which had the narrow meaning of "marriage bond" as well as the broader meaning of "bond" or "treaty" in general) in reference to the union that Christ created between Mary and John, implying a joining together of the two that was essentially marital even though couched in terms of mother and son, a marriage bond presided over by Christ himself as his death approached. Aelred wrote: "Vnde eos pendens in cruce tanto foedere copulauit, ut illam discipulo Matrem, illum Matri filium delegaret."[40] Aelred followed those words with an ecstatic address to John containing an encomium to the Virgin that expressed wonder and gratitude at the magnitude of Christ's testamentary gift: "O beatissimum hoc testamento Iohannem, cui totius humani generis decus, spes mundi, gloria

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[38] Io 19:26-27: "cum vidisset ergo Iesus matrem et discipulum stantem quem diligebat dicit matris suae / mulier ecce filius tuus / deinde dicit discipulo / ecce mater tua / et ex illa hora accepit eam discipulus in sua [when Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman behold your son,' and then to the disciple, 'Behold your mother,' and from that hour on the disciple received her to his own]."

[39] *De institutione inclusarum* 26 (CCCM, 658-59): "And if this pleases you, for the purpose of remiding yourself of the excellence of virginity, let images of the Virgin Mother and the virgin disciple be seen next to the cross, so that you may ponder how pleasing to Christ is the virginity of both sexes, which he consecrated in his mother and in the disciple who was loved by him above all others."

[40] *Ibid*. (CCCM, 659): "Whereupon he joined them together in such a great bond as to entrust the mother to the disciple and the disciple to the mother as her son."

caeli, miserorum refugium, afflictorum solatium, pauperum consolatio, desperatorum erectio, peccatorum reconcilatio, postremo orbis domina, caeli Regina, testamenti auctoritate commititur."[41]

The litany of the Virgin's titles in this passage emphasized, even more than her high status as queen of heaven, her charity and pity for the sick, the poor, the despairing, the sinning, and others among the lowliest of human beings: "refuge of the wretched," "solace of the afflicted," "consolation of the poor," "uplifting of the hopeless," "reconciliation of sinners." In this passage Christ's sacrificial love for sinners is complemented by Mary's tender and maternal love for them. In Aelred's pictorial meditation the trinity of Christ, Mary, and John as gazed upon by Aelred's virgin sister forms a complex representation of yearning divine love (Christ), selfless charity (Mary), and reciprocal human response (John, Aelred's sister) that finds its expression in a double metaphor of human-divine, earthly-heavenly marriage: between Christ and the virgin who has consecrated herself to him, and between John and the Virgin whose status as Christ's mother makes her queen of heaven.

It was in the third part of the treatise—the part of *De institutione* that became most widely copied—that Aelred used the fusion of bridal imagery and meditation on Christ passion to its most heightened and sustained effect. Aelred called this third part (chapters 29 through 33 in modern editions) a "triple meditation" ("triplici meditatione opus") that would focus on the past, the present, and the future ("de praeteritis scilicet, praesentibus et

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[41] *Ibid.*: "O John, most blessed by this bequest, you to whom was entrusted by the authority of a will the splendor of all the human race, hope of the world, glory of heaven, refuge of wretched, solace of the afflicted, consolation of the poor, uplifting of the hopeless, reconciliation of sinners, mistress of the world at the end of time, queen of heaven."

futuris").[42] The section concerning the past, which Aelred called a "recollection" ("praeteritorum recordatione"),[43] was in fact a chronological narrative of events in the life of Christ, particularly his incarnation and birth and, most extendedly, his passion and resurrection. As a narrative, this section of Aelred's work constituted one of the earliest non-biblical lives of Christ in Western European literature. Its closest analogue was a mid-twelfth-century passion narrative by the Rhineland Benedictine abbot Ekbert of Schönau that was also widely copied, was variously titled *Stimulus amoris* or *Stimulus dilectionis* and was attributed, like Aelred's treatise, to Anselm, as well as to Bernard of Clairvaux, Ambrose of Milan, and Bonaventure.[44]

Yet this part of Aelred's treatise, unlike Ekbert's work, was not simply a chronological narrative with affective overtones. It was a guided meditation, directly addressed to Aelred's sister like much of the rest of *De institutione*, that asked her to visualize in her mind the episodes in Christ's life that Aelred narrated, to place herself inside the frame of those episodes as an intimate observer, and above all, to experience the scene emotionally as though she were a participant. A decade earlier Aelred had employed this technique in *De Iesu puero duodenni*, a meditation on the passage in Luke's Gospel in which the twelve-year-old Jesus is taken by Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, becomes separated

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[42] *Ibid.* 29 (CCCM, 662).

[43] *Ibid.*

[44] Roth, Friedrich Wilhelm Emil, ed., *Die Visionen der heiligen Elisabeth von Schönau und die Schriften der Äbte Ekbert und Emecho von Schönau* (Brno: Verlag der Studien aus dem Benedictiner und Cisterciencer-Orden, 1884). For a discussion of Ekbert's work and its manuscript history see Thomas H. Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 40-41, 188.

from them for three days, and is discovered by them sitting in the Temple arguing with the learned men there.[45]

In that treatise, written, according to Aelred, at the request of Yvo, a Cistercian monk at Rievaulx's daughter house Wardon in Bedfordshire, and widely copied,[46] Aelred asked his readers to experience imaginatively Mary's fear and feelings of loss when she discovers her son is missing and her joy when he is eventually found.[47] Similarly, in *De institutione*, Aelred instructed his sister to place herself mentally, for example, inside the very room in which the angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would conceive the son of God—and even to join in the angel's greeting: "Ibi aduentum angeli praestolare ut uideas intrantem, et sic repleta stupore et extasi dulcissimam dominam tuam cum angelo angelo salutante salutes, clamans et dicens: *Aue gratia plena, Dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus.*"[48] The emotion Aelred meant to invoke in his reader was extreme: "stupor," "ecstasy," and not just a greeting of Mary by the angel but a "crying out."

Aelred followed this passage with a brief and fervent prayer to Mary: "O dulcis domina inebriabaris dulcedine, quo amoris igne succendebaris, cum sentires in mente et in uentre tantae maiestatis praesentiam, cum de tua carne sibi carnem assumeteret, et membra in

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[45] Lc 2:41-51.

[46] Hoste (n. 4), at 51-52, lists twenty-one widely scattered surviving manuscripts of *De Iesu puero duodenni*,

[47] Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Iesu puero duodenni* 2, 8, *Aelredi Rievallensis opera omnia*, vol. 1, ed. Anselm Hoste and Charles H. Talbot, CCCM 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), 250, 255-56.

[48] *De institutione inclusarum* 29 (CCCM, 663): "There await the coming of the angel so that you may see him as he enters and hear him as he greets her, and thus overcome with stupefaction and even ecstasy, you may greet that most sweet lady along with the angel who is greeting her, crying out and saying, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women." That last is a quotation from Lc 1:28; the annunciation itself is narrated in Lc 1:26-38.

quibus corporaliter omnnis plenitudo diuinitatis habitaret, de tuis sibi membris aptaret."[49] The prayer intensified the emotional level of the passage by casting Mary's feelings (and by extension those of Aelred's sister who was asked to duplicate those feelings by virtue of saying the prayer) in terms of the most extreme and even dangerous of analogies: to drunkenness and being set afire. The prayer also celebrated the carnality of the human nature that Christ had taken on in his incarnation: that he was flesh of Mary's flesh and had fashioned his limbs from her limbs. Mary herself in Aelred's text, paradoxically because she was a paragon of virginity, experienced the most intimate and sensual of fleshly responses to her impregnation with Christ: intoxication and burning with the fire of love. The image of Christ's conception that Aelred painted for his sister was a frankly nuptial image. His technique was to place his reader inside a vivid pictorial tableau of an episode in the life of Christ, lead her to identify with the episode's participants, and then induce in her by sensuous, emotional, and, ultimately, quasi-erotic language a powerful affective response.

Aelred ended this passage on the annunciation with three repetitions of the word "virgin" in reference to his virgin sister, to the Virgin Mary whom his sister wished to "imitate," and to Christ, Mary's son, to whom his sister was virginally "wed": "Haec omnia propter te, o uirgo, ut Virginem quam imitari proposuisti diligenter attendas, et Virginis Filium cui nupsisti."[50] Aelred's sister, by reason of her virginity, could both identify with the most exalted of virgins and bond with Christ himself. The ascetic life she had chosen was

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[49] *Ibid.*: "O sweet lady, with how much sweetness you were intoxicated, with what fire of love were you inflamed, when you felt, in your mind and in your womb, the presence of such great majesty, when he took on his flesh from your flesh, and fashioned members for himself from your members, in which all the fullness of his divinity dwelled bodily."

[50] *Ibid.*: "All of this was for you, O virgin, so that you would diligently attend to the Virgin, whom you have proposed to imitate, and to the Virgin's son, whom you have wed."

thus not an end in itself, in Aelred's view, but a precondition for the contemplative life whose

end was union with Christ, nuptial union (at the beginning of the triple meditation Aelred

also identified his sister with Mary, the sister of Martha of Bethany in Luke's Gospel who did

not busy herself with household tasks as Martha did but sat at Jesus' feet, took in his words,

and "truly drank from the fountain of divine love").[51] She was "buried" to the world as a

recluse in order that she concentrate fully and without distraction on hearing and loving

Christ: "Haec pars tua, carissima, quae saeculo mortua atque sepulta, surda debes esse ad

omnia quae saeculi sunt audiendum, et ad loquendum muta, nec debes distendi sed extendi,

impleri non exhauriri."[52]

As the passage on the Annunciation demonstrates, religious contemplation in Aelred's

view was essentially an activity of the imagination, in which imagined actions and emotions

became palpable and real in the mind of the one who meditated. By visualizing tableaux of

Christ's life on earth, the reader of Aelred's treatise could in a sense see and hear him in the

flesh. She could even embrace him in the flesh, at least as far as her capacity to imagine

allowed her, and Aelred conceived of his task as stimulating her capacity for imagining as

vividly as possible by making her mental experiences as tangible and sensuous as possible.

His literary style was three-pronged: a combination of concrete visual images, elegant and

often rhyming parallel constructions ("proposuisti" and "nupsisti," "mortua" and "sepulta,"

"distendi" and "extendi"), and an insistence, via his repeated use of the second person

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[51] *Ibid.* (CCCM, 662): "ex diuinae uero dilectionis fonte haureiebat Maria." See also *De institutione* 28 (CCCM, 660). The story of Mary and Martha is in Lc 10: 38-42.

[52] *Ibid.* 28 (CCCM, 660): "This is your part, dearest one, you who are dead and buried to the world, you ought to be deaf as far was hearing everything of the world and mute to speaking of it; you ought everything that is heard in the world and mute as to everything that is spoken; you should not be distracted but enlarged, filled up, not drained out."

singular, on drawing his reader directly into the scene as both voyeur and participant. Aelred's emphasis was always upon the fleshly as a metaphor for, or even an expression of, Christ's human love for his fellow human beings. Aelred's sister was to imitate Mary, Christ's mother, as well as Mary of Bethany. Mary, as Aelred pointed out, was the human being closest to Christ not simply because of her peerless virtue, but because her flesh had generated his flesh. As a woman, Aelred's sister could reenact the fleshly closesness of Mary's maternity, and unite her flesh to Christ's as his bride.

Aelred continued this emphasis upon the experiential and the emotional throughout the "past" portion of the triple meditation. In his evocation of the visitation, narrated in Luke's gospel and involving the newly pregnant Mary's meeting with her formerly barren kinswoman Elizabeth, who was now also miraculously pregnant, with John the Baptist,[53] Aelred told his sister to "run" in her imagination to participate vicariously in the two women's joy and to "embrace" her "bridegroom" even in his mother's womb.[54] Aelred next instructed his sister to "help" Mary as she gave birth to Jesus, to embrace the manger in which the baby was laid, and to shower his feet repeatedly and shamelessly with kisses. As with the annunciation, Aelred's sister was to "burst into words of exultant joy," crying out the words of Isaiah, "Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given."[55]

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[53] Lc 1:39-56.

[54] *De institutione inclusarum* 29 (CCCM, 663): "Quid agis, o uirgo? Accurre, quaeso, accurre, et tantis gaudiis admiscere, prosterrnare ad pedes utriusque, et in unius uentre tuum Sponsum amplectere, amicum uero eius in alterius utero uenerare. [What shall you do, O virgin? Run, I beseech you, run, to involve yourself in such great joy, to prostrate yourself at the feet of both, to embrace your bridegroom in the womb of one and truly to venerate his friend in the womb of the other.]"

[55] *Ibid.* (CCCM, 663-64): "[A]ssiste et obsequere parienti, locatoque in praesepi paruulo, erumpe in uocen exultationis, clamans cum Isaia: *Paruulus natus est nobis, filius datus est nobis*. Amplectere dulce illud praesepium, uincat uerecundiuam amor, timorem depellat affectus, ut sacratissimis pedibus figas labia, et oscula gemines. [Stand by and help her in childbirth, and when the little one is laid in the major, burst out into words

Above all, Aelred's sister was to contemplate Christ as her bridegroom in several episodes from the Gospels describing Jesus' growth to adulthood, his baptism by his kinsman John the Baptist in the river Jordan, and his ministry. Of the four episodes from the Gospels narrating Christ's ministry that Aelred retold, three involved dramatic and emotional encounters with women[56] in which Christ's tenderness and mercy are paramount in Aelred's text: the woman taken in adultery whom Jesus saves from stoning in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel;[57] the sinner in the seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel (traditionally identified as Mary Magdalene, although not by Aelred) who washes Jesus' feet with her tears and dries them with her hair at the home of a Pharisee where Jesus is dining;[58] and Mary, Martha's sister, who, while Jesus is dining in the home the sisters share with their brother, Lazarus, breaks an alabaster box of expensive and fragrant spikenard and pours the ointment over Jesus' head.[59]

With respect to Christ's baptism, Aelred turned the episode into a rite of spiritual marriage presided over by the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with the Father

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of joy, crying out, 'A little one is born to us, a son is given to us.' Embrace that sweet manger, and let love conquer your shame and affection banish your fear, so that you may put your lips to his most sacred feet and kiss them repeatedly.]" The scriptural quotation is from Is 9:6.

[56] The fourth episode is the story of the paralytic lowered through the roof on his pallet so that Jesus can cure him. The story is found in Mt 9:2-8, Mc 2:3-12, and Lc 5:18-26. Aelred interprets the miracle as another example of Christ's boundless love and generosity in not only healing the man's body but forgiving his sins without being asked to so.

[57] Io 8:3-11.

[58] Lc 7:36-50.

[59] Io 12: 1-8. Aelred followed John's account of this incident closely, although he derived certain details—that the container for the spikenard was specifically made of alabaster, and that Mary broke the box over Jesus' head (in John's Gospel she pours the ointment over Jesus' feet)—from parallel accounts in the Gospels of Matthew (Mt 26:6-13) and Mark (Mc 14:39), which place the incident at the home of Simon the Leper in Bethany, not the home of Lazarus and his sisters, and do not identify the woman who pours the ointment as Mary. The accounts of Matthew and Mark, in turn, contain parallel details to those in Luke's account of the sinner woman who washes Jesus' feet with her tears while he is dining with a Pharisee (see n. 31).

presiding, the Son, Christ, given as bridegroom, and the Holy Spirit providing a token of

love: "Ibi tu ad spirtuales inuitata nuptias, sponsum suscipis datum a Patre, purgationem a

Filio, pignus amoris a Spiritu sancto."[60] Aelred instructed his sister to engage in her

imagination three of her senses—sight, hearing, and touch—to perceive each of the three

persons of the Trinity. His source for this was the account of Jesus' baptism in Luke's

Gospel,[61] where, while John baptizes his kinsman in the river, a voice from heaven declares,

"You are my beloved son," and the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove. Luke's

account, which suggested a tripartite manifestation of God, lay behind Aelred's urging his

sister to "see" the Spirit ("in columba uideas") and to "hear" the Father's voice ("audias in

uoce Patrem"). As for the Son, the second person of the Trinity, Aelred bade his sister to

experience him in the flesh ("in carne") as her bridegroom.

Aelred devoted the longest part of his narrative to Christ's passion and death, and it

was in this part of the narrative that the mental pictures Aelred drew were the most vivid and

tactile and his rhetoric most imagistic and intense, designed to demand responses of such

intimate affection that they bordered on the erotic. Aelred invited his sister, for example, to

offer her own feet for Christ to wash as he washed his disciples' feet in John's narration of the

Last Supper.[62] Aelred also gave his sister a unique role not only of spectator but of vicarious

participant in Christ's crucifixion, just as Mary was. He wrote: "At tu, virgo, cui maior est

apud Virginis Filium confidentia a mulieribus quae longe stant, cum Matre uirgine et

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[60] *Ibid.* 31 (CCCM, 665): "There you, invited to spiritual nuptials, will receive the bridegroom given you by the Father, your redemption by the Son, and a token of love from the Holy Spirit."

[61] Lc 3: 21-22.

[62] *De institutione inclusarum* 31 (CCCM, 668): The scene of the washing of the feet is drawn from Io 13.4-15. John's account of Christ's passion was the primary biblical source of Aelred's passion narrative.

discipulo uirgine accede ad crucem, et perfusum pallore uultum cominus intuere."[63] The

point was that only Aelred's virgin sister, because she was a virgin, was entitled to stand next

to the Virgin Mary at the cross rather than at a distance, and from Mary's vantage point see

and experience Christ's sufferings as though she were enduring them herself. Aelred

reminded his sister that Mary, in witnessing the crucifixion, had experienced her son's

suffering vicariously (the "sword of sorrow pierces her soul"), and that that his sister, too,

would not be able to remain dry-eyed.[64]

At the heart of Aelred's passion meditation are the beauty and nobility of Christ and

the emotion-heightening paradox of the mutilation of that beauty by the torments inflicted on

him. It was his "most beautiful" ("speciocissimam") face that was spat upon, his "most

sweet" ("dulcissimam") back that was torn with scourges, his "awesome" ("tremendum")

head that was crowned with thorns, his "sweet" ("dulces") hands and feet that were pierced

with nails.[65] Although Aelred's literary technique emphasized the visual—the events in

Christ's passion that the virgin reader could see in her mind--he also sought to engage, as he

had in his narration of Christ's baptism, her other senses, three of them this time: hearing,

touch, and taste. She was asked to hear the "lovely speech" ("suaui sermone") of Jesus, to

touch her bare feet to his hands to be washed at the Last Supper, and to lick the dust from

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[63] *Ibid.* 31 (CCCM, 671): But you, virgin, who has the greater relationship with the Virgin's Son than the women who stand a long way away, draw near to the cross in order to apprehend close at hand the face suffused with pallor."

[64] *Ibid.*: "Tu siccis manes oculis, et eius animam pertransit gladius doloris...?" The "sword of sorrow" is an illusion to Lc 2:35, in which the prophet Simeon tells Mary, who has come to the temple in Jerusalem to present the infant Jesus, that a sword will pierce her soul ("et tuam ipsius animam pertransiet gladius").

[65] *Ibid.* (CCCM, 669-70).

Christ's feet along with the drops of sweat and blood that fell onto them during his agony

in Gethsemane.[66]

Aelred presented Christ's death on the cross, confirmed by a soldier's piercing the side

of Christ's dead body with his lance and making a wound from which gushed blood and

water[67] as a climactic sensory experience for his sister, evoked in lush and multilayered

metaphoric language that combined eucharistic allusion (his sister was both to eat and to

drink the liquid from this wound, which Aelred compared to honey in its comb, wine with

which his sister should "make herself drunk," and nourishing milk) with a bold command for

her to join her flesh with that of the crucified Christ: to hide inside his wounds like a dove in

the cleft of a rock, and to kiss those wounds until her bloodstained lips resembled

scarlet ribbons:

> Tunc unus ex militibus lancea latus eius aperuit, et exiuit sanguis et aqua. Festina, ne
> tardaueris, comede fauum cum melle tuo, bibe uinum tuum cum lacte tuo. Sanguis
> tibi in uinum uertitur ut inebrieris, in lac aqua mutatur ut nutriaris. Facta sunt tibi in
> petra flumina, in membris eius uulnera, et in maceria corporis eius cauerna, in quibus
> instar columbae latitans et deosculans singula ex sanguine eius fiant sicut uitta
> coccinea labia, et eloquium tuum dulce.[68]

As was typical of his meditative methodology, Aelred sought to heighten the intensity of his

sister's imaginative experience by hurrying her ("festina, ne tardaueris") into it as a matter of

utmost urgency and a surfeit of sensation. There was not only the cleaving of flesh to flesh

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[66] *Ibid.* (CCCM, 669): "Quid stas? Accurre, et suauissimas illas guttas adlambe, et puluerem pedum illius linge. [Why are you standing there? Run up, and consume those most sweet drops [of sweat], and lick the dust from his feet.]"

[67] The incident is in Io 19:34.

[68] *De institutione inclusarum* 31 (CCCM, 671): "Then one of the soldiers opened his side with a lance, and there flowed forth blood and water. Hurry, do not delay, eat the honeycomb with your honey, drink your wine with your milk. His blood is turned into wine for you; the water is changed into milk so that you may be nourished. For you streams have been made to gush from the rock; wounds have been made in his limbs, and a crevice in the wall of his body, in which you, in the likeness of a dove are hiding and kissing them one by one, so that your lips become like scarlet ribbons from his blood and your speech sweet."

(she was to "hide" in Christ's wounds and kiss them over and over again) but sensory gorging in which taste was the primary engaged sense: devouring the honeycomb as well as the honey, having her fill of nourishing milk (sucked from Christ's breast), and becoming figuratively intoxicated. The language that Aelred used ("inebriaris") echoed the language he had used in his apostrophe to Mary celebrating the conception of Christ, in which he also portrayed Mary as becoming drunken and ecstatic with sweetness. Aelred was essentially telling his virgin sister that she could replicate the emotional experiences of the virgin mother of God.

In this passage Aelred turned the crucifixion of Christ into a nuptial consummation. Theologically Christ's death was the moment at which he fully accomplished his redemptive mission, expressed in the final shedding of blood from his side in John's Gospel. By joining that conventional Christian soteriology to almost shockingly erotic language—the immersion of flesh in flesh, the repeated kissing of the body, and a profusion of ecstatic sensation— Aelred concretized the redemption and its profound significance for sinful humankind and also made it something that could be vicariously experienced in the mind of an ardent reader. It seemed to be Aelred's expectation that not only his sister but any reader of his meditation could obtain a vivid sense of what Christ's redemption should not only mean theologically, but also feel like emotionally to a believing Christian who contemplated it: a vast and generous gift of love that begged for reciprocation. In emphasizing the wound in Christ's side, Aelred emphasized his corporeality and also his mortal nature, two key aspects of his humanity. As his bride Aelred's sister could respond to his corporeality on a human level of utmost intimacy.

Aelred infused the passage with direct linguistic allusions to the Song of Songs and its bridal poetry: The references to eating the honeycomb along with the honey, drinking wine along with milk, and even drunkenness come from the Vulgate Song of Songs: "comedi favum cum melle meo bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo / comedite amici bibite et inebriamini carissimi."[69] So, too, does the image of the dove in the clefts of the rock: "columba mea in foraminibus petrae in caverna maceriae."[70] So, too, also, does the simile that compares the lips of the bride to scarlet ribbons: "sicut vitta coccinea labia tua et eloquium tuum dulce."[71] These images of Aelred's, couched in the very language of the Song, ground his meditation, and hence the crucifixion of Christ itself, in the conventional Christian interpretation of the Song that held the bridegroom to be Christ. At the same time those images (gluttonous consumption and blood-red lips) are intense, sensual, and even violent, but also tender (the shy, half-hidden dove, the "sweet speech" that would issue from Aelred's sister's mouth when she had her fill of kissing).

In similar fashion, Aelred used amorous language from the Song of Songs when he invited his sister to watch Joseph of Arimathea take Christ's dead body down from the cross and (as Aelred rewrote the Gospel incident), clasp the corpse to his breast: "Fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus mihi, inter ubera mea commorabitur."[72] Aelred similarly cast Christ's

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[69] Ct 5:1: "Eat my honeycomb with my honey; drink my wine with my milk / Eat, my friends, and drink and become drunk, by dearest ones."

[70] Ct 2:14: "My dove in the clefts of the rock and the crevice of the wall."

[71] Ct 4:3: "Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon and your speech sweet."

[72] Ct 1:12: "To me my beloved is a bundle of myrrh that rests between my breasts." *De institutione inclusarum* 31 (CCCM, 671). Aelred's scriptural source was apparently Io 19: 38-42, which specifically mentions a mixture of myrrh ("murrae") and aloes as the spices interred with Jesus' body (in Io 19:39), although all four Gospels narrate the episode of Joseph's deposition of Jesus' body and interment of the body in the tomb that Joseph had had constructed for himself.

resurrection as an intimate encounter between Christ and Mary Magdalene, whom Aelred

invited his sister to accompany to the tomb on Easter morning and see in spirit ("in spiritu

cernere") what Mary saw with her eyes. Aelred's source was John's Gospel,[73] but he

embellished John's barebones narrative concerning a distraught and weeping Mary who

mistakes the risen Jesus for a gardener until he adresses her by name, with an overlay of

tenderness and projected feeling:

> ...nunc ipsum Iesum Mariam flentem et tristem tam dulci reficientem oculo, tam suaui
> uoce dicentem: *Maria*. Quid hac uoce dulcius? Quid suauius? Quid iucundius? Maria:
> rumpantur ad hanc uocem omnes capitis cataractae, ab ipsis medullis eliciantur
> lacrymae, singultus atque suspira ab imis trahantur uisceribus. <u>Maria</u>. o beata, quid
> tibi mentis fuit, quid animi, cum ad hanc uocem te prosterneres, et reddens uicem
> salutanti inclamares: *Rabbi*. Quo rogo affectu, qyo desiderio, quo mentis ardore, qua
> deuotione cordis clamasti; <u>Rabbi</u>. Nam plura dicere lacrymae prohibent, cum uocem
> occludat affectus, omnesque animae corporisque sensus nimius amor absorbeat.[74]

Furthermore, Aelred interpolated into this resurrection encounter a conversation between

Jesus and Mary Magdalene that does not appear in John's narrative. John in the Vulgate text

has Jesus replying to Mary, "Noli me tangere / nondum enim ascendi ad Patrem [Do not

touch me; indeed I have not yet ascended to my Father],"[75] and instructing her to go tell his

disciples what he has told her. In Aelred's enhanced version of John's story, Christ's "noli me

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[73] Io 20:14-17.

[74] *De institutione inclusarum* 31 (CCCM, 672): "Now [you see] Mary weeping and sorrowful until Jesus himself restores her with so sweet a look, saying in so sweet a voice: 'Mary.' What could be sweeter than this voice? What could be more gentle? What could be more pleasing? Mary: At this word let all the sluices burst forth from their floodgates, let tears be poured out from herr very depths, let sobbing and sighing be drawn from her innermost flesh. 'Mary.' O blessed one, what was in your mind, what was in your soul when you prostrated yourself it this word and cried out in return to his greeting, 'Rabbi.' With what affection, I ask, which what desire, with what ardor of mind, with what devotion of the heart did you cry out, 'Rabbi'? For your tears forbid you to say more, affection shuts off your voice, and excessive love consumes all feelings of soul and body."

[75] Io 20:17.

tangere" led to a passionate plea by Mary to be allowed to kiss his feet that had been pierced

with nails and drenched with blood for her sake:

> Sed o dulcis Iesu, cur a sacratissimis ac desiderantissimis pedibus tuis sic arces
> amantem? *Noli*, inquit, *me tangere*. O uerbum durum, uerbum intolerabile: *Noli*
> *me tangere*. Vt quid, Domine? Quare non tangam? Desiderata illa uestigia tua pro
> me perforata clauis, perfusa sanguine, non tangam, non dimittam te, non recedam
> a te, non parcam lacrymis, pectus singultibus, suspiriisque rumperetur,
> nisi tangam.[76]

To this plea of Mary's for physical contact with Jesus' body, Aelred had Jesus reply—in a

harmonization of John's Gospel, in which Jesus forbids Mary to touch him, with the

resurrection narrative in Matthew's Gospel, in which Mary and other women who have come

to Jesus' tomb do touch his feet and even hold them[77]--that the good thing ("bonum") that

Mary seeks will not be taken from her ("aufertur") but merely deferred ("defertur").[78]

Thus Aelred ended his narrative of Christ's life, the first part of the triple meditation,

not with Christ's ascension into heaven (indeed, Aelred, unlike the authors of the Gospels,

did not even allude to the ascension) but with an earthly tableau, drawn from Matthew's

Gospel, of Jesus surrounded by Mary Magdalene and other women ("aliis mulieribus")

whom he ran to meet ("occurrens"), greeted with gentle words ("blanda salutatione"), raised

their low spirits ("deiectas erigit") and alleviated their sorrows ("tristes consolatur").[79] As in

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[76] *De institutione inclusarum* 31 (CCCM, 672): "But O sweet Jesus, why do you keep your most sacred and most desirable feet from the one who loves you? He says, 'Do not touch me.' O harsh saying, intolerable saying: 'Do not touch me.' Why is this, Lord? Why may I not touch you? May I not touch, mayI not warmly kiss those desirable feet pierced with nails and drenched with blood for me? Are you harsher than is your custom because you are more glorious? Behold, I will not part from you, I will not withdraw from you, I will not spare my tears, my breast will burst from repeated sighs unless I touch you."

[77] Mt 28:9: "Illae autem accesserunt et tenuerunt pedes eius et adoraverunt eum [they even approached him and held his feet and adored him]."

[78] *De institutione inclusarum* 31 (CCCM, 672-73).

[79] *Ibid.* (CCCM, 673).

Matthew's Gospel, the women in Aelred's narrative drew close to Jesus and held his feet, and among them, or so Aelred bade his reader imagine, was his sister herself. Aelred advised her to linger there as long as she could ("Hic quamdiu, potes, uirgo, morare"), and neither to let sleep interrupt her delights ("Non has delicias tuas somnus interpolet") nor to let any exterior disturbance hinder them ("nullus exterior tumultus impediat").[80] This final tableau envisioned a bonding of the corporeal and the spiritual: fleshly delight (as his sister's hands clasped Christ's feet), sisterly communion among the holy women with whom she sat, and wordless contemplation of Christ's face. The ultimate meditation on Christ, for Aelred in the De institutione, was an imagined corporeal experience of Christ's humanity: embracing and touching his risen body.

All of this had its origins in traditions of interpretation of the Song of Songs. The Song, one of the shortest books in the Hebrew Bible, is also one of the Bible's most ambiguous. Unlike other biblical books, the Song makes no explicit references to God, to precepts of morality, or even to the people of Israel. It is, instead, a metrical poem, or perhaps a collection of as many as fourteen separate poems,[81] that celebrates erotic desire and the longing of lovers for each other, and is marked by sensuous imagery (the kiss of the lips and the breasts that are sweeter than wine, for example) and free use of lush metaphors and similes drawn from the natural, pastoral, agrarian, and cultural landscapes of the ancient Eastern Mediterranean. Flowers, figs, apples, pomegranates, wine and vineyards, milk, honey, spices and perfumed oils, cedar, palm, and cypress trees, sheep, deer, goats, ravens,

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Introduction, Marvin Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 16 (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1977). Pope (at 37-40) notes that the prosody is consistent throughout the Hebrew text of the Song, an argument for its unified structure.

and turtle-doves, gold, and precious stones all figure in the Song's imagery, invoking agricultural and material abundance and natural beauty.

Furthermore, and uniquely among biblical books, The Song takes the form of a dialogue involving at least two speakers, male and female. It thus has distinctly theatrical aspects, as the lovers address each other and also speak directly to the reader in first-person soliloquies in which they declare their longing and desire. There also seems to be a narrative thread, in which unspecified enemies separate the female speaker from the male and she embarks on a search for him that culminates in their eventual reunion. This quasi-dramatic format gives the Song a tone of personal intimacy that Aelred imitated in *De institutione*'s triple meditation. This intimate sense is heightened by the speakers' repeated use of the words "lover" and "beloved" ("amicus/a," "dilectus/a" in the Vulgate's translation)[82] both in direct address and in rhapsodic third-person references to each other. The Song's male speaker repeatedly refers to the female speaker as his bride ("sponsa" in the Vulgate).

By contrast, the female speaker never refers to her beloved as her bridegroom, although she calls him a "king" ("rex" in the Vulgate): "dum esset rex in accubitu suo nardus mea dedit odorem suam."[83] She also describes his physical beauty in extravagant figurative language: he is "blazing white and ruddy" in coloring, his head is like the finest gold, his hair

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[82] The Latin word "amicus [friend]," and especially its feminine, "amica," could have a distinctly erotic connotation, even in classical literature. "[S]ive ista uxor sive amica [she is either his wife or his mistress]." Terence, *Andria* 1.3.11. That connotation is implicit in the Vulgate Song of Songs, where the word "amica" always appears in a context of intimate tenderness. That context persisted through the twelfth century. Heloise, for example, wrote passionately to Abelard, "Et si uxoris nomen sanctius ac validius videretur, dulcius mihi semper extitit amice vocabulum aut, si non indigneris, concubine vel scorti....[And although the name 'wife' seems more holy and more binding, the word 'lover' is always sweeter to me, or, if you do not take offense, 'concubine' or 'whore....']" Peter Abelard, *Historia calamitatum*, ed. Jacques Monfrin, 2nd ed., Bbliothèque des Textes Philosophiques (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1962), Appendix 1, at 112. *Cf.* Old French "ami/amie."

[83] Ct 1:11 (in the Vulgate): "While the king reclined on his couch, my spikenard poured forth its fragrance."

like the branches of a palm tree and black as a raven, his eyes like doves on rivulets of water

washed with milk, his cheeks like beds of fragrant spices set out by the spice-merchants, his

lips like lilies dripping with myrrh, his hands like gold set with hyacinths, his belly like ivory

set with sapphires, his legs like pillars of marble on gold bases, his form like the cedars of

Lebanon, his throat most sweet: "My beloved is so completely desirable, and he is my lover,

O daughters of Jerusalem."[84]

The bridegroom addresses the bride in like language: "You have wounded my heart,

my sister, my bride, you have wounded my heart with just one of your eyes and just one hair

on your neck! How beautiful are your breasts, my sister, my bride! Your breasts are more

beautiful than wine, and the fragrance of your ointments exceeds all spices. Your lips, my

bride, are a dripping honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue, and the fragrance of

your garments is like the odor of frankincense. My sister is an enclosed garden, an enclosed

garden and a sealed-up fountain. Your breath is a paradise of pomegranates alongside the

fruits of orchard-trees, cypresses alongside spikenard, sweet cane and cinnamon alongside all

the trees of Lebanon, myrrh and aloes alongside all the best ointments."[85]

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[84] Ct 5:10-16 (in the Vulgate): "caput eius aurum optimum comae eius sicut elatae palmarum nigrae quasi corvus / oculi ius sicut columbae super rivulos aquarum / quae lacte sunt lotae et resident iuxta fluenta plenissima / genae illius sicut areolae aromatum consitae a pigmentariis / labia eius lilia distillantia murram primam / manus illius tornatiles aureae plenae hyacinthis / venter eius eburneus distinctus sapphyris / crura illius columnae marmoreae quae fundatae sunt super bases aureas / species eius ut Libani electus ut cedri / guttur illius suavissimum et totus desiderabilis / talis est dilectus meus et iste est amicus meus filiae Hierusalem."

[85] Ct 4: 9-14 (in the Vulgate): "vulnerasti cor meum soror mea sponsa vulnerasti cor meum / in uno oculorum tuorum et in uno crine colli tui / quam pulchrae sunt mammae tuae soror mea sponsa / pulchriora ubera tua vino et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata / favus distillans labia tua sponsa mel et lac sub lingua tua / et odor vestimentorum tuorum sicut odor turis / hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus conclusus fons signatus / emissiones tuae paradisus malorum punicorum cum pomorum fructibus / cypri cum nardo / nardus et crocus fistula et cinnamomum cum universis lignis Libani / murra et aloe cum omnibus primis unguentis."

The original function of this extravagant and amorous language is unknown. According to Marvin Pope, scholars have discerned various parallels between the motifs of the Song and those of Ugaritic love poetry, the visual art of the Bronze Age Harrapan culture of the Indus Valley, Sumerian and Akkadian hymns, and charms and love songs of ancient Egypt.[86] According to Jewish and Christian tradition, the composer of the Song had been King Solomon, celebrating one of his many nuptials[87] with an unnamed bride occasionally called "the Shulamite,"[88] who is perhaps an Egyptian or an Ethiopian and who describes herself as "black but beautiful" ("nigra sed formosa" in the Vulgate)[89] because she haa been burnt by the sun. One of the Song's verses refers to Solomon wearing a crown that his mother, Bathsheba, has placed upon his head for his wedding day.[90]

Whether or not the Song was originally a strictly secular wedding song (or collection of wedding songs), and whether the work was composed by Solomon or in Solomon's honor during the tenth century BC, as Jewish and Christian tradition had it, or at the close of the third century BC as some modern scholars argue on the basis of linguistic evidence, it is undisputed that by the first century AD the Song was being read by many Jews as an allegory of God's ardent love for his people, Israel. Certain features of the Song appear to reinforce

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[86] Pope (n. 81), 46-84.

[87] 1 Kings 11:3 (3 Rg 11:3 in the Vulgate) states that Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

[88] Ct 6:12, 7:1 (in the Vulgate).

[89] Ct 1:4 (in the Vulgate). "nigra sum sed formosa filiae Hierusalem / sicut tabernacula Cedar sicut pelles Salomonis / nolite me considerare quod fusca sim quia decoloravit me sol. [I am black but beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Cedar, like the hides of Solomon. Do not judge me for being dark, because the sun has stained me.]"

[90] Ct 3:11 (in the Vulgate): "egredimini et videte filiae Sion regem Salomonem / in diademate quo coronavit eum mater sua / in die disponsionis illius et in die laetitiae cordis eius. [Go out and see King Solomon, daughters of Zion, wearing the diadem with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding and the day of the joy of his years.]"

this interpretation: the frequent references to specific place-names in the Holy Land and its

environs (Gilead and Hermon, Engeddi, Lebanon, Damascus, and above all, Jerusalem), and

the occasional martial imagery (the king compares his bride's neck, for example, to a "tower

of David which is built with ramparts; a thousand shields hang from it, the armor of strong

men"[91]) that recalls the narrative of strife and conquest that marked the Holy Land's

scriptural history. Furthermore, the Song seemed to be literarily related to a section of Psalm

44. traditionally attributed to Solomon's father, King David, in which a royal wife or queen is

described as standing at God's right hand wearing a golden crown.[92] The psalm's speaker

addresses this resplendent woman directly: "Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear,

and forget your people and the house of your father, for the king shall desire your beauty

because he is your lord....Wearing varicolored garments she shall be led to the king, her

virgins shall follow her, her friends shall be led thither, they shall be led with rejoicing and

exaltation, they shall enter the marriage chamber of the king."[93] The Song also echoes

passages in the prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea, in which Israel is

addressed as a wife, although sometimes as a wife who has degraded herself to the status of a

prostitute by her offenses against God.[94]

　　　　Pope points out that Jewish scribes took as much care in preserving the exact text of

the Song as they did of other, indisputably sacred scriptural texts. Two fragments of the Song

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[91] Ct 4:4 (in the Vulgate): "sicut turris David collum tuum quae aedificata est cum propugnaculis / mille clypei pendent ex ea armatura fortium."

[92] Ps 44:11 (the numbering is the Vulgate's): "stetit coniux in dextero tuo in diademate aureo."

[93] Ps 44: 11-12, 15-16 (in the Vulgate): "audi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam / et obliviscere populi tui et domus patris tui / et concupiscet rex decorem tuum / quia ipse est dominus tuus....in scutulatis ducetur ad regem / virgines sequentur eam / amicae eius ducentur illuc / ducentur in laetitiis et exultatione / ingredientur thalamum regis."

[94] Is 50:1, 54:5-6, Ier 3, Ez 16, Os 2 (in the Vulgate).

that fairly faithfully track its authoritative Masoretic version were found in the Qumran caves

near the Dead Sea, and Jerome seemed to be working from a similarly faithful Hebrew text

when he made his translation into Latin for the Vulgate Bible.[95] Toward the end of the first

century AD, in a rabbinic dispute over whether the Song, which was sometimes sung as

entertainment at Jewish weddings, truly belonged in the canon of the Hebrew Bible, Akiba

ben Joseph (ca. AD 50-ca. AD 135), one of the founders of rabbinic Judaism, was quoted in a

targum as reaffirming the Song's status as profoundly allegorical and declaring that it was

actually the most sacred of all scriptural texts, "given to Israel" by God himself. "For all the

Scriptures are holy," Akiba said, "but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies."[96] The Song's

very Hebrew title, *Shir Hashirim*, attested to this high sacral status.

Jewish allegorical interpretation of the Song as celebrating a sacred covenant between

God and his people formed the basis of a rich body of similar, although Christocentric,

Christian interpretation, beginning with the New Testament itself. The Gospels of Matthew

and John contain oblique references to Jesus as a "bridegroom,"[97] most extensively in Jesus'

parable of the wise and foolish virgins, recorded in Matthew, who are charged with escorting

the bridegroom to his wedding feast by the light of their oil-lamps.[98] The virgins who are the

subjects of Jesus' parable suggest the "virgins" in Psalm 44 who enter the bridal chamber

with the bride, as well as the "young girls" and the "daughters of Jerusalem" who surround

the king on his wedding day in the Song of Songs and form a kind of chorus to which the

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[95] Pope (n. 81), 20-22.

[96] *Ibid.*, 19.

[97] Mt 19:15, Io 3:29.

[98] Mt 25:1-13.

bride addresses her longing and laments.[99] Paul of Tarsus, in a lengthy passage of his letter to

the Ephesians, composed in about AD 60, explicitly compared the relationship between

husband and wife to that between Christ and his church.[100] Paul's very language recalled that

of the Song: "Husbands, love your wives / even as Christ loved his church and handed

himself over for her / so that he might make her holy / by cleansing her in the Word with a

bath of water / so that he could present to himself a glorious church / having neither stain nor

imperfection...."[101] In the Song of Songs the male speaker had declared, "You are all

beautiful, my love, and there is no stain in you."[102] The book of Revelation, composed

toward the end of the first century, described the wedding feast of the Lamb, in which the

bride covers herself "in a glittering white linen garment."[103] In a later verse the author of

Revelation states that the bride, the wife of the Lamb, is the new Jerusalem descended from

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[99] See, *e.g.*, Ct 1: 2: "ideo adulescentulae dilexerunt te [therefore the young girls have loved you}"; Ct 3: 9:11: "ferculum fecit sibi rex Salomon de lignis Libani / columnas eius fecit argenteas relinatorium aureum ascensum purpureum / media caritate constravit propter filias Hierusalem / egredimini et videte filiae Sion regem Salomonem.... [King Solomon has made for himself a litter out of wood from Lebanon. He made its columns out of silver, its seat out of gold, its stepway out of purple; he covered its middle with charity for the sake of the daughters of Jerusalem. Go out and see King Solomon, O daughters of Zion....]" In Luke's Gospel Jesus, while carrying his cross to Calvary, encounters a group of weeping women, whom he addresses as "daughters of Jerusalem" and tells them not to weep for him but for themselves and their children. Lc 23:28: "conversus autem ad illas Iesus dixit / filiae Hierusalem nolite flere super me / sed super vos ipsas flete et super filios vestros."

[100] Eph 5:23-32.

[101] Eph 5:25-27: "viri diligete uxores / sicut et Christus dilexit ecclesiam / et se ipsum tradidit pro ea / ut illam sanctificaret / mundans lavacro aquae in verbo / ut exhiberet ipse sibi gloriosam ecclesiam / non habentem maculam aut rugam."

[102] Ct 4:7: "tota pulchra es amica mea et macula non est in te."

[103] Apc 19:8: "et datum est illi ut cooperiat se byssininum splendens candidum."

heaven.[104] The readiness with which Christian writers of the first century adopted an allegorical reading of the Song of Songs, attested to in a plenitude of explicit and oblique allusions, is powerful evidence of the pervasiveness of Jewish allegorical readings during that time. The Christians could be said to have thoroughly appropriated Jewish interpretation, adapting it to their belief that Jesus was the equal of God (his father in Christian theology) and that the Christian church was the new Israel and thus the new Jerusalem.

During the first half of the third century, around the year 240, the Neoplatonist Christian theologian Origen of Alexandria (c. 185-c. 254) wrote a lengthy commentary (the first such to survive, although there were apparently earlier ones) and a series of homilies on the Song of Songs that crucially altered later Christian interpretation of the Song's central allegory. More than a century after Origen's death certain of his teachings, or teachings associated with him, all unrelated to his exegesis on the Song (they centered around Platonic theories attributed to him concerning the peexistence of souls and the universality of salvation) began to be condemned as heretical in the Eastern and Western churches. The condemnation became official in the form of anathemas issued against Origen and other alleged heretics at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. Possibly because those condemnations rendered all of Origen's writings suspect, almost none of his work on the Song, save for a few quotations, survives in the Greek in which he composed it. Fourth- and fifth-century Latin translations by Rufinus of Aquileia (the commentary) and Jerome (the

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[104] Apc 21:9-10: "veni ostendam tibi sponsam uxorem agni / et sustulit me in spiritu in montem magnum et altum / et ostendit mihi civitatem sanctam Hierusalem / descendentem de caelo a Deo. ['Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' And he lifted me in spirit onto a great and high mountain, and he showed me the holy city of Jerusalem descending from God.]"

homilies), both of whom were eager to demonstrate that Origen was thoroughly orthodox in his scriptural commentary,[105] survive only in part.[106]

In the Greek-speaking lands of the Eastern church Origen's exegesis of the Song of Songs influenced interpretations by such indisputably orthodox fourth-century theologians as Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nanzianzen, and Basil the Great, and, during the sixth century, Procopius of Caesaria, well after the condemnation at Constantinople of Origen's alleged heterodoxy .[107] Yet it was in the Latin West that Origen's reading of the Song exercised an astonishingly wide and pervasive influence that sustained itself throughout the Middle Ages. E. Ann Matter argues for a distinct continuity of Western hermineutic tradition dependent on Origen evident in commentaries on the Song written by Ambrose of Milan during the fourth century, Gregory the Great during the sixth, Isidore of Seville during the seventh, Alcuin and Bede during the eighth, and Paschasius Radbertus and Haimo of Auxerre during the ninth, even though the authors of those commentaries seemed hesitant to refer to Origen by name, possibly because of his heretical reputation.[108] What bound those Western patristic and Carolingian commentators together in a single thread of interpretive tradition was their

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[105] For a discussion of the theological controversies surrounding Origen, see E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 25-31.

[106] The critical editions are: Origen, *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, ed. and trans. Luc Brésard and Henri Crouzel, 2 vols., SC 375 and 376 (Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1991); and Origen, *Homélies sur le Cantique des Cantiques*, ed. and trans. Olivier Rousseau, SC, 2nd ser., 37 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007).

[107] *The Voice of My Beloved*, 26.

[108] *Ibid.*, 12-14, 34-38. Friedrich Ohly's *Hohelied-Studien: Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Hohenliedauslegung des Abenlandes bis um 1200* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1958) is a detailed survey of those commentaries. Editions of the leading commentaries are as follows: Ambrose of Milan, *Commentarius in Canicum Canticorum*, PL 15: 1547-2060; Gregory the Great, *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum*, ed. R. Bélanger, SC 314 (1984); Isidore of Seville, *In libros veteris ac novi testamenti proemia de libris Salomonis*, PL 83: 164-65; Venerable Bede, *In Cantica Canticorum*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119B (1985); and Alcuin, *Compendium in Canticum Canticorum*, PL 100: 641-64. See *The Voice of My Beloved*, 203-05.

adherence to Origen's novel insistence that the bride of the Song was not only the Christian church as a collective entity but the individual Christian soul. Origen's reading infused the Song with a sense of the intensely personal—that Christ was not simply bridegroom in an abstract and allegorical sense but in a literal and intimate sense, since the object of his love, his very human love, was another human person.

At the beginning of his commentary Origen wrote (in Rufinus' translation): "[Q]uem cecinit instar nubentis sponsae et erga sponsum suum, qui est Sermo Dei, caelesti amore flagrantis. Adamavit enim eum sive anima quae ad imaginem eius facta est, sive ecclesia."[109] The burning ("flagrantis") and hence explicitly erotic quality of the bride's love, indeed her very falling in love ("adamavit"), gave another allegorical dimension to the Song, yet at the same time it intensified and made more vivid the literal meaning of the Song as a wedding chant ("nuptiale carmen," in Origen's words).[110] So explicitly carnal and also so powerful were the words of the song that Origen warned his readers that the study of them was not for spiritual novices, who, like children, were not ready for passionate love ("amorem passibilem"), but, rather, for the spiritually mature who were ready for solid food ("solidus cibus") rather than milk for infants.[111] Origen also pointed out the Song's antiphonal nature, with the bride and bridegroom addressing each other and also, in the case of the bride, the youthful daughters of Jerusalem who are her attendants ("adulescentulas" or "young girls")

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[109] *Commentaire sur le Cantique des Cantiques* (n. 102) 1.1 (SC, 80): "It is sung in the role of the Bride at her wedding and toward her Bridegroom, who is the Word of God and for whom she burns with heavenly love. For she fell in love with him, she who was either the soul that was made in his image or the church."

[110] *Ibid.*

[111] *Ibid.* 1.4 (SC, 82). This is an allusion to Hbr 5.14: "perfectorum autem est solidus cibus eorum qui pro consuetudine exercitatos habent sensus ad discretionem boni et mali [therefore solid food is for the perfect, for them who out of habit have their senses trained for the discernment of good and evil]."

and in the case of the bridegroom, the young men who are his companions ("amicos").[112]

Origen's observation that the Song contains two speaking characters and two choruses (albeit

silent choruses, for the two groups of young people never speak themselves) led him to

assign to the Song a literary genre drawn from the classical Greek theater that was likely still

alive in third-century Alexandria. The Song, Origen wrote, had been composed in the form of

a drama ("modum dramatis esse conscriptum"). He continued: "Drama enim dicitur, ut in

scaenis agi fabula solet, ubi diversae personae introducuntur et, aliis accedentibus, aliis etiam

discendentibus, a diversis et ad diversos textos narrrationis expletur."[113]

In so writing, Origen implicitly averred that the Song of Songs was not only a vatic

Scriptural text but also a work of literature, a drama whose action consisted of the characters'

revelations of their subjective emotional states as they played out a story of love, longing,

rejection, and reconciliation. Paradoxically, Origen, like the Rabbi Akiba before him in a

Jewish context, insisted that the Song's primary meaning was allegorical—because a literal

reading of its sexualized content ("amorem passibilem") would confuse and even scandalize

the spiritual novices who opened it without proper preparation. Yet at the same time he

encouraged his readers to confront the Song directly and experientially as its characters

dramatized their subjectivity on the stage of the text.

Origen's writings on the Song of Sons circulated widely in the West in their Latin

translations for many centuries. E. Ann Matter notes that thirty manuscripts of his

commentary on the Song survive, along with more than forty manuscripts of his homilies,

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[112] *Ibid.*, 1.3 (SC, 82).

[113] *Ibid.*: "It is said to be a drama, as its story is customarily presented in scenes where various characters are introduced, some approaching, others walking away, and from one character to another the fabric of the story is unfolded."

and that between the sixth and fifteenth centuries more than a hundred commentaries were written that directly or indirectly displayed his influence.[114] Matter, citing the critical theories of Mikhail Bakhtin, Hans Robert Jauss, and others, contends that such commentaries constituted a distinct literary genre that drew its inspiration from the fertile ground for allegory that was the Song itself, and also from the commentators' recognition that the Song must perforce be interpreted allegorically by Christian exegetes, since its literal text seemed to be disturbingly sexual and bereft of the presence of God. In terms of genre, Matter argues, early commentaries—those of Origen and Gregory, for example--provided recognizable and easily imitable literary models for later and ever more elaborately imaginative commentaries.[115] "The function of Song of Songs commentaries," Matter writes, "can therefore only be perceived within the broad context of medieval Christian literary expression."[116]

The commentary genre, which focused on the rich and sensual imagery of the Song of Songs, its intensely emotional language transmitted directly to the reader via first-person discourse, along with the possibilities it afforded for complex figurative readings, not only generated dozens of commentaries but fed other Western literary genres both sacred and secular that were similarly grounded in highly poetic language. Peter Dronke and Judson Boyce Allen have elaborated on the Song's influence on the language, imagery, and in many cases, antiphonal and dialogic structure of the secular love poetry of the High Middle Ages

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[114] *The Voice of My Beloved* (n. 102), 3, 35.

[115] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

and afterwards.[117] Dronke especially has argued that the Occitan troubadours and the other secular poets who imitated them instinctively responded to the qualities of the Song as epithalamium and drama that Origen had recognized, and to the Song's "multivalent" dialogue and imagery in which the speakers rhapsodize emotionally rather than engage in formal rhetoric, and the images simultaneously reach outward to the natural world and inward into the depths of bliss and longing on the part of the lovers. The Song's multivalence and seeming open-endedness, in Dronke's view, allowed for both sacred and profane readings by Christian lyricists, who sometimes echoed the exact language of the various Latin versions of the Song that circulated in manuscript during the Middle Ages. (Jerome, as Dronke points out, not only translated the Vulgate text directly from the Hebrew but also made a second Latin translation of the Song based upon the polylingual Hexaplaric text of the Bible that Origen had compiled; a third Latin version, the Vetus Latina that predated Jerome's translations, subsisted in the Western liturgy as well as numerous patristic quotations).[118]

Beginning in the eleventh century and certainly throughout the twelfth, what had been a handful of patristic and monastic Western commentaries on the Song[119] began to generate

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[117] Peter Dronke, "The Song of Songs and Medieval Love-Lyric," in *The Bible and Medieval Culture*, ed. W. Lourdauz and D. Verhelst, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia, ser. 1:7, (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 236-62; and Judson Boyce Allen, "Grammar, Poetic Form, and the Lyric Ego: A Medieval *A Priori*," in *Vernacular Poetics in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lois Ebin, Studies in Medieval Culture 16 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1984), 199-226. Jean Leclercq argued that the twelfth-century courtly literature of Champagne, particularly the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, was influenced by exegesis of the Song of Songs--Christian and possibly also Jewish because of the flourishing Jewish culture in Champagne. Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love: Psycho-Historical Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

[118] "The Song of Songs and the Medieval Love-Lyric," 236, 242-43.

[119] *The Voice of My Beloved*, 203-205. Matter lists only twenty extant commentaries composed from the third through the ninth centuries, including those of Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, Alcuin, Bede, and Radbertus.

dozens of works. Not coincidentally this was exactly the time during which secular poets

began to use the Song's language, imagery, and structure for their own purposes. Among the

Cistercians alone, who were as a group probably the most prolific exegetes of the Song

during the High Middle Ages, Friedrich Ohly listed ten different authors, starting with

Bernard of Clairvaux, who composed texts centered on the Song. Ohly's list did not even

include Aelred of Rievaulx or mention his triple meditation.[120]

Ann W. Astell argues that this sudden explosion of high-medieval commentary,

especially during the twelfth century, represented a distinct departure from Origen's

insistently thorough allegorization of the Song.[121] In his commentary on the Song, Astell

writes, Origen drew on Platonic theory (specifically the arguments in Plato's *Symposium*) to

contend that all human beings are impelled by the force of eros ("vim amoris" in Rufinus'

Latin translation) to crave others, and that the ultimate end of that erotic force should be to

propel the lover upwards from a desire for earthly beings to a desire for the divine.[122] Yet at

the same time, Astell contends, Origen distinguished between two kinds of eros that were

mutually exclusive: "carnalis amor" that the poets called Cupid ("quem et Cupidinem poetae

appellarunt"), a love that plants itself in the flesh and is fundamentally as base as the body

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[120] *Hohenlied-Studien* (n. 103), 135-205. The best known of the Cistercian commentaries are these: Bernard of Clairvaux, *Brevis commentatio in Cantica*, PL 184: 407-36, and *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*, in *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, Charles H. Talbot, and Henri Rochais, vols. 1-2 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957-1958); William of Saint.-Thierry, *Exposé sur le Cantiques des Cantiques [Expositio super Cantica Canticorum]*, ed. Jean-Marie Déchanet, SC 82 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962); Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermones in Canticum Salomonis*, PL 184: 11-252; and John of Ford, *Super extremam partem Cantici Canticorum sermones CXX*, ed. Edmund Mikkers and H. Costello, CCCM 17-18 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970). The last is a continuation of Bernard's sermons. See *The Voice of My Beloved*, 206-10.

[121] Ann Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press (1990), 1-24.

[122] Origen, *Commentaire* 2.1 (SC, 90) and *Ibid.*, nn. 1-2.

itself, tainted by Adam's fall, and "amor spiritalis," which focuses on the soul and draws it upwards to the beauty of the Word of God--that is, Christ--so that the soul falls in love with Christ to the point of receiving what Origen called the wound of love ("vulnus amoris").[123] Astell argues that Origen's thorough allegorization of the Song stemmed from his belief that eros, grounded in corrupt flesh, must be ruthlessly sublimated and channeled toward the divine: "He loves the Song for what it does not say rather than for what it does," Astell writes of Origen.[124]

By contrast, Astell argues, the twelfth-century exegetes re-literalized the Song and even re-historicized it as a record of Solomon's wedding; they gloried in the literalness of its fleshly eroticism, which they viewed, not as a distraction for the soul from the love of Christ but a precise evocation of the depth and intensity of that love, provoked by the depth and the intensity of Christ's own love for the soul.[125] Centuries of rigorous allegorization of the Song under Origen's influence, Astell contends, left them so convinced of the Song's ultimate spiritual sense that they felt free to explore once again its literal sense, all in the context of its status as a holy and Christocentric book as established by Origen and the other commentators of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Astell writes that the twelfth-century exegetes, in contrast to their earlier counterparts, "tend to value the Song for the *affectus* it awakens, the example it sets, the images it provides for the communication of personal and communal

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[123] *Ibid.*, 2.16-17 (SC, 102-104).

[124] *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, 22.

[125] Hildegard Elisabeth Keller makes a similar argument in *My Secret is Mine: Studies on Religion and Eros in the German Middle Ages* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 14-27.

experience."[126] For those twelfth-century commentators, in Astell's view, the sheer literary power of the Song's erotic images amounted to the "valorization of the *affectus*."[127] For them, Astell writes, "the prime substance ('elementia') of holiness was understood to be the <u>affectus</u> of love and desire, not the *ratio*; the proof of holiness was practiced virtue, not intellectual enlightenment."[128] In other words, the experience of love and yearning for Christ as the soul's bridegroom was not a way station or a first step on the way to higher mystical union with the divine but, rather, the very essence of that union. By Astell's reasoning, the affective experiences that Aelred asked his sister to undergo as she contemplated Christ's passion in the triple meditation were not specially tailored women's versions of mysticism crafted to suit women's less rational and more carnal and emotional nature. They were the thing itself of mysticism for the twelfth-century West.

It can be argued that Astell draws too sharp a distinction between Origen's unwavering focus on the Song's implicit spiritual lessons and the twelfth-century exegetes' loving examination of the literal words of its text. After all, Origen himself (in Rufinus' translation) had used the language of passion to describe an affective union between Christ and the human soul: "adamavit" and "vulnus amoris," the latter clearly an allusion to the Song's "vulnerasti cor meum" spoken by the bridegroom in the Vulgate text[129] but also reminiscent of the arrows of Cupid, the pagan god of love specifically condemned by Origen

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[126] *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, 22.

[127] *Ibid.*, 178.

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] Ct 4:9 (see n. 80).

in his commentary as a synonym for carnal eros.[130] On the other hand, William of Saint.-

Thierry, a leading twelfth-century Cistercian commentator on the Song and close friend of

Bernard of Clairvaux, closely tracked and elaborated on Origen's allegorical use of the Song

in his *Expositio super Cantica Canticorum*,[131] written shortly after William, who had been

abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Saint.-Thierry near Rheims from 1119 to 1135,

resigned his abbacy and entered the newly founded Cistercian monastery at Signy not far

from Saint-Thierry. So closely did William follow Origen's allegorical interpretations of

specific passages of the Song that William's modern editor, Jean-Marie Déchanet, felt

compelled to declare in William's defense that he had "nothing of the plagiarist about him,"

because, as Déchanet argued, William had used Origen's readings in a strikingly original

fashion.[132] In short, there was a great deal of thematic continuity between Origen's exegeses,

on the shelves of many a monastic library, and the proliferation of commentaries on the Song

that characterized the twelfth century.

Still, Astell's twin observations-- that the late eleventh and the twelfth century

witnessed a vast expansion of commentary on the Song as a literary genre, and that the

commentaries of the High Middle Ages were experiential and personal in a way that those of

earlier centuries had not been--are indisputably accurate. The literary transformation of the

genre was intimately related to the general transformation of Western spirituality and

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[130] Bernard McGinn argues that both Jewish and Christian commentators on the Song consciously used explicit erotic language to describe the mystical union of the soul and God. Bernard McGinn, "The Language of Love in Christian and Jewish Mysticism," in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. Steven T. Katz (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 202-35.

[131] William of Saint.-Thierry, *Exposé sur le Cantique des Cantitiques* (see n. 120).

[132] Jean-Marie Déchanet, Introduction, William of St.-Thierry, *Exposition on the Song of Songs*, trans. Mother Columba Hart, Works of William of St. Thierry, vol. 2, Cistercian Fathers Series 6 (Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1970), xxxvi.

religious institutions that also occurred during the twelfth century. Jean Leclercq noted that medieval commentaries on the Song, like commentaries on other biblical texts, were intrinsically related to monastic culture, both because monastic learning was specifically focused on the reading of the Bible, the "sacred page," and because the Song, with its ardent language that fails to make any explicit theological or moral points, was, in Leclercq's view a "contemplative text" ideally suited to monastic contemplation, the heart of monastic spirituality whose aim was to foster "the desire for the heavenly life."[133]

Cistercian writers dominated the literary genre of high-medieval commentary on the Song of Songs that in turn dominated the devotional literature of that period. Cistercian commentaries on the Song were not only the most numerous but also the most influential, thanks to Bernard's prestige as a charismatic abbot and intimate of the politically powerful and also as a writer of considerable rhetorical talent. As Denis Renevey observes, Bernard's monastery at Clairvaux possessed a copy of Origen's commentary.[134] It also was Bernard who, if Astell's analysis is correct, emphatically reunited the allegorical interpretation of the Song, upon which Origen had insisted with the literal and sensual denotations of the Song's very words.

In his first sermon on the Song Bernard used a literary analysis of the bride's longing for the bridegroom's kiss in the Song's first verse to fuse the Song's language of sensual immediacy and intimacy with profound spiritual experience::

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[133] Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catherine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1961), originally published as *L'Amour des lettres et le désir pour Dieu* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1957), 84-86.

[134] Denis Renevey, *Language, Self and Love: Hermeneutics in the Writings of Richard Rolle and the Commentaries on the Song of Songs* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 4.

Dic, quaeso, nobis, a quo, de quo, ad quemve dicitur: OSCULETUR ME OSCULO ORIS SUI? Aut quale est istud ita subitaneum et factum repente de medio sermonis exordium? Sic quippe in verba prorumpit, quasi quempiam loquentem praemiserit, cui consequenter respondentem et hanc introducat personam, quaecumque est ipsa quae osculum flagitat. Deinde si ne osculari a nescio quo vel petit vel praecipit, cur signantur et nominatim ore, et ore suo illius, quasi aliud quam os, ad alienum, et non potius suum, exhibere sibi soleant osculantes? Quamquam ne hoc quidem dicit: "Osculetur me ore suo", sed aliquid profecto insinuatius: OSCULO, inquit, ORIS SUI.[135]

The crucible of that intermingling of carnal and spiritual was, in Bernard's view, Christ's humanity, for it is Christ to whom Bernard's female speaker is speaking. Bernard emphasized that the kiss is specifically amorous, a kiss that can only be mouth upon mouth, and that the speaker not only kisses "with his mouth"("ore suo") but emphatically "with the kiss of his mouth." It is an intensified kiss. Bernard thus drove home his point that that Christ, by reason of his incarnation as a fleshly human being, could reciprocate, reinforce, and even initiate on a human level, a powerful love that could be experienced in the flesh as well as the soul; he could literally "kiss" the bride, or the soul of the devotee, with that "kiss of his mouth."

As Étienne Gilson observed, the kiss, the joining of flesh with flesh, was for Bernard neither a metaphor for, nor a lowly first step toward, a mystical union with God, but was instead the literal culmination of that union: "She who asks this kiss is she who loves: 'quae

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[135] *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 1.5, *Sancti Bernardi opera*, vol. 1, 5 The translation is: 'Tell us, I beseech you, from whom, about whom, and to whom it is said: 'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth'?' Or rather, what sort of introduction is this that appears suddenly and hastily put together in the middle of a speech? For indeed it bursts into words as if it were fastening on a certain speaker to whom another speaker is replying as if she were entreating a kiss. Then, if she begs for or demands that she be kissed by someone—I know not whom—why does she say distinctly and by name 'with the mouth,' and 'with his own mouth,' as if those who kissed were accustomed to kissing something other than the mouth or with a mouth other than their own? Yet indeed she does not say this: 'Let him kiss me with his mouth,' but says something surely more intimate: 'With the kiss of his mouth.'" The translation is this writer's, but it has been influenced by that of Kilian Walsh. See *On the Song of Songs I*, trans. Kilian Walsh, *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, vol. 2, Cistercian Fathers Series 4 (Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1971); *On the Song of Songs II*, trans. Kilian Walsh, *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, vol. 3, Cistercian Fathers Series 7 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1976); and *On the Song of Songs III*, trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene M. Edmonds, Cistercian Fathers Series 31 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1979).

vero osculum postulat, amat'; and she who loves is she who asks this kiss, and asks naught

else: 'Amat autem quae osculam petit. *Non petit libertatem, non mercedem, non denique vel*

doctrinam, sed osculum. [She does not ask for freedom, nor for mercy, nor indeed for

learning, but for the kiss.]' In short, the love of God, when brought to this degree of intensity,

has something of the character of heavenly beatitude, inasmuch as it is an end in itself, the

possession of which dispenses with all the rest because it includes it."[136]

Denis Renevey points out that this sort of interpretation of the Song of Songs by

Bernard and other twelfth-century commentators, as a means of describing divine love in

purely human terms, gave commentators those a language for exploring their own mystical

experiences as an integral part of the literary genre of Song of Songs commentary. The

intensely personal language of the characters—the bride, the bridegroom, and others--who

speak in the Song's first-person voices and build its internal drama was readily mimicked by

Bernard and others (note that Bernard says that the bride—proxy for Bernard's soul, or

Bernard himself--personally "asks" Christ for a kiss, and thus Bernard thrusts himself

directly into the Song's drama. Renevey describes Bernard's sermons, along with other

twelfth-century commentaries, as "case studies in which the Song of Songs stands as material

for the experiential use of the language of love by commentators in expressing their mystical

experiences and the discovery of their own selves....This mode of appropriation, which

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[136] Étienne Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard*, trans. A.H.C. Downes (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1940, repr. Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1990, Cistercian Studies Series 120), 111. See also Brian Stock's analysis of Bernard's first sermon on the Song in *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpetation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 410-30, in which Stock notes that Bernard "combines the physical and the spiritual' so that "the kiss confirms that his mystical experience begins with the sensual" (415). Stock argues that fundamental to Bernard's mystical theology is the notion that man, although a spiritual being, "has need of the body" so as to acquire through his senses the knowledge necessary to ascend to higher understanding (421).

signally departs from the original intention grounded in the biblical context, confers on the authorial voice of the commentary a substantial ability to manoeuvre the lexical terms into contexts more closely related to its inner experiences." Renevey notes that Bernard "is often seduced by the emotive power of the Song," to the point that he sometimes "moves away from the allegorical frame and into effusive passages inspired by images of the Song."[137]

Reveney asserts further that Bernard's "decoding of the meaning of the highly charged words of the song becomes a hymn of praise to the poetic beauty of the Song, equally abounding with sensual imagery."[138] That very mimicry observed by Renevey, characterized by the commentator's inserting himself into the Song's action and using the Song's language as the basis for his own poetic embellishment was the essence of twelfth-century commentary on the Song, and so made such commentary a literary genre. Commentary on the Song became a form of prose poetry, powerful in its intended and realized effect upon readers.[139]

Aelred's drawing his sister into the events of Christ's life and passion, shot through with rich allusion to the imagery of the Song, was an imitation and imaginative expansion of Bernard's own imitative technique. Bernard himself, in his Sermon 61 on the Song, interpreted the Vulgate's "Surge, amica mea, sponsa mea, et veni / Columba mea in

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[137] *Language, Self and Love*, 33.

[138] *Ibid.*

[139] Brian Stock writes that Bernard "achieved his results by recreating in mystical language a sense of the spoken, the pysical and the performed....In that sense, his sermons can be described as the acting out of an intensely personalized ritual" (408). Jean Leclercq, in *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* (n. 134), observed that the monastic practice of *lectio divina* involved the use, not only of the eyes in reading Scripture, but also of the lips pronouncing what the eyes see and the ears "listening to the words pronounced, hearing what is called 'the voices of the pages'" (23-24). In this way, Leclercq wrote, reading and meditation became a single highly visual and aural—and thus dramatic—activity.

foraminibus petrae, in cavernis maceriae, ostende mihi facien tuam, sonet vox tua in auribus

meis."[140] Bernard elaborated:

> Amat et pergit amatoria loqui. Columbam denuo blandiendo vocat, suam dicit, et sibi asserit propriam; quodque ipse rogari obnixius ab illa solebat, ipsius, nunc versa vice, et conspectum postulat, et colloquium. Agit ut sponsus; sed ut verecundus, publicum erubescit, decernitque frui deliciis suis in loco sequestriutique in foraminbus petrae et cavernis maceriae.[141]

Bernard projected onto the Song's dialogue an even more intense and erotic drama than the

words themselves necessarily implied: a bashful ("verecundus") bridegroom, a longing bride,

the cleft of the rock as a locus of lovemaking. All this was Bernard's imaginative creation, as

he worked over and over in his sermons to place himself and his audience directly into the

Song. Aelred's personification of the dove a decade later in *De institutione* as his sister

passionately kissing the wounds of Christ was perhaps the next logical step in the Cistercian

use of the Song as a canvas for the writer's (and the reader's) own vivid projections.

William of Saint-Thierry, who composed his *Expositio super Canticum Canticorum*

at about the same time that Bernard was composing his sermons, during the years following

William's entry into the Cistercian monastery at Signy, made it clear that such use of boldly

erotic interpretive language in commentary on the Song was a deliberate literary strategy

designed to arouse in a reader or hearer the experience of desire for God. William wrote:

"Etenim, sicut jam supra diximus, ut ex usu carnalis amoris circa spiritualem amorem, et

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[140] Ct 2:13-14 (in Bernard's Vulgate text): "Arise, my love, my bride, and come. My dove is in the clefts of the rock, in the hollows of the wall. Show me your face, let your voice sound in my ears."

[141] Sermon 61.2, *Sancti Bernardi opera*, vol. 2, 148-49: "He loves and proceeds to speak amorously. For a second time he gently calls her his dove, and he claims her as his own; and he in his own turn asks intently of her what she was accustomed to asking of him; he begs to see her face and to speak with her. He acts like a bridegroom, but like a bashful bridegroom who blushes to make love in public and wishes to enjoy his pleasures in a hidden place, 'in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the walls."

affectum Sponsi et Sponsae aliquem sentiamus experientiae sensum..."[142] Denis Renevey

remarks that for William, "the use of the terminology which describes carnal love is

ineffective at circumscribing spiritual love if the practices (*usus*) of carnal love are not felt by

those who use or read the terms. The metaphorical discourse of love is cognitively

meaningful if the primary meaning, carnal love, is kept in the mind to explicate the

secondary meaning."[143] Renevey illustrates William's "high level of literary competence" in

this passage:

> [V]idetur saepe Sponsus Sponsae quasi lasciviente amore alludere, et crebro
> subducere se vehementi amanti, rursumque reddere desideranti; egredi aliquando
> et abire tanquam non rediturus, ut ardentius requiratur; regredi aliquando et
> intrare ad illam quasi perpetuo mansurus, quo dulcius ad oscula invitetur;
> aliquando stare post parietam, et aspicere per fenestras, ut ad excitandum
> amantis videatur blandiens, sed non totus....[144]

William, perhaps even more thoroughly than Bernard, conjoined sensory and mystical

experience, nearly turning the Song of Songs into a romance of passion. Caroline Walker

Bynum writes of the capacity of both Bernard and William to possess "a profound sense of

the person as psychosomatic unity and of the earthly body as a means to glory and

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[142] William of Saint-Thierry, *Exposé sur le Cantique des Cantiques* 2.5.180 (SC, 366-68). The translation is: "Indeed, as we have already said above, from using the language of carnal love in referring to spiritual love, we can feel some of the experience of the love between the bridegroom and the bride..." The translation is this writer's.

[143] *Language, Self, and Love*, 58.

[144] *Exposé sur le Cantique des Cantiques* 2.5.180 (SC, 368): "Often the bridegroom seems to play at lascivious amours with the bride; he frequently snatches himself away from his lover violently, only to give himself back again to the one who desires him; he sometimes leaves and goes away as if not to return, so that she may seek him more ardently; and sometimes he returns and enters the place where she is as if he would remain forever, so that he might invite her more sweetly to kisses; sometimes he stands behind the wall and looks through the windows, so that he can be seen with his charm but not completely, so as to arouse his lover's desire...."

ecstasy."[145] Together Bernard and William forged a particularly Cistercian reading of the Song: highly imaginative, emotionally intense, and focused on the bodily senses as a direct means of achieving union between the soul and God.

Aelred, in composing his *De institutione*, fused that particular Cistercian hermeneutic tradition, exemplified by Bernard and William, with another tradition of interpreting the Song that also could be traced back to Origen and his Latin translators: that of regarding the Song as a piece of women's literature. In this tradition, the Song's bridegroom was Christ, and the Song's bride, Christ's female consort, was not only a representation of the church, or of the soul seeking mystical union with God, but of flesh-and-blood women who had given themselves to Christ by their vows: consecrated virgins and female monastics. In this interpretive tradition women, by virtue of their sex alone, could unite themselves with Christ in a powerful metaphoric fashion that was inaccessible to men. Their model was Mary, Christ's virgin mother, who by bearing and nursing her son and then standing at his side as he suffered on the cross, had also achieved a fleshly and emotional intimacy with her son that was impossible for men (in the Gospels all of Jesus' male disciples had fled his passion, except for the virgin John). The binary aspect of the Song's dialogue between bride and bridegroom made that pair, literarily speaking, equals by virtue of their perfect complementary relation to each other ("sponsus" and "sponsa" in the Vulgate's Latin), just as Mary had been, by virtue of her physical closeness to her son in his birth and passion, his female complement. In terms of this strand of the Song's hermeneutics, Christ's bride,

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[145] Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity 200-1336*, Lectures on the History of Religion Sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies, n.s., 15 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 166.

whether Mary or any consecrated virgin who modeled herself on Mary, could be seen as his

alter ego, a female Christ.

In Christian hagiography dating to antiquity this image of a woman as representation

of Christ was all the more powerful when the woman in question was a martyr who had

actually imitated Christ in her own suffering and death. A chronicler of a mass persecution of

Christians by the Roman governor of Lyons in AD 177 told the story of a slave-girl,

Blandina, who was tortured in gruesome ways over her refusal to recant her Christian faith.

Facing death along with several other Christians before the crowds packed into the city's

amphitheater, Blandina, as portrayed by the chronicler, became transformed into a living

crucifix, an iconic representation of Christ:

> But Blandina was suspended on a stake and exposed to be the food of the wild beasts that had been let loose to attack her. And because she could be seen hanging upon a kind of cross and could be heard praying in a loud voice, she greatly raised the spirits of those who were struggling in the arena with her. As they looked upon her in her struggle, they saw externally with their eyes, through the form of their sister, the one who had been crucified for them.[146]

The Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 263-c.339) incorporated the narrative of the

martyrs of Lyons, with its vivid verbal picture of Blandina as an image of the crucified

Christ, into his *Ecclesiastical History* written in Greek during the early fourth century.

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[146] Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.5.41, ed. Gustave Bardy, SC 41 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1955), 17. The Greek is: "ἡ Βλανδῖνα ἐπὶ ξύλου κρεμασθεῖσ προύκειτο βορὰ τῶν εἰσβαλλομένων θηρίων ἤ καὶ διὰ τοῦ βλέπεσθαι σταυροῦ σχήματι κρεμαμένη διὰ τῆς εὐτονου προσευχῆς πολλὴν προθυμίαν τοῖς ἀγωνιζομένοις ἐνεποίει, βλεπόντων αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι καὶ τοῖς ἔξωθεν ὀφθαλμοῖς διὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς τὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐσταυρωμένον...." The translation is this writer's. See also Jacqueline Amat, ed., *Passion de Perpétue et Félicité, suivi des Actes*, SC 417 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1996). This martyrs' passion, written in Latin during the first decade of the third century, is an account of the deaths of two young North African Christian mothers in the arena at Carthage in 203.

Rufinus of Aquileia, who had been Origen's translator, also translated Eusebius'

Ecclesiastical History into Latin, in about 405, making it available in Western Europe.

The Lyons narrator had not alluded to the Song of Songs or suggested that Blandina

might be a bride of Christ as well as his female image. Jerome, however, writing two

centuries later, boldly joined numerous allusions to and quotations from the Song with

allusions evocations of both female martyrdom and Mary in his letter to Eustochium, who

was the learned adolescent daughter of his widowed Roman friend Paula. Eustochium had

chosen a life of consecrated virginity in about 375. In his letter Jerome explicitly celebrated

Eustochium as Christ's bride. Jerome was probably familiar with an early third-century Latin

treatise by the North African Christian orator Tertullian (ca. 160-ca. 220), *De virginibus*

velandis ("On the Veiling of Virgins"), one of several works in which Tertullian insisted that

Christian virgins ought to cover their hair with veils just as married women of his time did,

because, as virgins, they ought to regard Christ as their proper husband. Tertullian wrote:

"nupsisti enim Christo, illi tradidisti carnem tuam, illi sponsasti maturitatem tuam. incede

secundum sponsi tui voluntatem. Christus est et qui alienas sponsas et maritatas uelari iubet,

utique multo magis suas."[147] Building upon Tertullian's starkly literal equation of the

Christian virgin wed to Christ and the married woman wed to her husband, Jerome explicitly

clothed Eustochium with the beauty celebrated in the bride of the Song of Songs. He wrote of

Christ's nuptial love for Eustochium: "'sis,' inquit, 'pulchra et inter omnes mulieres species

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[147] Tertullian, *De virginibus velandis* 16.4, ed. Eligius Dekkers, CCSL 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1965), 1225: "For you have wedded Christ. You have handed over your flesh to him. You have betrothed your ripeness to him. Go about as your bridegroom would wish, for if Christ is the one who commands other men's brides and married women to be veiled, he certainly commands his own all the more to be so."

tua diligatur ab sponso."[148] He made Mary, Christ's mother, the leader of the band of virgins who in the Song and in Psalm 44 accompany the bride to the marriage chamber.

For another companion of Eustochium in this heavenly bridal procession, Jerome selected Thecla, the heroine of a romance-like apocryphal gospel, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, probably written during the late second century.[149] Thecla, according to the apocryphal *Acts*, was a virgin living in Iconium in Asia Minor who, after hearing Paul of Tarsus preach outside her window during his missionary travels, defied her parents and spurned several suitors in order to follow Paul and to embrace the life of virginal asceticism that he himself had chosen. She was not a martyr strictly speaking, but only a series of miracles allowed her to escape first being burned at a stake and later being devoured by lions and other beasts in the arena where she had had been condemned at the vengeful instigation of a nobleman smitten with desire for her who had tried unsuccessfully to take her virginity by force. The animals refused to attack Thecla, however, and crouched quietly at her feet. (She was also stripped naked during this latter ordeal, but another miracle prevented the lascivious mob in the amphitheater from seeing her nudity.) Thecla was revered as a saint in both the Eastern and Western churches, and the immensely popular story of the beautiful virgin with her brave willingness to die rather than renounce her faith or surrender her chastity served as a model for numerous narratives of the travails and deaths of virgin

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[148] *Ad Eustochium* (n. 353) 25 (CSEL, 180): "' May you be beautiful,' he says, 'and may your face be cherished by the bridegroom among all women.'"

[149] The leading critical edition is Richard A. Lipsius, ed., *Acta apostolorum apocrypha*, vol 1 (Leipzig: Mendelssohn, 1898), 235-69. An English translation is in *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, ed. Edward Schneemelcher (Tübingen: Mohr, 1964), trans., Robert McLachlan Wilson <u>et al.</u> (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 353-64.

martyrs throughout Christian late antiquity, narratives that were avidly read and reworked during the High Middle Ages.

In his letter to Eustochium Jerome made Mary and Thecla into the companions who would accompany Eustochium when, at the end of her life, she would enter a heavenly consummation with her divine bridegroom. If Mary, in allusions to both the Song of Songs and Psalm 44, was to lead the virgins who would escort Eustochium into the bridal chamber to be met by Christ, Thecla would go arm in arm with Eustochium as well:

> ....qualis erit illa dies, cum tibi Maria, mater domini, choris occurret comitata uirgineis....tunc Thecla in tuos laeta uolabit amplexus. tunc et ipse sponsus occurret et dicet: *surge, ueni, proxima mea, speciosa mea, columba mea, quia hiemps transiit, pluuia abiit sibi.* tunc angeli mirabuntur et dicent: *quae est ista prospiciens quasi diluculum, speciosa ut luna, electa ut sol?*[150]

Jerome placed words from the Song into Eustochium's mouth as she heard Christ, her lover, knocking at her door and wooing her like a suitor: "uox fratuelis mei pulsantis: aperi mihi, soror mea, proxima mea, columba mea."[151]

Jerome's letter to Eustochium had begun with the words "audi filia" from the eleventh verse of Latin Psalm 44. The full verse reads in the Vulgate: "audi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam / et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui."[152] To the Christian exegete Jerome and to Eustochium, his pupil, the verse had a complex meaning; it not only referred to Psalm 44's royal bride's forsaking her homeland and family ("obliviscere populum tuum")

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[150] *Ibid.* 41 (CSEL, 209): "So will be that day when Mary, mother of the Lord, will run to you, accompanied by a chorus of virgins....then Thecla will joyously fly into your embraces, and then the bridegroom himself will run to you and say, 'Arise and come, my beloved, my beautiful one, my dove, because, behold, the winter has gone away, the rain has absented itself.' Then the angels will marvel and say, 'Who is this woman glowing like the daybreak, as lovely as the moon, as brilliant as the sun?'" The quotations are from Ct 2:10-11 and Ct 6:9.

[151] *Ibid.* 26 (CSEL, 181): "I hear the voice of my brother knocking: 'Open your door to me, my sister, my dear one, my dove, my perfect one.'"

[152] "Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear—and forget your people and the house of your father."

but to the Christian virgin's openness, granted to her by her very female nature ("audi filia"), to mystical union with her bridegroom. Whereas Tertullian had focused almost solely on the deontological status of the Christian virgin, on her social and moral obligation to cover her hair modestly in public in the manner of a wife, Jerome focused on her unique spiritual status as recipient of an invitation to become Christ's nuptial partner and to enjoy an intimacy with him whose foundation was the very fact of her sex.

The themes that Jerome explored in his letter to Eustochium—the use of the Song of Songs as an allegory for consecrated virginity, the equation of virginity with martyrdom, and the evocation of Mary as a model for the virgin's nuptial relationship with Christ—all figured prominently in a longer work composed about the same time as Jerome's letter, the tripartite treatise *De virginibus* of Ambrose of Milan (c. 337-397).[153] Ambrose addressed his treatise to his older sister, Marcellina, a consecrated virgin who had taken the veil, although she continued to live, as was fourth-century custom, in the home of her aristocratic Roman family. Indeed, Ambrose began his treatise with a feast-day sermon upon the Roman virgin martyr Agnes, who had been executed under the Emperor Diocletian in 304 and whose tomb just outside the city walls was already a much-visited shrine.[154] Ambrose's treatise, even more than Jerome's letter, boldly examined the nature of the virgin's mystical marriage, using Scriptural imagery, including imagery from the Song of Songs, and deftly conflating the consecrated virgin with Mary and also with the church as the new Jerusalem, bride of Christ

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[153] Ambrose of Milan, *De virginibus*, *Sancti Ambrosii episcopi mediolanensis opera*, vol.14, ed. Franco Gori, with introduction, translation, notes, and indexes (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, and Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1989). Gori used the Latin text (which he annotated and translated into Italian) of an earlier critical edition of Ambrose's work: *Libri Tres de virginibus*, ed. Ignazio Cazzanaga (Turin: Paravia, 1954).

[154] *Ibid.*, 1.2-9 (104-10).

and nourisher of the faithful. Ambrose pointed out that virginity was sacred because it sprang

from Christ, who was himself a virgin and born of a virgin. Ambrose wrote:

> Christus uirginis sponsus est et, si dici potest, Christus uirgineae castitatis;
> uirginitas enim Christi, non uirginitatis est Christus. Virgo est ergo quae nupsit,
> uirgo quae proprio lacte nutruit, de qua legimus: <u>Quanta fecit uirgo Hierusalem!</u>
> <u>Non deficient de petra ubera neque nix a Libano aut declinabat aqua ualido uento</u>
> <u>quae portatur</u>. Qualis est haec uirgo, quae trinitatis fontibus irrigatur, cui de petra
> fluunt aquae, no deficiunt ubera, mella funduntur?[155]

This passage, with its complex amalgam of allusions to a virginal Jerusalem and thereby to

the Christian church as the New Jerusalem, to the consecrated virgin as wedded to Christ,

and most significantly, to Mary as herself the bride whom the Song of Songs celebrated

allegorically, raised the virgin to the status of Mary, Christ's consort.

In narrating the martyrdom of Agnes, Ambrose emphasized her likeness to a bride, a

bride who had gone to meet an executioner who put her to the sword instead of giving her to

a betrothed husband. He reminded Marcellina that Agnes had been twelve years old, the

minimum (and all too common) age for marriage under Roman law: "Haec duodecim

annorum martyrium fecisse traditur."[156] In a display of rhetorical virtuosity that implicitly

emphasized Agnes' youth and beauty, he paired nuptial imagery antithetically (via a series of

parallel constructions) with Agnes's joyful embrace of her martyrdom: "Non sic ad thalamum

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[155] *Ibid.*, 1.22 (124): "Look at another of virginity's boons: Christ is the virgin's bridegroom, and if it can be said, Christ is the bridegroom of virginal chastity. For she is a virgin who married him, she is a virgin who carried him in her womb, a virgin who bore him, a virgin who nourished him with her own milk, of whom we read: 'How many things has the virgin Jerusalem done! Her breasts shall not go dry of food from the rock, nor will the snow from Lebanon fail or the water that is borne by the strong wind.' What sort of virgin is this, who is watered from the fountains of the Trinity, to whom waters flow out of a rock, whose breasts shall not go dry, for from them flows honey?" The Scriptural quotation is Ier 18:13-14. The mention of breasts and honey is, as Gori points out, almost certainly a reference to Ct 4:1: "favus distillans labia tua sponsa mel et lac sub lingua tua" (your lips, my bride, are a dripping honeycomb, and honey and milk are under your tongue" (125, n. 89). As Gori also points out, Ambrose's allegorical interpretation of the verses from Jeremiah is at odds with their literal sense, which is an excoriation of Israel for straying from God (125, n. 87).

[156] *Ibid.*, 1.7 (106): "She is said that to have made her martyrdom at the age of twelve years."

nupta properaret ut ad suplicii locum laeta successu gradu festina uirgo processit, non intorto crine caput compta, sed Christo, non flosculis redimita, sed moribus."[157]

As Ambrose's use of the story of Agnes indicates, the pairing of virginity and Christlike martyrdom was central to his exhortation to his sister. Like Jerome, he introduced Thecla into his exhortation. Indeed, Ambrose paired Thecla with Mary as complementary models: The virgin ought to imitate Mary's chastity and obedience in life but also be willing to die a martyr's death, just as Thecla had been willing to be devoured by beasts:

> Ergo sancta Maria disciplinam vitae informet. Thecla doceat immolari, quae copulam fugens nuptialem et sponsi furori damnata natural etiam bestiarum uirginitatis ueneratione mutauit.[158]

The double nature of the virgin martyr's holiness exalted her as a woman in a way that was unavailable to men, even the holiest and most courageous of male martyrs. Furthermore, Ambrose, along with Jerome, equated the consecrated virgin's desire to sacrifice herself ("immolari") to virginity with the martyr's sacrifice of self that Thecla and Agnes had made. In this sense, Ambrose implied, the consecrated virgin was superior to her male counterparts vowed to chastity, an equal to Mary.

Most significantly, Ambrose highlighted the sensual aspect of the virgin's intimate and nuptial relationship with Christ, using extensive quotations from the sensual language of

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[157] *Ibid.* 1.8 (108): "Thus she proceeded joyfully, hastening with quick step not as a bride hurrying to the marriage chamber but as a virgin to the place of punishment, for she had adorned her head not with a bride's braided tresses but with Christ, and had wreathed herself not with blossoms but with virtues."

[158] *Ibid.* 2.19 (180): "Therefore let holy Mary be an example for the conduct of your life. Let Thecla teach you how to be offered in sacrifice, she who, fleeing the nuptial embrace and condemned to death because of the fury of her betrothed, transformed the very fury of the beasts who were expected to devour her into veneration of her virginity." Jean Leclerq observed that the legend of Thecla, as well as that of Thaïs, the fourth-century prostitute who lived as a recluse after her conversion by the Egyptian ascetic Paphnutius, served as powerful models for both nuns and anchoritesses during the High Middle Ages. "Solitude and Solidarity: Medieval Women Recluses," in *Medieval Religious Women*, vol. 2: *Peaceweavers*, ed. John A. Nichols and Lilian Shank, Cistercian Studies Series 72 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985), 67-83.

the Song of Songs to make his point. He elaborated exegetically upon the words "candidus et

rubicundus" in verse 10 of the fifth chapter of the Canticle as descriptions of Christ's divine

and human natures and also of his glorious physical beauty:

> Candidus merito, quia patris splendor, rubeus, quia partus est virginis. Color in eo fulget et rutilat utriusquae naturae. Memento tamen antiquiora in eo diuinitatis insignia quam corporis sacramenta, quia non coepit a uirgine, sed qui erat uenit in uirginem.[159]

As Christ's bride, the virgin would share the most intense union with him, rendered by

Ambrose in the most ecstatic language he could borrow from the Song:

> *Veni* igitur *huc a Libano, sponsa, ueni huc a Libano; transibis et pertransibis.* Saepius enim nobis iste uersiculus recantandus est, ut uel dominicis uocata uerbis sequatur, si qua non credit humanis. Hoc nos mgisterium non inuenimus, sed accepimus; sic instituit mystici carminis doctrinia caelestis: *Osculetur me ab osculis oris sui, quia bona ubera tua super uinum et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata, unguentum exinanitum est nomen tuum.* Totus iste deliciarum locus ludum sonat, plausum excitat, amorem prouocat. *Ideo*, inquit, *adulescentulae dilexerunt te et attraxerunt te. Retro odorem unguentorum tuorum curramus. Induxit me rex in tabernaculum suum.* Ab osculis coepit, ut ad tabernaculum perueniret.[160]

Ambrose essentially transformed Origen's allegorical representation of the mystical

relationship between the soul and Christ the bridegroom via language of erotic yearning into

an allegorical representation of the mystical relationship between the virgin and Christ the

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[159] *Ibid.* 1:46 (46): "White deservedly because he is the splendor of his father, red because he was born of a virgin. The color of both his natures glitters and glows. Remember still that the emblems of divinity in him are more venerable than the incarnation of his body, because he did not begin with his birth by a virgin, but he who had always existed came into a virgin." Gori points out that Ambrose owes his exegesis of Christ's red and white coloring as emblems of his divinity and humanity to the fourth-century *Letter to a Virgin* by Ambrose's contemporary Athanasius of Alexandria (147).

[160] *Ibid.* 2:42 (200): "'Therefore come to this place from Lebanon, my bride, come to this place from Lebanon; you will cross over and cross by.' We must recall this verse more often, so that even someone who does not believe what is said in human words may follow what is said in the Lord's words. Here we do not invent our instruction but receive it; in such a way the heavenly message of the mystical song emerges. 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, because your fine breasts are superior to wine and the scent of your oils is superior to all fragrances, and your name is oil poured out.' This entire place of delights resonates with play, it arouses the beating of the heart, it calls forth love. 'Therefore,' he says, 'the young girls have loved you and been drawn to you. Let us run behind the fragrance of your ointments. The king led me into his chamber. He began giving me kisses so as to lead me to his chamber.'" The quotations are from Ct 1:1-4 and Ct 4:8.

bridegroom via much the same language. In a place of pleasure ("locus deliciarum") the

virgin would be provoked to erotic love ("provocat amorem"), and the bridegroom himself

would lead her into the chamber of consummation, arousing her with kisses ("osculis coepit,

ut ad tabernaculum perueniret"). Ambrose's was another kind of re-literalization of the Song

(to borrow Ann Astell's word), in which the consecrated virgin experiences her spiritual

union with Christ as erotic union.

Aelred of Rievaulx was almost certainly familiar with Ambrose's *De virginibus*. Like

Ambrose, he chose a tripartite structure for his *De institutione*, and like Ambrose he

addressed his work to his virginal sister. He also imitated Ambrose's use of the story of

Agnes,[161] although it is clear that he had an additional source, probably an anonymous fifth-

century letter commemorating Agnes' feast day that was in Aelred's time attributed to

Ambrose and that told a more elaborate and dramatic version of Agnes' martyrdom.[162] This

latter text, possibly influenced by the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, gives Agnes a well-born

suitor, a prefect's son, who tries to woo her with jewels, but Agnes rejects him, telling him

that she has a richer and more beautiful lover in Christ. The spurned youth arranges to have

Agnes sent to a brothel to be stripped naked and violated, but an angel intervenes to protect

her, clothing her nudity in an impermeable white light. Agnes is then sentenced to be burned

to death, but like Thecla she is miraculously spared, to be put to death finally by the sword.

Aelred recapitulated an abbreviated version of this story in *De instituitione* as an elegant,

rhetorically chiasmic verbal lesson reminding his sister that if an angel can enter a brothel,

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[161] *De institutione inclusarum* 16 (CCCM, 652).

[162] PL 17: 735-742.

she will certainly enjoy angelic protection in her chaste cell: "non certe angelus suo casto deerit cubiculo, qui prostibulo non defuit."[163]

Most striking was Aelred's borrowing of specific imagery from Ambrose. When Ambrose had made Mary, Christ's mother, into the leader of the virgins who would escort the bride into the bridal chamber, he had included an allusion to Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron (her name in the Vulgate Bible's Latin is "Maria"), who, according to the Book of Exodus, had beaten a timbrel and led a dance of women in thanksgiving to God for delivering the Israelites from the Egyptians in the parting of the Red Sea. The passage of Exodus reads in the Vulgate: "sumpsit ergo Maria prophetis soror Aaron tympanum in manu / egressaeque sunt omnes mulieres post eam cum tympanis et choris quibus pracinebat dicens / cantemus Domino gloriose enim magnificatus est...."[164] Ambrose had conflated Miriam and Mary, so that the virgin attendants whom Mary would lead to the bridal chamber were also the dancing women in Exodus. He wrote, echoing the language in Exodus: "Tunc etiam Maria tympanum sumens choros uirginales citabit cantantes domino, quod per mare saeculi sine saecularibus fluctibus transierunt"[165]

In a passage of *De institutione* Aelred added another level of allusion to Ambrose's, identifying the dancing maidens not only with Miriam's band of women with their timbrels but with the virgins in the Book of Revelation (male virgins in that text, virgins of both sexes

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[163] *De institutione inclusarum* 16 (CCCM, 652): "An angel will certainly not be absent from your chaste little bedroom, since an angel was not absent from that place of prostitution."

[164] Ex 15:20-21: "Therefore Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances, and she began the song, saying, "Let us sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously magnified....""

[165] *De virginibus* 2:17: "Then likewise Mary, taking a timbrel, will set the dances of the virgins in motion as they sing to the Lord because they crossed through the sea of this world without harm from the waves of this world." Gori observes that Ambrose likely borrowed this conflation from Athanasisus (179, n. 52).

in Aelred's reading) who sing before the throne of the Lamb, whose wedding feast Revelation celebrates. Guiding the virgin's meditation, Aelred wrote:

> Cogitet sine intermissione ad cuius ornatur thalamum, ad cuius praeparatur amplexum. Proponat sibi agnum, quem sequi habet quocumque ierit. Contempletur beatissimam Mariam cum uirginitatis tympano choros uirginum praecedentem et praecinentem dulce illud canticum, quem nemo potest canere utriusque sexus uirgines, de quibus scriptum est: *Hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non coninquinati, uirgines enim sunt.*[166]

Aelred took a specific Ambrosian trope and not only added a layer of eschatological meaning to its bridal core but amplified the trope into something metaphorically richer (the resounding timbrel becomes a triumphant symbol of virginity in Aelred's passage). Aelred also, characteristically, made Ambrose's trope visual, asking his sister to place before herself in her mind ("Proponat sibi") Mary and her virgins dancing and singing, as well as the Lamb, the virgin's bridegroom. It is impossible not to conclude that it was through Ambrose's literary example that Aelred was able to identify his sister with the bride of the Song of Songs in *De institutione*'s triple meditation—a dove who could unite herself with the bridegroom's flesh by immersing herself in Christ's wounds.

Aelred's twelfth century also happened to be a time when the influence of the Ambrosian interpretation of the Song of Songs was at an apogee, reflected in a burgeoning of consecrated female spirituality in nunneries as well as anchorholds, a medieval high point in women's Latin literacy, a proliferation of spiritual texts elaborating on Ambrose's

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[166] *De institutione inclusarum* 15 (CCCM, 651): "Let her meditate without ceasing upon the one whose marriage chamber she adorns, for whose embrace she prepares herself. Let her place before herself the Lamb whom she must follow wherever he goes. Let her gaze upon the most blessed Mary leading the dances of the virgins with the timbrel of virginity and beginning to sing that sweet song that no one can sing except virgins of both sexes, about whom it was written: 'These are those who have not defiled themselves with women—that is to say, they are virgins.'" The quotation is from Apc 14:4: "hii sunt qui canunt cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati / virgines enim sunt/ hii qui sequuntur agnum quocumque abierit [the ones singing are those who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins--those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes).

identification of the consecrated virgin as the Song's bride, and a flourishing of literature that explored Ambrose's other identification of the bride—as Mary, Christ's mother. Most of the texts, although not all of them, were written by men. Nonetheless, consecrated women, especially those who had chosen the anchoritic life as Aelred's sister had, acquired an iconic status that was enhanced by their association with Christ's virgin mother. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) wrote that by reason of Christ's incarnation in Mary's nourishing body, women were living representation's of Christ's very humanity: "Et uir divinitatem, femina uero humanitatem filii Dei significat."[167]

The growth of women's monastic houses during the twelfth century and its immediately surrounding years was phenomenal. Sally Thompson, drawing on the work of David Knowles, notes that there were only ten known nunneries in England before the Norman Conquest, but by the third quarter of the thirteenth century there were at least 161, most of them established between the years 1110 and 1250.[168] Bruce Venarde, tracking foundations of nunneries in France as well as England, finds a similar explosion of growth in

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[167] Hildegard of Bingen, *Liber divinorum operum* 1.4, ed. Albert Derolez and Peter Dronke, CCCM 92 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 243: "And man represents the divinity of the son of God, while woman represents his humanity."

[168] Sally Thompson, *Women Religious: The Founding of English Nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 2, 217-31. Thompson draws on lists compiled by David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock in *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales* (see Introduction to this dissertation), 194, 253-5, 270, 272, 278. The lists that Knowles and Hadcock compiled continued Knowles's earlier studies *The Religious Houses of Medieval England* (see Introduction to this dissertation) and *The Monastic Order in England: A History of Its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 943-1216* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1949). See also Thompson, "Why English Nunneries Had No History: A Study of the Problems of English Nunneries after the Conquest," in *Medieval Religious Women*, vol. 1: *Distant Echoes*, ed. John A. Shank and Lillian Thomas (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984). 131-49.

foundations of female monasticism starting in the late eleventh century and continuing to last

quarter of the twelfth, with a second surge that peaked during the early thirteenth century.[169]

Venarde observes a "tenfold" multiplication of nunneries in France and England

between the years 1000 and 1300, with most of the growth concentrated between 1080 and

1215, a period "which saw the establishment of about 425 new monastic communities for

women, about half of all nunneries founded in the millennium before the Black Death."[170]

Venarde observes, "By the end of the thirteenth century, nearly all the inhabitants of this

great region were no more than a day's travel from a female monastic community, and most

were closer than that."[171] Houses of women who affiliated themselves with the Cistercians

accounted for about one-fourth of this growth: more than one hundred new female Cistercian

houses in France and England, according to Venarde.[172]

The proliferation of women's religious houses, which entailed a concomitant growth

in the number of women choosing the religious life, was accompanied by a surge in female

literacy (convents, like male monasteries, hosted libraries and scriptoria and housed schools

for girls that enabled young women, especially young nuns, to attain literacy in Latin and

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[169] Bruce Venarde, *Women's Monasticism and Medieval Society: Nunneries in France and England, 890-1215* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1-16.

[170] *Ibid.*, 15-16.

[171] *Ibid.*, 16.

[172] *Ibid.*, pp. 159-61. Venarde notes many of those Cistercian-affiliated female houses were autonomous communities that had originally identified themselves as Cistercian on a strictly informal basis. Sometime after 1190, Venarde notes, the Cistercian General Chapter made provision for those ad hoc affiliations to incorporate themselves formally with the order, although no surviving Cistercian document outlines exactly how such incorporation occurred. By 1213, Venarde writes, citing a Cistercian charter, the affiliation of those houses with the order seemed to be a *de facto* given, and the Cistercians' chief concern was that the women's communities practice strict enclosure and that male abbots exercise general supervision over female houses.

immerse themselves in classical and Christian Latin literature).[173] Women, especially high-

born women to whom, thanks to the leisure that their wealth afforded them, education in

Latin and vernacular literacy was available both inside and outside of convents, participated

to an unprecedented degree in the production of literature, as scribes, patrons, correspondents

of male writers, and writers themselves.[174] Vastly increased female literacy, which itself

conferred prestige, coupled with the sheer visibility of a vast new population of nuns, gave

religious women and female religiosity a new social prestige.

  Penelope Johnson, examining contemporary writings about cloistered women in

France, describes the positive "sense of self" that twelfth-century nuns enjoyed: "Dedicating

their lives to raising a perpetual anthem of praise to God made nuns particularly revered by

their contemporaries. But even more important, they vowed themselves to chastity, and as

brides of Christ became the virgins most fit to walk at the head of the procession of the

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[173] P.R. Robinson argues, on the basis of his examination of books from the library at Nunnaminster in Winchester, that a tradition of nuns copying books persisted at this convent founded by King Alfred from the early tenth through the twelfth centuries. "A Twelfth-Century *Scriptrix* from Nunnaminster," in *On the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, Their scribes and Readers: Essays Presented to M.B. Parkes*, ed. P.R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot, U.K.: Scholar Press, 1997), 73-93.

[174] David N. Bell has listed and indexed the surviving books from the surprisingly extensive libraries of works written in Latin, French, and English in women's religious houses in England from the twelfth through the sixteenth centuries. His lists, which include Latin theological texts, indicate a relatively sophisticated level of literacy in at least some convents: "More nuns than we suppose might have been able to construe a Latin text, and more nunneries than we suspect might have taught the language." David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, Cistercian Studies Series 158 (Kalamazoo and Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian Publications, 1995), 63. Aelred's sister, for example, was clearly able to read her brother's elegant Latin, and sometime between 1163 and 1169 a nun at the abbey of Barking in Essex, founded in 666 and because of its centuries of royal patronage the most prestigious convent in England, translated Aelred's life of Edward the Confessor from Latin prose into Anglo-Norman verse. Latin literacy among women began to decline after 1300 with the rise of the universities and their displacement of monasteries both male and female as centers of learning. The universities were closed to women, and although, as Bell points out, girls in noble households might still be tutored privately by household chaplains and others, "few fathers would have been prepared to retain a private tutor to teach their daughters what—in the fathers' view—were useless accomplishments" (59). For a study of the limitations on women's learning, see Alcuin Blamires, "The Limits of Bible Study for Medieval Women," in *Women, the Book, and the Godly: Proceedings of the St. Hilda's Conference, 1993*, vol. 1, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 1-12.

Christian host. In their continence they imitated the Virgin Mary or even, in one formulation, the church. The rich tradition of the nun as espoused to Christ gave professed women a unique and valued status in the Middle Ages."[175]

Johnson cites numerous convent charters recording the prayers that lay patrons asked the nuns who resided in those convents to offer on their behalf and the frequent interactions that even the most cloistered nuns had with the lay members of their wealthy extended families, who typically belonged to the higher and lower nobility and the *haute bourgeoisie*, interactions that bolstered the nuns' high social status in the communities that surrounded convents. The common Latin word for nun, *sanctimonialis* (derived from *sanctimonium*, meaning "piety" or "holiness" but commonly mis-etymologized as a contraction of *sancta monialis* or "holy nun') testified to the high regard in which medieval people held religious women; the equivalent Latin word for male monastic was merely *monachus*, or "monk," Johnson observes.[176]

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[175] Penelope D. Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago and London: Univesity of Chicago Press, 1991), 230-231. For a more cautious view of claims that women religious enjoyed high status in medieval society, see Penny Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France*, Women in Culture and Society (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 75-115. Gold argues that because women were barred from holy orders, women religious, unlike their male counterparts, were never free from the company and scrutiny of the opposite sex.

[176] *Ibid.*, 235. Sharon Elkins points out that at least one-fourth of the new twelfth-century religious houses for women were actually double foundations for both sexes, as at Fontevrault in France and in England, the Gilbertine houses, founded in 1131 by Gilbert of Sempringham (ca. 1073-1190) and eventually growing to twenty-six foundations. Gilbert's first foundation , in Lincolnshire, was for cloistered women only; he later attached a community of lay sisters, and then, in order to provide the women as priests, a community of male canons, and finally a community of lay brothers. Gilbert seemed to have founded his women's houses because the Cistercians officially refused to accept women. Elkins argues that, contrary to Herbert Grundmann, who contended that medieval women who sought the religious life were often driven to heresy because male religious did not want to minister to them (the long reluctance of the Cistercians to recognize their female foundations might support Grundmann's argument), the proliferation of double monasteries during the twelfth century is evidence that there was actually much close cooperation between men and women who sought a reformed religious life. Sharon Elkins, *Holy Women of Twelfth-Century England*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), xvii-xvix. Cf. Herbert Grundmann, Religious Movements in the Middle Ages (n. 136), 75-88. See also Henrietta Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England, 500-1400* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995), 192-204. Leyser points out that women's

Texts either addressed to or celebrating religious women proliferated, many of them

showing the influence of Ambrose's *De virginibus*, which had elaborated so fully and densely

on the consecrated virgin's unique double stature as Christ's bride and the bride of the Song

of Songs.[177] Barbara Newman observes that in these texts--in contrast to the novice monk,

who is "only a converted sinner who must struggle painfully to acquire virtues"--the virgin

"already *has* the exalted virtue that defines her state, and must apply herself only to

preserving it."[178] Medieval monastics writing to or for religious women thus combined what

Newman terms "the highest flattery" to virgins with severe warnings against their

succumbing to spiritual pride and reminders that they were particularly vulnerable to the

religious houses in England remained robust strong until the Reformation, and that even the nuns who were ejected from their closed convents during that upheaval continued to meet communally afterwards. As fpr Gilbert of Sempringham, he and Aelred of Rievaulx were close friends. Gilbert called upon Aelred during the late 1150s or early 1160s to report upon a scandal at Gilbert's double monastery at Watton in Yorkshire. A nun there, a child oblate from age 4 who had entered the convent unwillingly, had become pregnant by a lay brother; when she was found out, she was forced by her superiors to castrate her lover and then was chained in her cell. There—by what Aelred concluded had been a miracle, two beautiful women took away the nun's unborn child, her fetters fell off, and she was restored to youthful girlishness overnight. Aelred of Rievaulx, *De sanctimoniale de Wattun*, PL 195: 780-96 Giles Constable argues that that Aelred regarded the incident as a display of divine mercy, paralelling contemporary stories of the miracles of the Virgin Mary, in which sinners are protected from the consequences of violating social norms. Giles Constable, "Aelred of Rievaulx and the Nun of Watton: An Episode in the Early History of the Gilbertine Order," in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History: Subsidia 1 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Ecclesiastical Hisorical Society, 1979), 205-26.

[177] One of the most widely circulating of those texts was the treatise *Speculum virginum*, composed in about 1140 by an anonymous Rhineland author, probably a monk. It survives in thirty-eight Latin manuscripts, some of them elaborately illustrated, and twenty-six more manuscripts containing translations into vernacular languages, mostly Middle Dutch. *Speculum virginum* is a twelve-part compendium, framed as a dialogue between a nun, Theodora, and her spiritual advisor, Peregrinus, that elaborates upon the themes that Ambrose explored in *De virginibus*, including the linking of Psalm 44 to the Song of Songs., the virgins as brides of the Lamb, Mary as a model for monastic women, the virgin martyrs as models of female asceticism (including Agnes, who had turned down an earthly suitor to choose Christ as her bridegroom). Part 9 presents the virgin as the sole human being who can snare the unicorn, an image of Christ who cannot be captured by male hunters. Despite its evident popularity in manuscript during the Middle Ages, *Speculum virginum* fell into obscurity during the early modern period, and its *editio princeps* was its recent critical edition in 1990. Jutta Seyfarth, ed. *Speculum virginum,* CCCM 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990). The leading study of *Speculum virginum* is Constant J. Mews, ed., *Listen Daughter: The* Speculum virginum *and The Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, The New Middle Ages (New York et al.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

[178] Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, (1995), 29.

devil, who delights in the fall of the holiest.[179] Those female-directed texts also employed an

aesthetic and narrative principle, perhaps unique to them, that Morgan Powell describes as

"audio-visual poetics," an incorporation of "sensory experience" into scriptural exegesis and

religious instruction that emphasized the visual, whether by way of manuscript decoration or

byvivid verbal tableaux in the text. Powell argues that Psalm 44 itself, a central focus of

exegesis in twelfth-century women's religious literature, provided an explicit directive for

visual presentation: "audi filia et vide." "Picture and Scripture are part of one hermeneutic

experience," Powell writes. [180]

Certainly some of the most richly decorated manuscripts of the twelfth century were

made for and even by women. They include the sumptuous St. Albans Psalter believed to

have been made during the 1130s for the English prioress Christina of Markyate (ca. 1095-

ca. 1155);[181] respositories of the visionary writings of Hildegard of Bingen, especially the

now-lost Rupertsberg manuscript of her *Scivias* (once housed at the Benedictine convent she

founded in 1150), whose illustrations are believed to have been created at her personal

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[179] Jane Tibbetts Schulenberg similarly notes what she calls a "disproportionate admiration for female virginity" evident in patristic writings such as Jerome's letter to Eustochium and continuing in the monastic literature of the Middle Ages. Schulenberg's essay surveys the hagiography of holy women of the early Middle Ages who disfigured their beauty or feigned madness in order to protect their virginity from loss by rape or forced marriage. "The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," in *Women in the Middle Ages: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 29-72. Although Schulenberg does not make either point explicitly, the hagiographic accounts emphasize the virgin's physical beauty and also the aspects of self-martyrdom implicit in defacing it. Both are topoi of the hagiography of virgin martyrs.

[180] Morgan Powell, "The *Speculum virginum* and the Audio-Visual Poetics of Women's Religious Instruction," in *Listen Daughter,* 111-35. Powell argues that the very title *Speculum virginum* ("Mirror of Virgins") implied the visual: the bride's self-recognition and recognition of her beauty as she is presented to the bridegroom in the Song of Songs.

[181] The manuscript's shelf mark is Hildesheim, St. Godehard's Church, St. Albans Psalter.

direction;[182] and the twelfth-century Alsatian abbess Herrad of Hohenbourg's *Hortus*

deliciarum, a book of instruction for her novices perhaps illustrated by Herrad herself (its

title derives from the Song of Songs: "hortus conclusus soror mea sponsa hortus conclusus

fons signatus.").[183] The directive "audi filia et vide" seemed to be a mandate to infuse works

of female spiritual guidance with literary and visual artistry. It seems clear that the twelfth-

century association of religious women with the highly poetic text of the Song of Songs,

itself celebrating beauty and the conjunction of eros and the spiritual, inspired writings that

were also works of art.[184]

　　Twelfth-century religious writings addressed to women typically exemplified Barbara

Newman's paradigm, combining exhortations to chastity and reclusive piety with encomia to

holy wives and widows of the Bible as well as the virgin saints with whom the texts' authors

identified their monastic addressees.[185] The seventh letter in the correspondence of Peter

Abelard (ca. 1079-1142) and his onetime lover and wife, Heloise (ca.1101-1164), who

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[182] The Rupertsberg manuscript of *Scivias* was housed at the Hessische Landesbibliotek in Wiesbaden until the Second World War, when it disappeared. Copies had been made of its illustrations, however. The critical edition of *Scivias* is Adelgundis Führkötter and Angela Carlevaris, eds., *Hildegardis scivias*, CCCM 43-43A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978).

[183] Ct 4:11: "An enclosed garden is my sister and my bride; she is an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain." The sole known manuscript of the *Hortus deliciarum*, housed in the municipal library at Strasbourg, was destroyed when the library was bombed in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. Portions of the manuscript, including its miniatures, had been copied, however. A facsimile of those copies is Herrad of Hohenbourg, *Hortus deliciarum*, ed. Rosalie Green, 2 vols. (London: Warburg Institute/University of London, 1979).

[184] The exquisitely illustrated Rothschild Canticles (Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library MS 404), a devotional compendium containing a meditation on the Song of Songs, possibly written for a laywoman by a German Dominican friar in about 1300, is a late example of the genre. The leading study of the manuscript is Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles: Art and Mysticism in Flanders and the Rhineland circa 1300* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1991).

[185] Among those writings are the English prior Osbert of Clare's letter to Adelidis, abbess of Barking, composed in about 1157, and the abbot of Cluny Peter the Venerable's letter to his nieces who were nuns at the Cluniac convent of Marcigny in Burgundy, composed during the second quarter of the twelfth century. English translations of those letters are in Vera Morton and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, eds., *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*, The Library of Medieval Women (Woodbridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 2003).

became abbess at the Paraclete, the Benedictine house near Troyes that Abelard had founded

in 1121, was Abelard's celebration of biblical, early Christian, and even classical pagan holy

women, virgins, wives, widows, and reformed prostitutes such as Mary Magdalene. Abelard

argued that women were superior to men in many ways, or at least possessed the capacity to

be so. He observed that Christ's female followers, including his mother, who the Gospels

reported had stood faithfully and fearlessly at the cross of Christ after his male disciples had

deserted him, showed greater devotion, compassion, and love than any of the men.

Furthermore, Abelard wrote, holy women were actually superior to holy men; only women,

for example, could achieve the "double crown" of virginity as well as martyrdom. He wrote:

"Unde et quum innumeras videamus virgines matrem Domini in hujus excellentiae proposito

sequi, paucos agnoscimus viros hujus virtutis gratiam adeptos; qua, quocunque ierit, ipsum

sequi agnum valerent." [186] As Aelred would do in De institutione three decades later, Abelard

literally turned the male virgins of the Book of Revelation "who had not known women" and

so followed the Lamb into female virgins who followed Christ by imitating his

virgin mother.

Perhaps even more tellingly, twelfth-century writers clothed their accounts of saintly

women who were their own contemporaries with bridal imagery and topoi of dramatic escape

from earthly marriage that might have been drawn from the stories of Thecla or Agnes. An

example is the *vita* of Christina of Markyate, a nearly exact contemporary of Aelred and like

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[186] Victor Cousin, ed., *Petri Abaelardi opera*, vol. 1 (Paris: Auguste Durand, 1849), 152: "Therefore when we see the innumerable virgins following the mother of God in her mode of excellence, we realize that few men have arrived at this gift of virtue through which they are worthy to follow the lamb himself wherever he goes." An English translation of the seventh letter is in *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*, 50-95. The scriptural reference is to Apc 14:4.

Aelred, a well-born Anglo-Saxon living in an Anglo-Norman culture.[187] The *vita*, written in

Latin, possibly by a monk of the Benedictine abbey of St. Albans not far from Markyate in

Hertfordshire, and whose only surviving manuscript (the fire-damaged British Library MS

Cotton Tiberius E.i) leaves the text unfinished, tells the story of an adolescent girl who makes

a vow of perpetual virginity and then flees her parents and the fiancé to whom they have

betrothed her against her will. She first becomes a recluse and later a professed Benedictine

nun and prioress of her own convent at Markyate.[188] Like the virgins of the early Christian

hagiography whose topoi clearly influenced her *vita*, Christina is described as both beautiful

and charming ("tale decus, tanta gratia"),[189] so beautiful in fact that besides her fiancé, two

clerics try to seduce her.

The melodramatic story of Christina's efforts to elude the sexual advances of her

fiancé (he slips into her bedroom, but she hides from him by suspending herself from a nail

between the hangings and the wall) and her arranged marriage (her parents beat her black and

blue, and at one point her father strips her of all her clothing except her shift and threatens to

expel her from the house): her escape from her parents dressed as a man, and the four years

she spends hiding out in a cramped closet in a hermit's cell is a story filled with idiosyncratic

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[187] It is uncertain whether Aelred met or knew of Christina. She was, however, briefly under the protection of Thurstan, archbishop of York, who succeeded Thomas II after the latter's death in 1114.

[188] A critical edition is *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse*, ed. Charles H. Talbot (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). Kristine Haney, among other scholars, argues that Christina, although sometimes viewed as an exmplar of twelfth-century female anchoritism, did not originally aim to choose that life and became a recluse only as "a means of keeping herself hidden away from her parents and her husband. "In other words, she wanted to accept the traditional, communal form of Benedictine life practiced in England after the reforms of the late eleventh century." *St. Albans Psalter: An Anglo-Norman Song of Faith*, Studies in the Humanities: Literature—Politics—Society 60 (New York *et al*: Peter Lang, 2002), 344.

[189] *The Life of Christina of Markyate* 20 (66).

English specifics, including many local place names, that seem unquestionably real. The

hermit, Roger, even gives her a pet name in English: "sunendaege dohter"

("Sunday daughter").[190]

At the same time as Christina's *vita* accurately reflects the historical interface between

Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman culture, it is replete with the traditional literary

commonplaces of the hagiography of the virgin martyr. When her parents send her to be

interrogated by a prior, Fredebertus, she tells him, echoing Agnes, that she has rejected her

fiancé for a richer suitor: "For who is richer than Christ?" ("quis namque Christo dicior").[191]

The *vita* refers to Christina as Christ's "bride" ("sponsa"), and Christ, presented as her

bridegroom ("sponsus"), appears to her in the form of a child whom she presses to her virgin

bosom with evident pleasure: "Et inestimabili de[lectatione] nunc et virginali illum in suo

tenebat sinu. nunc intra se immo per ipsam cratam pectoris [apprehen]debat intuitu."[192] It is

only one of many visions she has of Christ and his mother. The *vita* of Christina of Markyate

is a real woman's biography that strives for credible geographic, anecdotal, and even

linguistic detail in the context of Anglo-Saxon cultural survival in Norman England, but it is

also a stylized religious romance whose models are the virgin-martyr narratives of late

antiquity. It presents the consecrated virgin as a cynosure of men's reverence, superhuman in

fortitude and inviolable in chastity.

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[190] *Ibid.* 41 (106).

[191] *Ibid.* 17 (62).

[192] *Ibid.*, 118. "And with inestimable delight she at one moment held him to her virgin breast, and at the next she indeed felt a sense of his presence within her through the barrier of her chest." Christina's is both maternal as she clutches the infant tenderly, calling to mind Mary's fleshly bond with her son, and erotic, as Christina feels his presence piercing her as though he were a lover.

By the twelfth century as well, a related interpretive tradition of the Song of Songs was in full bloom: that the Song's bride was actually the Virgin Mary herself, her fleshly bond of motherhood with her divine son seen as a version of the fleshly bond of husband and wife. This tradition also clearly had its roots in Ambrose's treatise on virginity and in Jerome's letter to Eustochium as well, for both works had presented Mary in her virginity as the supreme model for consecrated virgins (Abelard's "excellentiae proposito"). The identification of the Song's bride with Mary seemed to have originated in the late-antique Western liturgy for the feast of the Assumption, the solemn holy day of August 15 that celebrated the belief that Mary was taken bodily into heaven at the time of her death, where she rejoined the resurrected body of her son.

Bernard Capelle traced this belief regarding Mary's assumption, and its resultant feast day, a solemnity in both the Western and Eastern churches, to several second-century apocryphal acts of the apostles, especially of the apostle John, in which Mary's perpetual virginity, before and after the birth of her son, was a salient part of the apocryphal narrative. The miraculous incorruptibility of Mary's virgin body was a logical concomitant to her miraculous virginal conception of Jesus and the virginity that she miraculously sustained during parturition.[193] A fifth-century apocryphal text conventionally attributed to John, *Transitus Mariae*, provided a full-fledged and literarily influential narrative of Mary's assumption, and in the year 600 the Byzantine Emperor Mauritius placed the feast of the Assumption on liturgical calendar of Constantinople.[194] There is no record of the celebration

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[193] Bernard Capelle, "La Fête d l'Assomption dans l'histoire liturgique," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 3 (1926): 33-45.

[194] *Ibid.* See also William O'Shea, "The History of the Feast of the Assumption," *The Thomist* 14 (1951): 118-32.

of the feast in the West until the seventh century, but by the time of Charlemagne and his descendants the Assumption was being celebrated as a major solemnity throughout the Frankish dominions of Western Europe.

The Gelasian Sacramentary, a liturgical book attributed during the Middle Ages to the fifth-century Pope Gelasius but more likely composed in France in about 750, contains a reference to Christ as bridegroom in its postcommunion prayer for the Mass of the feast of the Assumption: "et ueniente sponso filio tuo unigenito accensis lampadibus eius digni praestulemur occursum."[195] The bridal allusion is to the wise virgins with their lit lamps in Matthew's parable, not to the Song of Songs, but the association of Mary with an eschatological wedding feast attended by virgins suggests the influence of the writings of Jerome and Ambrose upon the Carolingian liturgy for the feast day that celebrated Mary's incorruptible virgin body.

By the ninth century the Song of Songs had become an explicit part of the Assumption liturgy. *Liber responsalis*, a ninth century antiphonary attributed to the sixth-century Pope Gregory the Great (and thus invoking as authority Gregory's magisterial status in the Western church), freely borrowed from and paraphrased laudatory verses from the Vulgate Song of Songs so as to identify Mary as the Song's bride in its chants for the Mass and the monastic office of the hours for Assumption Day. [196] The liturgists who composed

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[195] Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, ed., *Liber sacramentorum romanae aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli (Sacramentarium gelasianum)*, Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series Maior, Fontes 4 (Rome: Herder, 1960, repr. 2004), 154: "When your only son comes, may we be worthy to stand ready to meet him with our lamps held high."

[196] *Liber responsalis sive antiphonarius*, PL78: 724-850. E. Ann Matter identifies the Antiphoner of Compiegne (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. MS lat. 17436), a manuscript from the monastery of Satin-Corneille in northern France dating between 860 and 880, as the earliest chant book attributed to Gregory and incorporating the Song of Songs into the Assumption liturgy. *The Voice of My Beloved* (n. 106), 153-55.

Liber responsalis found language in the Song that they found specifically figurative of
Mary's entry into heaven, her fleshly connection to her royal son, and her exalted status as
the virginal "enclosed garden" and "sealed fountain" in whose virginal body God had become
incarnate: "Quae est ista quae ascendit sicut aurora consurgens, pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol,
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata?....Nigra sum, sed formosa, filiae Jerusalem; ideo dilexit
me Rex, et introduxit me in cubicula sua....Hortus conclusus es, sancta Dei genitrix, hortus
conclusus, fons signatus."[197] As E. Ann Matter points out, the Vulgate uses the Latin verb
"progreditur" ("goes forth") in the "quae ista" verse (6.9) of the Song, but the composers of
Liber responsalis or their sources used the verb "ascendit" ("rises up"), which made the verse
thematically consonant with Mary's entry into heaven and the heavenly bodies of sun and
moon that she resembled.[198]

     The Carolingian liturgy's mariological reading of the Song of Songs fostered—or
perhaps cross-fertilized—a similar mariological reading in Carolingian scriptural exegesis.
Paschasius Radbertus (785-865), abbot at the monastery of Corbie in northern France, wrote

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[197] *Liber responsalis*, 799. "Who is this one who ascends rising up like gold, beautiful as the moon, brilliant as
the sun, fearful as a battle-line arrayed from the camp?....I am black but beautiful, daughters of Jerusalem, and
therefore the king has loved me and led me into his chambers....You are an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain,
holy mother of God." The verses are, in order of allusion, from Ct 6:9 (the "quae est ista"), 1:4, 1:3 (where the
Vulgate has "cellaria," or "storerooms," not "cubicula"), and 4:12. Some of the epithets for Mary borrowed from
the Song, such as "hortus conclusus" and "fons signatus" had been in theological circulation long before the
composition of the *Liber*. Mary Clayton points out that the West Saxon abbot and bishop Aldhelm (ca. 639-709)
used both of those titles for Mary in his treatise *De virginitate*, which owes a literary debt to Ambrose's *De
virginibus*. Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-
Saxon England 2 (Cambridge, U.K. *et al.*: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14-15.

[198] *The Voice of My Beloved*, 153-54. The composers of *Liber responsalis* also added the word "castrorum" to
the Vulgate verse (whose verse 6:9 lacks that noun but is otherwise identical to the pertient text of *Liber
responsalis*), an inadvertent borrowing from, or, as Matter contends, a conflation with Ct 6:3, whose text in the
Vulgate reads: "pulchra es amica mea suavis et decora sicut Hierusalem / terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata
[You are beautiful, my lover, fine and comely as Jerusalem, fearful as a battle-line arrayed from the camp]."
The verbal parallels between Ct 6:3 and Ct 6:9 might have lulled a scribe copying the Vulgate into inserting the
word "castrorum" from 6:3 into 6:9 a few verses later.

several treatises on Mary, among them a treatise on her assumption that contained at least seventeen quotations from the Song of Songs, including a version of the "quae est ista quae ascendit" text identical to that found in *Liber responsalis*.[199] On the basis of this evidence Matter argues that Radbertus "must have beem quite familar with this liturgy." Alternatively, it may be the case that the composers of *Liber responsalis* took their lead from Radbertus, but in any event, there is a close textual relationship between *Liber responsalis*, vastly influential upon the medieval liturgy because of its attribution to the authoritative Gregory, and Radbertus's treatise, vastly influential upon subsequent mariological interpretations of the Song,

Radbertus's treatise added another influential element to mariological exegesis of the Song: It explicitly linked contemplation of Mary as the Song's bride to Jerome's letter to Eustochium and thus to all consecrated virgins and the way of life they had chosen, that way of life itself already allegorically imbued with the Song's imagry, thanks to Jerome and Ambrose. Indeed, Radbertus, in a literary conceit, purported to address his treatise to Eustochium and her mother, Paula. The text's implicit, "Cogitis me" ("you two compel me"), became the title by which Radbertus's widely copied treatise was known throughout the Middle Ages. In fact, Radbertus was writing to a mother-and-daughter pair of nuns, Theodrada (a cousin of Charlemagne) and Irma, at whose double monastery dedicated to Mary near Soissons Radbertus had been left as a foundling. Theodrada was abbess of Soissons, and her two brothers were early ninth-century abbots at Corbie, where Radbertus

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[199] Paschasius Radbertus, *De assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis*, ed. Albert Ripberger, CCCM 56C (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985). The "quae est ista" passage is in *De assumptione* 47 (CCCM, 129).

spent most of his monastic life.[200] Radbertus's intentional pseudonymity was quickly

forgotten, and *Cogitis me* became enshrined as a genuine work of Jerome, invoking the

authority of the fourth-century theologian's patristic status as authority just as *Liber*

responsalis invoked the authority of Gregory the Great's patristic status. By the eleventh

century the Song of Songs was firmly entrenched in the elaborate liturgy of the Cluniac

monasteries. *Liber tramitis*, a liturgical book probably composed at the Benedictine

monastery of Farfa near Rome under the influence of the abbot and monastic reformer Odilo

of Cluny (ca. 962-ca. 1048), called for the singing of the "Quae est ista" and other verses

from the Song of Songs in the Mass and monastic office for the feast of the Assumption, its

vigil, and its octave, as well as readings from *Cogitis me*, which the book's author described

as "a sermon of St. Jerome" ("sermone sancti Hieronimi").[201]

The Assumption liturgy, together with Radbertus's mariological reading of the Song,

profoundly influenced twelfth-century exegesis. Honorius Augustodunensis (ca. 1090-ca.

1156), writing at the beginning of the twelfth century, devoted a treatise, *Sigillum Beatae*

Mariae, to explaining, in line-by-line fashion, why the Song was sung on Assumption Day,

even though its text did not appear on its face to pertain to Mary (Honorius later wrote a

mariological commentary on the Song.).[202] The first systematic mariological exegesis of the

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[200] *The Voice of My Beloved*, 152-3.

[201] Peter Dinter, ed., *Liber tramitis aevi Odilonis abbatis*, Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticum 10 (Sieburg: Schmitt, 1980), 148-54. The Song of Songs remained an integral part of the Catholic liturgy for Assumption Day until the liturgical changes that followed the Second Vatican Council. *Liber usualis*, a Latin chant book widely used before the council and still used to a lesser degree among liturgical traditionalists, provides for the singing of "Quae est ista" at lauds, the "audi filia" of Psalm 44 at the gradual of the Mass, and other verses from the Song at vespers. Benedictines of Solesmes, eds., *The Liber Usualis* (Tournai and New York: Desclee, 1959), 1600-07.

[202] Honorius's *Sigillum Beatae Mariae* is in PL 172: 495-518. His *Expositio in Cantica Canticorum* is in PL 172: 347-496. For a discussion of both works, see *The Voice of My Beloved*, 155-59.

Song, however, was that of Rupert of Deutz (ca. 1075-1129), a prolific theologian and supporter of monastic reform who during his last decade of life became abbot of the Benedictine abbey of Deutz near the Rhine in present-day Westphalia. E. Ann Matter describes Rupert as "the paramount Latin Christian writer between Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux."[203]

Rupert's *Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum*,[204] written between between 1117 and 1126 and displaying a more sophisticated knowledge of patristic exegesis on the Song than Honorius's works (indeed, Rupert's commentary might have preceded and therefore influenced that of Honorius), was not only the most extensive and systematic mariological interpretation of the Song to date, but Rupert took mariological reading of the Song to a new level. Radbertus's treatise had been purely encomiastic, imitating the Carolingian Assumption liturgy exalting Mary that had been the treatise's inspiration. Rupert added a narrative element to his exegesis, exploiting its dramatic tensions and correlating its verses to Gospel passages in order to compose a kind of life of Mary, or even an autobiography of Mary, as the Song's bride often speaks in the first person. Because the Song's bridegroom, Christ in Christian allegorical interpretation, also speaks in the first person, Rupert's life of Mary was also a life of Christ.

For example, Rupert interpreted the Song's verse "vadam ad montem murrae et ad collem turis" ("I will go to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of incense")[205] as a future-tense

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[203] *The Voice of My Beloved*, 159.

[204] Rupert of Deutz, *Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum*, ed. Hrabanus Haacke, CCCM 26 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1974).

[205] Ct 4:6.

description by Christ of his own passion and resurrection: "Ascendam Hierosolymam, et consummabuntur omnia, quae scripta sunt de me: Tradar enim gentibus ad illundendum et flagellandum, et postquam flagellauerint, crucifigent et occident me. Hoc erit ire ad montem myrrhae, scilicet mortificari uel occidi, sicut a patribus istorum mortificati sunt prophetae. Tertia die resurgam a mortuis, et deinde ascendam in caelum, et sedebo ad dextram Patris, iuxta illud: *Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede a destris meis.* Hoc erit ire *ad | collem thuris*."[206]

In similar fashion Rupert wove narrative material concerning Mary from the Gospels into his exegesis. The Song's opening verse, "osculetur me osculo oris sui," placed into Mary's mouth in Rupert's commentary, was in his interpretation a way of understanding the exchange between the angel Gabriel and Mary in Luke's annunciation narrative as signaling a lover's kiss from God the Father that would result in the conception of Christ: "Nonne hoc uerbum angeli uerbum et sponsio erat iam imminentis osculi oris Domini?...Deus Pater te osculatus est *osculo oris sui*."[207] Rupert explicated the clause "introduxit me rex in cellaria sua" of the Song's verse 1:3 as a complex commentary on Mary's meeting with her kinswoman Elizabeth in Luke's gospel. In Rupert's exegesis the "storerooms" of the Song were "the sacred mysteries" that Elizabeth, whom Luke describes as filled with the Holy

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[206] *Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum* 3 (CCCM, 77): "I will ascend to Jerusalem, et all will be fulfilled that is written concerning me, for I will be handed over to the Gentiles to be stripped and scourged, and after they have scourged me, they will crucify me and kill me. This is what it will be to go 'to the mountain of myrrh,' that is, to be dishonored and killed, just as the prophets were dishonored by the fathers of those ones. On the third day I will rise from the dead and then I will ascend into heaven, and I will sit at the right hand of the Father, according to this passage: 'The Lord said to my lord, "Sit at my right hand."' This is what it will be to go 'to the hill of incense.'" The scriptural passage in question is the opening of Vulgate Ps 109:1 (Psalm 110:1 in modern English Bibles). Translations are this writer's.

[207] *Ibid.* 1 (CCCM, 10): "Did not the speach of the angel, the speech and its response, concern an imminent kiss from the Lord?...'The kiss of his mouth' means that God the Father kissed you."

Spirit ("repleta est Spiritu Sancto Elisabeth"[208]), revealed to Mary, namely that Mary was the

mother of God, leading to Mary's song of praise, the Magnificat, equally inspired by the Holy

Spirit: "Hoc ipsa quidem dixit uerbis | aliis, scilicet uerbis cantici sui, quo anima eius

Dominum magnificauit, sed, sicut iam dictum est, prior eidem, uidilicet Elisabeth, Spiritus

sanctus, Spiritus propheticus reuelauit. Et quae sunt illa cellaria regis Dei? Nimirum sacra

mysteria, quaecumque continentur in Scripturis sanctis."[209] As Matter points out, Rupert's

hermeneutic was not merely narratological, for he also drew attention to a Marian

tropological level in the Song--that Mary was "also the model of monastic virtues: virginity,

humility, and obedience."[210]

Rupert's incorporation of narrative into exegesis of the Song influenced a growing

body of narrative-based mariological commentary. Ann Astell writes: "The identification of

Mary with the Bride provided for a fusion of the letter with allegory in the reader's

perception because of the historicity of both....Mary's historical relationship to Christ

establishes a narrative context in which the Song of Songs is literally true."[211] Eva De

Visscher states: "This new mode of reading the Song of Songs responded to a need for

greater proximity to Mary and Christ and more intimate knowledge about their relationshiop

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[208] Lc 1:41. Mary's prayer, the "Magnificat," is in Lc 1:46-55.

[209] *Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum* 1 (CCCM, 16): "Indeed he [Luke] said those very things in other words, namely the words of his song in which [Mary's] soul magnified the Lord, but, just as I have already said, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of prophecy, had earlier revealed to that same women, namely Elizabeth. And what are those storerooms of God the king? Doubtless they are the sacred mysteries, whatever is contained in Holy Scripture."

[210] *The Voice of My Beloved*, 163.

[211] *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (n. 122), 44.

than was offered by the Gospels."[212] It was thus an ideal lens with which to read the Song for those who followed the contemplative life. As E. Ann Matter points out, Rupert's commentary set an example for the Cistercian theologian Alan of Lille (ca. 1128-1202), whose In *Cantica Canticorum ad laudem Deiparae Virginis Mariae elucidatio*,[213] written at the request of the prior of Cluny and copied at several important monastic libraries on the Continent, seemed to reflect the devotional concerns of twelfth-century monastic culture (all Cistercian monasteries were dedicated to Mary). Alan repeated Rupert's assertion that the Song's verse "osculetur me osculo oris sui" expressed Mary's longing joined with Christ as he became incarnate within her body.

Aelred of Rievaulx wrote a sermon for the feast of the Assumption that explicated verses from the Song of Songs.[214] While it is possible that the inspiration for his incorporation of the Song into his sermon might have been the Assumption Day liturgy itself or even Radbertus's *Cogitis me*, it is far more likely that Aelred knew Rupert's mariological commentary or some of its progeny. Aelred's homelitic text was the Song's "in lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea / quaesivi illum et non inveni."[215] He interpreted the plaintive verse, with its lover's longing to unite herself with her beloved, to describe Mary's assumption into heaven as a search for her divine son prompted by her desire to be with him after her death. This is an element of narrative that hearkens back to the literary methodology of Rupert or those who imitated him.

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[212] Eva De Visscher, "Marian Devotion in the Latin West in the Later Middle Ages," in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (Oxford *et al.*: Oxford University Press, 2007), 177-201, at 198.

[213] PL 210: 55-110.

[214] Aelred of Rievaulx, Sermon 18, *In assumptione Beatae Mariae*, PL 195: 309-16.

[215] Ct 3:1: "In my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him but I did not find him."

Furthermore, narrative is the very technique that animates the vivid tableaux from the Gospel accounts of Christ's life that make up the first part of the triple meditation in Aelred's *De institutione*. Mary plays a key role in the triple meditation, and Aelred bids his sister to join Mary in her joys and griefs. It is possible that Rupert of Deutz might have been the ultimate inventor of the meditative technique by which women, emulating and embodying Mary's virginity and other virtues, could strive to unite themselves emotionally as well as spiritually with the heavenly bridegroom they had chosen.

Although Aelred might not have known Rupert's *Commentaria* directly, he was without question familiar with the third important strand of literary influence upon his *De institutione*, the *Confessiones* of Augustine of Hippo, which, as mediated through the eleventh-century devotional writings of Anselm of Canterbury, offered a strategy for for using personal experience as a devotional technique oriented ultimately toward contemplation of the passion of Christ. The *Confessiones*, written about a decade after Augustine's dramatic conversion to Catholic Christianity in 387, combined intimate and emotionally rendered autobiographical material (Augustine had become deeply attached to a concubine whom he could not marry for social reasons but who bore him an adored son) with philosophical speculation and abject prayer. Augustine addressed his work his directly to Godk and he confronted God with passionate passages that dwelt upon his sense of his own unworthiness as a sinner, especially a fleshly sinner, and God's all-seeing grandeur and all-forgiving mercy.

Augustine had been baptized in Milan by Ambrose, and as he related in the *Confessiones*, he had become entranced before his conversion by Ambrose's sophisticated allegorical readings of biblical texts using a figurative hermeneutic ultimately borrowed from

Origen.[216] Those allegorical and highly allusive interpretations, with their boundless

possibilities for teasing spiritual meanings out of texts that did not yield those meanings on

their literal surface, clearly influenced not only Augustine's own scriptural readings but also a

scripturally allusive literary methodology that he would bring to his writing. This famously

elegant passage from the *Confessiones*, essentially an intimate and sensuous prayer, is richly

redolent of the Song of Songs (possibly influenced by Ambrose's fascination with the Song)

both in its imagery of lovers' flight and pursuit and its poetic rhythms and rhetoric of rolling

parallel constructions:

> Sero te amaui, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam noua, sero te amaui! et ecce intus
> eras et ego foris, et ibi te quaerebam, et in ista formosa, quae fecisti, deformis
> inruebam. mecum eras, et tecum non eram. ea me tenebant longe a te, quae si in te
> non essent, non essent. uocasti et clamasti et rupisti surditatem meam, coruscasti,
> splenduisti et fugasti caecitatem meam: fragrasti, et duxi spiritum, et anhelo tibi,
> gustaui et esurio et sitio, tetigisti me, et exarsi in pacem tuam.[217]

Charles Taylor describes Augustine as a pivotal figure in the Western tradition, introducing

to Western thought a "language of inwardness" suggesting that the way to knowledge of God

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[216] Augustine of Hippo, *Confessiones* 5.14, ed. Pius Knöll, CSEL 33.1 (Prague *et al.*: Tempsky and Freytag, 1896), 111: "...maxime audito uno atque altero, et saepius aenigmate soluto de scriptis ueteribus, ubi, cum ad litteram acciperem, occidebar." [above all, I heard first one and then another puzzling passage of the Old Testament more often parsed out spiritually ('spiritaliter' later), passages that, when I had taken them literally, had killed my faith....]" Augustine was alluding to 2 Cor 3:6. The Vulgate version of that text is: "littera enim occidit Spritus autem vivificat [moreover the letter kills, but the spirit brings to life]."

[217] *Ibid.*, 10.27 (CSEL, 255): "Too late have I loved you, beauty so ancient and so new. Too late have I loved you! And lo, you were within me, and I was outside, where, when I sought you in those lovely things that you made, I rushed into them hideously. You were with me, and I was not with you, and they kept me from you-- those things that if they did not exist in you, did not exist. You called and cried out, and you broke down my deafness. You blazed and glittered with splendor, and you put to flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now I pant for you. I tasted you, and now I hunger and thirst for you. You touched me, and I was set on fire in your peace."

was intense scrutiny of one's own experiences and one's own emotions—going inward as a means of going upward, as Taylor writes.[218]

Augustine's *Confessiones*, as well as his *Soliloquia*, a prayerful internal dialogue that he had written around the time of his conversion ten years earlier, were widely read in Western Europe during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Peter Abelard's *Historia calamitatum*, while centered on Abelard's perceived grievances against his theological opponents and others whom he believed had misjudged and misused him—self-justifying themes that would have been alien to Augustine's constant sense of his own worthlessness-- bears the mark of the combination of autobiographical narrative and unremitting introspection that had characterized the *Confessiones*.[219] Indeed Abelard claimed to quote knowledgeably from the *Confessiones* in the eighth letter of his correspondence with Heloise.[220] The *Confessiones* were an even more immediate and compelling model for Aelred, as his hagiographer Walter Daniel related in his *vita* of Aelred. Walter wrote of Aelred during the last four years of his life, when he took up severe ascetic practices out of remorse for his past sins: "Legebat autem libros quorum litera lacrimas elicere solet et edificare mores, et maxime confessiones Augustini manibus portabat assidue, eo quod illos libros quasi quasdam introducciones habebat cum a seculo conuerteretur."[221]

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[218] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 131.

[219] See *Historia calamitatum*.

[220] *Petri Abaelardi opera*, vol 1, 81. Abelard misattributed this passage to the *Confessiones*: "Multum pecat qui inobediens est suis prelatis in aliquo, si vel meliora eligat quam ea quae sibi jubentur [he sins greatly by disobeying his superiors even if he chooses something better than what he was ordered to do]" This passae is nowhere to be found in the *Confessiones*.

[221] *Vita Ailredi* (n. 2), 50. "Moreover, he read books that were wont to elicit tears and to build good habits, and most of all he constantly carried in his hands the *Confessiones* of Augustine, for he had found a certain guidance

Aelred's *De institutione* bore out Walter's assessment of his mentor's devotion to Augustine's work. The second, autobiographical section of *De institutione*'s triple meditation, in which Aelred narrated to his sister his spiritual transformation out a youthful life of sexual excess by the sheer power of God's grace could only be a close imitation of the *Confessiones*, to the point of incorporating Augustine's very theology of grace, enslaving bad habits, and the weakness of the human will:

> Eia soror, diligenter attende, omnia ista turpia et nefanda, in quae me meum praecipitauit arbitrium, et scito te in haec omnia corruisse, si non te Christi misericordia conseruasset....Ad illud quantae fuit gratiae, quod fugientem prosecutus est, timenti blanditus quod erexit in spem totiens desperatum, quod suis obruit beneficiis ingratum, quod gustu interioris dulcedinis immundis assuetum delectationibus attraxit et illexit, quod indissolubilia malae consuetudinis uincula soluit, et abstractum saeculo benigne suscepit.[222]

Aelred used Augustine's narrative trajectory from sin to conversion and also Augustine's "language of inwardness" to craft a mode of devotional literature whose power derived from the fact that it was self-abnegating, emotionally effusive, and intensely experiential.[223] It was not surprising that parts of Aelred's triple meditation were later thought to have been written by Augustine himself.

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in those books when he had been converted from worldly things." See also 58, in which Walter Daniel states that Aelred's Psalter, his personal copy of John's Gospel, and the *Confessiones* are the three books that he has with him on his deathbed.

[222] *De institutione inclusarum* (n.1) 32 (CCCM, 675): "See well, sister, all these shameful and wicked things into which my will hurled me, and know that you would have fallen into all these things if the mercy of Christ had not preserved you....How great were his graces that pursued me when I fled,. He kindly spurred me on when I was afraid, he aroused me to hope when I was so often in despair, he overwhelmed my ungratefulness with his kindnesses, he dragged and enticed me away from my practice of filthy pleasures by the taste of interior sweetness, he broke the unbreakable chains of bad habits, and he gently took me to himself after rescuing me from the world."

[223] See Pierre Courcelle, "Aelred de Rievaulx à l'école des 'Confessions,'" *Revue des études augustiennes* 3 (1957): 163-74.

The influence of the *Confessiones* upon the works of Anselm of of Canterbury—another sprirual writer to whom medieval scribes sometimes attributed Aelred's triple meditation—was even more striking. Robert Southern described Anselm's nineteen *Orationes siue meditationes*, written between the years 1060 and 1078 when Anselm was a monk at the monastery of Bec in Normandy, as triggering an "influence so profound on Christian devotion that it has been called 'the Anselmian revolution.'"[224] Anselm's highly personal and highly emotional style was not entirely unique. André Wilmart, Jean Leclerq, Jean-Paul Bonnes, and most recently, Rachel Fulton, have pointed to similarities between Anselm's meditative techniques and those of his near-contemporary, the Norman monk and spiritual writer John of Fécamp (d. 1079).[225] Still, there is no doubt that Anselm transformed traditions of prayer in the West, which had been hitherto influenced mostly by the Psalms, the liturgy, and a largely Carolingian genre of private (in contrast to liturgical) prayer. Thomas Bestul has noted the presence of a copy of the *Confessiones* in the library at Bec in a twelfth-century catalogue and has traced the literary influence of the *Soliloquia* and the *Confessiones* not only upon Anselm's crafting of a cadenced prose style that resembled Augustine's predicated on balanced clauses and subtle use of rhyme in parallel constructions

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[224] Robert Southern, Foreword, *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, trans. Benedicta Ward (Harmondsworth, U.K., and New York: Penguin, 1973, repr. 1979), 18. Southern was quoting from his own *St. Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 1963). The critical edition of the prayers and meditations is Anselm of Canterbury, *Orationes siue meditationes*, ed. Francis Schmitt, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Nelson and Sons, 1946).

[225] Later medieval scribes and their readers mistook some of John's writings for those of Anselm and attached Anselm's name to them. For André Wilmart's assessment of which prayers and meditations attributed to Anselm during the late Middle Ages and early modern period are more properly attributable to other writers, including John of Fécamp and Aelred himself, see the second chapter of this dissertation See also Jean Leclerq and Jean-Paul Bonnes, *Jean de Fécamp: Un maître de la vie spirituelle*, Études de Théologie et D'Histoire de la Spiritualité (Paris: Librairie Phlosophique J. Vrin, 1946), 34-47, 63-68 (the latter pages deal with the influence of Augustine's *Confessiones* on John's writings), and Rachel Fulton, <u>From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200</u> (Introduction to this dissertation, n. 76), 158-70.

(the quotation from the *Confessiones* above displays both of those features), but also upon

Anselm's intense focus upon his own experiences and his thoroughly experiential approach to

religious devotion in the *Orationes*. Bestul writes: "From the *Confessiones* Anselm could

have acquired the traits of his fervent personal style, in particular the extensive use of

exclamation and of the successions of agitated questions, directed in part to oneself, in part to

God, through which an attempt is made to probe the depths of private

religious experience."[226]

To Augustine's elegantly rendered exploration of the self as a vehicle for prayer and

religous devotion, Anselm added another element: the mediating of that self-exploration and

prayerful fervor through the passion of Christ. In his second *Oratio*, addressed directly to

Christ (and not to God the father as Augustine's *Confessiones* had been), Anselm used quasi-

erotic language reminiscent of Augustine's: "Te sitio, te esurio, te desidero, te concupisco."[227]

Furthermore, Anselm placed himself mentally into each episode of Christ's passion, reliving

Christ's pain and humiliation in his authorial imagination, and reproaching himself, not just

for his sins but for his having escaped the torments that Christ endured for his sake:

> Cur, o anima mea, te praesentem non transfixit gladius doloris acutissimi, cum
> ferre non posses vulnerari lancea latus tui salvatoris? Cum videre nequires violari

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[226] Thomas H. Bestul, "St. Augustine and the *Orationes sive Meditationes* of St.Anselm," in *Anselm Studies 2: Proceedings of the Fifth International Saint Anselm Conference: St. Anselm and St. Augustine—Episcopi ad Saecula*, eds. Joseph C. Schaubelt *et al.* (White Plains, N.Y.: Kraus International, 1988), 597-606. Bestul notes that the first two of Anselm's *Meditationes* contain apprently autobiographical material focusing penitentially on Anselm's youthful fleshly sins—an Augustinian topos also used by Aelred in his triple meditation. See also Bestul, "Devotional Writing in England from Anselm to Richard Rolle," in *Mysticism: Medieval and Modern*, ed. Valerie M. Lagorio, Salzburg Studies in English Literature, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 92, no. 20 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1986), and "Antecedents: The Anselmian and Cistercian Contributions," in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, ed.William F. Pollard and Robert Boenig (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 1-20.

[227] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio 2*, *Orationes sive meditationes*, l. 30 (7): "I thirst for you, I hunger for you, I desire you, I sigh for you, I wish to possess you."

clavis manus et pedes tui plasmatoris? Cum horrores effundi sanguinem tui
redemptoris? Cur non es inebriata lacrimarum amaritudine, cum ille potaretur
amaritudine fellis? Cur non es compassa castissimae virgini, dignissimae matri
eius, benignissimae dominae tuae?[228]

In these parallel cadences marked by rhetorical antitheses that heightened their paradoxical

effect Anselm thrust his readers, implicitly asked to identify with his first-person voice,

directly into the passion itself so as to experience Christ's sufferings imaginitively even as

they reproached themselves for not having experienced them physically and for having been

the cause of those torments via their sins.

Anselm also made Mary a prominent character in his prayer, for it was she who had

suffered imaginatively ("compassa") the pains her son had suffered physically. In Anselm's

Orationes Mary (to whom Anselm addressed three of his nineteen prayers) was a sort of alter

ego of her son, capable of perfect love as her son was for even the unworthiest of their

supplicants; She also, by reason of her humanity, her maternal bond with her son, and her

own sinlessness, was uniquely able to bridge by her intercession the bridge between the

human sinner and the suffering God. In Anselm's view Christ's crucifixion was a

demonstration of his human love, and Mary, suffering at his side and equally loving,

dramatized that love visually. ("Amator et miserator hominum, tu potuisti reos tuos et usque

ad mortem amare, et poteris te roganti amorem tui et matris tuae negare? Mater huius

amatoris nostri, quae illum in ventre portare et in sinu meruisti lactare, an tu non poteris aut

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[228] *Ibid.*, ll. 42-47 (7-8): "Why, O my soul, were you not present so that the sword of most sharp pain did not
pierce you? When you could not bear to see the side of your savior wounded by the lance? When you could not
endure to see the hands and feet of your creator violated by nails? When you you recoiled with horror at the
blood flowing from your redeemer? Why were you not made drunk with the bitterness of tears when he was
given to drink the bitterness of gall? Why did you not suffer together with the most chaste virgin, his most
worthy mother and your most kindly lady?"

non voles poscenti amorem eius et tuum impetrare?")[229] Anselm thus fashioned a tripartite

relationship of devotion involving Christ, Mary, and Anselm himself (and his readers) in

which Mary's sorrowing and maternal presence at the foot of the cross was a key factor in

stirring up the desired reciprocation of Christ's love on the part of the sinner.

Finally, Anselm introduced a narrative element into his prayer to Christ that was to

prove highly influential upon other works. Using climactic repetitions of the word "memor"

("I call to mind"), he worked through the painful events of the crucifixion—blows, scourges,

wounds, and death—that not only brought these episodes vividly to the reader's mind for

meditative purposes but told a story. "[M]emor passionis tuae, memor alaparum tuarum,

memor flagellorum, memor crucis, memor vulnerum tuorum, memor qualiter pro me occisus

es, qualiter conditus, qualiter sepultus, simul memor gloriosae tuae resurrectionis et

admirabilis ascensionis," Anselm wrote.[230] Anselm's incorporation of narrative into

devotional material and his use of narrative to evoke the precise sort of empathetic remorse

that he believed to be the object of prayer proved to be his most powerful influence upon the

devotional writers of the decades that followed him. So immediate and overwhelming was

Anselm's reputation as a devotional writer that within a few decades after his death in 1109

the contents of *Orationes sive meditationes* had swollen from twenty-two indisputably

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[229] Anselm, *Oratio 7*, *Orationes sive meditationes*, ll. 191-95 (25): "Lover and pitier of humankind, you could love those who crucified you even unto death, can you deny the pleas of one who loves you and your mother? Mother of this lover of ours, who bore him in your womb and were worthy of giving him him milk from your breast, can you not or will you not procure his love for this one who begs for it?"

[230] *Oratio 2*, ll. 33-36 (7): "I call to mind your passion, I call to mind the blows, I call to mind the whips, I call to mind the cross, I call to mind your wounds, I call to mind in what manner you died for me, in what manner you were embalmed with spices, in what manner you were buried, and at the same time I call to mind your glorious resurrection and your wondrous ascension."

genuine prayers by Anselm to more than sixty pryaers attributed to him (Aelred's triple meditation accounted for three of the spurious prayers).[231]

The eleventh-century Flemish monk Goscelin of Saint Bertin (ca.1020-ca.1107), a contemporary of Anselm who had emigrated to England in 1058 and spent the rest of his life in various Benedictine houses in eastern and southern England, wrote an epistolatory treatise in about 1082, titled the *Liber confortatorius* ("Book of Consolation") in its single surviving manuscript dating from the mid-twelfth century. Goscelin addressed the treatise to Eve, a young nun at the Benedictine abbey of Wilton in Wiltshire who had been a pupil of his but in about 1079 had abruptly and secretively left England to join a community of anchoresses in Angers in northwestern France.[232] Goscelin's *Liber* frequently alluded to and made clear its literary dependence upon Jerome's letter to Eustochium and Jerome's exegetical use of Psalm 44's "audi filia," as well as Ambrose's *De virginibus*.

Goscelin was also familiar with Augstine's *Confessiones*, and his *Liber* displayed a tone, emotional, personal, and characterized by Goscelin's plaintive feelings of abandonment by his protegée, that showed Augustine's literary influence.[233] Significantly, in light of Anselm's *Orationes*, Goscelin's *Liber* included a narrative meditation on Christ's passion that also focused on Mary, who had stood by the cross transfixed by her sword of sorrow, and in an imaginative embellishment of the Gospel stories, postulated that Jesus had longed to tear

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[231] See Thomas H. Bestul, "The Verdun Anselm, Ralph of Battle, and the Formation of the Alnselmian Apocrypha," *Revue Bénédictine* 87: 383-89 (1977).

[232] The critical edision is Charles H. Talbot, ed., *The Liber Confortatorius of Goscelin of Saint Bertin*, Studia Anselmiana 37, Analectica Monastica, 3rd ser. (Rome: Herder, 1955). An English translation is *The Book of Encouragement and Consolation [*Liber Confortatorius*]: The Letter of Goscelin to the Recluse Eva*, trans. Monka Otter (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 2004).

[233] Goscelin alluded to the *Confessiones* in his *Liber*. See *Liber confortatorius* 1 (33 in Talbot's edition).

his palms from the nails that affixed them in order to embrace his sorrowing mother but refrained from descending from the cross so as not to void his redemptive mission.[234] Even more significantly, Goscelin used an allusion to the Song of Songs to describe the weeping Mary, tying the tradition of Marian readings of the Song's passionate content to the emotions of grief and love to be stirred up in the heart by the contemplation of Christ's passion. Goscelin wrote of Mary, "[P]eperit...unica unicum," calling her the unique one who had give birth to the unique one—her son's mate, in a sense—and paraphrased the Song in describing her: "oculi eius ut piscine in Esebon."[235] In Goscelin's exegesis Mary's eyes were like the fishpools of Heshbon not because her eyes were beautiful (as in the Song's praise of the bride's lovely body) but because they had overflowed like fountains with a torrent of grieving tears: "de sanctis fontibus exundabant torrentem suum."[236]

Other writers similarly found in the diction of the Song a language in which they could describe Christ's intense and personal love for humankind as expressed in the voluntary gift of his painful death for their redemption. Rupert of Deutz related, in his Marian *Commentaria* on the Song of Songs and also in a commentary on Matthew's Gospel, a dream he had had in which he had looked at a crucifix in his monastery's church. He saw the image

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[234] *Liber confortatorius* 1 (31 in Talbot's edition: "Miseratus est benignus Ihesus flentem et ultro excepisset ruentem, sed utrisque palmis confixus manebat ad crucem, nolens descendendo euacuare nostri redeptionem [Jesus in his kindness took pity on her as she wept and would have caught her as she fainted, but he remained affixed to the cross by both his plams, not wishing to nullify our redemption by descending]."

[235] *Ibid.* See Ct 7:4: "oculi tui sicut piscinae in Esebon [your eyes are like the fishpools of Heshbon]."

[236] *Ibid.*: "Her eyes poured forth their torrent of tears from those sacred fountains."

of the crucified Christ come alive, inviting (as Rupert though) the young monk to embrace

him, even to kiss him on the mouth—a replication of the lover's kiss that opens the Song.[237]

       Reginald of Durham wrote a *vita* of Godric of Finchale (ca. 1065-1170), a merchant

seaman from Norfolk who became a hermit in County Durham, where his life of severe

austerity seemed to imitate that of the northern saint Cuthbert, whom he revered. According

to Reginald, Godric was also a friend of Aelred, who occasionally visited him, Reginald

related, on his travels north as abbot of Rievaulx, and it was Aelred, along with many other

friends, who persuaded Reginald to write his *vita* of Godric.[238] Reginald's *vita* recounted

several visions that Godric had experienced after taking up his solitary life. In the most

striking of those visions Godric, who had fallen asleep while praying in the monastic church

at Finchale, saw the image of Christ on the crucifix above the altar come alive, in a startling

parallel to Rupert's vision. Out of the wounded right side of the crucified Christ emerged a

beautiful little boy—"totus candissimus et genis purpureis rubicundus" in the words of

Reginald that echoed the Song's "candidus et rubicundus"—who walked around the church

glittering with a brightness whiter than snow, his eyes shining like stars as they gazed on

Godric, then re-entered the wound from which he had come.[239]

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[237] *Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum* (n. 226), 5 (CCCM, 110-111); and *De gloria et honore Filii hominis super Mattheum*, ed. Hrabanus Haacke, CCCM 29 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1979), 382-83.

[238] Reginald of Durham, *De vita et miraculis S. Godrici, heremitae de Finchale*, Publications of the Surtees Society (London: Nichols and Son, Edinburgh: Laing and Forbes, 1847), 19, 173.

[239] To modern readers Godric's complex vision might suggest childbirth, with the wound in Christ's side as a kind of womb from which the boy emerged. Flora Lewis argues that such an interpretation would not have been alien to medieval readers. In a study of late-medieval devotional literature and art, she points out that medieval exegetes, artists, and devotional writers regularly depicted and venerated the wound as a fruitful source of redeeming grace. Lewis pays special attention to the Rothschild Canticles, with their illustration of the naked Christ wounded by his bride, as a potent example of the metaphorical power of sexual union in representing human salvation accomplished by the sheer force of God's love. Flora Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side and the Instruments of the Passion: Gendered Experience and Response," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the*

The sight of the shining purple-cheeked child, so physically near to Godric and embodying the intense love for humankind that Christ's passion represented, prompted the hermit to murmur an emotional silent prayer that would become a kind of template for later devotional entreaties. "'Jesu pie, Jesu dulciflue, Jesu misericors et benignissime, Tui nunc miselli miserere.'"[240] Godric had other visions similar in content: a crucifix whose image of Christ had briefly descended from the cross to display the bodily marks of his passion in detail, and a eucharistic host that attached itself to the crossbar of the altar crucifix. Reginald described the latter episode: "Est etiam aliquis ante cujus oculos Domini Jesu Crucifixi forma apparuit, quae primitus pedum vestigia vulneribus clavorum confixa protulit, postea genua et ventris paulatim serena monstravit, denique effigiem plenissimam totius Corporis, quae vulneratis manibus latus exhibuit, madenti curore et sanguine undas redemptionis salutiferae profundentis."[241] Reginald—perhaps following the lead of Godric himself—laid out for his readers a highly visual and corporeal display of Christ's suffering designed to evoke love and gratitude.[242]

Visual Evidence, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor, British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (London and Toronto: British Library and University of Toronto Press, 1996), 204-29. Jennifer O'Reilly, in a study ot the twelfth-century narratives of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, has emphasized the sheer power of the coinjoined words "red and white"—evoking the Song of Songs as mediated through the eleventh- and twelfth-century exegesis on the Song—in describing the deaths of martyrs and linking them implicitly to the passiion of Christ. Jennifer O'Reilly, "'Candidus et Rubicundus': An Image of Martyrdom in the 'Lives' of Thomas Becket," *Analecta Bollandiana* 99 (1981): 303-14.

[240] *Ibid.,* 157-58:"Loving Jesus, Jesus overflowing with sweetness, merciful and kindest Jesus, have murcy on your wretched sinner now."

[241] *Ibid.*, 222: "He [Godric] is also the one before whose eyes the image of the crucified Jesus appeared, an image that earlier had displayed the pierce-marks on his feet made by the wounds from the nails, and afterwards gradually shown him his belly, his fair knees, and finally, the fullest likeness of his whole body, whose his side and his wounded hands brought forth, in dripping gore and blood, the gushing tidal wave of our redemption."

[242] Peter Dinzelbacher lists other English visionaries of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who reported similar experiences of Christ's passion to those of Godric: Waldef of Melrose (d. 1159), who saw the Mass host transformed into the boy Jesus, whom he embraced; Bartholomew of Farne (d. 1193), who reported that Christ

The use of the Song of Songs as a mode of interpretation of Christ's passion made its way into Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons on the Song. Bernard's Sermon 61, composed shortly before his death, read the Song's clause "columba mea in foraminis petrae [my dove is in the clefts of the rock],"[243] as a springboard for an extended meditation on Christ's passion in which Bernard used the passion narrative to explain that the clefts in the rock were not simply Christ's wounds but fissures through which he, Bernard, could suck Christ's mercy like honey. Bernard wrote:

> Ego vero fidenter quod ex me mihi deest, usurpo mihi ex visceribus Domini, quoniam misericordia affluunt, nec desunt foramina, per quae effluant. Foderunt manus eius et pedes, latusque lancea foverunt, et per has rimas licet mihi surgere mel de petra, oleumque de saxo durissimo, id est gustare et videre quoniam suavis est Dominus....Quidni videam per foramen? Clamat clavus, clamat vulnus, quod vere Deus sit in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi....Patet arcanum cordis per foramina corporis, patet magnum illud pietatis sacramentum, patent VISCERA MISERICORDIAE DEI NOSTRI IN QUIBUS VISITA NOS ORIENS EX ALTO. Quidni viscera per vulnera pateant?[244]

Bernard's vivid physical image of the bleeding wounds of Christ as the fissures through which literally poured his love and mercy likely influenced Aelred's directive to his sister that she immerse herself in Christ's wounds like the Song's dove in the cleft of the rock.

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had embraced him from the cross; and a monk named Edmund who, as reported by Adam of Eynsham (ca. 1156-1233), experienced the sweetness of Christ and wept with exultation. Peter Dinzelbacher, "The Beginnings of Mysticism Experienced in Twelfh-Century England," in *The Medieval MysticalTradition in England; Exeter Symposium 4*, ed. Marian Glasscoe (Cambridge, U.K.: Boydell and Brewer, 1987), 111-31.

[243] Ct 2:14.

[244]*Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 61.2.4, *Sancti Bernardi opera* 2: 150-51: "As for me, however, whatever is lacking in me, I confidently seize upon from the heart of the Lord, which pours over with mercy, and there is no lack of clefts through which they pour out. They put holes into his hands and feet, and they gored his side with a lance, and through these fissures honey is permitted to flow to me from the rock and oil from the hardest of stone—that is, I can taste and see how good the Lord is. Why should I not look through the cleft? The nail [that pierced Christ] cries out, the wound cries out that God is truly in Christ reconciling the world to himelf. The secret of his heart is laid open through the clefts in his body, that great mystery of his devotion to us is laid open, the very heart of the mercy of God is laid open, through which he has come upon us like the rising sun. Why should not his heart be laid open through his wounds?" The penultimate sentence is a conflation of 1 Tim 3:16 and the prayer of Zachary in Lc 1:78.

Powerful visual images such as these, along with Bernard's intense concern with Christ's human love and its generation of a relationship with God upon a human level, helped transform Bernard, in the eyes of his readers and imitators, into perhaps the premier Latin devotional writer of the high Middle Ages on the subject of Christ's passion, even though Bernard in fact wrote sparsely about the passion directly. His name alone connoted empathetic fervor, and it quickly became attached to works displaying such fervor that Bernard did not write. Thomas Bestul has identified seven different narrative and meditative passion texts attributed to Bernard and dating from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries.[245] An eighth pseudepigraphal passion text, titled *Lamentatio in passionem Christi*[246] and probably dating from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, was replete with the emotion-charged rhetorical questions that characterized Bernard's Sermon 61. The *Lamentatio* was so closely identified with Bernard during the later Middle Ages—and circulated so widely--that brief passages from it, often identified in the margins of their manuscripts with the initial "B" or a "Ber" for Bernard's name—became ejaculatory prayers. The *Lamentatio* began in the form of a prayer to Christ:

> Quis me consolabitur, Domine Jesu Christe, qui te vidi in cruce suspensum, plagis lividum, morte pallidum; et non sum crucifixo compasus, obsecutus mortuo, ut saltem lacrymis meis loca illa vulnerum delinirem?...Quid dicam? quid faciam? quo vadam? ubi te Dominum meum quaeram? ubi te inveniam? quem interrogabo? quis annunciabit dilecto meo quia amore langueo? Renuit consolari anima mea, nisi te, dulcedo mea sancta, attenderem et ad osculum oris tui. O bone Jesu!²⁴⁷

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[245] *Texts of the Passion*, Appendix 2, 187-92.

[246] PL 184: 769-72.

[247] *Ibid*, 521: "Who will comfort me, Lord Jesus Christ, who saw you hung from the cross, discolored with bruises, white from death, and yet I did not suffer with you when you were crucified, I did not sink down before your dead body in order to cover with my tears those places where you were wounded?...What shall I say? What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where shall I seek you, my Lord? Where shall I find you? Whom shall I ask about

The *Lamentatio*'s linguistic liftings from the Song of Songs ("quia amore langueo," "osculum oris tui") coupled with the Song's motif of a lover's pursuit, a highly personal and self-referential style evocative of Bernard, a vivid visual presentation of Christ's passion, and the theme, borrowed from Anselm's prayer to Christ, of the speaker's sense of abject unworthiness because he could not physically suffer with his savior—all these combined to make the *Lamentatio* one of the most widely copied and literarily influential of high-medieval devotional texts.

The *Lamentatio*'s reputed author, Bernard of Clairvaux, acquired iconic status among late-medieval scribes as a writer of emotionally intense works of meditation on Christ's suffering humanity. The very phrase "O bone Jesu!" signaled to readers that they were in the literary presence of Bernard, who in turn could lead them by the sheer power of his language into an intense and loving relationship with the good Jesus who had laid down his life for them.[248] This was an honor that Bernard shared with Anselm and and also with Augustine;

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you? Who will tell my beloved that I am sick with love? My soul refuses to be comforted unless you, my holy sweetness, extend to her the kiss of your mouth, O good Jesus!"

[248] Bernard was also believed during the later Middle Ages to have been the author of *Dulcis Iesu memoria*, a widely copied and literarily influential Latin poem (its editor, André Wilmart, counted eighty-eight surviving manuscripts) that probably dates from the thirteenth century. Wilmart, ed., *Le "Jubilus" Dit de Saint Bernard*, Storia e Letteratura 2 (Rome: Edizioni di "Storia et Letteratura," 1944). While not a passion text *per se*, *Dulcis Iesu memoria* was a model for other poetry that did concern itself with Christ's passion. The poem, as Wilmart pointed out in his detailed annotations, is literarily dependent on both the Song of Songs (hence its emphasis on the "sweetness" and the amorous nature of Christ expressed in embraces and kisses), and also Bernard's sermons on the Song. Wilmart and Étienne Gilson contended that the poem's author, while unlikely to have been Bernard himself, was probably a Cistercian who knew and revered Barnard's work. See Étienne Gilson, "Le mystique cistericienne et le Iesu dulcis memoria," in *Les idées et les lettres* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1932), 39-57.

both of whose reputations generated numerous apocryphal texts on the theme of Christ's passion during the later Middle Ages.[249]

From the late eleventh through the early thirteenth centuries, it can be seen, religious writers and their readers in Western Europe engaged in a variety of complex readings of the Song of Songs that centered around the erotic literalness of its language and the theological implications of interpreting the Song as a canticle of passionate love. Viewing the Song as a narrative dramatization of the bridal status of the consecrated virgin, of the fleshly bond between Mary and her son, or of the emotions of remorse and gratitude engendered by contemplation of Christ's passion was a natural outcome of this sort of interpretation. In some devotional works several strands of interpretation of the Song converged. Philip of Harvengt (ca. 1100-1183), a Premonstratensian abbot in Hainault (and a biographer of Augustine who knew the *Confessiones* well) wrote a Marian commentary on the Song that interpreted parts of the Song as a passion text.[250] Concerning the Song's verse "nolite me considerare quod nigra sum quia deoloravit me sol,"[251] Philip wrote: "Quod nigra sum, quod moesta sum, quod me circumvolat nebula momentaneae laesionis, quod usque ad animam intrant aquae, pertransit gladius passionis: ille fecit verus Sol, ille ad hoc suo consilio me adduxit, ille faciei meae hujusmodi fucum vel nigredinem superduxit...Sol qui respectu vultus sui cuncta reficit

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[249] Thomas Bestul counts at least three widely read passion meditations mistakenly attributed to Augustine dating from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, including a spurious *Soliloquia* probably composed during the thirteenth century. *Texts of the Passion*, 4-7, 187-90.

[250] Philip of Harvengt, *Commentaria in Cantica Canticorum*, PL 203: 181-490.

[251] Ct 1:5. "Do not judge me because I am black, because the sun has stained me." The Stuttgart edition of the Vulgate has the subjunctive "sim" rather than the indicative "sum" and "fusca" ("dark") rather than "nigra" (black)." Ct. 1:4, however, states: "nigra sum sed formosa [I am black but beautiful]."

et decorat, sua quadam absentia me ad modicum docolorat."[252] Out of the language of the

Song Philip constructed a literary rood-screen for contemplation in which Mary stands

darkened by her grief next to her son's cross.[253]

When Aelred of Rievaulx, in the triple meditation that formed the climax of his *De institutione inclusarum*, bade his anchoress-sister to stand with Mary as virgin near the cross, to seek shelter in Christ's wounds like a dove in a rock-cleft, to stain her lips scarlet from kissing those wounds, and to be with Christ during every blow of his passion, he epitomized

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[252] *Commentaria in Cantica Canticorum* 20 (PL: 230-31): "That I am black, that I am troubled, that a cloud of stabbing pain envelops me, that rain-waters soak me me down to to my soul—the sword of sorrow pierces me. He who is the true Sun did this, he led me to this according to his plan, and so he placed dark dye or blackness upon my face....The Sun who restores and makes beautiful all things by the gaze of his face stains me somewhat by this absence of his."

[253] During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the depiction of the crucified Christ in Western European art changed as well, the figure of Christ appearing more contorted with pain, with his head drooped to his right shoulder in death. The culmination of this development, documented by Paul Thoby, was an increasing prevalence of Western crucifixes onto which both of Christ's feet were affixed by a single nail, (in contrast to the separate nail for each foot in previous representational tradition. The three-nail crucifixes, which became almost universal in Western art as the thirteenth century progressed, demanded a further twisting of the body and increasingly naturalistic depictions of Christ's pain. Paul Thoby, *Le crucifix: des origines au Concile de Trente* (La Roche-sur-Yon: I'Imprimerie Centrale de L'Ouest, 1959), x. Sara Lipton has traced a history of high-medieval literary texts, beginning with Rupert of Deutz's accounts of his vision, whose subject was the contemplation of a crucifix. "'The Sweet Lean of His Head': Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages," *Speculum* 80 (2005): 1172-1208. The development of more naturalistic crucifixes went hand in hand with the increasing proliferation of crucifix texts, but it is difficult to assess their precise relationwhip to each other. Lipton argues that the texts were designed by their authors in part to control the reaction of viewers who might otherwise be baffled or horrified by the contorted umage of a suffering man. It may be equally the case—and perhaps more likely-- that the artistic representations instead accompanied or followed the devotional writing. Thoby found models for the increasingly naturalisic crucifixes of the twelfth century in the Byzantine crucifixes of the eleventh through fourteenth centuries, which, although rigidly stylized, displayed a contorted body and drooping head (92-93). Bernhard Ridderbos identifies a twelfth-century strand of Eastern devotion to the suffering Christ and his mother exemplified in the famous "Man of Sorrows" or *imago pietatis* icon of Kastoria in northern Greece displaying the face of Christ in agony; on its obverse is an image of s sad-eyed Mary with her child. Ridderbos, "The Man of Sorrows: Pictorial Images and Metaphysical Statements," in *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late Medieval Culture*, ed. Alisdair A. MacDonald *et al.* (Groningen: Egbert Forster, 1998), 145-81. See also Gérard Cames, "Recherches sur les origines du crucifix a trois clous," *Cahiers archéologiques* 16 (1966): 185-202. Richard Viladesau traces naturalistic iconography of Christ's crucifixion to the affective hymns of the Byzantine liturgy for Good Friday and a transformation of Byzantine art, beginning in the mid-ninth century in which images in fresco and mosaics began portraying Christ as dead or dying rather than triumphant on the cross. By the late eleventh century the Byzantine crucifix displaying Christ with inclined head and blood spurting from the wound in his side in a moment of dialogue with Mary was common. Viladesau argues that these Byzantine images "had a profound influence on the development of Gothic art." Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts, from the Catacombs to the Eve of the Renaissance* (see Introduction to this dissertation), 48-55.

a culmination of traditions of exegesis of the Song of Songs, Cistercian in its most generous sense, that also involved the creation of literature. The abbot of Rievaulx whose career synthesized his country's Anglo-Saxon past and Anglo-Norman present was also a gifted synthesizer of powerful devotional themes that expressed themselves in vivid languages and pictorial images that would quickly attract a readership far larger than his sister's anchorhold.

Chapter 2

What Aelred Wrought: Meditative Literature in England

Aelred of Rievaulx's *De institutione inclusarum* was a pivotal text in the development

of devotional literature in England during the later Middle Ages. It is no exaggeration to say

that Aelred's treatise, with its vivid, explicitly pictorial evocation of a suffering, loving Christ

inviting the most personal, even erotic, of unions with the reader, triggered an explosion of

such literature, beginning toward the end of the twelfth century but especially during the first

half of the thirteenth. It was a trilingual explosion: Latin texts translated into Anglo-Norman

and then into English and back into Latin, as well as works written in Anglo-Norman and

English that were in some instances cross-translated and turned into Latin as well. The line of

demarcation between the culture of the *litteratus* (someone clerically trained in the tradition

of Latin pastristic and secular learning) and the culture of the *illiteratus* (someone who might

know how to read only in a vernacular, if at all) was quite blurred.

The fact that the vernacular languages of twelfth- and thirteenth-century England—

Anglo-Norman and English—were early vehicles for Aelredian meditative literature

alongside Latin is of central importance. Aelred's use of visual pictures, narrative, and

evocation of intense affective response via the emotions amounted to a meditative strategy

that could be accessible to nearly everyone. It did not require training in scriptural exegesis,

the intricate fourfold readings of scripture that had marked Bernard's sermons on the Song of

Songs, or even the ladder-like methodology of monastic contemplation—the components of

monastic learning and monastic spiritual life. Aelred instead drew upon the power of story

and the appeal of pathos, the suffering of the innocent. He thus effected a kind of democratization of spirituality. Although Aelred wrote as the abbot of a monastery in Latin, the language of the monastery, to a woman seeking guidance for an even more severe form of asceticism as an anchoress, he did not offer her a monastic model of living, except in the externals. Internally, she was free simply to fire up her imagination with the scriptural acocunts of the life of Christ, accounts that she could hear read aloud to her as readily as read for herself, and so come to love him more intimately.

This was something that any Latin-illiterate lay person could do—and it is not coincidental that anchorites such as Aelred's sister were liminal figures, non-monastics, living on the borderline between lay and religious life, consecrated and immured but accessible to everyone in the parish. Elizabeth Warren has noted that English anchorites were in frequent contact with the outside world, that they received visitors and dispensed counsel, and that people regularly used anchorholds as places of safekeeping for their property.[1] Anchoritism itself was, socially speaking, a democratic calling; there were no lines of demarcation as in monasteries and nunneries between the choir monks and nuns, who came from the upper ranks of society and were typically literate in Latin, and lay brothers and sisters from the lower ranks who were largely Latin-illiterate. As Warren points out, anchorites came from all social classes, from the families of the nobility on down, and their patrons—those who supported them with donations, in-kind gifts such as food and firewood, and endowments--included representatives of all walks of life starting with the king. Many anchorites had servants to attend to their needs, lower-class men and women who served

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[1] Elizabeth Warren, *Anchoresses and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (see ch. 1 of this dissertation), 110-112. See also Elizabeth Warren, "English Anchorites in the Age of Henry III," *Ball State University Forum* 19 (1973): 21-28.

without pay out of devotion to the anchorite, and it was not uncommon for the maidservants

of anchoresses to succeed their mistresses in the anchorhold on death.[2] It was nearly

inevitable that a Latin treatise written for a Latin-literate anchoress would inspire a similar

treatise written in one of England's two vernaculars and quickly translated into the other, all

for the benefit of those who could not read Latin.

The point, however, is not simply that Aelred had written a work whose devotional

methodology was immensely appealing to his intended audience of anchoresses. Aelred's

devotional methodology could be said to appeal to almost everyone. The market for Aelred's

devotional strategies quickly expanded to include monastics living in communities both

female and male and lay people of both sexes. Those people read, recopied, translated,

anthologized, and editorially tailored *De institutione* to meet their various needs, treating it

not as a guidebook for anchoresses but as a manual for their own personal spiritual

development. In many cases those who adapted *De institutione* for male readers or readers of

both sexes did not bother to eliminate the instructions specifically aimed at anchoresses'

external life from the text (such as Aelred's insistence that his sister retain a very old priest

beyond the age of temptation for her confessor)[3] or his references to a female reader, or

where they did so, they did so only partially. This was the other feature of Aelred's

democratization of spirituality in *De institutione*: an implied equality of the sexes in spiritual

matters. It is clear that the men who read it and copied Aelred's text did not mind thinking of

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[2] *Ibid.*, 24-26.

[3] *De institutione inclusarum* 6 (CCCM, 642): "Igitur, si fieri potest, prouideatur in uicino monesterio uel ecclesia, presbyter aliquis senex, maturis moribus et bonae opinionis, cui raro de confessione et animae aedificatione loquatur [Therefore, if it can be done, let some elderly priest in the neighborhood of the monastery or church be provided, someone of mature ways and good reputation, to whom she may speak infrequently concerning her confession and the care of her soul]."

themselves in a sense as female—at least, following the lead of Bernard of Clairvaux,

metaphorically in terms of their souls--for the purposes of their spiritual development.

Alternatively, they likely believed that the very habits that Aelred deemed important for

anchoresses to cultivate—mastery of the flesh and the tongue[4]—were just as important

for male monastics.[5]

      There has been a tendency among feminist critics in recent years to read misogyny

and condescension toward women into *De institutione*, to assume that Aelred and those who

followed him interpreted women's nature as founded on patristic and medieval stereotypes, of

carnality and loquaciousness. Anne Clark Barlett finds Aelred to be preoccupied with

"[f]emale speech as a vehicle for sexual desire" and argues that he wished to shape the

anchoress "not…as a merely celibate female subject, but as a regendered one whose

perspective on sexuality comes from masculine norms and male experiences."[6] Elizabeth

Robertson has traced such presumed assumptions about women's nature to Aristotle's

physiology of the sexes, readily adopted by patristic and medieval commentators on the

failings of Eve in the Book of Genesis: Women, in the thinking of Aristotle and the Christian

commentators on Genesis, were not only naturally weak of morals but naturally weak of

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[4] *Ibid.* 5 (CCCM, 641): "Sedeat ergo sola, taceat, Christum audiens et cum Christo loquens. Ponat custodiam ori suo, primum ut raro loquatur, deinde, quid loquatur, postremo quibus et quomodo loquatur attendat. [Therefore, let her sit alone, let her keep silent, listening to Christ and speaking with Christ. Let her place a guard on her mouth, first so that she may speak infrequently, second so that she may watch what she says, and lastly so that she may pay attention to whom and how she speaks.]"

[5] See Caroline Walker Bynum, "Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing," in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982, paperback 1984), 110-69.

[6] *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (see ch. 1 of this dissertation), 47, 49.

mind, and both of these failings were inextricably linked to their possession of a womb.[7]

Robertson concluded that medieval spiritual writing for women emphasized the pathetic, the

emotional, and the physical because women were deemed less capable of rational thought

than men: "[A] woman must experience spirituality through the body; moreoever, she can

overcome the body only through the physical and mental resources determined by her

physical nature….The assumption that a woman's nature was sensual led these writers to

focus on tactile and sensual images, as well as on other images emphasing such 'female'

characteristics as moisture, blood, tears, suffering, endurance, and compassion."[8]

 Yet the fact that male scribes and male spiritual writers readily and without

embarrassment adapted *De institutione* for male audiences or audiences of both sexes with

only the most superficial and even haphazard gender changes to some of the words suggests

that those men did not have quite such a negative or segregationist attitude toward spiritual

writing for women, and that tactile and sensual images as well as the evocation of tears and

compassion could move men just as profoundly as women to an awareness of and

participation in God's love. They even left intact in the text Aelred's own intended audience:

the anchoress-sister whom he had consistently addressed and instructed in the second-person

singular.Perhaps Aelred's own self-abasement before his sister, his emphasis in the second

part of the triple meditation upon his male carnality, in the form of sins of the flesh, that

contrasted so sharply with his sister's female chastity, made it difficult for for men—or

women--to read *De institutione* as a text of condescension and misogyny. In any event, it is

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[7] Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 32-43.

[8] *Ibid.*, 43.

clear that men as well as women during the late twelfth and early thirteenth century sought to appropriate Aelred's devotional methodology.

This chapter will examine Aelred's influence upon three of this period's influential spiritual writers in Anglo-Norman and Latin: (1) Clemence, a late-twelfth-century nun at the Benedictine convent at Barking in Essex who is known only through her single surviving work, a 2,700-line life of St. Catherine of Alexandria in Ango-Norman octosyllabic couplets; (2) Stephen of Sawley (d. ca. 1252), a Cistercian abbot in Aelred's Yorkshire who left behind four surviving short treatises directing the spiritual life of his monks; and (3) Edmund of Abingdon (1189-1240), a secular priest, master at the universities of Oxford and Paris, and archbishop of Canterbury from 1234 until his retirement to the Cistercian abbey of Pontigny in Normandy shortly before his death in 1240. Edmund was canonized six years after his death, in 1246, and by 1250 his best-known work, *Speculum religiosorum*, or as it later became known, *Speculum eccelesie*, probably written in 1213 or 1214, was circulating widely in Latin and Anglo-Norman versions. Stephen of Sawley explicitly referred to *De institutione* in one of his treatises and recommended that the readers of this work read Aelred's work for a fuller explication of the devotional methodology that Stephen proposed. Edmund did not explicitly cite Aelred, but, as Thomas Bestul has noted, he seemed to have imitated Aelred's use of visual pictures and narrative to tell an affective story of Christ's life and passion.[9]

Clemence of Barking, Stephen of Sawley, and Edmund of Abingdon were not the only religious writers in England during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries on whose work Aelred's *De institutione* seemed to have exerscised considerable influence.

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[9] *Texts of the Passion* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 42-43.

Bestul has found traces of Aelred's distinctive devotional methodology in the Marian

writings of other English-born Cistercians, including Isaac of Stella (c. 1100-c.1169) and

Gilbert of Hoyland (d. 1172), in the treatise *De quadripartito exercitio cellae* of the

Premonstratentian/Carthusian monk Adam of Dryburgh (ca. 1140-1212), and in an

unpublished manuscript by the Augustinian canon Alexander of Ashby (d. 1215) that,

according to Bestul, contained mental images of Christ's passion. Bestul relates that

Alexander asked rhetorically, "Why am I not transfixed with the sword of sorrow?"[10] Finally,

a rich body of English religious texts, most notably *Ancrene Wisse*, composed during the first

quarter of the thirteenth century, either explicitly or implicitly influenced by Aelred's guided

meditations.

The connection between Aelred and Clemence seems most tenuous, for there is

nothing in Clemence's life of St. Catherine that explicitly connects it to the work of Aelred.

Nonetheless, Clemence reworked her Latin source, an eleventh-century prose martyr's

passio, to imbue Catherine's passion with elements of Christ's passion and with erotic

imagery echoing the Song of Songs that strongly suggests that she was familiar with *De*

institutione (as a woman religious highly literate in Latin, she would have been likely to read

a work addressed to another woman religious). Jocelyn Wogan-Browne argues that

"Clemence's most profound achievement is her translation (in the full medieval sense of

interpretive rather than simply interlingual transfer) of the thought of Anselm of Canterbury

on the redemption." Wogan-Browne contends further that Anselm's theology of Christ's

passion as substitionary atonement, worked out in his *Cur deus homo* ("Why God Became

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[10] "Devotional Writing in England Between Anselm and Richard Rolle," (see ch. 1 of this dissertation).

Man"), informed all of Clemence's tale of Catherine's mayrtyrdom, not simply Clemence's explicit references to Christ's death, and did so in a way that was entirely lacking in the poem's Latin source.[11] If it can be argued that Clemence wrote an Anselmian work despite the difference in genre and failure to allude explictly to Anselm, it can be argued that she wrote an Aelredian work as well, and that Aelred provided the vivid imagery that fleshed out the bones of Anselm's theology.

Finally, as has been noted above, Aelred's *De institutione* influenced early thirteenth-century devotional literature in English. The next chapter that follows this one will examine *Ancrene Wisse*, an explicitly Aelredian guide for anchoresses, along with its textually and linguistically related prose devotional works: nine texts conventionally grouped together as the "Katherine Group" (three virgin martyrs' lives, one of them Catherine's, along with two moral treatises) and the "Wooing Group" (four brief, quasi-poetic meditative texts) all dating from the early to middle thirteenth century and apparently written in or near Hereforshire. All nine works have been conventionally categorized as anchoritic because of their association with *Ancrene Wisse*, although there is strong evidence that they were embraced from the very time they were composed by a variety of religious and lay audiences, and that the manuscripts that contain them were early devotional anthologies intended for a range of different kinds of readers.

First it should be noted that *De institutione* itself quickly found a readership that extended well beyond Aelred's sister's anchorhold. Aelred himself had anticipated and even intended that his treatise be read by other religious women besides his sister. In the section of

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[11] Jocelyn Wogan-Brown, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150-1300: Virginity and Its Authorizations* (Oxford *et al.*: Oxford University Press, 2001), 227.

the first part of *De insitutione* in which he warned the anchoress to retain an elderly confessor—and even then, not to offer her hand for him to touch or stroke ("nec ipsi manum suam tangendam praebeat uel palpandam")[12]--he declared that he was not addressing those minatory words to her, far advanced in modesty, but rather to novices to the reclusive life: "These things I have spoken of are not for you, sister, thank God, but I decided to include them because you wished me to write this rule, not only for you but for younger girls who, on your advice, are eager to take up a similar way of life."[13] Then, in his treatise's very last sentence Aelred departed from his usual practice of referring to his reader in the second person singular and expressed the wish that "if any woman ('qua') makes progress from the reading of this little book…may she intercede for my sins before my savior whom I await and before my judge whom I fear."[14] By the thirteenth century that feminine-gender pronoun "qua" had changed, in at least one manuscript copy of *De institutione*--Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Hatton 101, fols. 412-419--to the masculine "quicumque," indicating that *De institutione* was being read (or was intended to be read) by men as well as women.[15]

De institutione was widely diffused during the high and late Middle Ages in England and the continent. C.H. Talbot counted eleven manuscripts of the treatise containing either the entire text of *De institutione* (seven manuscripts) or significant excerpts (another four)

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[12] *De institutione inclusarum* 6 (CCCM, 642).

[13] *Ibid.* 7 (CCCM, 642): "Haec tibi, soror, gratias Deo dicenda non fuerant, sed uia non solum propter te, sed etiam propter adolescentiores quae similem uitam tuo consilio arripere gestiunt, hanc tibi formulam scribi uoluisti, haec inserenda putaui."

[14] *Ibid.* 33 (CCCM, 682): "Si qua…in huius libelli lectione profecerit…apud Saluatorem meum quem expecto, apud Iudicem meum quem timeo, pro peccatis meis intercedat."

[15] *Ibid.*, n. 1536. See C.H. Talbot, "The 'De Institutis Reclusarum' of Ailred of Rievalux" (see ch.1 of this dissertation) 167-217, 176.

dating from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries with provenances in England, France, Germany, and and the Low Countries. Six of those manuscripts came from Cistercian (the provenance of MS Hatton 101), Benedictine, Cluniac, and Carthusian monastic houses for men.[16] Furthermore, although no twelfth-century manuscript of Aelred's treatise survives, numerous passages from his treatise found their way into two late twelfth-century treatises, *De arrha animae*, commonly if erroneously attributed to Hugh of St. Victor (ca. 1096-1141), and *De diligendo deo*, usually attributed to the twelfth-century Cistercian monk Alcher of Clairvaux.[17] Finally, portions of *De institutione* were incorporated into *Meditationes Anselmi*, a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century collection of genuine and spurious writings attributed to Anselm of Canterbury that displays strong Cistercian influence and exercised enormous influence on late-medieval devotional literature.[18]

All of those manuscript excerpts from *De institutione* have something in common: They consist of either the entirety or selected portions of the triple meditation that comprises

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[16] Talbot, 174-76. By contrast, Talbot observes, the treatise *Liber confortatorius* of Goscelin of St. Bertin, addressed to the recluse Eve of Wilton, survives in only a single manuscript and had no imitators. Other contemporary writings addressed to women religious by Godwin of Salisbury and John Goddard of Newnham similarly survive in single manuscripts. Talbot notes that hard evidence for the circulation of *De institutione* among religious women, in contrast to religious men, is less clear. None of its extant manuscripts can be traced to a nunnery. See David N. Bell, *What Nuns Read* (see ch. 1 of this dissertation), which lists no work by Aelred among the surviving manuscripts of English nunneries at the time of the Dissolution.

[17] Talbot, 169.

[18] PL 48: 734-98. André Wilmart identified three of this text's meditations, nos. 15, 16, and 17, as excerpts from *De institutione*: the triple meditation nearly in its entirety. André Wilmart, "Les méditations réunies sous le nom d saint-Anselme," *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin*, 196-97 (Études d'histoire littéraire, 1932, repr. Paris: Études Augustiennes, 1971), 196-97. Other passages of the *Meditationes* Wilmart identified as coming variously from Anselm himself, Jean de Fécamp, Eckbert of Schönau, Elmer of Canterbury (d. 1137), who probably knew Anselm, William of Auvergne (ca. 1180-1249), various anonymous authors, and the compiler of the *Meditationes* himself (193-199). A number of the meditations (nos. 9 and 10 in particular), deal with the passion of Christ. The *Meditationes Anselmi* were first printed during the seventeenth century. The pertinent manuscript containing Aelred's triple meditation , originally from the Charterhouse in Buxheim, Bavaria, and dating from the fifteenth century, is Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 107, fols. 119r-133v. See also Talbot, 170.

chs. 29-33, part of the the dramatic third and last part of Aelred's work. That is to say, they represent a deliberate detachment of Aelred's tripartite account of Christ's life, his own, and his vision of the Last Judgment from the earlier didactic and apodictic portions of the treatise that regulate the externals of the anchoress's daily life and her vocation as a consecrated virgin. The excerpt from *De institutione* in MS Hatton 101, for example, its diction modified for a male Cistercian audience, is exactly that sort of text. As Talbot reports, it begins with the phrase "Ut ille dulcis amor" from ch. 29 of *De institutione* and continues to the end of Aelred's treatise.[19] The pertinent portion of *Meditationes Anselmi* is nearly identical to the text of the triple meditation, although it is a somewhat corrupted version with a slightly shorter ending. It is clear then, that from early on other writers and compilers treated *De institutione* as a multipurpose, multivalent devotional text whose authorship was immaterial and which could be cut apart and used by many different kinds of audiences.[20] Its meat was the triple meditation with its vivid tableau of Christ's passion. It was also clear from this sort of excerpting that one did not have to be an anchoress, a woman, or possibly even someone consecrated to the religious life to wish to participate imaginatively in the brief and powerful evocation of the significance of Christ's gruesome but redemptive sacrifice that Aelred had led his reader through. Even a sinner—as Aelred confessed he was—was a beneficiary of Christ's sacrifice, and those who chose a life of virginal purity and self-denial--such as Aelred's sister in the text—were privileged to join Christ in the sacrifice..

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[19] Talbot, 176.

[20] In addition, Talbot points to the use of *De institutione*, via extensive quotations, in works of monastic and anchoritic guidance for women produced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: Robert Godard's letter to his abbess-sister, Margaret, the rule set forth in *Roberti Presbyteri ad Hugonem anachoritam*, and the *Regula heremitarum* sometimes ascribed to Richard Rolle, and its imitators. The Dublin Rule, a fourteenth-century guide for anchorites, does not quote from Aelred's work, but is dependent upon it (170-171).

As was argued in the previous chapter, *De institutione*'s contribution to the spiritual literature of the High Middle Ages was his unprecedented fusion of several modes of religious meditation, each ultimately hinging upon interpretations of the Song of Songs: the Cistercian concentration on Christ's love for the human soul, a separate tradition that focused on Christ's passion as an affective experience, and the Ambrosian tradition of literature for religious women in which the consecrated virgin herself was encouraged to view her spiritual life as an erotic union with her bridegroom, Christ. Aelred had brought other innovations to this genre. The most important was his use of narrative; by relating the life and passion of Christ as a dramatic story resembling the *vitae* of the martyrs and other saints, he could invoke the paradoxically pleasurable emotions induced by tragic literature—pathos, identification with the characters, and the shock of climax and catharsis—as well as the traditional affective responses to Christ's sacrifice represented by the works of Anselm and Jean de Fécamp. Furthermore, Aelred conveyed his narrative of Christ's passion by means of a series of visualizations that encouraged his reader to enter into the narrative via her own imagination, and by explicitly placing his reader into the scenes as a character herself, having her feet washed at the Last Supper or drinking the blood from Christ's wounds, Aelred in essence made her an active and self-conscious participant in the drama of redemption. She could stand alongside Mary at the cross because she was another Mary by reason of her virginity; she could bind her flesh to that of Christ, and just as he had sacrificed his flesh for love of mankind, she could directly participate in that sacrifice by the sacrifice of her own flesh.

Moreover, Aelred infused his meditation with an aesthetic of spirituality that derived from the Song of Songs and its centuries of allegorical interpretation. The heavenly

bridegroom and his bride in this tradition were as royal and beautiful as the heroes and

heroines of romance, so that behind all of Christ's sufferings—and the sufferings of the

ascetics who imitated him in deprivation--lay a vision of heaven: a garden of delights, sweet

ointment, the voice of the turtle-dove, the union of the king, ruddy and incandescent white,

and his beloved, whether she was Mary or the church or the human soul or the consecrated

virgin, black but beautiful, her breasts like twin deer feeding on the lilies. Finally, through his

evocation of his own sinful experience in the second part of the meditation, he added an

authorial "I"—the writer himself, and also the reader making his or her way through his

words, who might never be worthy to identify with Christ or Mary but who could also

participate in their experience as a sinner-beneficiary of the enormous love that the passion

had represented historically and the Song.

Of the twelfth-century poet Clemence of Barking, nothing is known except the very

little that she tells us about herself in her life of Catherine: "….Par nun sui Clemence numee.

/ De Berkinge sui nunain. [By name I am named Clemence. I am a nun of Barking.]"[21] Even

the date of her poem is a matter of pure conjecture; the consensus, based upon an analysis of

her language, is only that she composed her life of Catherine sometime between 1150 and

1200. [22] It is also known that Barking Abbey, just east of London and one of the nine English

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[21] William MacBain, ed., *The Life of St. Catherine by Clemence of Barking*, ANT 18 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1964). All citations are to this edition. Translations of the passages quoted herein are by this writer, but they are influenced by the translation in *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths: Two Exemplary Biographies for Anglo-Norman Women*, trans. with intro. and notes by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Glyn S. Burgess, Everyman (London: J.M. Dent; Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1996).

[22] William McBain, "The Literary Apprenticeship of Clemence of Barking," *A.U.M.L.A.: Journal of the Australasian Universities Modern Language Association* 9 (1958): 3-22, at 4; *cf.*, for a contrary conclusion, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Wreaths of Thyme: The Female Translator in Anglo-Norman Hagiography," in Roger Ellis and Ruth Evans, eds, *The Medieval Translator 4*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 123 (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, State University of New York, 1994), 44-65.

nunneries that predated the Norman Conquest, had enjoyed royal patronage since its

founding in the seventh century and housed women of the highest aristocracy both religious

and secular. During the late twelfth century Barking was also, as Duncan Robertson writes, a

"foyer for vernacular literary production."[23] Robertson counts four twelfth-century religious

works either written at Barking or composed with the apparent encouragement of Barking's

abbesses of noble and royal blood.[24] Finally, Clemence's bold willingness to name herself

and her deft, concise employment of classical rhetorical figures (here, assonance,

epanalepsis, paregemenon, and paronomasia) in the two lines' wordplay ("nun," "numee,"

"nunain") bespeak a thorough Latin education and striking authorial self-confidence.

Whether Clemence actually knew Aelred's *De institutione* is a matter of pure

inference, for, as noted above, neither does she borrow explicitly from Aelred's treatise (as

the author of *Ancrene Wisse* does) nor does she imitate its genre or structure. Clemence was

attempting (as she said herself her poem) to render into French verse ("romanz")[25] an

exceedingly popular eleventh-century Latin prose *passio*[26] narrating the martyrdom in the

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[23] Duncan Robertson, "Writing in the Textual Community: Clemence of Barking's Life of St. Catherine," *French Forum* 21 (1996): 5-28, at 6.

[24] They are, besides Clemence's poem, an Anglo-Norman octosyllabic translation of Aelred's life of Edward the Confessor made by a nun of Barking who decided that she was not worthy to be named and identified herself only as a "handmaid of the sweet Jesus Christ ("ancele al dulz Jhesu Crist," l. 5307), quoted in MacBain, "The Literary Apprenticeship," at 3); Guernes de Pont-Saint-Maxence's account of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket written under the patronage of Thomas's sister, Mary Becket, who was abbess of Barking from 1173 to 1175; and Adgar's *Le gracial*, a collection of miracles of the Virgin Mary which he dedicated to Mary's successor as abbess, Maud, an illegitimate daughter of Henry II. Duncan Robertson, 6

[25] *The Life of St. Catherine,* ll. 29-34, 2689.

[26] Some 84 manuscripts of the *Passio Sancte Katerine virginis et martyris* have been counted in European libraries, and S.R.T.O d'Ardenne and E.J. Dobson estimate that that there may actually be as many as 200. Introduction, *Seinte Katerine, Re-Edited from MS. Bodley 34 and the other Manuscripts*, EETS, s.s., 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), xvi. *Seinte Katherine* is a critical edition of the thirteenth-century English adaptation of the *Passio Sancte Katerine* that is the leading text of the Katherine Group.

year 305 of Catherine, a legendary princess of Alexandria, at the hands of Maxentius, the

pagan ruler of Rome who was defeated by Constantine at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in

312. St. Catherine was a much-beloved saint of the later Middle Ages, especially in England,

where there are sixty-two surviving medieval churches dedicated to her.[27] As for Aelred,

Clemence's convent at Barking was familiar with at least one of his works, his Latin *vita* of

Edward the Confessor, written in 1162 or 1163 immediately after he finished *De*

institutione.[28] At the same time that Clemence was writing her "Life of St. Catherine" during

the second half of the twelfth century, or perhaps a little even before Clemence began

writing, another nun at Barking whose name is not known completed a translation of Aelred's

life of Edward. Like Clemence, she was literate in both Latin and French, and, like

Clemence, she put a Latin prose *vita* (Aelred's) into Anglo-Norman octosyllabic couplets,

although unlike Clemence, this second nun was either too unsure of herself or too self-

effacing to describe herself as anything other than a "nun of Barking."[29] It may be as well

that other works by Aelred had made their way to Barking, as *De institutione* would have

been of great interest to nuns as consecrated virgins.

The Latin *passio* of Catherine of Alexandria that Clemence reworked, referred to as

the "Vulgate" by many scholars and ultimately deriving from a ninth-century Greek account

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[27] *Anchoritic Spirituality:* Ancrene Wisse *and Related Works*, trans. with intro. by Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, preface by Benedicta Ward (New York and Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1991), 260.

[28] *Bibliotheca aelrediana* (see ch. 1 of this dissertation), 39.

[29] See M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 60-66. William MacBain has argued that this anonymous and somewhat pedestrian adaptation of Aelred's vita was was actually a piece of juvenilia by Clemence, universally recognized as a far more accomplished poet. "The Literary Apprenticeship of Clemence of Barking." (n. 22). MacBain's is a minority view, but if the stylistic parallels that he finds between the works of Clemence and her anonymous contemporary at Barking are adequate proof that the two authors were the same, Clemence could be viewed as the first important writer of the Middle Ages to be directly influenced by Aelred.

of her martyrdom in the *Menologion*, the liturgical book of Constantinople, resembles in many ways the fifth- and sixth-century *passiones* of Roman virgin martyrs such as St. Agnes and St. Cecilia that were repeatedly recopied and read throughout the Middle Ages. The Christian virgin as a beautiful young woman who has nonetheless spurned—indeed, openly defied—pagan suitors and undergone protracted and gruesome torture for the sake of her heavenly bridegroom, Christ, is a topos of the Roman *passiones*. So it is also in the Vulgate, where Catherine reiterates that she is Christ's bride ("sponsa") and he her bridegroom.[30] The Vulgate also makes it clear (following the lead of the older Roman *passiones*) that Catherine is beautiful and well-born.[31] The element of the Vulgate that distinguishes it from the ancient *passiones* is Catherine's sophisticated learning and her willingness to engage her pagan opponents in protracted theological debates that she, as might be expected, wins. In the Vulgate *passio*, Catherine manages both to confound in debate and to convert to Christianity some fifty pagan philosophers. She also persuades Maxentius' queen, his confidant, Porphyry, and two hundred soldiers, or knights ("milites") to embrace Christianity. Maxentius has all the converts killed. He condemns Catherine to be torn apart upon the spiked "Catherine wheel" (actually a machine composed of four rotating wheels) that became iconographically associated with her in art and literature, and when an angel destroys the wheels, he has her beheaded. In a post-mortem miracle, milk, not blood, flows from her severed neck, and angels transport her body from Rome to Mt Sinai where Moses had

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[30] Citations herein to the Vulgate *passio* of St. Catherine are to the critical edition of the Latin text appended to the English text in *Seinte Katerine* (n. 27), at 144-203. References in the Vulgate to Catherine as bride of Christ and to Christ as her bridegroom include: 155, l. 236 ("sponsam"); 160, l. 319 ("immortali sponso"); 176, ll. 625 and 626 ("sponsam"); 188, l. 852 ("sponsus").

[31] *Ibid.*, 155, ll. 225-226: "sed speciosa facies et decora te alto sanguine ortam protestatur."

received the Ten Commandments.[32] As Duncan Robertson points out, Catherine of

Alexandria, able to hold her own with learned men and free from control by any man,

"feminizes, as it were, the Pauline freedom of the Spirit."[33]

Clemence claimed to be a mere translator of this Vulgate material, but, as several

critics have observed (and it is impossible for a reader not to notice), she actually

transformed it into something radically different, expanding and contracting numerous

passages in significant ways. William McBain points out that Clemence imported into the

Vulgate narrative the diction of chivalry and courtly love derived from the secular romances

of the twelfth century. For example, Clemence repeatedly changed the Vulgate's "sponsus"

and "sponsa" ("bride" and "bridegroom") to "ami" and "amie" ("lover" or "beloved"), which

is the language of romance and even of the illicit erotic love that courtly romance romance

often celebrated.[34] The most dramatic example is this speech of Catherine's in which she

urges Maxentius's queen to abandon her husband and follow Catherine to martyrdom:

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[32] Although the legend of St. Catherine of Alexandria places her in the early fourth century, her cult seems to be of ninth-century Byzantine origin, and she does not appear to have been known in the West until the early eleventh century, around the time of the translation of some of her relics to Rouen in 1030. Her cult spread quickly throughout France after its introduction and came to England with the Norman Conquest. For accounts of Catherine's legend and cult, see Introduction, *The Life of St. Catherine* (n. 21), xi-xii; Introduction, *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths* (n. 21), xix-xxiii; Introduction, *Seinte Katerine* (n. 26), xiii-xv; and Katherine Lewis, *The Cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, U.K., and Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 2000), 14-63.

[33] Robertson (n. 23), 9.

[34] Introduction, *The Life of St. Catherine*, xxiv. See also William MacBain, "Five Old French Renderings of the *Passio Sancte Katerine*," in *Medieval Translators and Their Craft*, ed. Jeannette Beer, Studies in Medieval Culture, no. 25 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1989), 41-65; and "Anglo-Norman Women Hagiographers," in *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ed. Ian Short, Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications, 2nd ser., 2 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, Birbeck College, 1993), 235-50. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Glynn Burgess suggest that Clemence wrote her poem not simply for the nuns in her convent but for an aristocratic lay audience that included men. She addresses her readers on one occasion as "lords" ("segnurs," 1. 1159). See Introduction, *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths* (n. 21). See also Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Saints' Lives and the Female Reader," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 27 (1991): 314-32; "'Cerc u lai muïne u dame': women and Anglo-Norman hagiography in the twelfth and

> Tu recevras un tel ami
> Pur le tuen qu'as guerpi
> De qui belté le mund resplent,
> E si est rei sur tute gent.[35]

Indeed, Clemence used the phrase "amie Deu" (or "Deu amie"), "lover" or "beloved" of God— with respect to Catherine at least seven times in her poem.[36] This is an improvisation upon her Vulgate source, where Catherine is usually a more decorous "servant of Christ" ("famula Christi") or "maiden favored by God" ("grata Deo puella") or "precious virgin of Christ ("pretiosam uirginem Christi").[37] In a lecture to Maxentius on the futility of worshipping idols, Catherine declares in the Vulgate *passio* that she is "bride" ("sponsam") of Christ.[38] Clemence amplified this reference into a passionate declaration of love: "Tute m'amur li ai dunee / Pur la sue ki tant m'agree [I have given him all my love in return for his, which pleases me so much]."[39]

These embellishments are not present simply for the sake of literary grace, or simply because the aristocratic nuns of Barking and their royal patrons expected courtly refinements in their saints' lives, or, as Wogan-Browne and Burgess write, simply to emphasize Catherine's embodiment of the highest nobility and graciousness ("her love pact with Christ

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thirteenth centuries," in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 61-85; and "Powers of Record, Powers of Example: Hagiography and Women's History," in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 71-93.

[35] "You will receive such a great lover in exchange for the one you have rejected, one whose beauty lights up the world and who is king of all peoples." *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 2283-86.

[36] *Ibid.*, ll. 470, 519, 563, 925, 1617, 1889, 2551.

[37] Vulgate (n. 30), 159, l. 296; 160, l. 311: 172, l. 544

[38] *Ibid.,* 155, l. 236.

[39] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 389-90.

is filled with courtly joy, honour, comfort, sweetness and mutual desire, and it is

indissoluble")—although all those things are true,[40] The language of love does more than

embellish; it explicitly defines the relationship between Catherine and Christ, which is that

of the bride and bridegroom of the Song of Songs: "amica," "dilectus." The Vulgate *passio*,

as we have seen, also uses the trope of the bride and bridegroom, but Clemence used it

repeatedly so that its physicality, its intimacy, is emphasized: Catherine is not simply

"favored" by Christ; she is his true love. She declares, in a passionate speech that has no

equivalent in the Vulgate:

> ….Jhesu Crist le mien espus
> Est de m'amur si cuveitus,
> Que ja avum fait cuvenant
> Que amie sui et il amant….
> Jo l'aim tant que n'en puis partir,
> Kar lui sul aim, lui sul desir.[41]

Clemence emphasized over and over Catherine's physical beauty, using the word "bele" in

description of her or address to her at least eight times.[42]

A celebration of physicality, fleshliness—that is the quality that Clemence brought to

her adaptation of the Vulgate story of the martyr Catherine of Alexandria. Catherine's

relationship with Christ is an unbreakable mutual bond ("cuvenant") that she describes in the

language of physical love ("amur," "amie," "amant"). When she languishes in prison at

Maxentius' command, beaten with whips and denied food and drink on his orders for twelve

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[40] Introduction, *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths*, xxxii.

[41] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 1357-60: "Jesus Christ, my own bridegroom, is so desirous of my love that we have already made a covenant that I am his beloved and he is my lover….I love him so greatly that I cannot be parted from him, because he is the only one I love and the only one I desire."

[42] *Ibid.*, ll. 222, 260 (with reference to Catherine's voice), 307, 596 ("sa belté"), 664, 1245, 1246, 2595 (used by Christ to greet Catherine on her death).

days, Jesus himself, accompanied by other virgins who are already with him in heaven, gives

her the food that restores her beauty. Indeed, Clemence revealed that the very purpose of

Maxentius's starvation of Catherine is to destroy that beauty and hence break her will ("Car il

aveit bien esperé / Pur ço que tant aveit jeuné / Qu'ele oust sa belté perdue / E que par tant

l'oust vencue").[43] In the Vulgate *passio* a crowd of onlookers is astonished, as it is in

Clemence's poem, that Catherine has retained her good looks after her ordeal, but Maxentius

reveals that his intent has been merely to weaken her will with hunger so that she will

sacrifice to the pagan idols as he has demanded: "Presentetur nobis," inquit, "temeraria illa

puella, ut sciamus si, uel fame urgente, ad culturuam deorum incuruari."[44] In the Vulgate

Catherine's physical beauty is an ornament of her virtue (and in the above passage, a sign of

her miraculously preserved health, for when she is brought before the tribunal, the author

calls her "uirgo speciosa,"[45] but in Clemence's poem, Catherine's beauty is a very element of

her virtue that the emperor believes he must destroy.

Catherine's beauty is a visual marker that separates her virtuous and heaven-sanctified

passion for her lover, Christ, from the array of ugly and sinful passions that characterizes

Maxentius, whom Clemence calls "the wicked tyrant," in contrast to Jesus the true ruler of

the world ("rei sur tute gent").[46] Those passions of Maxentius' include willful cruelty (when

he sees that Catherine's beauty remains intact, he orders her jailers to tell him who gave her

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[43] *Ibid.*, ll. 1881-84: "For he had very much hoped that on account of having fasted so much she would have lost her beauty and thereby would have been vanquished."

[44] Vulgate, 187, ll. 835-37: "'Let that rash girl be brought before us,' he says, "so that we may know whether she can be bent by driving hunger to the worship of the gods.'"

[45] *Ibid.*, l. 837.

[46] *The Life of St. Catherine*, l. 1871: "li fel tyrant."

food, with the apparent aim of putting the disobedient employee to death) [47]; uncontrollable

anger (his heart is seized by a "great rage"[48] when the fifty pagan philosophers accept

Christianity at Catherine's behest, and when Catherine informs him that he will go to hell

unless he himself accepts the true God, he "bares his teeth like a lion and takes on the

ferocious aspect of a criminal,"[49] and then orders Catherine to be beaten mercilessly as a

prelude to her torture on the wheel), and, as Clemence makes evident, an element of

outright lust.

Clemence presented a stark contrast between the reaction of the crowd of onlookers

to Clemence's beauty—for the crowd is able to see that beauty (as Clemence expects her

audience, another group of onlookers, to see) as a translucent screen through which

Catherine's inner goodness can be viewed clearly. Indeed, her outer and inner beauty—the

beauty of her body and her soul--are so congruent that the former actually displays the latter,

and indeed, the crowd seems equally divided between those who are drawn to look at

Catherine by her beauty and those who are drawn by her goodness:

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[47] *Ibid.*, l. 1889.

[48] *Ibid.*, l. 1112: "De grant ire sun cuer esprent."

[49] *Ibid.*, ll. 1959-61: "Les denz escrinne cume liun; / Un reguart fait d'ume felun."

A tant es devant tuz entree;
A merveilles l'unt esguardee,
Car nun disable ert sa belté
Ki bien mustreit sa grant bunté…
El munde n'ot a cel tens si bele
Cume fud ceste Deu ancele.
Pur s'amur tuit s'asemblerent
Ki envirun la cited erent.
Les uns sumeneit sa belté
E les altres sa grant bunté.[50]

There is no equivalent to this passage in Clemence's Vulgate source. Nor is there a precise

Vulgate equivalent to Clemence's description of the way Maxentius looks at Catherine: "En

sun bel vult ses oilz ficha [His eyes fixed themselves on her beautiful face]."[51] Unlike the

crowd, Maxentius never sees Catherine's goodness, and his gaze has an obsessive quality,

for, as Clemence explains, "he had desired her greatly in his heart."[52] The word Clemence

used for "desired" here, "cuvie," foreshadows the adjective "cuveitus" with which Catherine

describes her equally intense but chaste and innocent desire for her heavenly spouse, Christ.

Maxentius is the opposite of Christ, and his destructive lust is an inversion of Christ's

redemptive love. Perhaps not surprisingly then in Clemence's poem, after Maxentius has the

queen cruelly tortured by having her breasts torn apart with nails and then ripped off (despite

his protestations of love to her) and then has her beheaded, he offers Catherine the boon of

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[50] *Ibid.*, ll. 594-98, 621-27: "When she entered before them all, they gazed on her with wonder, for her beauty was not inappropriate in that it showed her great goodness….In the world at that time there was no one so beautiful as was this handmaid of God. For love of her all gathered who lived near the city. Her beauty summoned some of them, and her great goodness the others."

[51] *Ibid.*, l. 222. By contrast the Vulgate has: "uisu in uirginem defixo uultus ipsius claritatem et uerborum constantiam considerabat [his sight fixed on the virgin, he silently considered the brightness of her face and the firmness of her words]." 151, ll. 145-46.

[52] *The Life of St. Catherine*, l. 357: "mult l'ad en sun cuer cuvie."

becoming her bridegroom instead of Christ ("Que tu mei a espus avras")[53] if she will

renounce her faith. (In the Vulgate, Maxentius' offer is more ambiguous, for he does not offer

to become a husband—so there is no clear contrast in that *passio* as there is in Clemence's

poem between the deformity of his passions and those of Catherine and her heavenly love.

Maxentius merely informs Catherine that she would have been able to reign with him and be

named as the "first" woman in his kingdom.)[54]

Clemence's emphasis upon Catherine's physical beauty as a visible manifestation of

her goodness—and of her power as a martyr ultimately to vanquish Maxentius and his

murderous passions and tyrannical political will. Both the Vulgate *passio* and Clemence's

poem explicitly foreshadow Maxentius' coming defeat at the hands of Constantine in a

victory of the cross over Rome's pagan emperor. This emphasis on Catherine's beauty is

reminiscent of Aelred's emphasis, in *De institutione*'s triple meditation, on the physical

beauty of Christ during his own suffering. Clemence referred to Catherine's "sweet face"

("dulz visage"), [55] and it may be that she was thinking of Aelred's references to the sweetness

of Christ's physical attributes as he undergoes the painful ignominies of his passion: his

"most sweet back" ("dulcissimum dorsum") [56] that is scourged, his "sweet hands and feet"

("dulces manus eius et pedes")[57] that are punctured with nails, his "most sweet breast"

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[53] *Ibid.*, l. 2484.

[54] Vulgate, 199, ll. 1083-84: "poteras nobiscum feliciter regnare et prima in regno nostro nominari."

[55] *Life of St. Catherine*, l. 620.

[56] *De institutione inclusarum* 31 (CCCM, 670).

[57] *Ibid.*

("dulcissisum pectus")[58] from which he forgives those who crucified him. Like Catherine in

Clemence's poem, Christ in Aelred's *De institutione*, has a "most beautiful face"

("speciocissima facie").[59] Duncan Robertson argues that Clemence engaged in a series of

delicate intertextual conversations, in the form of thematic borrowings and linguistic

allusions, with other twelfth-century Anglo-Norman octosyllabic texts: lives of St. Lawrence

and Mary of Egypt and the poet Thomas's version of the Tristan romance.[60] She might have

similarly engaged Aelred's Latin text as well.

Clemence shared with Aelred a conviction that that the fleshly body is in no way

inferior to the immaterial soul. Catherine's external physical beauty in Clemence's poem, like

that of Christ in Aelred's text, is a concretization of and a window into her internal spiritual

beauty. This is fitting, for mutual and mutually regarding beauty are the hallmarks of the

bride and bridegroom in the Song of Songs: "ecce tu pulchra es amica mea ecce tu pulchra;[61]

ecce tu pulcher es dilecte mi et decorus."[62] It is also a reminder that Catherine's body is like

that of Christ, and that she can accordingly, like Aelred's sister in *De institutione*, share in

Christ's redemptive function by joining her body to his, becoming him in a sense. Caroline

Walker Bynum points out that it was common among medieval theologians and devotional

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[58] *Ibid.*

[59] *Ibid.* CCCM, 667.

[60] It is also possible that Clemence had Béroul's *Roman de Tristan* in mind in her amplification of the Alexandrian crowd's pity and love for Catherine in scenes of public spectacle that resemble the weeping of the spectators in Cornwall over the proposed punishment of Iseut after her royal husband, Mark, has found evidence of her adultery. See ll. 831-59, 879, 1142-44, in *Tristan et Iseut: Les poèmes français, La saga norroise*, ed. and trans. into modern French, Daniel Lacroix and Philippe Walter, Lettres gothiques (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1989).

[61] Ct 1:14.

[62] Ct 1:15.

writers—she cites Anselm and Hildegard of Bingen—to associate women, already associated with the body in patristic and medieval thought, with Christ's human nature and men with his divine nature, and so to conclude that Christ had accomplished his redemption specifically via his body, the aspect of him—his humanity--that he had received wholly from his mother and was in a sense female.[63] This was a profound and positive corrective to the general medieval misogynistic notion of women as men's inferiors.[64]

Through the mystical bridal union of the consecrated virgin and Christ, the virgin united her body mystically with his. Aelred's sister, as an anchoress, is invited not only to approach the cross more closely than all other human beings are permitted to except for Mary, but to climb up on it in her imagination, to crawl inside the wound in Christ's side as the dove in the Song of Songs hides in the cleft of a rock, and to drink his blood and so turn her lips into the Song's scarlet ribbons to resemble the Song's bride. Christ's shedding of blood on the cross and the consummation of the virgin's mystical marriage are one and the same in Aelred's meditation. In Clemence's poem Catherine also makes it clear that Christ is her "bridegroom" ("epus") and her "love," ("ami"), but her bridal consummation with him is purely imitative; she is a beautiful mirror image, a female Christ who suffers death as he did, and then immediately joins him in heaven. Clemence, following the Vulgate, had Catherine die on a Friday as Christ did, but she heightens the mimetic nature of Catherine's martyrdom by placing it not merely upon the same day ("feria sexta" in the Vulgate, "vendresdi" in

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[63] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 91-222.

[64] *Ibid.*, 204.

Clemence's poem)[65] but at the very time of day, presumably the ninth hour, at which Christ

suffered death: "Mort suffri par un vendresdi / A l'ore que Deus la suffri,"[66] whereas the

author of the Vulgate stated that Catherine died at the "third hour" ("tertia hora"), the hour at

which Christ "hastened to his passion" ("ad passionem properavit").[67] With this small

alteration of her Vulgate source, Clemence heightened Catherine's figurative identity

with Christ.

Elsewhere, Clemence introduced extended passages on the passion into her reworking

of the Vulgate, usually in conjunction with a reference to Christ's taking on human flesh and

blood. The best-known of these is one of the most elegant and admired portions of

Clemence's poem, part of the consummation of Catherine's defense of her faith to the fifty

philosophers or "clerks," and indeed the speech that results in their conversion to Christianity

en masse:

> N'est tei avis que ço dreit fust
> Que cil ki venqui par le fust,
> Que par le fust fust poi vencu,
> Par le fruit ki fud poi rependu?[68]

Critics have praised Clemence's exquisite wordplay in this passage and her use of such

rhetorical figures as paranomasia (the punning of "fust," the imperfect subjunctive of "estre,"

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[65] Vulgate, 203, l. 1147; *The Life of St. Catherine*, l. 2643.

[66] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll 2643-44; see Mt 27:46.

[67] Vulgate, 203, l. 1150.

[68] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 988-91: "Do you not think it fitting that he [the devil], who conquered by the wood of a tree, was then conquered by the wood of a tree, by the fruit that was hung (on the tree)?"

"to be," with "fust," "wood,"), assonance ("fust" in both its meanings with "fud," the *passé simple* of "estre"), anadiplosis, and epistrophe.[69]

All of this complex rhetorical refinement was in the service of the theme of Catherine's speech to the clerks in its fifty-eight-line entirety (ll. 942-1010): that it was a man—a human being, Christ—who accomplished the canceling of the sin of another human being, Adam, by means of a tree, the cross, which was fitting because Adam had committed his sin via a tree and its fruit. Furthermore, Clemence's extended wordplay on tree and fruit gives the redemption not only a theological but a concrete physical dimension: it is not simply payment for sin but payment of tree for tree and fruit for fruit (for Christ was "hanged" ("rependu") upon the tree of the cross just as the fruit that Adam ate hung from a tree: "Jesus fud le fruit accetable / E a tut le mund feunable [Jesus was the acceptable fruit and a source of fertility for all the world]."[70] Clemence's Vulgate source alluded to some of these themes, such as the paradox that it was a man, Adam, who had sinned through the wood of a tree, and a man, Christ, who was crucified on the wood of a tree ("qui peccauerat per lignum fixus in ligno est"),[71] but the context there is completely different.

In the Vulgate text Catherine is simply explaining to the philosophers that it was Christ's possession of both a human and a divine nature that made it possible for God, who is immortal and cannot suffer, actually to suffer and die. Clemence, by contrast, displayed no interest in this paradox of God's impassibility. Instead she emphasized the physicality of Christ's redemption in order to make a different point: that it was human flesh (Christ's flesh)

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[69] See, *e.g.*, Introduction, *Virgin Lives and Holy Deaths*, xlvii.

[70] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 979-80.

[71] Vulgate, 169, ll. 494-95).

that was the very means of the redemption of human flesh. Throughout the passage,

Clemence had Catherine use the word "hume" ("man") or its variant "ume," no less than

thirteen times with reference both to Christ and to the fallen Adam and his offspring.[72] The

rhetorical effect of these repetitions is powerful and cumulative. They also bring to the

foreground the proposition that it was Christ's very body, not simply the abstract principle of

his human nature, that accomplished the redemption—and that it was the human body that

was redeemed. In her physical beauty so frequently emphasized by Clemence, Catherine

herself personifies the body's redemption.

Clemence emphasized the fleshliness of Christ's redemption in other ways that her

Vulgate source did not; she had Catherine declare of Christ: "Se vesti de char et de sanc /

Qu'il recut d'un virginel flanc [He clothed himself in flesh and in blood that he received from

a virginal womb]."[73] She says it again a few lines later in the same speech: "Reçut la fraile

charn de l'hume [he received the frail flesh of mankind]."[74] There is no equivalent in

Clemence's source to either of these passages. Clemence emphasized that it is through the

flesh that Christ dies. It is the virginal Mary who made (actually produced) Christ's flesh, and

the virginal Mary (and, *pari passu*, her offspring, Christ) with whom the virgin Catherine,

who suffers and dies through her flesh as Christ did, identifies in Clemence's poem.

Elsewhere in her poem Clemence introduced the motifs of the passion and Christ's

fleshliness where it is nowhere to be found in her Vulgate source. In an earlier speech to the

fifty clerks, Catherine declares: "Le fiz Deu en charn mort suffri; / Par sa mort de mort nus

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[72] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 967, 969, 973, 983, 991, 993, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1005, 1006 (twice).

[73] *Ibid.*, ll. 959-60.

[74] *Ibid.*, l. 975.

guari,"[75] a couplet that has no equivalent in the Vulgate text. Two lines later in the same

speech, she again emphasizes that Christ's flesh came wholly from the virginal Mary:

> Quant il en terre descendi,
> De charn [e] de sanc se vesti
> Qu'il prist d'une chaste pulcele;
> Sa creature ert e s'ancele.[76]

Still earlier, Clemence rewrote another passage of the Vulgate, a speech of Maxentius to

Catherine, so as to emphasize those same two motifs:

> …[V]us dites que Jhesu Crist,
> Nostre mortel charn el mund prist;
> Icist dut estre en croiz mis
> Pur salver les morz e les vis; [77]

In the equivalent passage in the Vulgate Maxentius alludes briefly to Christ's passion but in a

different context; he directs his incredulity not to the proposition that God would stoop to

take on mortal flesh, as Maxentius does in Clemence's poem, but to Catherine's theological

assertion of Christ's divinity: "…Iesum, quem Iudei crucifixerunt, Dei filium asseratis—

quem uirilis ignara consortii uirgo conceperit, conceptum clauso utero peperit; qui a

discipulo traditus crucis suspendio interierit…."[78] In adapting the Vulgate text, Clemence, by

excising such details as the conventionally anti-Judaic reference to the Jews, the creedal

rehearsal of the virgin birth, and the allusion to Judas, redirected the focus to Christ's

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[75] *Ibid.*, ll. 717-18: "The son of God suffered death in the flesh; / By his death he rescued us from death."

[76] *Ibid.*, ll. 721-24: "When he descended to earth, he clothed himself with flesh and blood that he took from a chaste maiden; she was his creation and his mother."

[77] *Ibid.*, ll. 239-42: "[Y]ou say that Jesus Christ took our mortal flesh in the world; he had to be put on the cross in order to save the dead and the living."

[78] Vulgate, 152, ll. 157-60: "…[Y]ou claim that Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, is the son of God, he whom a virgin conceived ignorant of intercourse with men and whom she bore in her cloistered womb, he who, after having been betrayed by a disciple, died from being hung on a cross."

crucified flesh alone, to the central paradox that by becoming human and mortal, he saved mortal human beings.

Clemence similarly reworked the following passage in the Vulgate, spoken by a clerk astonished at Catherine's claim that a man who could not halt his own death could be God: "Et ecce, principium orationis sue fecit de quodam Iesu, quem Christianorum fabule deum suum esse testantur, qui quondam, a discipulo suo traditus et morti adiudicatus, nec in ipso mortis periculo sibi adesse potuit!"[79] Clemence adapted the passage in this way:

> La fable nus dit de Jhesu
> Ki ja[dis] fud en croiz pendu.
> Un suen disciple le trai
> Ki as mals Judeus le vendi,
> Par esguart le crucificerent
> E meins e piez li encloerent,
> Il ne pot de de sa mort fuir
> Car destresce li fist suffrir.[80]

She not only turned the Vulgate's allusion to Christ's death into a narrative ("fable") of his death, but altered the source of the clerk's astonishment from the paradox of a mortal man's divinity to the narrative itself, with its vivid and dramatic tableau of the crucifixion: the wicked Jews, the hands and feet nailed to the cross. In the Vulgate, the fact that Christ could not escape death amounts to proof to the unbelieving clerk that he could not possibly be God. In Clemence's poem that fact is there for its own sake, heightening the pathos of the scene and the vulnerability of Christ's mortal body.

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 164, ll. 384-87: "And behold, she began her speech concerning a certain Jesus, who the stories of the Christians say is God, who at one time, betrayed by his disciple and condemned to death, could not come to his own aid in the very peril of death!"

[80] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 745-52: "She tells us the story of Jesus, who in former times was hanged on a cross. One of his own disciples betrayed him who sold him to the wicked Jews. By their counsel they crucified him and nailed his hands and feet. He could not escape his death because he was forced to suffer it."

Thus, as can be seen, Clemence consistently reshaped Catherine's speeches into something very different from their Vulgate equivalents. In the Vulgate Catherine offers proofs for such theological propositions as the divinity of Christ and the notion that an impassible and immortal God could suffer and die. Clemence's poem transforms those proofs into meditations on a series of paradoxes: that through death Christ triumphed over the curse of death, that through his mortality he conferred immortality, that he accomplished this redemption, this making whole, through the laceration and destruction of his own flesh, and that he, God, had acquired this flesh from his mother, a member of the very human species that his death redeemed: "Sa nature pas ne muad, / Mais nostre par soe honurad."[81] It is not that the Catherine of Clemence's poem is not interested in the theological arguments that engaged the author of the Vulgate. In Catherine's penultimate speech to the clerks, she exactly recapitulates the Vulgate's Anselmian logic that only Christ, as both human and divine, could accomplish the divine work of redemption and yet die as a man to bring it about: "Car bien set l'um si Deu ne fust / Que ço pas faire ne poust; / E bien set l'um que hume fu Jhesus…."[82] Catherine's final speech to the clerks ends with another Anselm-like proposition: "Mais par greinur dreit le fist si, / Que un hume l'ume venjast; / Ço que hume forfist, hume amendast."[83] Yet it is not her logic but the dazzling rhetoric of this speech--the play of "fust" and "fud," the repetition of the words "hume," "char," and "sanc" that

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[81] *Ibid.*, ll. 962-63: "He did not change his nature, but honored ours by his."

[82] *Ibid.*, ll. 867-79: "It is well-known that if he were not God, he could not do what he did; and it is well-known that Jesus was a man." The Vulgate has: "Qui si deus non esset, mortuis uitam dare non posset: si homo non fuisset, mori ut homo non potuisset [If he were not God, he could not give up his life for the dead; if he had not been man, he could not die as a man]," 166, ll. 423-44.

[83] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll. 997-99: "But by a greater justice he did it thus, that man avenge man; that which a man forfeited, a man avenged." The Vulgate has: "Deus sic modum statuit uictorie ut qui hominem subiugaret per hominem ipse uinceretur [God arranged the mode of the victory (over the devil) so that the one who subjugated man would be himself conquered by a man]," 170, ll. 500-01.

emphasize the frailty of the human condition and the graciousness and love of Christ in assuming it. It is the effect upon the imagination of Catherine's repeated and extended references to the crucified Christ, and her extended analogy that compares Christ on the cross to the fruit upon the tree that Adam ate that appears to convert the clerks. At the same time, as the author of the poem, Clemence invited those in her audience to see Christ in their imagination as Catherine does and to see Catherine as the onlookers in Alexandria do: in her physical beauty that bespeaks human flesh already redeemed and sanctified by Christ's flesh exemplifying redemption that is possible for all humankind.

Catherine's physical beauty allows the onlookers to perceive her goodness and thus the potency of her message of salvation through Christ, which she preaches visually as well as logically, invoking a series of mental pictures and pathos-producing images. It is not surprising that nearly all who come into contact with Catherine, from the clerks to the queen to Maxentius' counselor, Porphyry, to the two hundred knights to much of the crowd, become Christians. Only Maxentius, his mind occluded by lust, pride, cruelty, and anger so that he cannot see Catherine properly, will not convert. In her fruitfulness Catherine is comparable to Mary, whose flesh literally made Christ's flesh, and also to Christ himself as the "fertile" ("feunable") savior hanging on the tree. As a virgin, Catherine is entitled to regard herself literally as Christ's bride, and to join the chorus of virgins in heaven whose union Clemence describes in the erotic language of the Song of Songs; they despise "mortal lovers" ("amanz mortels"), for Christ is "their spouse and their lover" ("lur epuse et lur ami").[84] Finally, Catherine recapitulates Christ's salvific death in her martyrdom; she offers her "beautiful,

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[84] *The Life of St. Catherine*, ll 1781, 1848.

white, tender flesh" ("bele blanche charn tendre") to the wheel. In the Vulgate *passio* milk

flows from Catherine's neck instead of blood when she is decapitated, but Clemence added

something more dramatic to this miracle: an explicit quasi-eucharistic transubstantiation in

which Catherine's blood actually becomes the milk that recalls her fair physical beauty and

her paradoxically fecund virginity: "Sun sanc sa nature perdi / Car blancs laiz de sun cors

eissi."[85] This is reminiscent of the blood of Christ that is transformed into wine for Aelred's

sister to drink in *De institutio*, and also of the Song of Song's "candidus et rubicundus" that

characterized the beauty of Christ in medieval interpretation. After Clemence informed her

audience that Catherine died on a Friday at the very hour that Christ died, she ended her

poem with a meditation on Christ's love that is not in the Vulgate:

> Car nostre amur tant desira
> Que tute rien pur nus cria.
> Il meime devint criature
> Par sa bunté, nient par natur.
> Mort suffri pur la nostre amur,
> Peines, viltez e grant dolur.
> Ohi! tant nus devum preisier,
> Encuntre tuz mals tenir chier,
> E la soe amur desirer,
> E vaines amurs eschiver,
> Quant il la nostre amur desire,
> Il ki suls est reis e sire.[86]

In this perfectly balanced twelve-line passage, its two symmetrical halves broken by the

ejaculation "Ohi!" that lets loose Clemence's emotional response to the affective picture of

the suffering and self-giving Christ that she has painted in the first half, Clemence drew on

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[85]*Ibid.*, ll. 2624-25: "Her blood lost its [bloody] nature, for white milk issued from her body."

[86] *Ibid.*, ll. 2651-662: For he so greatly desired our love that he made everything for us. He himself became a creature through his goodness, not through his nature. He suffered death for the sake of our love, pain, shamefulness, and great suffering. Oh! We ought to praise him so much, to hold him dear against all evils, and to desire his love and eschew vain loves when he desires our love, he who alone is king and lord."

the allusive power of the Song of Songs, whose erotic and bridal diction ("amur," "reis") colors the intensity of Christ's love and the love that we owe him in return. Clemence's point was that everyone can and should imitate Catherine's love for and imitation of Christ and the nuptial union that she achieves with him after her death.

Whether Clemence actually knew the triple meditation in Aelred's *De instituione* is of course a matter of conjecture, but she used Aelred's techniques: narrative, empathetic identification, focus on Christ's passion as a crucible of divine love and human emotional response, allusions to the bridal imagery and language of the Song of Songs, and an emphasis on meditation as a route to theological understanding, and, finally prayer. Like Aelred, Clemence interjected her authorial self into her work: "Pur s'amur pris cest oevre en mein."[87] If she knew Aelred's work, as a woman she inverted its point of view, writing as the very sort of consecrated virgin to whom Aelred had addressed *De institutione*. Through Catherine Clemence herself imagined the virgin's union with Christ and identification with Christ that Aelred had imagined his sister achieving through her own imagination. Clemence of Barking's poem about the martyrdom of Catherine of Alexandria exemplified one way in which *De institutione* could be adapted by a woman writer for an audience of fellow nuns and their aristocratic patrons, many of whom were likely also women.

Stephen of Sawley's use of *De institutione* needs no conjecture. Stephen, abbot first of the Cistercian monastery of Sawley in south Yorkshire, and later of Newminster in Northumberland and Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire's West Riding, specifically mentioned

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[87] *Ibid.*, l. 269: "For his (God's) love I took this work in hand."

Aelred's work in his *Speculum novitii* ("Mirror for the Novice"),[88] one of Stephen's four

extant treatises, all of which he addressed to monastic readers.[89] All four show signs of

Aelred's influence and that of other twelfth-century Cistericans, notably Bernard of Clairvaux

and Gilbert of Hoyland, from whom, as Edmund Mikkers notes, Stephen did not simply draw

influence but boldly borrowed.[90] As the title *Speculum novitii* indicates, Stephen addressed

this work to Cistercian novices, for whose training he seemed well-adapted as a seasoned

monastic administrator (he had been cellarer at Sawley before his election as abbot). The

Rule of St. Benedict and the *Consuetudines* of the Cistercian order were the primary sources

of this work. Like Aelred's *De institutione*, Stephen's *Speculum* is written largely in the

second-person singular (it is addressed to a single hypothetical Cistercian novice), and it

instructs those new to the religious life how to comport themselves in both external matters

(how to work, eat at refectory, conduct themselves at Mass and chapter meeting, and confess

their sins) and internal matters such as prayer and meditation. In that structural respect it

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[88] All citations are from Edmund Mikkers, ed., "Un 'Speculum Novitii' inédit d'Étienne de Salley," *Collectanea ordinis cisterciensium reformatorum* 8 (1946): 17-68. Translations of this and the other three treatises by Stephen are my own, although influenced by this translation: Stephen of Sawley, Treatises, trans. Jeremiah F. O. Sullivan, ed. Bede K. Lackner, Cistercian Fathers Series 36 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1984).

[89] The other three treatises are *De informatione mentis circa psalmodiam diei et noctis*, *Meditationes de gaudiis beatae Mariae virginis*, and *Triplex exercitium*. The critical editions are respectively: Edmund Mikkers, ed., "Un traité inédit d'Étienne de Salley sur la Psalmodie," *Cîteaux* 23 (1972): 242-88; and André Wilmart, ed., "Les méditations d'Étienne de Sallai sur les joies de la Sainte-Vierge," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 10 (1929): 368-415; and "Le triple exercice d'Étienne de Sallai," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 11 (1930), 355-374. All references to Sephen of Sawley's texts herein are to these critical editions by Mikkers and Wilmart. *Speculum novitii* and *De informatione* expressly concern themselves with monastic life. *Speculum novitii* is addressed to a young reader who is presumably a monastic (although Stephen never makes that entirely clear), while *Meditationes de gaudiis* is addressed to a unknown male friend ("karissime"), a "man of many wishes" ("vir desideriorum"). All four treatises make frequent use of the second-person singular.

[90] Mikkers thoroughly rehearsed the sources of *Speculum novitii*, which also included an array of anonymous penitential tracts as well as the *Vitae patrum* and the writings on monasticism in the works of Augustine, Jerome and John Cassian. "Un 'speculum,'" 38-40. See also ch. 16 of "Un 'speculum,'" 58-59.

resembles *De institutione*, where directives on the externals of the anchoress's life preceded

and prepare the reader for triple meditation.

The sixth chapter of Stephen's *Speculum*, titled "De muliplici modo formandi

meditationes [On the Multiple Modes of Forming Meditations]," is in fact a densely

abbreviated adaptation of the life-of-Christ segment of Aelred's triple meditation, a

borrowing that Stephen readily admitted, for he wrote: "Quae hic sub brevitate succinta

transcurruntur, diffusius invenies in mediationibus Aelredi, quas scribit in opusculo suo,

quod Insitutio inclusae titulatur."[91] Certain aspects of Stephen's debt to Aelred should be

noted. The first is that Stephen, in his use of the future indicative form ("invenies"—"you

will find"), indicates that he expected the male Cistercian novice who was his reader to read

and use for his spiritual benefit a treatise addressed to and designed for a female solitary.

Stephen's reader must consult Aelred's treatise, for it is only there that he will find a complete

treatment of the contemplative strategies that Stephen expected his reader to employ.

Second, Stephen, in the sentence immediately preceding his direction to his reader to

turn to Aelred, precisely described the imaginative core of Aelred's meditative strategy based

on the forming of mental pictures, the making of narratives, and the placing of oneself inside

them. In that preceding sentence, Stephen invited his reader to contemplate the visit of the

Magi to the infant Jesus as described in Matthew's gospel. Stephen wrote: "In ortu etiam

Christi multa opinaberis, quae scripta non sunt et in apparitione ad magos, qualis ille vultus

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[91] *Ibid.*, 52: "What is here run through with succinct brevity, you will find in more diffuse form in the meditations of Aelred that he wrote in his little work that is titled 'Rule of Life for a Recluse.'"

vel respectus, qui virorum potentium gravitatem ad obsequium tam humile inclinat.[92]

Matthew says merely that that the Magi "on entering the house, found the boy with Mary, his mother, and, falling down before him, adored him."[93] Stephen asked his reader to do much more: to make a mental picture of the "things that were not written down." This image is an explicitly visual one--the child Jesus' face—that Stephen insisted is so compelling in his retelling of the Magi story that it is this face of Jesus in itself (not, as in Matthew's gospel, the fact that the star of Bethlehem revealed Jesus to be king of the Jews) that provokes the powerful kings to prostrate themselves humbly before a baby. Stephen presented a blueprint of Aelred's mode of inciting an intense emotional response on the part of his audience. Here, the visit of the Magi is not simply a theophany to the Gentiles as it is in Matthew but an emotion-stirring paradox (encapsulated in the parallelism and rhetorical antithesis of "gravitatem" and "obsequium") of mighty men brought to their knees before a helpless infant whose very face reveals that he is far greater than they.

In the sixth chapter of his *Speculum* Stephen turned to Christ's passion, and there he revealed the visual and imaginative nature of his meditative technique even more clearly, inviting his reader to contemplate the gruesome details of Christ's suffering in the light of the reader's own sinfulness: "Puta Jesum in cruce saturatum opprobriis et ludibriis, plenum dilanatione, flagris et spinis compunctum, haerentem clavis, ad te illos misericordes et dulcissimos oculos, dum iaceres in massa perditionis, misericorditer reflectentem huiusmodi

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[92] *Ibid*.: "In addition, you will think many things about the birth of Christ and his appearance to the Magi that were not written down—what his face was like or his expression--that bent these important and powerful men to such humble homage."

[93] Mt 2:11: "et intrantes domum invenerunt puerum cum Maria matre eius et procidentes adoraverunt eum."

querulosis suspiriis repellere ingratitudinem tuam et duritiam cordis arguere.[94] Stephen then invites his reader, despite his unworthiness, to identify with Christ by mentally experiencing every aspect of his suffering and death: "Attende, quis patitur, quid, pro qup, quam care dilectionem tuam comparat et quam facile tibi cessit et tua sit pendentis infirmatas, tuus trepidantium pallor [membrorum], tua effusio sanguinis, tua expiratio crucifixi."[95]

Finally, Stephen made it clear, as Aelred did, that this deliberate stirring up of affective response to Christ's human nature via the use of one's imagination is the culmination and very goal of the contemplative experience (and in Stephen's case, the monastic experience). In the sixth chapter of his *Speculum* Stephen implicitly defined the multiple modes" ("multiplici modo") of meditating, not as a range of meditative techniques as the phrase might suggest but as a range of imaginative possibilities deriving from a single technique: the conjuring up of mental pictures from the life of Christ in which the reader is expected to participate, experiencing both the love of Christ and an overwhelming desire to return that love. The only "mode" of meditating, Stephen implies, is Aelred's mode. In his allusion to Aelred's *De institutione reclusarum* as the ultimate authority upon and ultimate guide to the forming of such mental images, Stephen effectively placed a male Cistercian imprimatur upon a mode of women's anchoritic spirituality. Indeed Stephen erased, as far as he was concerned, any distinction between the sexes when it comes to either the mode or the

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[94] *Speculum novitii*, 52: "Think upon Jesus on the cross, heaped with reproaches and ridicule, covered with lacerations, stung by whips and thorns, stuck with nails, his merciful and most sweet eyes turned toward you while you lay weighed down by your perdition, so that you, reflecting in this manner with sighs of grief, would cast aside your ingratitude and rebuke the hardness of your heart."

[95] *Ibid.*, 53: "Notice who is suffering, and what, and for whom, and how dearly he buys your love and how easily he gives himself up for you, and may the weakness of the one hanging on the cross be yours, the pallor of his trembling limbs be yours, the shedding of his blood be yours, the dying breath of the crucified one be yours."

intensity of religious experience. There was no hierarchy of the sexes for Stephen, no thought

that women, as the fleshy and emotional sex, are more suited to a fleshy and emotional

spiritual life in contrast to men, the rational sex, who ought to pursue a more abstract and

cerebral variety of religious experience.[96] Stephen effectively declared that so-called

women's spirituality, with its physicality, emotionality, and tears, was perfectly suited

to men, too.

Stephen did omit Aelred's allusions to the Song of Songs and its bridal imagery, for

male monastics could not literally be brides of Christ. Nonetheless, Stephen made it clear that

it was possible for men to achieve an analogous sense of physical closeness to Christ, even to

climb upon the cross in their imaginations and kiss Christ's wounds as Aelred bade his sister

to do in *De institutione*. In this passage from the third chapter of Stephen's *Speculum* that

might have been modeled on *De institutione* Stephen invited his reader to contemplate the

crucifix while saying the divine office at Matins and in so doing let his eyes travel to the

nails, the thorns, the spittle left by Christ's tormentors, the wound in Christ's side, and finally,

Christ's heart. Then, Stephen wrote, the novice-monk should mentally rest his head between

Christ's shoulder-blades and the cross, kiss his wounds, and drink his blood:

> Depinges…Dominum…suspensum in cruce, ut compungaris et nunc pro clavis, nunc
> pro spinis, nunc pro sputis, nunc pro lateris apertione suspirabis et gratias ages. Nunc
> latenter ingeres oculos tuos usque ad cor Dei, ubi omnes thesauri sapientiae et
> scientiae sunt absconditi. Nunc latenter inter scapulas et crucem violenter inicies
> caput, osculans vulnera eius, quae tam atrociter ipsum discerpserunt, dicens apud te:
> "Utquid perditio haec facta est sanguinis? Ego autem hic fame pereo. Utquid non
> venio hic haurire de fontibus salvatoris et refrigero linguam meam." Et sic audiens,

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[96] In the eighteenth chapter of his *Speculum* Stephen related two examples deriving from the funeral of a pious
nun whom he viewed as a model for his male readers to emulate: a nun who was so devoted to making the sign
of the cross that, as her body was being carried to her grave, the face of Christ on the crucifix turned toward her.
Another nun who was present related that the dead nun's entire body had putrefied except for the thumb with
which she had made the sign of the cross when living. *Ibid.*, 61.

quid loquatur in te Dominus Deus dicens: "Qui sitit, veniat et bibat" gustabis et videbis, quam suavis est Dominus, quam dulcis, quam mitis et humilis corde.[97]

Stephen subtly shifted the focus of this imagined experience of drinking Christ's blood from the erotic (as in Aelred's version replete with language from the Song of Songs) to the eucharistic (Stephen emphasizes hunger, thirst, and tasting), turning a specifically female experience into one that is sex-neutral without losing desired sense of extreme physical closeness to Christ.

Similarly, in the twelfth chapter of *Speculum novitii* Stephen informed the novice monk that even meals in the refectory were occasions to contemplate Christ, specifically the crucifix hanging in the monastic church: "Insuper cogita Christum in ecclesia crucifixum expectare gratias tuas."[98] Even the breadcrumbs left over from the monks' meal could be a source of intense imaginative meditative exercise. Stephen instructed his reader to take five crumbs and make a cross out of them, tracing out the shape of Christ's crucified body and saying to himself: "Here the feet, there the hands were crucified, here the head leans down, here, in water and blood, mercy and plenteous redemption flow from his side."[99]

The sixth chapter of Stephen's *Speculum* culminates with Christ's ascension into heaven, and it is in this passage that Stephen revealed that the aim of the sort of meditation he advocated was nothing less than oneness with God. He wrote:

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[97] *Ibid.*, 49: "You will picture…the Lord…hanging on the cross so that you may feel remorse, and you will sigh and give thanks, now for the nails, now for the thorns, now for the spittle, now for the opening in his side. Now in your mind you will move your eyes all the way to the heart of God, where all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden. Now you will place your head impetuously between his shoulder-blades and the cross, kissing his wounds that they have mangled so fearfully. Say to yourself, 'Why has this blood been lost? Indeed I am here perishing of hunger. Why do I not come here to drink from the springs of the savior and cool my tongue?' And listen to what the Lord God says inside you: 'Let him who is thirsty come and drink.' You will taste and see how delightful is the Lord, how sweet, how gentle and humble of heart."

[98] *Ibid.*, p. 56: "Think about the Christ crucified in the church awaiting your thanks."

[99] *Ibid.*: "Hic pedes, illic manus cruxifixae fuerunt, hic reclinat caput, hi per latus in aqua aet sanguine emanat misericorida et copiosa redemptio.

> [S]i prosequeris cum eisdem ascendentem Dominum ub desiderio animae et profusione lacrimarum, si occursum cum ceteris avere meditaris, si ad organa illa coelestia modulantius consonantia et prosequentium Dominum Jesum Christum usque ad interiora velaminis, usque ad consessionem Patris mirando comitatu admitteris; cum [non] sicuit fluit cera a facie ignis et sicut arentarca massa per ignem resoluta in foveam decurrit, sic et tu transiens in affectum cordis et concupiscens et deficiens in atria Domini conscendis ad Deum toto corde, tota anima erigeris in Deum tota virtute uniris Deo, ut unus fias cum eo spiritus in aeternum.[100]

Stephen was saying that the mode of meditation he recommends, grounded in human emotion and sentiment, leads directly to the highest form of mystical union.

Stephen of Sawley devoted his entire writing career, or least the writing career evidenced in his four surviving treatises, to promoting and providing subject matter for the meditative technique that Aelred had developed in *De institutione*. The monk's inner life in general was of great concern to Stephen. He devoted several of the twenty-four chapters of his *Speculum* to such practices as examination of conscience and confession (ch. one), the daily prayers that a monk ought to recite (ch. two), the divine office (ch. three), the Mass (ch. eight), reading from the Scriptures and other spiritual treatises (chs. fifteen and sixteen), the sign of the cross (ch. eighteen), and obedience to one's abbot (ch. twenty-two) as well as to the monk's moral life, which should be free of boasting of his spiritual progress (ch. nineteen) and unnecessary displays of piety (ch. twenty-one).

Visual meditation, however, was the central preoccupation of Stephen's writings. In the first chapter of his *Speculum novitii*, concerning the examination of conscience that was a

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[100] *Ibid.*, p. 53: "[I]f you follow the ascending Lord with them [the apostles who witnessed Christ's ascension] in the desire of your soul and in your shedding of tears, if you meditate on your craving to meet him along with the others, you will be admitted to that perfectly harmonious heavenly choir, and to those in the retinue of Jesus Christ the Lord, all the way to the interior veils [of the Temple], all the way to the presence of the Father, while all the heavenly company marvels at you. Just as wax melts in the face of a fire, and just as a mass of silver is rendered soft by the flame and flows into the pit, so indeed, you, when, overflowing with affection in your heart and desiring and yearning for the courts of the Lord, ascend to God with your whole heart, you will raise yourself with your whole soul, and you will be united to God with your whole strength, so that you become one spirit with him for eternity."

preparation for confession, Stephen demonstrated an experienced abbot's familiarity with the power of imagination in a young man, a power that could be used for ill, leading a monk astray from the prayer life that was the building material of his relationship with God. Putting himself in the place of a monastic novice searching his soul for distracting thoughts, Stephen confessed to have let his mind wander through "castles, schools, and gatherings" ("per castella, per scholas, per conventus")[101] when he should have been paying attention during the divine office or when listening to the Psalms or spiritual reading. The young monk whose voice Stephen adopted also confesses to letting things he has seen or heard in the past enter his memory at inappropriate times ("venit in memoriam meam, quae audivi vel vidi")[102] and even to forming images in his heart of things he had not seen or heard ("etiam nec visa nec audita formavi in corde")[103] Those images, whether bidden or unbidden, remembered or conjured up out of whole cloth, could include such activities as building a church, writing books, managing a house, hunting, or horse-racing. The monk's wandering mind and untrammeled imagination might even stray to "the imagining of a man and a woman copulating" ("venit in mentem commixtionis maris et feminae imaginatio"),[104] sometimes to the point of physical arousal ("quandoque movetur caro")[105] as he indulged in pleasurable fantasy when he should have been praying. Stephen was clearly fascinated by the mind's ability to create a reality so powerful that it could interfere with a monk's conscious desire to

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[101] *Ibid.*, 45.

[102] *Ibid.*

[103] *Ibid.*

[104] *Ibid.*

[105] *Ibid.*

focus upon the things of God. Stephen's aim was to enable the monk to use his imagination to

bring about a closeness to God in meditation that even prayer and chanting could not effect.

The techiques of meditation are the central preoccupation of seven chapters, nearly

one-third, of the Stephen's *Speculum*, including the sixth chapter discussed above. In

Stephen's view, meditation was the prayer behind all the monk's formal prayers, both in

private and in community. In his third chapter, dealing with the canonical hours of divine

office, Stephen wrote of a monk who desired to prolong the office of Matins to the breaking

of day so that he could use the occasion to meditate even more fully on Christ's passion and

its meaning:

> ...cogitante eo ad admirante mirabiles elationes, id est, impetus et angustias passionum Christi et etiam quam mirabilis in altis, hoc est in cruce, Dominus, mirante etiam quanta bonitas creantis, quanta dilectio pretisoso sanguine redimentis, quanta dulcedo praevenientis in gratia, quanta dignatio coronantis in misericordia, quanta cura humanae salutis, quanta modestia crucifixi, quanta morientis pietas, quanta virtus resurgentis, quanta gloria in coelum ascendentis, quanta crucis mysteria in modo, in causa, in fructu redemptionis.[106]

Stephen also emphasized the individual creativity inherent in the process of making such

mental images and dwelling upon them. This called "forming meditations" ("formandi

meditationes"). In the third chapter he told his reader to "picture" ("depinges") Jesus, and in

the fourth chapter, he instructed that reader: "Form an image in your heart" ("formaveris in

corde")[107] of Jesus. Stephen made it clear that he did not wish to control his reader's

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[106] *Ibid.*, 50: "...in his thinking about and his marveling at the wonderful exaltations, that is, the blows and the anguish of Chris's passion, and also the marvel of the Lord's being raised on high, that is upon the cross; in his marveling also at how great was his goodness as creator, how great his love as redeemer by his precious blood, how great his sweetness in giving out his grace beforehand, how great his worthiness in surrounding us with his mercy, how great his concern for human salvation, how great his humility in being crucified, how great his devotion in dying, how great his power in rising from the dead, how great his glory in ascending into heaven, how great the mysteries of the cross as the manner, the cause, and the fruit of our redemption."

[107] *Ibid.*, 51.

imagination or bind his reader to any particular mental image, for he wrote that Christ can be made mentally present by "these [Stephen's own] and similar" affective imaginings ("his et huiusmodi devotis affectibus mente conceptis defigitur Christus"),[108] leaving the reader free to improvise as he might choose.

As it was for Aelred, the passion of Christ, the supreme expression of divine love for mankind that elicited the most extreme responses of gratitude and pity, was the affective center of Stephen's meditations.[109] In the twenty-third-chapter of his *Speculum* Stephen suggested that his reader turn the entire day, but especially the canonical hours for reciting the divine office, into an extended contemplation of events in the life of Christ, especially those of the passion. At lauds, for example, the young monk should think about Christ's arrest in Gethsemane, at prime his trial and scourging, at tierce his way of the cross, at nones his death, and so forth. Pegging the remembrance of events in Christ's life, especially the events of the passion, to the hours of the day was not a new practice. As Sr. Mary Philomena (Helen P. Forshaw) has shown, such linking of events in Christ's life to the canonical hours dates back to Christianity's earliest centuries, where it is found in the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Basil, the treatise *De virginitate* attributed to Athanasius, John Cassian, and Isidore of Seville. It also appears in the Carolingian liturgy as well as the writings of Alcuin,

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[108] *Ibid.*, 49.

[109] Only *Triplex exercitium* (n. 89), which does not have a specifically Christological focus, does not touch upon Christ's passion. That treatise's three meditations concern sin, the Virgin Mary, and the Church Triumphant in heaven. Like *Speculum novitii*, and *De informatione*, *Triplex exercitium* is written in the second-person singular, addressed to an unknown friend ("karissime," "dilectissime"), perhaps a fellow monk. The second meditation of the three, concerning Mary, is very much in the style of *Speculum novitii* (and also of Aelred's triple meditation), in that it asks the reader to place himself in Mary's presence.

Rabanus Maurus, Hugh of St. Victor, and Rupert of Deutz.[110] Stephen, however, added to this centuries-old monastic practice his distinctive meditative technique centered around the visual.

Stephen's treatise *De informatione mentis circa psalmodiam diei et noctis* ("Mental Images Arranged Around the Psalmody for Day and Night") is, as its title indicates, is an elaboration of his *Speculum*'s meditative sections, particularly its twenty-third chapter. The final section of *De informatione* consists of a meditation upon the life and passion of Christ pegged to the canonical hours of the monastic day (like the twenty-third chapter of Stephen's *Speculum*). Stephen introduced each canonical hour using the second-person imperative form "cogita [think about],"[111] and he also used other imperatives that instructed his reader where to direct his eyes: "considera [consider]," "mira [wonder at]," "attende [observe]."[112] The meditation for the the hour of sext, marking Christ's ascent upon the cross is most elaborate, even cinematic. Stephen bade his reader to let his eyes move first to one crucified thief flanking Christ and then to the other, in an exercise in rhetorical antithesis that highlighted the dramatic contrast between good and bad thief: "Considera latrones, hinc et inde, unum blasphemantem et improperantem quasi novisssimo virorum; alium increpantem eum et Domino dicentem: Memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum. Mira fides latronis.

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[110] Sr. Mary Philomena [Helen P. Forshaw], "Edmund of Abingdon's Meditations before the Canonical Hours," *Ephemerides liturgicae* 78 (1964): 33-57, 36-47.

[111] *De informatione mentis circa psalmodiam diei et noctis* (n. 89) p. 285, l. 891; p. 285, l. 936; p. 286, ll. 971; p. 987, 1005; p. 287, ll. 1028, 1038.

[112]*Ibid.*, e.g. 286, ll. 980, 994, 1000.

Et Dominus: Hodie mecum eris in paradiso."[113] In Stephen's view this scene encapsulated the

very reason for Christ's passion: the redemption of sinners of whom the good thief is the first:

"Mirabilior mesericordia redemptoris, qui primitias operis sui dedit latroni, quando pro

peccatoribus venit."[114]

Stephen had already informed his reader that darkness had descended upon the land

from the sixth to the ninth hour. Moving from the thieves flanking Christ's cross, he told his

reader to turn his imagination to two others below the cross but also on either side, Mary and

the beloved disciple John:

> Cogita matrem virginem et discipulum quem diligebat Iesus stantes iuxta crucem,
> pios obtutus in eum lacrimabiliter reflectentes, eius passionibus et opprobriis
> condolentes, imo patientis compatientes. Nam anima matris pertransivit gladius
> passionis. Attende pium Iesum illos misericordes oculos suos ad suos convertentem,
> matrem discipulo et discipulum, virginem scilicet virgni commendantem, ultimum
> videlicet testamentum suum in terris facientem.[115]

This is a most complex visual meditation, in which Stephen invited his reader

simultaneously to look at and to suffer in his imagination ("cogita") with Mary and John,

even as those two are suffering in their own imaginations with Christ as he suffers physically

("lacrimabiliter reflectentes, patientis compatientes"). Stephen then drew back and changed

to the third person and the past tense in a scriptural allusion: to the "sword of suffering"

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[113] *Ibid*., ll. 991-94: "Consider the thieves, here and over there, the one blaspheming and reproaching like the lowest of men, the other reproving him and saying to the Lord: Remember me, Lord, when you come into your kingdom. Marvel at the faith of that thief. And the Lord says: This day you will be with me in paradise."

[114] *Ibid.*, ll. 994-96: "More wonderful is the mercy of the redeemer who, when he came [down from heaven] for sinners, gave the first fruits of his work to a thief."

[115] *Ibid.*, ll. 996-1003: "Think upon the virgin mother and the disciple whom Jesus loved standing next to the cross, looking lovingly and thinking mournfully upon him, sorrowing with him in his suffering and insults, indeed suffering for his suffering. For the sword of suffering passed through the soul of the mother. Consider the loving Jesus turning those pitying eyes of his toward theirs, from the mother to the disciple and from the disciple to the mother, so commending a virgin to a virgin, so making his last will and testament on earth." For the sword piercing Mary's heart, see Simeon's prophecy in Lc 2.35.

("gladius passionis") that he declared had "pierced through" ("pertransivit") the soul of Mary.
The suddenness of that change of tense and point of view, coupled with the dramatic, content
of his allusion—the sword that metaphorically kills Mary as her son dies lierally—is the
emotional center of the meditation. Stephen invited his reader to release that emotion in
double pathos, not only suffereing with Christ but with Mary, too, because her pain, induced
by her own imaginative participation with her son's pain, is equal to that of her son. Finally,
Stephen told his reader to look at Jesus ("attende"), and then, along with Jesus to look at and
to pity the pair beneath the cross, each in turn, as Jesus' own pitying eyes turn from one to the
other ("illos misericordes oculos suos ad suos convertentem").

      The reader is thus thrust imaginatively into the scene at the foot of the cross, made a
party to it not only by contemplating its *dramatis personae* as Stephen suggested, but by
observing them from their own points of view (Mary and John looking at Jesus, Jesus
looking at Mary and John). The reader is also thrust emotionally into the scene, feeling along
with John and Mary, especially Mary, and also with Christ as he observes the two below him
from the height of the cross. In the visual and emotional climax of this scene, Stephen invited
his reader not only to look at Jesus—at his eyes—but also to look with Jesus as Jesus' eyes
move back and forth between the eyes of Mary and John (as they stand looking at each other)
in a multiplicity of points of view: Stephen's, the reader's, John's, Mary's, and Christ's.
Through the complexity of this imaginative experience as the reader's thoughts rove from one
character to another in the crucifixion scene erected in his mind, Stephen invited the reader
into layers of empathetic response: to suffer Mary's pain as she suffers her son's, and to feel
Jesus' pity for Mary, a pity that transcends Jesus' own sufferings, which Stephen had already

impressed upon the reader in detail in his meditation for the hour of prime.[116] Jesus is

hanging on the cross, but what Stephen has askeds his reader to feel at this moment is not so

much Jesus' pain as his empathetic response to Mary's impending bereavement, so that Jesus'

last act on earth is a gift by will ("testamentum suum") of Mary's care to John. The final act

in this scene is thus an act of loving generosity on Christ's part that will presumably would

ignite the reader—who as a monk participated by his vows in the virginity of Mary and John

to which Stephen alluded—to a reciprocal outpouring of love. The meditation is designed to

draw the reader into both an emotional and an intellectual, theological interpretation of

Christ's suffering as a sign of supreme love, exemplified in microcosm by his loving concern

for his mother and his gracious entrustment of her care to John as his last act.

Stephen's design for his meditative technique was almost schematic, moving his

reader from his words on the page with their rhetorical pull, to mental pictures, to emotional

response to both words and pictures, to a powerful sense of identification with the central

characters: Christ almost always, and often Mary as well. In his eleventh meditation on the

joys of the Virgin Mary,[117] Stephen worked yet another variation upon the passion of Christ,

this time mostly from Mary's point of view (as well as his own, and at his invitation, his

reader's). He bade his reader to "think upon [considera]" Mary gazing at her son: "seipsum in

ara crucis patri offerentem, impassibilem pacientem, uitam morientem, uirginem astantem et

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[116] *Ibid.*, 285, ll. 258-59: "corpus immaculatum lacerantes flagellis et funibus, purpura induentes irrisoria, spineam coronam capiti impresserunt [they tore into his stainless body with whips and ropes, they dressed him in mocking purple, and they pressed a crown of thorns into his head]."

[117] "Les méditations d'Étienne de Sallai sur les joies de la Sainte-Vierge" (n. 89), 405-07.

dulcissimi filii sui singularis, scilicet gaudii sui, tormenta piis oculis aspicientem."[118] Again,

Stephen coupled the rhetorical power of paradox and polyptoton--"impassibilem pacientem

[the one who cannot suffer suffering]," "uitam morientem [the one who is life itself

dying]"—with his characteristic trope of looking ("piis oculis aspicientem"). Stephen

then asked:

> Quis digne sufficiat estimare dolorem matris, cum uideret preciosissimum filii corpus, quod ipsa nouit sanctissiumum et mundissimum ab omni labe, extensum in ligno crucis, caput tremendum angelis coronatum spinis, manus et pedes transfixos clauis, latus perforatum lancea militis, et ex omni parte corporis decurrentes undas sanguinis?[119]

This is a version of John of Fécamp's rhythmic quasi-poem *Candet nudatum pectus*, but

Stephen, typically, recast John's meditation it in multiple points of view: that of Mary as she

contemplates the suffering of her crucified son, that of the reader, as he is asked to try to

measure Mary's suffering, and that of Stephen himself, as he asks the rhetorical question

"Quis digne sufficiat [Who may rightly sum up]?," to which the only possible answer is:

No one.

Stephen then proceeded to address Mary directly, in a prayer that was meant for both

himself and his reader:

> Vere, piissima mater, tuam ipsius animam affectuossisimam pertransiuit gladius huius passionis. Sed, licet, imcomparabilis et indicibilis doloris amaritudine assisteres uulnerata in cruce pendenti, cum uideres tam potentem, tam innocentem, tam dulcem, tam amabilem tam abjecte morti addici ab impiis, tam immaniter a crudelibus lacerari, tam irreuerenter cum latronibus deputari, nunquid non in tanti doloris

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[118] *Ibid.*, 405-407, ll. 466-68: "...offering himself to the Father on the altar of the cross, the one who cannot suffer suffering, the one who is life itself dying, the Virgin standing nearby and looking at the torments of her most sweet only son, that is, her joy."

[119] *Ibid.*, 406, ll. 469-91: "Who may rightly sum up the sorrow of the mother when she saw the most precious body of her son, which she knew to be most holy and most clean of all stain, stretched out on the wood of the cross, his head that struck awe among the angels crowned with thorns, his hands and feet transfixed by nails, his side split open by a soldier's lance, and streams of blood running from every part of his body?"

augustia misericordie memor fuisti, domina, misericordie loquam, illius de tua et tocius mundi redemptione? Nunquid non inestimabili es gauisa es leticia cum ex immobili certitudine fidei scires sine dubio precioso sanguine filii tui totum mundum redimi, infernum spoliari, diabolum illum fortem alligari, ianuam regni celestis aperiri? Quid, cum audires dulcissimi oris sui uocem dilecto discipulo suo Ioanni beatissimo te commendantem, ut matri uirgini uirgo deuotum prestaret famulatum, quia post se cariorem non reliquit in mundo, cuius fidelitati ac puritati, cuius caritati tam preciosum salutis et spei nostre commendaret thesaurum?[120]

Stephen took the meditation on the canonical hour of nones from his *De informatione* and expanded it, piling on both visual detail (the physical and mental indignities heaped upon Christ), figures of speech (parallelism, paradox, anaphora, anadiplosis, antithesis, climax), and a series of rhetorical questions whose climax is a rapturous peripeteia in which Mary's "incomparably and indescribably bitter sorrow" ("incomparabilis et indicibilis doloris amaritudine") paradoxically becomes an occasion of "rejoicing, joy without measure" ("inestimabili es gauisa es leticia"). Stephen rehearsed Mary's joyously cathartic realization that her son's anguish (as well as her own) is for the imminent redemption of the world, and that his last living act, as (as Stephen also says in his *De informatione*) is a gift to her of John's loving care, and a gift to John of her, "such a precious treasure of our salvation and our hope" ("tam preciosum salutis et spei nostre…thesaurum"). As with Clemence's ecstatic

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[120] *Ibid.*, ll. 474-86: "Most devoted mother, the very sword of suffering has truly pierced your most loving soul. Yet, although you have been wounded by an incomparably and indescribably bitter sorrow, you stood near the one hanging on the cross, when you saw that one who was so powerful, so sweet, so lovable put to death so wretchedly by the impious, lashed so savagely by cruel men, placed so humiliatingly between thieves, were you not, nonetheless, mindful of mercy in your very great sorrow, his mercy, I say, in his redemption of you and the whole world. Was not your rejoicing and your joy without measure when you knew with unshakable certitude and without doubt that your son had redeemed the whole world with his precious blood, had emptied hell, had bound the strong devil, had opened the gates of the kingdom of heaven? Did you not rejoice when you heard his voice from his most sweet mouth commending you to the beloved disciple, the most blessed John, so that a virgin could take care of his virgin mother, since there was no one dearer whom he left behind in this world, and so that he could entrust to John's fidelity, purity, and charity such a precious treasure of our salvation and our hope?"

"Ohi!" in the *Life of St. Catherine* (another explosion of joy at the contemplation of the

redemption), the emotion in this passage reaches a climactic pitch that overflows into

grateful prayer.

As he explained to the readers of his *Speculum novitii*, Stephen of Sawley looked to

Aelred of Rievaulx's *De institutione inclusarum* as his model for these elaborate and highly

emotional visual exercises. Unlike Aelred, however, he carefully explained his precise aims

in producing his intricately wrought meditations. At the beginning of the *Meditationes de*

gaudiis, Stephen wrote that his anonymous friend had requested this work so that the friend's

"mind can be aroused and well-practiced in the love of that most blessed Virgin" ("memoria

tua possit excitari et exercitari in amore eiusdem beatissime uirginis").[121] Stephen also

reveals in the Meditationes de gaudiis, in a manner reminiscent of Aelred, that he himself

was a sinner, reminding his reader that he himself was undertaking, or had undertaken, the

same path from visual contemplation of to intense affective response to Mary's experiences:

"Besmirched by sins as I am, I ought rather to weep than to tell stories of joy" ("Peccatis

sordens, flere magis debeo quam de gaudiis narrare"),[122]

Stephen also made it clear that the human imagination has its limits when confronting

the divine, and that no one can hope to reduplicate in his mind the actual experiences that

Mary underwent when she participated in Christ's incarnation, passion, and resurrection: "In

primis ergo attendendum quod omnem experienciam humanam effugit et excedit illa

dulcedo, illa suauitas, illud gaudium, quo afficiebatur beata uirgo erga filium suum

[Therefore it must first be noted that the sweetness, the agreeableness, the joy with which the

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[121] *Ibid.*, 392, ll 18-20.

[122] *Ibid.*, ll. 22-23.

Blessed Virgin was overcome in the presence of her son exceeded and eluded all human experience]."[123] Stephen added, however, that this fact—that no one has ever fully known what Mary's experiences were really like ("nemo ad plenum nouit")[124]--should not hem in his reader's imagination, but, rather, liberate it, so that each individual who seeks to meditate upon Mary's experiences, is free to shape his meditations as he chooses ("diuersi diuersis modis meditantur")[125] in keeping with his inclinations and the demands upon his time.

Some people, Stephen wrote, compress all of Mary's joys into a mere five, while others stretch them out to twenty.[126] Indeed, Stephen reassured his reader that even among his own monks, many are busy with their various duties ("Nos autem….attendentes quorumdam occupationem"),[127] and that the fifteen meditations has offered might, in their plenitude, make his reader averse to meditating at all.[128] In that event, Stephen suggested that his reader, if he did not have the leisure to meditate upon all fifteen joys, might wish to break them down into three groups of five.[129] Stephen thus left his reader free to decide for himself the length and hence the content of his own meditations.

As Stephen explained in his *Triplex exercitium*, in response to his correspondent's request for a handbook of spiritual exercises, the subject-matter of meditation was something

[123] *Ibid.*, ll. 32-34.

[124] *Ibid.*, 393, l. 37.

[125] *Ibid.*, l. 38.

[126] *Ibid.*, ll. 38-40: "Quidam comprehendunt ea sub quinario, quidam sub septennario, quidam usque ad uicenniarium meditationem extendunt gaudiorum."

[127] *Ibid.*, l. 41-42.

[128] *Ibid.*, l. 42: "ne pariat, ut assolet, copia congesta fastidium."

[129] *Ibid.*, ll. 42-44: "in tres quinarios diuidamus prerogatiuas gaudiorum beate uirginis."

that could not easily be put into words, ("huius spiritualia studia magis sapiunt meditata quam dicta")[130] and even when there were words for the things seen in the mind, they were more easily spoken than written ("magis eciam dicta quam scripta").[131] As a writer, Stephen conceived of his purpose as giving written shape as best he could to an experience of the mind—his reader's mind--that could make powerfully real the import of Christ's incarnation and redemption and stir up responses of gratitude and love that would create what Bede Lackner calls an intense "spritual bond between God and the individual soul."[132] In Stephen's view it was the reader, not Stephen himself, who controlled that imaginative experience that was designed to produce a mystical experience; Stephen always saw his own role as merely that of guide and facilitator.

Stephen of Sawley's four treatises thus constitute a set of detailed guidelines to the highly visual, intensely affective meditative methodology focused upon the humanity of Christ that Aelred of Rievaulx had created. Unlike Aelred's *De institutione*, Stephen's treatises never apparently gained a wide readership. His *De informatione*, for example, has survived in only a single manuscript, and the *Triplex exercitium* in only two. Seven extant manuscripts survive of the *Meditationes de gaudiis*, however, with provenances in English and French monasteries that indicate a geographically wide circulation.[133] There is only one complete extant manuscript of *Speculum novitii*,[134] although extracts from it, including the

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[130] "Le triple exercice d'Étienne de Sallai" (n. 89), 361.

[131] *Ibid.*

[132] Introduction, Stephen of Sawley, *Treatises* (n. 88), 15.

[133] "Les méditations d'Étienne de Sallai sur les joies de la Vierge" (n. 89), 390.

[134] The sixteenth-century copyist of this manuscript (Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles 2724-39) attributed *Speculum novitii* as follows: "domni S. Abbatis saviniensis." There was a Cistercian monastery at Savigny in

first chapter concerning confession, appear in a text titled *Doctrina beati Bernardi*, surviving

in two late fourteenth-century French manuscripts of monastic and ecclesiastical provenance

and first printed in 1515 under that title.[135] The existence of those scattered manuscripts

indicates that Stephen's writings did manage to find audiences among religiously consecrated

men well outside of northern England, even if Stephen's French readers did attribute some of

those writings to Bernard of Clairvaux, as they did so many other devotional texts.

Furthermore, Edmund Mikkers, noting the debt that Stephen acknowledged to Aelred,

and also noting Aelred's influence on the writings of the fourteenth-century mystical writer

Richard Rolle of Hampole in Yorkshire (1290-1349), suggested that Rolle might have also

had access to Stephen's writings through the nuns at the Cistercian convent at Hampole

whose neighbor he was in his hermitage.[136] As Mikkers observed, Carl Horstmann found

strong signs of *Speculum novitii*'s influence—including numerous parallel passages that

appear to be translations--in *Our Daily Work*, a fourteenth-century English devotional treatise

attributed, not without controversy, to Rolle.[137] Those traces of influence are further evidence

that Stephen's work was probably read and copied more widely than its small number of

extant manuscripts would lead one to conclude.

Normandy headed by several different abbots during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries whose names began with "S." Nonetheless, Edmund Mikkers, noting distinct similarities between the style of *Speculum novitii* that of Stephen's other three treatises, whose authorship is undisputed, concluded that Stephen was the author of *Speculum novitii* and that the copyist had probably meant to write "salliensis" instead of "saviensis." The Brussels manuscript, titled *S. Bonaventura Opera*, includes eight treatises bearing the title *Speculum*. Several of the treatises are attributed to Bonaventure, others to Albert the Great. Introduction, "Un 'Speculum novitii' inédit d'Étienne de Salley," 22-29.

[135] *Ibid.*, 29-33.

[136] *Ibid.*, 40.

[137] *Ibid.*, 40-44. See also *Our Daily Work*, in *Yorkshire Writers; Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church, and His Followers*, ed. C. Horstman, Library of English Writers 1 (London: Swan Sonnenschein, New York: Macmillan, 1895), 137-56.

Stephen's contemporary Edmund of Abingdon (sometimes known as Edmund Rich because his prosperous tradesman father had acquired the Latin sobriquet "Dives"), was the far more widely read writer. Edmund's life is well documented in the records of his episcopacy and his successful canonization process, as well as in two thirteenth-century *vitae* written by Eustace of Faversham and Matthew Paris. Eustace and Matthew made Edmund into quasi-martyr, driven into exile in France because of persistent political tension between him and the English king, Henry III (1207-72), over the control of benefices and the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts in matters pertaining to marriage and bastardy, as well as constant tension between Edmund as as bishop and the monks of Christ Church Abbey in Canterbury over his claimed oversight of the abbey. This hagiographic view of Edmund as a thirteenth-century avatar of Thomas Becket, his twelfth-century predecessor as archbishop of Canterbury martyred by Henry's grandfather, Henry II, has been challenged by C.H. Lawrence.[138] Lawrence maintains that Edmund's cult flourished in popular memory, not because he offended Henry III but because "[p]rimarily, he was an ascetic and master of the spiritual life,"[139] who was venerated in both life and death for his humility and holiness.[140]

Certainly *Speculum ecclesie* lends credence to Lawrence's argument that Edmund was remembered by his contemporaries largely as a spiritual writer. Composed in Latin as early as 1213,[141] when Edmund was likely teaching as a master at the University of Paris, and

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[138] C.H. Lawrence, *St. Edmund of Abingdon: A Study in Hagiography and History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

[139] *Ibid.*, 181.

[140] *Ibid.*, 182.

[141] Edmund of Abingdon, *Speculum Religiosorum and Speculum Ecclesie*, ed. Helen P. Forshaw (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). The title *Speculum religiosorum* belongs to an abbreviated version of the work found in six manuscripts, including Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 26, fols. 183v-204v, deemed by

shortly thereafter translated into Anglo-Norman as *Mirour de seinte eglyse*[142] (possibly

during Edmund's lifetime but certainly within ten years after his death, and into English

during the fifteenth century, *Speculum ecclesie* survives in more than eighty manuscripts in

all three languages dating from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.[143] In 1521

the printer Wynken de Worde published an English translation titled *The Myrour of the*

Chyrche made by Saynt Austyn of Abyndon.[144] A.D. Wilshere has identified five manuscripts

of *Mirour* dating from the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that address the reader as

"soeur" ("sister") instead of the usual "frere" ("brother"), indicating modification of the text

for a female readership.[145] Wilshere has also identified a "lay," or "B," family comprising

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Forshaw to be the manuscript that preserves the earliest and most authentic version of Edmund's original text. The title *Speculum ecclesie* (or some variant thereof) appears on seventeen other manuscripts containing longer versions of Edmund's work, including British Library, Royal MS. 7.A.i, fols. 12r-22v, dating from about 1400 and deemed by Forshaw to be the best of that group. Forshaw argues that the text of *Speculum ecclesie*, which although somewhat longer than that of *Speculum religiosorum*, closely follows the latter's structure and meditative themes, represents a translation back into Latin from the mid-thirteenth century Anglo-Norman translation usually titled *Mirour de seinte eglyse*. Forshaw, 7.

[142] A.D. Wilshere, ed., *Mirour de seinte eglyse (St Edmund of Abingdon's Speculum Ecclesiae)*, ANT 40 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, Westfield College, 1982). Wilshere maintains, *contra* Forshaw's views, that certain mid-thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman manuscripts of *Mirour de seynte eglyse* (there are twenty-two thirteenth-century manuscripts in all) represent more faithful versions of the content of Edmund's original Latin work than the fourteenth-century MS Hatton 26 (although Wilshere concedes that Hatton 26 is nonetheless the best witness to Edmund's actual language, in contrast to his content). Introduction, *Mirour*, vi-vii, xvi-xvii. While Wilshere's division of the text of *Mirour de seinte eglyse* into two distinctly different "A" and "B" textual families is likely unsassailable, his categorization of the "B" family as a "lay" version is open to debate and would demand an examination of all seven manuscripts in question along with their various provenances. The very existence of numerous Anglo-Norman and English manuscripts of Edmund's work, however, together with the fact that it was retranslated into Latin for a subgroup of learned ecclesiastics and the fact that it was printed during the early sixteenth century for what was clearly a lay market are all evidence of a large lay readership for the work. It may be material to Wilshere's argument that *Speculum ecclesie* seems on cursory examination to follow the "B" textual family of *Mirour* more closely than the "A' family.

[143] Introduction, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, iii.

[144] Introduction, *Speculum Religiosorum and Speculum Ecclesie*, 14, n. 2.

[145] Introduction, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, xx. The five manuscripts in question are: Oxford University, St. John's College MS 190, fols. 190r-199v ("soeur"), late thirteenth century; Cambridge University, Emmanuel College MS 106, fols. 62r-105r ("beau frere e beau soer"), fourteenth century; British Library, Royal MS 20.B.xiv, fols

seven extant manuscripts of the Anglo-Norman *Mirour de Seinte Eglyse*, three of which date from the second half of the thirteenth century.[146] The seven "lay" manuscripts expand certain apparently pastoral material in *Mirour* pertaining to the creed, the Ten Commandments, the seven sacraments, and similar material, and also compressing *Mirour*'s more mystical elements, most notably a thirty-sixth chapter concerning the three degrees of contemplation that appears in full form in *Mirour*'s "religious," or "A" textual family.

The existence of such a wide range of specifically tailored variants of Edmund's work—aimed at various groups of readers, male and female, lay and religious, Latin-literate and able to read only in the vernacular, if at all, all produced within less than a century after Edmund's original composition of the work, is evidence of its mulivalence. Just as those who copied (and presumably, those who read) Aelred's *De institutione* did not view that work as designed solely for women, those who copied (and presumably, those who read) *Speculum ecclesie* or the Anglo-Norman *Mirour* did not view Edmund's work as a treatise designed solely for men. Aside from being addressed as "soeur" instead of "frere," religious women read essentially the same text of *Mirour* as did religious men. Nor, given the fact that *Speculum ecclesie* seems to represent a retranslation of Edmund's original work back into Latin from the Anglo-Norman translation of *Speculum religiosorum*,[147] all within a single

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534r-65v ("treschere soer"), early fourteenth century; British Library, Royal MS 12.C.xii, fols. 17r-30v ("treschere soer"), early fourteenth-century; Yale University MS 492, fols. 86r-99v ("treschere soer"), early fourteenth-century.

[146] Wilshere's critical edition of *Mirour* attempts to reconstruct both the "B" (lay) text and the "A" (religious) text. The three very early manuscripts from the "B" or "lay" family are: British Library, MS Arundel 288, fols. 103r-122r, third quarter of the thirteenth century; Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS 20, fols. 143r-157v, second half of thirteenth century); and Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poetry 241, fols. 163-189, third quarter of thirteenth century.

[147] See n. 130.

century, did the scribes appear to recognize any linguistic hierarchy that privileged Latin over the vernacular. Lay and religious, men (more likely to be Latin-literate) and women (less likely to be so), were equals as audiences for Edmund's work. Indeed, although there are marked differences of subject-matter emphasis between *Speculum religiosorum* (originally designed strictly for monastics) and *Speculum ecclesie* (designed for a mixed lay-religious audience), and between the "religious" and "lay" textual families of *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, the structure of all the versions is identical and no parts are completely omitted. As with Aelred's *De institutione*, lay people of the later Middle Ages formed an avid readership for texts initially meant for those in religious life: "vus ke *vevez* en religion ou en congregacion," as the "B," or "lay" text of *Mirour de seinte eglyse* paradoxically reads.[148] The very titles *Speculum ecclesie* and *Mirour de seinte eglyse* given to the later, lay-tailored versions of Edmund's work are more evidence of the non-hierarchical nature of his methodology and his text's reception. This was a work perceived to have been aimed at the entire church, to whose spirituality religious and layfolk might have equal access.

It is impossible to know whether Edmund ever read Aelred's *De institutione*, although he was possibly familiar with Stephen of Sawley's *Speculum novitii*, as a single passage in *Speculum religiosorum* that parallels a passage of Stephen's work indicates.[149] Pontigny was a Cistercian monastery, but Edmund did not live at Pontigny until the last year of his life. He

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[148] *Mirour*, 6 ("A" text), 7 ("B" text).

[149] The passage in question is in *Speculum religiosorum*, 40: "Cum ergo mane de lecto surrexeris, aut nocte media, statim cogita quot homines in illa nocte perierunt in diversis periculis, multi in corpore, multi in anima, multis modis in multis locis; quam multi ceciderunt in peccatum diversimode." Edmund's warning to his readers to think about the many different ways in which souls can be lost echoes a similar warning of Stephen's: "Et gratias agens pro innumeris et immensis beneficiis suis Deo, pro periculis omnibus, quae in mundo sunt et pro periculis et insidiis daemonum, a quibus te protegit, pro poenis gehennalibus, quas te incidere cum multis aliis non permisit, qui minus peccaverunt et longe aliter receperunt pro peccatis, a quibus te servavit vel de quibus tibi pepercit." *Speculum novitii* (n. 89), 46-47.

had other Cistercian connections that were strictly familial; one of his brothers had become a

Cistercian monk, and his two sisters had entered a nunnery at Catesby that was either

Cistercian or Gilbertine (the latter order had historic ties to the Cistercians).[150] Furthermore,

Speculum ecclesie is structurally and stylistically somewhat different from either *De*

institutione or any of Stephen's treatises. The first seventeen chapters of both versions of

Speculum's thirty chapters[151] consist of a brief, quasi-catechetical rehearsal of commonplaces

of Christian doctrine, such as the seven deadly sins, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the ten

commandments, the twelve articles of Christian faith, the seven sacraments, the four cardinal

virtues. Edmund covered this material in a terse, matter-of-fact fashion that contrasts with

Stephen's constant solicitude for the novice's inner life.

This apparently perfunctory quality of Edmund's *Speculum* is illusory, however, for

as Edmund explains in the first chapter of the Speculum religiosorum, the ultimate aim of

religious life is a fearful absolute: "to live perfectly" ("vivere perfecte," "vivre

parfitement")[152] as Edmund writes. To live perfectly is to fulfill a series of duties to oneself,

to one's neighbor, and to God. Edmund paraphrases Bernard of Clairvaux: "Perfecte vivere,

sicut sanctus Bernardus nos docet, est vivere humiliter, amicabiliter et honorabiliter.

Humiliter quantum ad teipsum; amicabiliter quantum ad proximum; honorabiliter quantum

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[150] *St. Edmund of Abingdon* (n. 138), 106-07.

[151] Wilshere's edition of the Anglo-Norman *Mirour* has turned the thirty chapters of the Latin *Speculum* into thirty-seven, on the basis of manuscript rubrics. Material that occupies the first seventeen chapters of *Speculum* occupies the first nineteen chapters of *Mirour*. Although *Speculum*'s two versions, *Speculum religiosorum* and *Speculum ecclesie,* each contain thirty chapters, the contents of the chapters respectively are not always identical.

[152] *Speculum religiosorum*, 32, *Speculum ecclesie*, 33; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 6 ("A" text), 7 ("B" text).

ad Deum, sic ut ponas totam tuam intencionem ad faciendum voluntatem divinam."[153] Living

perfectly thus consists of total submission to the will of God in every facet of one's existence,

in an interlocking series of relationships that are external (with one's neighbor), internal (with

oneself), and simultaneously external and internal (with God). Edmund portrayed those

relationships as a series of duties, not only to act properly (to obey the commandments, to

perform the works of mercy, to avoid sin, and to cultivate virtues) but to know the things of

God, such as the creed, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the essential Christian prayers (such

as the Lord's Prayer, the focus of the seventeenth chapter of both *Speculum* and *Mirour*).

Significantly, Edmund described the consideration of all those basic Christian duties

as the first of three different modes of "contemplation" ("modi sive species contemplandi,"

"modi contemplacionis," "maneres....de contemplaciun")[154] of God. In Edmund's view the

fulfillment of elementary Christian duties that bind religiously consecrated and lay people

alike is the substrate of the contemplative life. As A.D. Wilshere has argued, *Speculum* is a

training guide for knowledge of God, which begins in the knowledge of such commonplaces

as the creed, the sacraments, and the commandments but which culminates in the highest,

most direct, and most abstract contemplation, of God himself.[155] Edmund laid out that

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[153] *Speculum ecclesie*, 2: "To live perfectly, as St. Bernard teaches us, is to live in humility, friendship, and honor. Humility with regard to yourself, friendship with regard to your neighbor, honor with regard to God, so that you may direct your entire purpose to doing his divine will." The parallel passage in *Speculum religiosorum* is: "Perfecte quidem vivere est, ut ait beatus Bernardus, vivere honorabiliter, amicabiliter et humiliter…honorabiliter quoad Deum, ut voluntatem eius tota intencione faciamus." Forshaw assumes a scribal error in her base manuscript, Hatton 26 (n. 130) that omitted the words "Humiliter quoad teipsum; amicabiiter quoad proximum." Bernard's presumed source-text reads: "Abitror autem quod tu, qui in congregacione es, bene vivis, si vivis ordinabiliter, sociabiliter et humiliter: ordinabiliter tibi, sociabiliter proximo, humiliter Deo." *Sermo I in sollemnitate Apostolorum Petri et Pauli*, *Sancti Bernardi opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, Charles H. Talbot, and Henri-Marie Roschais, vol. 5: 190, paraphrased in Forshaw, 32, n. 17-19.

[154] *Speculum religiosorum*, 44; *Speculum ecclesie*, 45, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 16 ("A" text), 17 ("B" text).

[155] Introduction, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, v.

hierarchy of knowledge in *Speculum religiosorum*: "Tres sunt modi sive species contemplandi Deum. Prima est in creaturis, secunda in scripturis, tercia in ipso Deo, in sua natura."[156] Through contemplation of the sheer abundance and variety of God's creation, Edmund explained, one may know and marvel at the creator,[157] and through contemplation of the Scriptures and the doctrines and moral precepts that they contain, one may know how to attain salvation--union with that creator--by living properly and obeying his laws: "Et quando quo audieris de scripturis in communi sermone, sive in speciali colloquio sive collucucione, statim attende et attencius perpende quid tibi prodesse poterit ad salutem, ad bene vivendum…."[158] Living perfectly, Edmund made it clear, is as much a function of the contemplative mind as it is of the right action that prepares the mind for contemplation.

Finally, building upon the awe and gratitude derived from contemplating God's creation, and upon the knowledge of God's will and his law derived from contemplating the Scriptures, is the third mode of contemplation: of God directly. Edmund states that this third mode takes two forms: one that is "exterior"—that is, of Christ's humanity—and the other "interior"—that is, of God's divinity: "videlicet exterius quoad humanitatem, et interius

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[156] *Speculum religiosorum*, 44: "There are three modes or kinds of contemplating God. The first is in his creatures, the second is in the Scriptures, and the third is in God himself, in his nature." <u>Cf.</u> *Speculum ecclesie*, 45, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 16 ("A" text), 17 ("B" text).

[157] *Speculum religiosorum*, 46: "Cum ergo sic fueris in creaturis contemplatus, ad creatuorem Deum tuum atolle cor tuum, et considera quam infinite sit potencie qui cuncta condidit et creavit ex nichilo, et eis esse dedit [When, therefore, you have contemplated upon God's creatures, lift up your heart, and consider how infinite in power is he who began and created all things out of nothing and gave them their essence]." *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, p. 47, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 20 ("A" text), 21 ("B" text).

[158] *Speculum religiosorum*, 48: "And when you hear the things concerning Scripture whether in a communal sermon or in a private discussion or talk, immediately mark and hang more attentively on wjat can do you good for in terms of your salvation, in terms of living well.…" *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 49, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 22 ("A" text), 23 ("B" text).

quoad ipsam deitatem."[159] Edmund thus delineated a hierarchy of spiritual progression that

moves from the contemplation of creatures through the contemplation of the things of God as

spelled out in the Scriptures to the contemplation of God himself, an ordering of the mind

and imagination so that all things, at least in the the mind of the one who contemplates, lead

directly to God. As is the case in the treatises of Stephen of Sawley, an active mental

receptiveness to God's manifestations of himself in this hierarchy of contemplative objects is

the central activity of the holy life. Edmund wrote near the beginning of

Speculum religiosorum:

> Duo quidem sunt que sanctum faciunt hominem, scilicent, cognicio veritatis et
> dilectio bonitatis, ad qu nos oportet pervenire si velimus sanctificari, id est, sancti
> fieri. Sed ad cognicionem veritatis, que est Deus, non pervenies nisi per cognicionem
> tui; et ad dilectionem bonitatis, id est Dei, nisi per dilectionem proximi. Ad
> cognicionem tui poteris pervenire per crebram de teipso meditacionem; ad
> cognicionem Dei per puram contemplacionem.[160]

 Knowledge of the things that can be grasped with one's mind and imagination—the beauty

of the created world, the contents of the Scripture, the state of one's own soul—are an

absolutely necessary step without which the "pure contemplation" of God that is the end of

all meditation is impossible. A.D. Wilshere describes Edmund's meditative strategy in terms

used by the sixth-century Pseudo-Dionysius: "leading the contemplative from the kataphatic

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[159] *Speculum religiosorum*, 82. *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 83, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 56 ("A" text), 57 ("B" text).

[160] <u>*Speculum religiosorum*</u>, 34: "Indeed there are two things that make a man holy, namely, knowledge of the truth and love of goodness, to which it is necessary for us to arrive if we wish to be sanctified, that is, to be made holy. But at knowing the truth which is God, you cannot arrive except through knowing yourself; and at the love of goodness, that is, what is God's, except through love of your neighbor. You can arrive at knowledge of yourself through frequent meditation concerning yourself, and at knowledge of God through pure contemplation." *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 35; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 6, 8 ("A" text); 7, 9 ("B" text).

to the apophatic. Since the latter transcends language, it is inevitable that the kataphatic should take up the bulk of the treatise."[161]

The thematic center of Edmund's work is, of course, kataphatic: his instructions for meditating on Christ's humanity, the aspect of Christ that lends itself to language. Christ's humanity is crucial to Edmund's strategy for achieving perfection, for Christ, as both human and divine, is the pivotal figure, as both model and facilitator, for the process of theosis, or literal deification, that the contemplative undergoes as he progresses, via "living perfectly" to pure concentration upon God. Edmund paraphrased Augustine: "Ideo Deus factus est Homo, ut totum hominem faceret ad suam naturam."[162] Tellingly, as evidence of his putative debt to Aelred and Stephen of Sawley, Edmund presented his Christological material as a narrative. It was to be, he wrote, a "double meditation about God, that is, Christ" ("duplicem de Deo meditacionem, vel de Christo meditacionem"), and one of its parts would concern Christ's passion, while the other would consist of "other" episodes from Christ's life ("unam videlicet de Christi passione, et aliam de altera ipsius constitucione").[163] The framework of this double-stranded life of Christ, Edmund explained, would be the canonical hours of the monastic day, the same meditative framework that Stephen used in his *Speculum novitii* and *De informatione mentis circa psalmodiam diei et noctis.*

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[161] Introduction, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, v. Forshaw takes note of Edmund's debt to *De arrha animae*, attributed to Hugh of St. Victor. Introduction, *Speculum Religiosorum and Speculum Ecclesie*, 18-24.

[162] *Speculum religiosorum*, 82: "Therefore God was made man, so that he might make all of man in his own nature." Cf. *Speculum ecclesie*, 83; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 56 ("A" text), 57 ("B" text). Forshaw points out that although Edmund purported to quote Augustine directly, there is no source in Augustine for those precise words, although Augustine referred to deification in several places in his writings. *Speculum religiosorum*, 82, nn. 11-13.

[163] *Speculum religiosorum*, 82. Cf. *Speculum ecclesie*, 83, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 58 ("A" text), 59 ("B" text).

Marking the hours from midnight to compline (in chs. eighteen through twenty-three

of *Speculum religiosorum*), Edmund related the events of Christ's passion chronologically,

from Judas' kiss of betrayal to the burial in the tomb. Other events in Christ's life, as well as

the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, make make up the the part of the meditation that

Stephen described as being "other" in nature. Unlike the case with his narrative of the

passion, Edmund did not present those events in chronological order, but rather, in

correlation with the time of day that Scripture and tradition held them to have occurred.

Christ's birth, for example, was believed to have taken place at midnight, so Edmund paired

it with Judas' kiss, which tradition held had also occurred at midnight. Christ rose from the

dead at prime in Christian tradition, so Edmund recounted that event in conjunction with

Christ's trial before the Jewish council, another event believed to have occurred at prime. The

effect is that the clearly diachronic passion narrative moves to the foreground in the

reader's imagination.

Edmund, in the manner of Stephen of Sawley, presented both narratives, of Christ's

passion but also of the other New Testament events, as a series of images to be formed in the

reader's mind at the canonical hour in question. His typical instruction to his readers was

"think about" ("cogita" or "debes cogitare").[164] Unlike Stephen (and also unlike Aelred),

Edmund only rarely provided emotional content to his detailed but narratively parsimonious

stories. One exception is a clear echo of Aelred' De institutione (and strong indirect evidence

that Edmund was familiar with that work). In that passage Edmund asked his readers to call

to mind the joy and tenderness of Mary and Joseph at Christ's birth and, as Aelred had

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[164] *Speculum religiosorum*, 82, 84. *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 83, 85; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 58, 60 ("A" text), 59, 61 ("B" text). In *Mirour* the instruction is usually "devez penser de."

instructed in *De institutione*, to become part of the narrative and to sing with the angels as Edmund presented his verbal picture of the infant Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in the manger between the ox and the ass. Edmund wrote: "Ibi cogita de matris sollicitudine circa filium; de coniuge Ioseph; quantum erat eis gaudium; de devocione et devota relacione pastorum; de dulci cantico angelorum; et attolle cor tuum ad laudes eorum, et cum illis cantica, 'Gloria in excelsis Deo.'"[165]

Yet in the meditation for sext, the hour that begins Christ's agony on the cross (and also, in the second part of the meditation, of the hour of the angel Gabriel's annunciation to Mary that triggers Christ's incarnation), Edmund embarked upon an extended contemplation, divided into three parts, that was quite at odds with his terseness elsewhere in his discussion of Christ's humanity. Edmund took pains in this scene to to tie together the Incarnation and the passion thematically, making the two events all of one piece, a literary strategy that he did not employ elsewhere with the two strands of his double meditation. The meditation on the incarnation in fact became the first part of his meditation on the passion. The two events, incarnation and passion, Edmund informed his readers, are two aspects of God's love for the human race that was so powerful that he chose to become human himself. Edmund told his readers to meditate upon Gabriel's annunciation because thatwas the occasion upon which God, out of pity and compassion for human suffering, chose to become human and subsequently die, even though such an extreme act was not strictly necessary to accomplish the redemption, but was, rather, an act of pure love: "quam misericors et compaciens fuit Deus humane miserie, pro qua dignatus est Homo fieri et mortem subire, ex quo potuit nos

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[165] *Speculum religiosorum*, 84: "Here think upon the solicitude of the mother concerning her son; about her husband, Josph, and how great was their joy; about the devotion and the loving report of the shepherds; and about the sweet song of the angels. And lift up your heart along with their praises and sing with them, 'Glory to God in the highest!'" *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 85; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 58 ("A" text), 59 ("B" text).

alio modo liberasse. Hoc autem fecit ut amorem erga eum in nobis accenderet indeficientem."[166]

As Aelred did by means of imagery from the Song of Songs, Edmund here cast Christ's passion as an amorous act crying out to be reciprocated by the reader. God the father and creator (not simply of the human race but of his own son's human flesh) and God the son and savior on the cross represent two aspects of the same divine love, for Christ's death, being superfluous as an act of atonement, has the sole purpose of enkindling (that is, creating) the love of Christ in the reader that will enable the reader to achieve that theosis, that literal union with God, that is the ultimate goal of the contemplative trajectory that Edmund plots in his Speculum. He wrote: "Quid enim nobis profuisset creator, nisi nos perditos liberasset salvator? Ideo noster creator fieri voluit noster liberator, et in suo corpore totum nostrum tollerare dolorem et reatum, ut nostrum totum sibi vendicaret amorem."[167] Christ is a lover, Edmund implied, claiming all our love for himself, as lovers do, as reciprocity for his taking onto himself the consequences of human sin.

When he turned specifically to Christ's passion in the other two parts of his meditation for sext, Edmund returned to his characteristic unadorned narrative, although he actually offered only one narrative datum: that Christ was crucified between two thieves. The rest of the meditation is a slow movement of the mind's eye over this single picture: the

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[166] *Speculum religiosorum*, 88, 90: "[H]ow merciful and compassionate of human misery was God, who for the sake of that misery deigned to become man and to undergo death, even though he could have liberated us by another means. He did this in order to set aflame in us a love for him that would not fail." *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 89, 91; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 64 ("A" text), 65 ("B" text).

[167] *Speculum religiosorum*, 90: "For how could our creator do good for us, unless a savior freed us who were lost? Therefore our creator chose to become our savior and suffer in his body all our pain and guilt so that he could claim for himself all our love." *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 91; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 64 ("A" text), 65 ("B" text).

thieves, Christ, and beneath the cross, Mary and John, whom Edmund mentions only in the meditation's third part. Edmund argued that Christ truly took upon himself all human suffering and thus suffered more dreadfully than any other human being ever has or ever could suffer. Edmund offered no physical details of those torments, however, but rather, a logic-based argument, undoubtedly derived from his scholastic university training, that no human creature could possibly suffer as much as Christ did because Christ, although sinless, took upon himself and expiated all the sins of every single human being, some of them so egregious that those who committed them deserve eternal pains in hell: "Nulla creatura tanta mala pati potuit quanta Christus, quia nulla creatura tantam virtutem habet in se. Sed est creatura que pati potest penas infenti eternaliter. Ergo pena inferni levior est quam pena Christi pro tanto tempore."[168] This was a dry argument, but Edmund gave it emotional force by abruptly changing the narrative's point of view at its closing, so that the reader is no longer looking mentally at Christ on the cross but, rather, identifying with Christ on the cross inviting all to look at him, as he speaks through the words of the prophet Jeremiah ("per Ieremiam," "par Jeremie") in the Lamentations: "O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus."[169] In *Speculum religiosorum* Edmund added his own comment: "Certes nec est nec esse potest equalis illi"—certainly no one could be Christ's equal in suffering.[170] Brief as it is, this comment has enormous emotional effect,

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[168] *Ibid*.: "No created being can suffer such great pains as Christ because no created being has such great virtue in itself. But only a creature can suffer eternally the pains of hell. Therefore the pain of hell is far lighter than the pain that Christ suffered." *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 91; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 66 ("A" text), 67 ("B" text).

[169] Lam 1:2: "O all you who pass by the way, look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow." Forshaw points out that the use of this text with reference to Christ's passion also appears in the twelfth-century *Meditationes Ernaldi Abbatis*, PL 189: 1736D.

[170] *Speculum religiosorum*, 90: "Certainly there cannot be any [sorrow] equal to that one."

moving the reader's mind away from the dry logic of the proposition that Christ suffered the worst pain because he suffered for the worst sins to the pure empathy generated by in gazing upon someone suffering such a level of pain.

Edmund's early readers were well aware of the emotional effect of what he had written to cap this scene of Christ's suffering, for both the "A" and "B" texts of its Anglo-Norman translation, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, as well as *Speculum ecclesie*'s still later re-translation of *Mirour*, all slightly amplify this sentence of Edmund's in a way that intensifies the effect even further: Both of those texts turn Edmund's comment about Christ into an ejaculatory prayer to Christ, addressed in the most affectionate of language: "Certes nul a, ne unkes ne fu dolur [semblable] a la vostre, tresduz Jhesu!"[171] In those elaborations of Edmund's original text the narrator—and by extension, the reader—mentally enters the tableau of the crucifixion, not only as a spectator but as a participant in Christ's suffering, just as Mary is, and just Aelred's sister in *De Instititutione* is called upon to approach the cross with Mary and kiss Christ's wounds.

In the third part of the meditation, Edmund turned to Mary and asked his readers to gaze upon her, a pivotal figure who again links the incarnation and the passion. Again, as he did with Christ on the cross, Edmund manipulated an abrupt switching of points of view, so that the reader would mentally first look upon Mary in her sorrow and loss for which the disciple John's care would be an inadequate substitute ("quanto dolore repleto quando stetit ad dexteram filii sui crucifixi, ubi accepit discipulo pro magistro, servum pro Domino, filium

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[171] *Mirour de seint eglyse*, 66 ("A" text): "Certainly there is not, nor ever was any sorrow like yours, sweetest Jesus!" *Cf.* Ibid., 67 ("B" text); *Speculum ecclesie*, 91.

piscatoris pro filio imperatoris, Ioannem filium Zebedei pro Iesu Filio Dei"),[172] and then

look out of the picture along with Mary as she speaks the words of Naomi in the Book of

Ruth grieving for her dead husband and sons. Just as Christ calls attention to his own

wounded body in this meditation through the scriptural passage from Jeremiah's

Lamentations, Mary calls attention to her own wounded heart through a parallel scriptural

passage: "Nolite vocare me Noemi, (id est pulcram, sed Mara, (id est amaram), quia

amaritudine replevit me Omnipotens [Do not call me Naomi (that is, beautiful), but Mara

(that is, bitter), because the Almighty has filled me with bitterness]."[173] It is likely that

Edmund meant for his reader to hear in the word "Mara" an echo of "Maria," Mary's name

in Latin.

Edmund followed this with a second scriptural passage for Mary, from the Song of

Songs, perhaps following the lead of Aelred's *De institutione*, in which Christ's passion is a

nuptial union. In Edmund's meditation Mary herself is the bride, whom the Song describes as

"black but beautiful" ("nigra sum, sed formosa").[174] Edmund did not quote this particular

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[172] *Speculum religiosorum*, 90: "...filled which such great sorrow when she stood at the right hand of her crucified son, the place where she received the disciple instead of the teacher, the servant instead of the Lord, the son of a fisherman instead of the son of the ruler of all, John, the son of Zebedee instead of Jesus the Son of God." *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 91; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 66 ("A" text), 67 ("B" text). The "B" text of the Mirour has John as "the son of a sinner" ("le fiz al peccheur") instead of the son of a fisherman as he is in the "A" text ("le fiz al peschur"), as does the *Speculum ecclesie* ("filium peccatoris"). As Forshaw points out, the paradox of John's lowliness compared to Christ's exaltedness, expressed in a series of rhetorical antitheses, appears in the *Oratio* 20 traditionally ascribed to Anselm of Canterbury, although no longer believed to have been written by him (PL 158:904A), and also in Bernard's *Sermo pro dominica infra octavo Assumptionis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, PL 183: 438A.

[173] Rt 1:20. Forshaw notes that Rabanus Maurus (ca. 780-856), in his *Commentarium in Ruth*, used Naomi as an allegorical figure of the suffering church. PL 108: 1204-05. Edmund's identification of Naomi with Mary at the cross was likely original with him.

[174] Ct 1:4. The quotation is in *Speculum religiosorum*, 90, 92. *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 91, 93; *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 66 ("A" text), 67 ("B" text).

verse from the first chapter of the Song of Songs, but he did quote from the verse

immediately following it, a passage spoken by the Song's bride to the daughters of Jerusalem.

Edmund writes: "[L]oquitur in Cantico Amoris: 'Ne miremini si fusca sim, quoniam

decoloravit me sol [She says in the Song of Love, 'Do not wonder that I am dark, since the

sun has discolored me.']"[175] The clear implication to any reader who knew both verses (and it

may be assumed that most of Edmund's monastic readers did) was that Mary's face is

beautiful, but it been darkened by sorrow at her son's suffering. Philip of Harvengt had

interpreted the Song of Songs in exactly this fashion.

There is also a subtle allusion to the disfigurement of the crucified Christ's own

beauty in the traditional Christian reading of the Book of Isaiah: "non est species ei neque

decor et vidimus eum."[176] Mary thus stands in for Christ, with the mutilation of her own

beauty reflecting the mutilation of his. Edmund's reference to the sun ("sol") was a delicate

allusion to the noonday sun, marked by the midday hour of sext, the hour at which Christ's

cross was raised, according to the Gospels, and also to the passing of the three afternoon

hours until his death at nones, the canonical hour that follows. As the hours pass, and the sun

moves downward across the sky, Mary's face becomes literally and figuratively darkened and

disfigured by its burning, just as her son, like the sun, declines in his dying.

Those two Old Testament passages whose speakers are women give Mary, silent in

the gospel of John, a voice in which to speak, although only obliquely, through the voices of

the other speakers who prefigure her. The two passages constitute a kind of litotes, rhetorical

understatement (because Mary's grief, presumably far greater than that of Naomi, is never

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[175] Ct 1:5. The quotation is in *Speculum religiosorum*, 92. *Cf. Speculum ecclesie*, 66 ("A" text), 67 ("B" text).

[176] Is 53:2 "There is no beauty in him nor did we see majesty in him."

directly expressed), creating a crescendo whose climax is the last passage of the meditation.

There Edmund, abruptly changing point of view once again, invited his readers to cease

identifying with Mary and again gaze directly upon her, as he wrote: "Hic tamen illum sensit

gladium doloris acutissimi, de quo prophetavit Symeon in templo Domini, quando Iesum sibi

oblatum tenebat in manibus. Hic promissum Anne prophetisse accepit Maria, quod promisit

de puero Iesu. [Indeed at that point she felt that sword of sharpest sorrow, about which

Simeon had prophesied in the temple of the Lord when she made an offering of Jesus,

holding him in her hands. At that point Mary fulfilled the promise that Anna the prophetess

had made concerning the boy Jesus.]"[177] These sentences, the culmination of Edmund's

meditation for sext, are rich, not only with pathos, as the impact of the pain of Mary, the

mother who had held Jesus in her arms as a baby, comes home with full force upon the

reader, but with complex figurative meaning: Christ's passion as sacrifice, analogous to the

"offering" ("oblatum") that Mary has made of her infant son at the Temple, place of sacrifice,

in Jerusalem, the very site of Christ's death.

The writer who adapted *Speculum religiosorum* into the Anglo-Norman *Mirour de

seinte eglyse* heightened the emotion still further. Just as that writer had fashioned an

emotional prayer to Christ out of Edmund's third-person statement about Christ as the

culmination of the second part of the meditation, he turned Edmund's third-person statement

about Mary into a tender address to Mary herself that finished off the third part: "Ore avez,

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[177] *Speculum religiosorum*, 68. The scriptural passage to which Edmund alluded is Lc 2:35-38.

pucele, esprovee la tranchaunte pointe de cele espee dunt Symeon vus fist mencion le jur de vostre purificacion. Ore avez receuhe la promesse ke Anne vu promist, la prophetesse."[178]

The very fact that Edmund departed from his usual abrupt narrative style to turn his meditation upon sext into a rhetorically elaborate composition seemed to aspire his later redactor to intensify further its emotional effects. Those alterations are evidence of the importance that both Edmund and his readers attached to Christ's passion as the focal point of their contemplation of his human nature. By thinking about and creating mental pictures of the suffering Christ and his suffering mother, they could construct for themselves an experience of God's intense love and a desire to reciprocate it via expressions of love to Christ and his mother. The changes that the author/translator of *Mirour de seinte eglyse* made to Edmund's original text are a kind of snapshot of the emotional response that Edmund had seemed to desire of his reader. The prayer to Mary wrought by the Anglo-Norman redactor from Edmund's original reflection amounted to a reciprocation of feeling; the speaker pours upon Mary his own empathy with her pain that is in turn, as Edmund makes clear, an empathetic response to her son's pain.

Aelred's *De institutione inclusarum* had begun its existence as women's literature—literature for anchoresses. Yet it very quickly became men's literature, monastic men's literature, via simple pronoun changes. By the thirteenth century, within one hundred years of

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[178] *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 68 ("A" text): "Now, maiden, you have experienced the cutting edge of that sword about which Simeon made mention to you on the day of your purification. You have realized the promise that Anna the prophetess promised to you." *Cf. Ibid.* 69 ("B" text). *Speculum ecclesie* presents this reading even more dramatically with the addition of the words "speciosa" and "veraciter": "O puella speciosa, iam veraciter es experta acutissimum punctum illius gladii, de quo Symeon fecit tibi mencionem in die Purificacionis tue. Modo eciam recepisti promissa, que tibi promisit Anna prophetissa." *Speculum ecclesie*, 93. In addition, all surviving manuscripts of *Mirour* and *Speculum ecclesie*, as well as some manuscripts of *Speculum religiosorum*, include, inserted between between the quotation from the Song of Songs and the final references to Simeon and Anna, the English quatrain whose incipit is "Nou goth sonne under wod." The quatrain and its relation to Edmund's meditation will be discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

Aelred's composing it, the core of *De institutione*, the triple meditation, had become detached from Aelred's text and had acquired a life of its own as a polysemous devotional text, sometimes attributed to Anselm of Canterbury, whose readership included lay people as well as religious. During the latter part of the twelfth century, the nun Clemence of Barking likely used the amorous imagery and fleshly intensity of the De institutione in her Anglo-Norman verse life of St. Catherine, a work that she clearly intended to be read by an aristocratic audience outside her convent. During the first half of the thirteenth century, the Cistercian abbot Stephen of Sawley adapted Aelred's employment of mental pictures as a devotional technique for use by male monks, and Edmund of Abingdon wrote a similar monastic meditational guide, *Speculum religiosorum*, that also relied upon Aelred's highly visual, highly affective methodology. Edmund's *Speculum* very quickly became a bilingual text modified for use by both sexes and for lay people as well as religious. It in fact became one of the most popular devotional works in England and circulated on the Continent as well. By the mid-thirteenth century, it could be said that Aelred had launched an explosion of devotional literature, and also a democratization of spirituality, in which religious and lay people, men and women, read the same texts and schooled their souls in the same fashion.

Chapter 3

Anchoritic Literature as Devotional Literature

The English texts that owed a debt to Aelred's *De institutione*—*Ancrene Wisse* and nearly a dozen other works composed in or near Herefordshire during the first half of the thirteenth century—constituted the bulk of a thirteenth-century renaissance of literary English in both prose and verse, which had fallen into disuse after the Norman Conquest. *Ancrene Wisse*, in particular, was translated into Anglo-Norman within two decades after it was first composed in English in about 1225 (there are also four surviving Latin versions of the text dating from the early fourteenth to the early fifteenth centuries), and was recopied and reshaped throughout the later Middle Ages. *Ancrene Wisse* ("Counsel for Anchoresses") is an explicitly Aelredian work, although it relies on numerous other patristic and medieval sources. It not only follows the structure of *De institutione*—a series of instructions to a woman or women seeking to live the life of a consecrated recluse, followed by an intensely affective meditation on Christ's passion (the seventh of its eight parts) that is its devotional heart—but it explicitly cites Aelred's work as its model.

The anonymous author of *Ancrene Wisse* wrote: "Ne schal ha for hire lif witen hire al cleane, ne halden riht hire chastete wið uten twa þinges, as seint Ailred þe abbat wrat to his suster. Þet an is pinsunge i flesch wið feasten, wið wecchen, wið disceplines, wið heard werunge, heard leohe, wið uuel, wið muchele swinkes: þe oþer is heorte þeawes—deuociun, reowfulnesse, riht luue, eadmonesse & uertuz oþre swucche [Nor shall she keep herself entirely pure for life, nor hold her chastity properly without two things, as St. Aelred the abbot wrote to his sister. The one is mortification of the flesh, with fasting, with vigils, with

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disciplines, with rough clothes, rough shelter, with sickness, with much toil; the other is the

heart's virtues—devotion, pity, proper love, humility, and other such virtues]."[1] The author

not only drew upon Aelred's lengthy disquisition to his sister on the constant vigilance and

self-mortification that she and other virgins must exercise in order to guard their chastity,[2]

but he also cited Aelred by name, unlike most of his numerous sources, who remain

anonymous in *Ancrene Wisse*.

So widely read was *Ancrene Wisse* (especially its Aelred-like passion meditation in

Part Seven) throughout the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, by audiences both

clerical (hence the Latin versions), and lay of all literate social classes (hence the versions in

Anglo-Norman as well as English) that it is not untoward to credit Aelred with being the

ultimate inspiration for such major fourteenth-century devotional writers as Richard Rolle

and Julian of Norwich, who also made emotional identification with the suffering Christ the

linchpin of their meditative writings. The fourteenth century is considered a golden age of

gorgeously imaginative and movingly affective English religious writing designed

specifically for lay readers, but in fact that age began during the early thirteenth century with

Ancrene Wisse and its related texts, which included, as will be seen, religious lyric poetry.

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[1] *Ancrene Wisse, Parts Six and Seven*, ed. Geoffrey Shepherd, Nelson's Medieval and Renaissance Library (Edinburgh et al.; Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1959), 12.8-14. All translations of *Ancrene Wisse* herein are this writer's but show the influence of the translation of this work in *Anchoritic Spirituality* (ch. 2, n. 11).

[2] The entire second part (sections 14-28) of *De institutione* is a treatise on virginity, chastity, and mortification of the flesh. In section 17 Aelred wrote: "Nemo se palpet, nemo blandiatur sibi, nemo se fallat: nunquam ab adolescentibus, sine magna cordis contritione et carnis afflictione castitas conquiritur uel seruatur, quae plerumque in aegris uel senibus periclitatur. [Let no one flatter himself, let no one delude himself, let no one deceive himself: Chastity is never sought out or preserved among young people without great contrition of the heart and torment of the flesh, for chastity is very much put to the test even among the sick and the aged.]" *De institutione inclusarum* 17 (CCCM, 653).

The ten early thirteenth-century English prose texts--*Ancrene Wisse*, the so-called "Katherine Group," and the so-called "Wooing Group," reflect an even more complex and varied response to Aelred's *De institutione* than the Anglo-Norman and Latin works that have been examined in the previous chapter. All ten English works were either composed in or show the influence of the same West Midlands dialect, indicating that they were written in the same place, probably in or near Herefordshire, and all ten are preserved in six textually and linguistically related manuscripts dating from the second quarter of the thirteenth century.[3] *Ancrene Wisse*, the longest and most influential of the ten works also survives in whole or in part in five other English manuscripts dating from the second half of the thirteenth century through the early sixteenth centuries, as well as four manuscripts in French and four more in Latin.[4]

As Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson point out, all six manuscripts, dating from around 1225 (or pehaps even earlier) to 1250 at the latest, are relatively small in size (between five and nine inches high), compact enough to be held in the hand, and neatly and attractively copied, although without much decoration beyond red and blue captials and paragraph markers.[5] All six contain almost exclusively religious texts. Furthermore, these six manuscripts bear a complex textual relationship to each other.[6] The two earliest of them (both composed at the end of the first quarter of the thirteenth century) Cambridge University

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[3] Introduction, *Anchoritic Spirituality*, 7-8.

[4] Yoko Wada, "What is *Ancrene Wisse*?," in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Yoko Wada (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 1-2. Robert Hasenfratz lists and describes all the manuscripts in detail. Introduction, Hasenfratz, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, Middle English Texts (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), 30-33.

[5] *Anchoritic Spirituality*, 7.

[6] Introduction, Geoffrey Shepherd, ed., *Ancrene Wisse, Parts Six and Seven*, Nelson's Medieval and Renaissance Library (Edinburgh *et al.*: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1959), xiv.

Corpus Christi College MS 402, and British Library MS Cotton Cleopatra C.vi, contain only *Ancrene Wisse*.[7] A third manuscript, Oxford University, MS Bodley 34, is probably the earliest of all the six, probably predating *Ancrene Wisse* and the product of a single scribe who made his copy possibly as early as 1210, contains only the texts of the Katherine Group.

That "group," a scholarly construction defined by the contents of Bodley 34, consists of a life of St. Catherine of Alexandria (translated from the same eleventh-century Latin <u>passio</u> as Clemence of Barking's "Life of St. Catherine"), together with the lives of two other early Christian virgin martyrs, St. Margaret and St. Juliana (also adaptations of Latin *passiones*), together with a homiletic treatise on virginity titled *Hali Meiðhad* ("Holy Maidenhood"), and *Sawles Warde* ("Guardian of the Soul"), an English adaptation of *De custodia interioris hominis*, an allegory variously attributed to Anselm of Canterbury and Hugh of St. Victor (*De custodia* is in turn a section of a collection titled *De anima* traditionally attributed to Hugh).[8] The fourth manuscript of the six, British Library MS Cotton Titus D.xviii, made close to the year 1250, contains *Ancrene Wisse* together three texts from the Katherine Group (the life of St. Katherine, *Hali Meiðhad*, and *Sawles Warde*) and the sole copy of the longest and most artful text of the Wooing Group, *Þe Wohunge of*

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[7] The Cleopatra manuscript contains 200 folios. The text of *Ancrene Wisse* occupies fols. 3-197. Several Latin prayers, including a hymn to St. Etheldreda, and a series of arithmetical numbers occupy fols. 198-200. See *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library, Deposited in the British Museum* (London, 1802), 581.

[8] A facsimile of MS Bodley 34 has been published. *Facsimile of MS. Bodley 34: St. Katherine, St. Margaret, St. Juliana, Hali Meiðhad, Sawles Warde*, introduction by N.R. Ker, EETS 247 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960). Critical editions of its various texts are as follows: *Seinte Katerine*, re-edited from MS Bodley 34 and other manuscripts by S.R.T.O. d'Ardenne and E.J. Dobson, EETS, s.s., 7 (Oxford *et al.*: Oxford University Press, 1981); *Seinte Marherete þe Meiden ant Martyr*, reedited from MS Bodley 34 and British Museum MS Royal 17.A.xxvii by Frances M. Mack, EETS, o.s., 193 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934); d'Ardenne, S.R.T.O., ed., *Þe Liflade ant te Passiun of Seinte Iuliene*, EETS 248 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1961); Bella Millett, ed., *Hali Meiðhad*, EETS, o.s. no 284 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982); R.M. Wilson, ed., *Sawles Warde*, Leeds School of English Language Texts and Monographs 3 (Leeds: Titus Wilson, 1938).

Ure Lauerd ("The Wooing of Our Lord").[9] The fifth manuscript, British Library MS Cotton

Nero A.xiv, copied contemporaneously with Titus in around 1250, contains *Ancrene Wisse*

together with (in the hand of a different scribe) the remaining three texts that have been

assigned to the Wooing Group: *On wel swuðe god ureisun of God almihti* ("A Very

Exceedingly Good Prayer of God Almighty"), *On lofsong of ure lefdi* ("A Song of Praise of

Our Lady"), and *On lofsong of ure louerde* ("A Song of Praise of Our Lord") together with

other brief prayers in English and Latin.[10] The sixth manuscript, British Library MS Royal

17.A.xxvii, dating from perhaps 1220-30, contains all three of the saints' lives in the

Katherine Group together with *Sawles Warde* and a truncated version of *On lofsong of ure*

lefdi that bears a different title: *Þe oreisun of seinte Marie* ("The Prayer of St. Mary").

  Finally, it should be noted that an incomplete version of the Wooing Group text *On*

wel swuðe god ureisun of God almihti, titled *A devout praier to or Savior* and renamed *On*

Ureisun of Ure Louerde by its first editor, Richard Morris, in 1868, is to be found on two of

the last three folios of Lambeth Palace MS 487, a late-twelfth or very early thirteenth century

manuscript that predates any of the six manuscripts textually or philologically related to

Ancrene Wisse. Lambeth 487 is a collection of pre-Conquest sermons in Old English by the

early eleventh-century abbot Aelfric of Eynsham and others, together with what appears to be

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[9] The critical edition is W. Meredith Thompson, ed., *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, EETS o.s., 241 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1958). This volume also contains critical editions of the other three Wooing Group texts—as defined by Thompson--found in the British Library MS Cotton Nero A.xiv, together with versions of two of those texts found in British Library MS Royal 17 A.xxvii and Lambeth Palace MS 487.

[10] Preceding the three prose Wooing Group texts in the Nero manuscript, on fols. 120v-123v, is an English poem of 171 lines in octosyllabic couplets bearing the title *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* ("A good prayer of Our Lady"). The poem is in the same hand as that of the Wooing Group texts in Nero, which occupy fols. 123v-131r, followed by an English translation of the Apostles' Creed and two short Latin texts (also in the same hand) that fill up the rest of fol. 131r, the last page in the codes. Thompson deliberately omitted the poem from his edition of the Wooing Group because, as he said, "it is in rhymed and metered couplets, and is in other ways very different from this group." Introduction, *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, xiv. This poem and its relation to the prose Wooing Group texts in Nero will be discussed in the next chapter of this dissertation.

the earliest text of *Poema morale*, a 396-line homiletic verse probably written between 1150 and 1170 in a southeastern dialect of English and deemed by scholars to be the earliest surviving written specimen of post-Conquest Middle English.[11] According to W. Meredith Thompson, the sermon content of Lambeth 487 (including *Poema morale*) was completed before the year 1200 in a single hand, while *On ureisun of ure louerde* is in a slightly later hand.[12] From the dating of all these manuscripts, including the very early Lambeth manuscript, it seems clear that all the Katherine Group texts were written before *Ancrene Wisse*, as was at least one Wooing Group text, *On ureisun of ure louerde/On wel swuðe*, whose presence in Lambeth 487 points to its completion during the late twelfth century. The rest of the Wooing Group cannot be easily dated.

Ancrene Wisse is a handbook for anchoresses, or at least was apparently originally intended as such, and four out of the five texts in the Katherine Group deal in various ways with female spirituality. *Hali Meiðhad* is a treatise on consecrated virginity and its practical and ontological superiority to the married state, and the three saints' lives in the Katherine Group concern virgin martyrs who had been deemed models for consecrated women since patristic times; as when Ambrose of Milan, in his *De virginibus*, had urged veiled women to imitate Mary in their lives and the virgin martyrs in their deaths. Modern scholars have tended to designate all the Katherine Group texts, as well as all those of the Wooing Group,

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[11] The contents of Lambeth 487 were published and translated into modern English by Richard Morris in 1968, together with *Sawles Warde* (from MS Bodley 34), *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, the three Wooing Group texts in the Nero, Royal and Lambeth manuscripts, the poem *On god ureison of ure lefdi* that precedes the Wooing Group texts in the Nero manuscript, and several shorter thirteenth-century works. Richard Morris, *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises (Sawles Warde, and þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd: Ureisuns of Ure Louerd and of Ure Lefdi, &c.), edited from MSS. in the British Museum, Lambeth, and Bodleian Libraries*, EETS (London: N. Trübner, 1868, rpr. NewYork: Greenwood Press, 1969).

[12] Introduction, *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* (n. 9), ix.

as women's literature--specifically as literature created expressly for anchoresses to be read in conjunction with their reading of *Ancrene Wisse*. There are good reasons for this. The ten texts are not only interlinked in their six early-thirteenth-century manuscripts but are linguistically and stylistically tied to each other as well. In 1929 J.R.R. Tolkien described certain consistent philological features common to both the Corpus Christi manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* and MS Bodley 34, the only manuscript of the six containing all five Katherine Group texts. Tolkein noted such features such as an archaic and extremely consistent orthography that harked back to Old English scribal practices and surmised that both manuscripts were written in a distinctive literary language that he called "AB" ("A" for *Ancrene Wisse*, "B" for Bodley 34) that he believed resembled and to some extent preserved the pre-Conquest West Saxon literary language of most Old English literature.[13]

Tolkien believed that Herefordshire and its environs, hard by the Welsh border, had represented a western last redoubt of Anglo-Saxon resistance to Norman cultural hegemony in England. That cultural resistance, according to Tolkien, resulted in the creation of a distinct and deliberately archaic literary dialect that kept alive earlier Anglo-Saxon literary memories. Subsequent philological studies of *Ancrene Wisse* in particular have modified some of Tolkien's assumptions about the parochial and resistant nature of West Midlands culture, for *Ancrene Wisse* is in fact rich in French loan words and also in linguistic borrowings from Welsh neighbors, Scandinavian settlers, and Dutch traders.[14] Nonetheless, the fact remains that all ten texts are distinctly West Midlands compositions, all show to

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[13] J.R.R. Tolkien, "*Ancrene Wisse* and *Hali Meiðhad*," *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Assocation*, vol. 14, ed.. H.W. Garrod(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), 104-26.

[14] See, *e.g*., Richard Dance, "The AB Language: The Recluse, the Gossip, and the Language Historian," and D.A. Trotter, "The Anglo-French Lexis of *Ancrene Wisse*: a Re-evaluation," chs. 4 and 5 respectively in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse* (n. 4).

some extent the influence of Tolkien's "AB" language, and the distinctive hands in which all of six of their early manuscripts are written are remarkably similar in appearance.

Because of this close linguistic interrelationship of the works, along with philological and paleographic evidence for a geographically and dialectically limited setting for all the texts' composition in or near Herefordshire during the last quarter of the twelfth century or the first quarter of the thirteenth, several scholars have argued that the intended audience for the ten texts was similarly limited: a small number of women living in anchorholds scattered throughout England. E.J. Dobson asserted in 1976 that he had identified the otherwise anonymous author of *Ancrene Wisse*: one Brian of Lingen, an Augustinian canon regular in residence at Wigmore Abbey, an Augustinian congregation dating from the late twelfth century in North Herefordshire in the Welsh Marches border country. Wigmore Abbey had acquired the Corpus manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* in about 1300, some seventy-five years after it was written. Dobson's other evidence consisted of similarities between the "rule" devised for anchoresses in that treatise and the rules and customaries of the Augustinian congregations. The medieval attribution of *De anima*, the Latin source of *Sawles Warde*, to Hugh of St. Victor was also part of Dobson's evidence, for the Victorines used as their rule a version of the Augustinian legislative tradition. Dobson argued that only an institution the size of Wigmore could support a scriptorium large enough to develop the distinctive scribal features of the six manuscripts in question, so it followed that all ten texts originated at Wigmore, although not all might have been composed by Brian.[15]

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[15] E.J. Dobson, *The Origins of* Ancrene Wisse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 312-68.

Indeed, Dobson went so far as to conclude that all ten texts (*Ancrene Wisse* plus the Katherine and Wooing groups) originated in the specific vicinity of Wigmore for a "community, or more probably communities of anchoresses" living in hermitages (or more likely, in anchorholds attached to parish churches) a short distance away from each other.[16] Dobson argued that the anchoresses, despite their immurement in anchorholds, were likely to have been in constant contact with each other through their maidservants as messengers. Those latter women of lower social standing who were not bound like their mistresses to remain within the walls of the anchorhold typically supplied the anchoresses with food, attended to their other needs, and constituted their only contact with the outside world. Dobson speculated that the anchoresses themselves acted as scribes of *Ancrene Wisse*, revising the text under the author's supervision, with the Corpus manuscript as the final product.[17] Moreover, Dobson found what he considered to be evidence of the very community of anchoresses to whom he believed *Ancrene Wisse* had originally been directed: two groups of women living the religious life between 1190 and 1230 at Limebrook Priory and at a chapel dedicated to St. Leonard, both not far from Wigmore Abbey.[18]

More recent scholarship has challenged Dobson's specific identification of Brian of Lingen, Wigmore Abbey, and the Augustinian canons as the sole sources of the authorship of *Ancrene Wisse*. Bella Millett has traced a rich and many-stranded tradition of monastic and

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[16] *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (see chs. 1 and 2 of this dissertation), 24-26. According to Warren, the role of an anchoress's servant, who took no pay for her services, was itself regarded as a religious calling; many such women succeeded their mistresses in the anchorhold, for anchorites belonged to all social classes.

[17] *The Origins of* Ancrene Wisse, 172-73. See also E.J. Dobson, "The Affiliation of the Manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*," in *English and Medieval Studies Presented to J.R.R. Tolkien on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Norman Davis and C.L. Wrenn (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962), 128-63, at 162.

[18] *Ibid.,* 174-311.

anchoritic legislation underlying the work, beginning with Augustine of Hippo's fourth-century precepts for communal religious living and continuing through John Cassian's *Institutes*, Aelred's *De Institutione* and the Cistercian tradition of reformed Benedictine monasticism it represented, the Carthusian *Consuetudines* drawn up by the Prior Guigo I in about 1128, the Premonstratensian customaries, and the Dominican *Constitutiones* of 1216, which followed both Augustinian and Premonstratensian legislative practices. For that reason Millett dates the composition of *Ancrene Wisse* to sometime after 1216 and argues that its author might as likely have been a Dominican friar as an Augustinian canon.[19]

Nonetheless, Dobson's theory that *Ancrene Wisse* and its nine related texts were composed as literature for anchoresses remains predominant in scholarly literature. Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson title their translations of the ten works into modern English *Anchoritic Spirituality*.[20] Savage, Watson, and other critics have elsewhere emphasized what they view as specifically anchoritic features in all ten texts: features that they argue emphasize the solitary and enclosed nature of the anchoress's religious experience.[21] Savage

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[19] Bella Millett, "The Genre of *Ancrene Wisse*," ch. 2 in *A Companion to* Ancrene Wisse (n. 4), 29-38.

[20] See n. 1.

[21] See Anne Savage, "The Solitary Heroine: Aspects of Meditation and Mysticism in *Ancrene Wisse*, the Katherine Group, and the Wooing Group," in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, ed. William F. Pollard and Robert Boening (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 63-83, and "The Communal Authorship of *Ancrene Wisse*," ch. 3 in *A Companion to* Ancrene Wisse (n. 4); Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson, "The Methods and Objectives of Thirteenth-Century Anchoritic Devotion," in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England, Exeter Symposium IV*, ed. Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1987), 132-53. See also Alexandra Barratt, "Some Anchoritic Aspects of *Ancrene Wisse*," *Medium Aevum* 49 (1980): 32-56; Linda Georgianna, *The Solitary Self: Individuality in the* Ancrene Wisse (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 1981); Roy Gopa, "'Sharpen Your Mind with the Whetstone of Books': The Female Recluse as Reader in Goscelin's *Liber Confortatorius*, Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum* and the *Ancrene Wisse*, in *Women, the Book, and the Godly: Selected Proceedings of the St Hilda's Conference, 1993*, vol. 1, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 113-35; Bella Millett. "Women in No Man's Land: English recluses and the development of vernacular literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries," in *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, ed. Carol M. Meale, Cambridge Studies in

and Watson offer a compositional timeline for all ten texts that was first proposed by

Dobson: that around the year 1200 "one or two men, perhaps Wigmore canons," began to

translate the three saints' lives of the Katherine Group from Latin into English, beginning

with "Margaret" and "Juliana" and culminating with "Katherine," the most "theologically and

stylistically sophisticated of the three."[22] (This hypothetical timeline for the three saints' lives

is problematic however, for in the two surviving manuscripts where all three lives appear,

Bodley 34 and MS Royal 17.A.xxvii¸ *Seinte Katerine* leads off, followed by the lives of

Margaret and Juliana in that order, as though the three lives were considered as a single

package of three and meant to be read serially as presented.) Those Wigmore scribes—or

others following their lead, according to this timeline--then moved on to *Sawles Warde*,

another translation from the Latin, followed by the three Wooing Group texts to be found in

the Nero and Royal manuscripts.

 Hali Meiðhad was the next text to be composed (according to this timeline), an

original composition although highly dependent on a number of patristic, pseudo-patristic,

and medieval Latin sources. After *Hali Meiðhad* came *Ancrene Wisse*, in about 1225,

followed by *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, the single Wooing Group text to be found in the

Titus manuscript. Although Savage and Watson concede that their timeline is "hypothetical

and in places quite speculative," they also assert that it "is nonetheless extremely useful as a

guide to the works and the contexts in which they were written."

Medieval Literature 17 (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 86-103; Denis Renevey, "Enclosed Desires: A Study of the Wooing Group," in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, 39-62.

[22] General introduction, *Anchoritic Spirituality* (n. 3), 11-12. All references to Savage's and Watson's timeline in this paragraph are to those two pages.

Savage and Watson argue that the ten works can be arranged along a trajectory that became increasingly focused on specifically anchoritic religiosity (in contrast to general piety) as the texts were composed during the years between 1200 and 1230. The life of St. Margaret, the first work of the ten to be written, according to the Dobson-Savage-Watson theory, addresses an audience of women, but one that includes "widows" and "the wedded" ("widewen wið þa iweddede") as well as the "maidens: who yearned "very eagerly" to know how they "must love the living lord and live in maidhood" ("te meidnes…lusten swiðe ȝeorliche hu ha schulen luuien þe liuiende lauerd & libben I meiðhad")—that is, women who wished to live as virgins although perhaps not necessarily as anchoresses.[23] By contrast, *Ancrene Wisse*, composed closer to 1230, clearly speaks to anchoresses, and the first-person speaker in the last-written work of the group (according to the Dobson-Savage-Watson theory), *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, describes himself (although also very likely "herself") as "sperrerd querfaste wið inne fowr wahes…til þat I deie [enclosed with arms outspread--an allusion to Christ's arms nailed to the cross--within four walls…until I die]",[24] which can be read as a reference to an anchoress's lifelong state of enclosure. The endpoint of Savage's and Watson's trajectory is thus the anchoress's own internalization of the spirituality that the scribes of Wignore (or wherever their scriptorium was located) had created for her and her fellows.

The thirteenth century in England was certainly a growth period for anchorites, particularly female anchorites. According to records examined by Elizabeth Warren, the

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[23] *Seinte Marherete þe Meiden ant Martyr* (n. 8), 4, ll. 6-7. This edition of *Seinte Marherete* presents a semi-diplomatic edition of both of its manuscripts, the Bodley text on even-numbered pages and the Royal text on odd-numbered pages. All citations herein are to the Bodley text as the earlier of the two.

[24] *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* (n. 8), ll. 591-93.

number of anchorites both male and female more than doubled in England from the twelfth

through the thirteenth centuries—from about ninety-six to about 198--and anchoritism was

also a calling that during that same period went from mostly female during the twelfth

century (forty-eight known women anchorites to thirty known males) to overwhelmingly

female during the thirteenth century (123 known women anchorites to a mere 37 known

males).[25] Savage and Watson argue that the increasing anchoritic focus that they see in the

ten texts as they were composed over the first thirty years of the thirteenth century ran

parallel to and mirrored the increasing popularity of anchoritic life to women during those

same years, "doubtless at once fueling and being fueled by that movement."[26]

Reasoning from this assumption of an exclusively female and anchoritic audience for

those ten texts, many critics, especially feminist critics, have also concluded that, because

most of the authors of the ten texts were undoubtedly men writing for women, *Ancrene*

Wisse, the Katherine Group, and the Wooing Group were strongly colored by medieval

misogyny at worst, and at best by medieval male condescension toward women as spiritual

inferiors. Elizabeth Robertson argues, for example, that all of the works were infected by

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[25] *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (n. 17). Warren points out that the sex of some anchorites cannot be determined from the record. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker observes a similar phenomenon in the high-medieval Low Countries and northern Germany. She uncovered the names of more than two hundred recluses between 1100 and 1300, of whom only five were men. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, *Lives of the Anchoresses: The Rise of the Urban Recluse in Medieval Europe*, trans. Myra Heerspink Scholz, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsyvania Press, 2005).

[26] General introduction, *Anchoritic Spirituality* (n. 3), 13-14. Patricia J.F. Rosof, studying anchoresses in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France as well as England, argues that their way of life had a special appeal to poor women, who, as anchoresses, did not need a dowry in order to live the enclosed life of a nun, and that such women readily found lay benefactors to support them. Rich women also found the anchoress's life appealing, as they could afford to build their own cells. Indeed, Rosof contends, the anchoritic life of prayer and contemplation within a restricted physical space became a model for the communal religious life of nuns when as strict enclosure increasingly became the rule for religious women as the twelfth century progressed. Patricia J.F. Rosof, "The Anchoress in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Medieval Religious Women*, vol. 2: *Peaceweavers*, ed. John Nichols and Lilian Thomas Shank, Cistercian Studies Series 72 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1985), 123-44.

Aristotelian biological and Augustinian theological presuppositions that associated men with

reason and the capacity for genuine mystical knowledge of God and women with carnal

appetite, runaway emotionality, weakness, and sexual temptation--all of which dictated that

the only sort of spirituality suitable for women was one that confined their bodies in

anchorholds and cloisters and emphasized the physical and the emotional over the genuinely

mystical. Robertson writes: "The assumption that a woman's nature was sensual led these

writers to focus on tactile and sensual images, as well as on other images emphasizing such

'female' characteristics as moisture, tears, suffering, endurance and compassion. In addition,

specialized syntax and imagery were employed to lead women toward an emotional and

physical realization of religious truths."[27] Robertson also contends that the focus in several of

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[27] Elizabeth Robertson, *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 43. See also Robertson, "The Corporeality of Female Sanctity in the *Life of Saint Margaret*," in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timaea Szell (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1991), 268-67, and "Savoring 'Scientia' The Medieval Anchoress Reads *Ancrene Wisse*," ch. 4 in *A Companion to* Ancrene Wisse (n.4). Robertson is far from alone in her assessments. See also Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 1-55; Sarah Beckwith, "Passionate Regulation: Enclosure, Ascesis, and the Feminist Imaginary," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 93 (1994), 803-24; Thomas Bestul, *Texts of the Passion* (see Introduction to this dissertation), 111-44; Alcuin Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 120-25; Susannah Mary Chewning, "The Paradox of Virginity within the Anchoritic Tradition: The Masculine Gaze and the Feminine Body in the *Wohunge* Group," in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl, The New Middle Ages (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 113-34; Grace Jantzen, "'Cry Out and Write': Mysticism and the Struggle for Authority, " in *Women, the Book, and the Godly: Selected Proceedings of the St Hilda's Conference, 1993*, vol. 1, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 67-76; Jocelyn Price, "'Inner' and 'Outer': Conceptualizing the Body in *Ancrene Wisse* and Aelred's *De institutione inclusarum*," in *Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G.H. Russell*, ed. Gregory Kratzmann and James Simpson (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1986), 192-208; Sarah Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head': Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages" (see Introduction to this dissertation), at 1197-98, esp. 1197, n. 71; Sarah Salih, "Performing Virginity: Sex and Violence in the *Katherine Group*," in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, 95-112; Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, "The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," ch. 2 in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986). A notable exception is Catherine Innes-Parker, who argues that the central image of much of this literature—that of the virgin uniting herself with Christ on the cross in his redemptive role—was actually empowering to medieval women readers, enabling them to identify with Christ and thus partake in his redemptive function. See Catherine Innes-Parker, "*Ancrene Wisse* and *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*: The Thirteenth-Century Female Reader and the Lover-Knight," in *Women, the Book, and the Godly*, vol. 1, 137-47; "Fragmentation and Reconstruction: Images of the Female Body in *Ancrene*

these texts on Mary as a model for religious women was a negative and discouraging one that emphasized the unbridgeable gap between Mary as Mary as the uniquely sinless mother of Christ and the lowly, fleshly status of ordinary women.[28]

Much of the large body of recent feminist scholarship on early thirteenth-century English-language "anchoritic literature" (as defined by Savage, Watson, and many others) has focused on a perceived underlying misogynist strain that presumed the mental and moral inferiority of its female readers. For example, Robert Hasenfratz writes that the author of *Ancrene Wisse* largely assumed that the treatise's female readers were incapable of mystical experience, and should even be discouraged from such, as visions and dreams were probably works of the devil: "[T]he anchoress remains firmly rooted in a (gendered) body of pain, and the promise of spiritual embraces must, by and large wait for the next life….In this way <u>AW</u> may betray a male fear of women's spirituality."[29]

The assumptions underlying Hasenfratz's conclusions (and *pari passu* those of Robertson and other feminist critics) require serious reexamination, however. The first of those assumptions is that all ten texts (or perhaps any of them) can truly be described as a body of "anchoritic literature" containing an "anchoritic spirituality" aimed specifically at anchoresses. It is equally arguable that the ten texts were simply devotional literature aimed at heterogeneous audiences, some of whom might be anchoresses, some religiously professed

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<u>Wisse</u> and the Katherine Group," *Comitatus* 26 (1995): 27-52; and "*Mi bodi henge with thi bodi neiled o rode*: The gendering of the Pauline concept of crucifixion with Christ in medieval devotional prose for women," *Studies in Religion/Science religieuses* 28 (1999): 49-61.

[28] *Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience*, 39-40.

[29] Introduction, Robert Hasenfratz, ed., *Ancrene Wisse*, Middle English Texts (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2000), 42. Hasenfratz specifically denies any connection between the visual and affective meditational techniques urged by Aelred in *De institutione inclusarum* and those employed by the author of *Ancrene Wisse*, whose methodology, he says, is "allegorical" and "exegetical" in contrast to affective. Introduction, 42-43.

women (and, as shall be seen, religiously professed men), and some layfolk: those "widows" and "wedded" wives whom *Seinte Marherete* addresses alongside the virgins who sought to give their lives to Christ. Even the text of the highly anchoritic *Ancrene Wisse* itself, as shall be seen, became quickly adapted by its copyists to a variety of different kinds of readers, including male readers who might read the work not as reflecting a negative male view of female spirituality but as opening the visual, concrete, and highly affective aspects of female sprituality to members of both sexes. They were the same sorts of men who made up an eager monastic readership for *De institutione*.

Indeed, a more recent generation of scholars studying *Ancrene Wisse* has focused on its multiplicity of audiences. Bella Millett writes in the introduction to her recently published variorum edition of the Corpus manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* that the very fact that the work, in particular its material on sin and sacramental confession in Parts Four and Five, drew on many earlier writings that were not intended for anchorites, which suggests that the work's author might have had a non-anchoritic readership in mind from the very beginning.[30] Cate Gunn argues that *Ancrene Wisse* "always contained within it different functions and the possiblity of being used by different audiences."[31] Gunn points to a direct connection

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[30] Bella Millett, ed., *Ancrene Wisse, A Corrected Edition of the Text in Cambridge Corpus Christi College, MS 402, with Variants from Other Manuscripts*, glossary and additional notes by Richard Dance, 2 vols., EETS, o.s., 325 and 326 (Oxford *et al.*: Oxford Univerity Press, 2005, 2008), xxiii-iv. See n. 38 below for a complete discussion of the various editions of *Ancrene Wisse*.

[31] Cate Gunn, *Ancrene Wisse: From Pastoral Literature to Vernacular Spirituality*, Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), 10. *Cf.* Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Female Body and Religious Practice," in *Fragmentation amd Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 218: "[M]edieval thinkers used gender imagery fluidly, not literally." Gunn and Bynum both assert that it was not uncommon for female imagery and female spiritual models to be used by men.

between *Ancrene Wisse* and the growth during the thirteenth century of lay piety centered on

the passion of Christ and devotion to the Virgin.[32]

Ironically, the text of *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, deemed by Savage and Watson to

be the final and the most anchoress-directed of the ten works, appears only in MS Cotton

Titus D.xviii, whose version of *Ancrene Wisse* includes many modifications clearly designed

for a male readership. Thus, while it possible to assign a composition date of around 1225 to

Ancrene Wisse on the basis of its references to the presence of mendicant friars in England,

and to assume, as nearly all scholars have, that gender-modified versions of *Ancrene Wisse*

such as the Titus text were produced after 1225, it is impossible to assign certain composition

dates to any of the other nine works—which makes the notion of a trajectory of increasing

anchoritic focus for the works highly problematic. It makes more sense to regard Bodley 34,

Royal 17.A.xxvii, Nero A.xiv, and Titus D xviii as very early vernacular devotional

miscellanies: compendia of homiletic, hagiographic, and meditative material of an intense

and quasi-poetic nature. In that respect those four manuscripts have as much in common with

the earlier Lambeth 487 (which contains a Wooing Group text) as with each other. It is

important to note that all those manuscripts were produced contemporaneously with the

writing and translating of *Speculum ecclesie*, which responded to a similar desire by religious

and laypeople of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century for richly imaginative aids

to meditation.

An examination of the individual works among the "Herefordshire Ten" bears out the

theory that most could not have been intended for anchoritic audiences. *Sawles Warde*, for

example, is an elaborate tropological allegory glossing this verse spoken by Christ in

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[32] *Ancrene Wisse: From Pastoral Literature to Vernacular Spirituality*, 62-71.

Matthew's Gospel: "si sciret pater familias qua hora fur venturus esset vigilaret utique et non sineret perfodiri domum suam."[33] As in *De anima*, the Latin source of *Sawles Warde*, the "thief" ("fur" in the Vulgate) is to be interpreted as the devil, the "house" ("domum") is the human self ("seolfe þe mon" in *Sawles Warde* for the Latin "conscientia"),[34] and the "master of the house" ("pater familias") is the intellect or reason ("þe monnes wit" in *Sawles Warde*, "animus" in the Latin).[35]

    Sawles Warde, unlike its Latin source, gives the lord of the house a "foolish wife" ("fulitohe wif") named "Will" ("wil")[36] to her husband's "Wit." It is she who is the devil's mark, and she must be constantly reined in by her husband, or else her servants, who include the five senses, will run amok (in the Latin, there is no lady of the house, and it is the servants themselves who are lazy and willful and must be controlled by their master, the intellect). The undisciplined housewife Will, who requires Wit's mastery, certainly partakes of traditional patristic and medieval misogyny (although it can also be argued that the author of *Sawles Warde* offers a more complex and subtle presentation of human psychology than the author of the pertinent section of *De anima*), but there are female counter-forces to the wayward wife in *Sawles Warde*, in the shape of the four cardinal virtues also in the Latin

[33] Mt 24:43: "If the master of the household knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly keep watch and not allow his house to be broken into."

[34] *Sawles Warde* (n. 8), 2, l. 9. The Latin word "conscientia" appears on 5. Wilson's edition publishes all three manuscript texts of *Sawles Warde* in semi-diplomatic form on facing pages, together with the pertinent section of *De anima* and a fifth text, *The Ayenbite of Inwyt* ("The Remorse of Conscience"), another adaptation of that same section of *De anima* (probably by way of a French translation and far more faithful to the Latin than *Sawles Warde*) made by the monk Michael of Northgate in 1340). Wilson uses MS Bodley 34 as his base manuscript, and quotations from *Sawles Warde* herein are from that manuscript. The Bodley text, although the earliest, is incomplete, beginning on fol. 72r and breaking of on fol. 80v; the Royal and Titus manuscripts contain complete texts.

[35] *Ibid.* The Latin appears on 3.

[36] *Ibid.*, l. 10.

sources),[37] daughters of God who at God's behest guard Wit's house for him and ultimately deflect the devil's assault.

Although the five senses also appear allegorically in *Hali Meiðhad* and in Part Two of *Ancrene Wisse*,[38] the notion of the Christian's duty to guard the senses is not a particularly anchoritic one. Indeed, in *Ancrene Wisse*, the only text of the ten to deal explicitly with anchoritism, the five senses play a complex allegorical role that is different from and at least partially inconsistent with their role in *Sawles Warde.* In *Ancrene Wisse* the senses themselves are the guardians or "wardens" of the "heart," which requires taming, and the senses (not the intellect as in *Sawles Warde*) are called the "wits": "Þe heorte wardeíns beoð þe fif wittes. Sihðe. & herunge. Smecchunge. & Smeallunge. & euch límes felunge."[39] *Sawles Warde* is thus neither clearly dependent upon nor thematically related to *Ancrene Wisse*. Rather, *Sawles Warde* is simply an exemplar of the popular patristic and medieval

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[37] In *Sawles Warde* the names of the four daughters are "warshipe," "gasteliche strengðe," "meaðe," and "rihtwisnesse," which translate literally as "prudence," "strength of spirit," "moderation," and "righteousness"—the conventional prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. The Latin has the traditional "Prudentia," "Fortitudo," "Temperantia," and "Iustitia."

[38] *Hali Meiðhad* (n. 8), 8, ll. 7-25. Citing from *Ancrene Wisse* is problematic. The Hasenfratz edition (n. 29) is a teaching text containing substantial modifications in orthography designed to make Ancrene Wisse accessible to students with limited knowledge of Middle English and none of Old English; it is thus not a suitable source of citations. The leading twentieth-century critical edition of *Ancrene Wisse* is J.R.R. Tolkien, ed., *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle: Ancrene Wisse, Edited from MS. Corpus Christi College, Cambridge 402*, introduction, N.R. Ker, EETS 249 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1962). Tolkien's edition is essentially a diplomatic transcription of the Corpus manuscript, preserving its original punctuation and unexpanded abbreviations, and it is hence somewhat difficult to read. A more readable edition of Parts Six and Seven of *Ancrene Wisse*, also based upon the Corpus manuscript, is Geofrey Shepherd, ed., *Ancrene Wisse: Parts Six and Seven* (n. 4). Using the Cleopatra manuscript as their base text, Robert W. Ackerman and Roger Dahood have published a critical edition of the introduction and Part One of *Ancrene Wisse* titled *Ancrene Riwle: Introduction and Part I*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Ackerman and Roger Dahood, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 31 (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1984). This dissertation uses Shepherd's edition for citations to Parts Six and Seven of the *Ancrene Wisse*; otherwise, all citations are to Tolkien's edition, although Bella Millett's most recent edition, also based on the Corpus manuscript and drawing upon the uncompleted worth of E.J. Dobson, is currently the most useful edition to scholars because of its inclusion of all other manuscript variants.

[39] *Ancrene Wisse*, Corpus text, 29: "The heart's guardians are the five wits: sight and hearing, tasting and smelling, and the feeling of each limb."

genre of *psychomachia*, or battle of personified vices and virtues, with the human soul as the

stakes, that originated in the late fourth century with Prudentius' *Psychomachia* and

continued through *De anima* in the eleventh or twelfth century and indeed well into the

fourteenth century in such English works as *The Ayenbite of Inwyt* (itself a translation of *De

anima*, much closer to the Latin original than *Sawles Warde*)[40] and Chaucer's *Tale

of Melibee*.

     Hali Meiðhad is similarly a genre work, not an anchoritic work. It is a homiletic tract

with numerous patristic and medieval antecedents whose subject is the superiority of

virginity to the married state.[41] Bella Millett has argued that the work "seems to have been

written to reinforce the vocation of women who had already taken a vow of virginity, but it

gives no hint of the exact nature of their vocation."[42] That is to say, as Millett points out in

the same paragraph, the consecrated women to whom *Hali Meiðhad* is addressed might well

have been nuns, not anchoresses. The addressee of *Hali Meiðhad* is a second-person singular

"þu," or "thou," (the author describes his text as a "writ," or "letter"),[43] but this, as Millett

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[40] See n. 198.

[41] Bella Millett traces the rhetorical genre of comparing the virgin's freedom to the burdens of married women (*molestiae nuptiarum*) back to the early third century, in the writings of Tertullian, adapted by Jerome during the fourth century in his *Adversus Iovinianum*. As Millett points out, the latter treatise indicates that the genre had roots in the classical Greek philosophical tradition, where it was commonplace to regard marriage as incompatible with the life of a philosopher. Millett points out that the topos of the *molestiae nuptiarum* was even more fully developed in the writings of numerous Greek fathers, including Gregory of Nyssa and John Chrysostom. Introduction, *Hali Meiðhad* (n. 8), xxxiii-xxxviii. The contents of *Hali Meiðhad* derive from a rich array of patristic and medieval sources (or their florilegia), including, most notably, the early twelfth-century bishop Hildebert of Lavardin's letter to the recluse Athalisa, PL 171: 193-97. Millett summarizes the known sources of *Hali Meiðhad* on xlv-liii. Julie Hassel argues that *Hali Meiðhad* and, indeed, all the Katherine Group works, were powerful propandistic texts designed to encourage young women to shun wedlock for the religious life, thus fostering their personal autonomy. Julie Hassel, *Choosing Not to Marry: Women and Autonomy in the Katherine Group*, Studies in Medieval History and Culture (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 39-49,

[42] *Ibid.*, xxiii.

[43] *Ibid.*, 4.12.

points out, may be merely a literary convention, as the treatise is an extended commentary on its opening scriptural quotation, also in the second person singular, from the Vulgate's Psalm 44:11: "Audi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam et obliviscere populum tuum et domum patris tui [Listen, daughter, and see and incline your ear, and forget your people and the house of your father]."[44]

Furthermore, it is arguable that the author of *Hali Meiðhad*, which presents uncommonly vivid descriptions of the distastefulness of a husband's unwanted sexual attentions, the discomforts of pregnancy, the agony of childbirth, and the unrelenting messiness of nursing, feeding, and caring for an irritable infant,[45] might, like the author of *Seinte Marherete*, have had an audience in mind that included married women, women who would have been all too familiar with the unrewarding, unrelieved lot of daily chores faced by medieval homemakers.The author of *Hali Meiðhad* writes: "Ant hwet ȝef ich easki ȝet, þah hit þunche egede, hu þet wif stonde, þe ihereð hwen ha kimeð in hire bearn schreamen, sið þe cat et te fliche ant ed te hude þe hunde, hire cake bearnen o þe stan ant hire kelf suken, þe crohe eornen in þe fur—and te cheorl chideð? Þah hit beo egede I sahe, hit ah, meiden, to eggi þe swið[r]e þerfrommart, for nawt ne þuncheð hit hire egede þet hit fondeð. [And if I may ask further--though it may seem comical--how does it stands for that wife who, when she comes into her house, hears her children screaming, sees the cat at the bacon and the dog at the rind, her cake burning on the stone and her calf sucking up the spilled milk, the pot boiling over on the fire—and the churl she married blaming her? Though what I say may be

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[44] See *Hali Meiðhad*, 1.12.

[45] The pertinent pages are *Ibid.*, 16.25-19.15.

comical, it should encourage you even more strongly away from this life, maiden, for nothing of this seems comical to her who experiences it.]"[46]

       This is not misogynistic, but rather, in its deliberate exaggeration for humorous effect, deeply empathetic with the daily personal and material frustrations of a housewife harried by both unrelenting duties and an unhelpful husband. *Hali Meiðhad* can be read not simply as an entreaty to unmarried women to choose the virgin state but as a reminder to married women that it is possible for them to have an existence on a spiritual level beyond the chaos of their day-to-day household cares—simply by reading devotional texts such as *Hali Meiðhad*. The author continues: "Ne þerf þet seli meiden þet haueð al idon hire ut of þullich þeowdom, as Godes freo dohter ant his spuse, drehe nawiht swucches. Forþi, seli meiden, forsac al þuli sorwe for utnume mede…[That blessed maiden who has gotten herself out of that bondage, as God's free daughter and his spouse, need not endure such things. Therefore, blessed maiden, leave behind all such sorrow for a surpassing reward…]."[47] This language can be read figuratively as well as literally, for it is to be remembered that the soul of every Christian, not only that of the consecrated virgin, is always to be seen allegorically as the bride of Christ. The author indeed reminds the virgin whom he addresses as his reader not to consider widows or wedded wives "worthless" ("eðelich") in comparison to herself, for even though virginity is superior to widowhood and the married state, just as a ruby is superior to a semi-precious jacinth, "a mild wife or a meek widow is better than a proud virgin" ("is betere

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[46] *Ibid.*, 19, ll. 9-15.

[47] *Ibid.*, 19, ll. 16-18.

a milde wif oðer a meoke widewe þen a prude meiden"), just as "a bright jacinth is better than a dull ruby" ("is betere a briht iacint þen a charbucle won")."[48]

With its pungent diction framing a call to transcendence beyond the jumbled mess of daily life, *Hali Meiðhad* can be read as inviting the ordinary layfolk reading that treatise to think of themselves figuratively as consecrated nuns, just as Stephen of Sawley, writing at about the same time in another part of England, invited the Cistercian monks who read his *Speculum novitii* to think of themselves figuratively as anchoresses who might benefit from Aelred's *De institutione*. Indeed, the conclusion of *Hali Meiðhad* abruptly switches from the second-person singular used in the rest of the treatise to a third-person voice that encompasses not only the individual virgin-addressee ("hire," "her") but "all those" who "forsake the love of earthly men in order to be his [Christ's] leman" ("alle þeo þe leaueð luue of lami mon forte beon his leofmon").[49] Like Aelred in *De institutione*, the author of *Hali Meiðhad* clearly anticipated multiple audiences for his work. Although *Hali Meiðhad* is exhortative, not meditative in genre, the author culminated his conclusion with a rich imagistic evocation of his hope that virgins' souls—and his readers' souls—would experience eternal unity with Christ the heavenly bridegroom: "ant helpe ham swa in him to hehin towart heouene, aþet ha beon istihe þider as hare brudlac schal, in al þet eauer sel is, wið þene seli brudgume þet siheð all selhðe of sitten buten ende [and help them ascend in him toward heaven, until they have risen to that place where their wedlock, in all that is ever blessed,

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[48] *Ibid.*, 21.30, 22., ll. 1, 3-4. Millett points out that the source of the simile of the ruby and the jacinth is Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis*, PL 77:107. Gregory's use of the simile is slightly different; he compares men in holy orders (rubies) to layfolk of either sex (jacinths).

[49] *Hali Meiðhad*, 32.8.

with the blessed bridgroom from whom all blessedness comes, shall last without end]."[50]

These words, painting a picture of everlasting nuptial unity and bliss with a heavenly

husband, following directly after graphic negative evocations of nuptial life with an earthly

husband, suggest that the experience of the consecrated virgin can be universalized, applied

to all women and hence to all Christians who cleanse their souls of their mundane earthly

concerns in order to focus meditatively upon their bridegroom in heaven.

Furthermore, it cannot be an accident that the two surviving manuscript texts of *Hali*

Meiðhad appear only in conjunction with *Sawles Warde*, which is most definitely not an

anchoritic text, and also only in conjunction with one or more of the three female saints' lives

that make up the rest of the Katherine Group. The earlier of the two manuscripts, Bodley 34,

contains all three lives, while the later, mid-thirteenth-century manuscript, Cotton Titus

D.xviii, contains only the life of St. Katherine (along with *Ancrene Wisse* and *Þe Wohunge of*

Ure Lauerd, which are not in Bodley 34). Two of the three saints' lives—*Seinte Marherete*

and, as we shall see, *Seinte Iuliene*, are explicitly addressed to layfolk as well as

religious women.

The lives of the three virgin martyrs, as well as *Ancrene Wisse* and *Þe Wohunge* (and,

as will be demonstrated, the three other Wooing Group texts that appear in the Nero

manuscript) all have something distinctive in common: They incorporate vivid Christological

meditations, all centered around Christ's passion and often embedded in narratives, that are

clearly designed to stir up responsive emotions of gratitude and love for Christ in

their readers.

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[50] *Ibid.*, 32.12-14.

In the virgin martyrs' lives of the Katherine Group those meditations take the form of distinctive alterations to the Latin hagiographic sources that their authors closely followed. In this respect, the three saints' lives very much resemble Clemence of Barking's dramatic alterations to her Latin source (the same source, incidentally, as for *Seinte Katerine*). In *Ancrene Wisse* and the Wooing Group texts, the meditations are presented directly to the reader (*Ancrene Wisse*), or are first-person prayers (the Wooing Group) in which the reader is expected to identify with the author's narrated experiences. It is this feature that makes it appropriate to appropriate to describe the manuscripts in which these works appear as devotional anthologies, compiled perhaps for religious people (including but not limited to anchoresses) and certainly for laypeople, probably primarily (although not exclusively) for women, and likely for a mixed readership of all of the above. As such, their composition followed the precedent of the various manuscript adaptations of Aelred's *De institutione* and the treatises of Stephen of Sawley and Edmund of Abingdon in recognizing that a spiritual experience that would on the surface seem accessible only to a tiny group of anchoritic adepts was actually something that could be had by large numbers of people living many different kinds of lives. Those ten Middle English texts were in this respect like *De institutione* and *Speculum ecclesie*; they were lineal ancestors of the large array of vernacular devotional works of mid- and late fourteenth-century England.

Like *Sawles Warde* and *Hali Meiðhad*, the three saints' lives of the Katherine Group, detailing the martyrdoms of saints Margaret, Juliana, and Catherine, show no signs at all of having been written strictly for anchoresses. Saints Margaret of Antioch and Juliana of Nicomedia were nearly as widely venerated as St. Catherine during the later Middle Ages (the names "Catherine," "Margery," and "Julian" were among the most popular women's

names in England during that time). Indeed the traditional stories of these three women had common features: exotic Eastern locales; the topos of a beautiful Christian maiden speaking truth to the power of a male pagan Roman official of high birth who, smitten erotically by her beauty, sought to marry her if he could induce her to relinquish her faith; the subjection of the maiden to an array of brutal punishments, including beatings, dungeons, a torture wheel (Catherine and Juliana); temptations by and eventual mastery over demons (Margaret and Juliana); comforting visits from an angel who is Christ's messenger (Catherine and Juliana); the conversion of numerous bystanders (Catherine and Juliana); and the eventual beheading of all three virgins when all other tortures proved unavailing. The hagiographic narratives about the three martyrs entailed lives lived and deaths endured upon public stages, so they could relate only obliquely at best to the rigorous enclosure that was the hallmark of the anchoress's vocation.

All three lives had already circulated widely for centuries in Latin *passiones* whose templates were the *passiones* of Agnes and Cecilia, the virgin martyrs of Rome, written in Latin during the fifth and sixth centuries. Indeed, the author of *Hali Meiðhad* exhorted his readers to "think of St. Katherine, of St. Margaret, St. Agnes, St. Juliana, and St. Cecilia, and of the other holy maidens in heaven" ("Þench o Seinte Katerine, o Seinte Margaret, Seinte Enneis, Seinte Iuliene, and Seinte Cecille, ant o þe oþre mei[d]enes in heouene").[51] The very names of those virgins had an iconic significance that called to mind the drama of their very similar stories.

The "wedded" wives who join the "widows" and "maidens" among the author's intended audience in *Seinte Marherete* are the strongest evidence that he could not have

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[51] *Ibid.*, 23, ll. 2-4.

intended an anchoritic audience, or even an audience of religious women as the primary

readers or hearers of that particular text. Furthermore, the legend of St. Margaret of Antioch,

one of the most popular saints of the later Middle Ages, revolved around a series of physical

struggles, the first and most dramatic involving a demon in the shape of a dragon who bursts

in two after swallowing Margaret whole because he cannot endure the power of the sign of

the cross with which she has blessed herself. Margaret emerges from the monster's shattered

belly unscathed and goes on to best another devil in both argument and deed (she pins his

neck under her foot) before undergoing a series of gruesome torments, including the burning

of her entire body, before she is eventually beheaded. Margaret's superlative endurance, as

well as the episode of her delivery from the dragon's belly, made her cult a favorite among

pregnant women, who prayed to her for safe childbirth.

The author of *Seinte Marherete* emphasized Margaret's virginity ("*meiðhad*") and

alluded to the the topos of the chorus of virgins, led by the Virgin Mary, who are entitled to

sing with the angels in heaven ("þat seli meidnes song singen…echliche in heouene [that

they may sing the innocent maidens' song…eternally in heaven]",[52] the same topos that

Clemence employed in her life of St. Catherine, where Christ appears with his choir of

virgins to the imprisoned young princess. The author of *Seinte Marherete* also took pains, as

Clemence did, to align Margaret's passion as a martyr with that of Christ. The narrative's

opening reads: "Efter ure lauerdes pine & his passiun & his deð on rode [After Our Lord's

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[52] *Seinte Marherete* (n. 8), 4, ll. 7-14.. For a discussion of the topos of the chorus of virgins, which also appears in *Hali Meiðhad*, see Alan J. Fletcher, "The Dancing Virgins of *Hali Meiðhad*," *Notes and Queries,* n.s., 40 (1993): 437-439. Aelred of Rievaulx, in a striking image in his *De institutione inclusarum*, wrote that the consecrated virgin "should contemplate the most blessed Mary leading the dance of the virgins with the tambourine of virinity" ("Contempletur beatissimam Mariam cum uirginitatis tympano choros uirginum praecedentem"), 15.482-484 (CCCM, 651).

pain and his passion and his death on the cross]",[53] which reminds readers that Margaret imitates Christ. Indeed, the very incipit of the Bodley 34 text reads: "Her biginneð þe liflade & te passiun of seinte margarete ["here begins the life-story and the passion of St. Margaret]."[54] When Margaret is about to be burned, the prefect Olibrius, who desires her sexually, orders her stripped naked and hung "high" for all to gaze upon—a numinous image that recalls a crucifix—and then, the author writes, Margaret's "snow-white skin blackened as it scorched"—an image that recalls the association of Mary at the cross with the sunburned bride of the Song of Songs in *Speculum ecclesie*.

These visual images present a powerful paradox of mutilated beauty and sacrificial love, and they suggest that "Seinte Marherete" was meant to read or heard in a meditative context. Yet they are not particularly relevant to anchoresses. If anything, these passages recall Edmund of Abingdon's meditation on the canonical hour of sext in his *Speculum ecclesie*, in which the virgin's (in this case, Mary's) suffering mirrors Christ's, and the text draws in the reader to identify with Mary as a mirror of Christ in her suffering that the reader is expected to share. Edmund's meditation was, of course, never intended for reading by anchorites, but was originally addressed to members of monastic communities, and male monastics at that.

Seinte Iuliene and *Seinte Katerine* are equally problematic as anchoritic works. As S.R.T.O. d'Ardenne points out, *Seinte Iuliene* was one of at least six different lives of St. Juliana of Nicomedia (traditionally believed to have suffered martyrdom under Diocletian in A.D. 306 after many tortures) composed in various Western European vernaculars during the

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[53] George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson, *British Museum, Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green *et al*., 1921), 220-21.

[54] *Seinte Marherete*, 2, l. 2.

twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, including Anglo- Norman, Middle High

German, and Middle English.[55] (This list does not include Cynewulf's alliterative poem

Juliana in Old English, composed during the ninth century or perhaps even earlier.) The

vernacular lives rested on a tradition of Latin lives of Juliana dating to before the time of

Bede (ca. 672-735), who summarized one or more of them in his martyrology (d'Ardenne

also notes a reference to Juliana in the Old Irish *Félire* of Oengus dating to around the year

800).[56] Manuscripts produced during the eleventh and twelfth centuries alone preserve four

separate versions of Juliana's passion.[57] Furthermore, although Juliana had reputedly died in

Asia Minor, she was a popular enough saint in the West to generate the legend that her body

had been buried at Pozzuoli in Campania, and her relics were believed to have been

translated to other parts of Campania along with several other towns in what are now France,

Portugal, Austria, and Belgium.[58] In short, Juliana, like Margaret, was one of the most widely

venerated of virgin martyrs in the West from at least the eighth century onward. Like

Margaret she had no particular association with anchoritism.

Furthermore, d'Ardenne has identified a Latin manuscript, Oxford University MS

Bodley 285, produced during the early thirteenth century (possibly at the Benedictine abbey

at Ramsey in Cambridgeshire) at around the same time as Bodley 34. As d'Ardenne points

out, both manuscripts derived from an even older Latin work now lost but probably

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[55] Introduction, *Þe Liflade ant te Passiun of Seinte Iuliene* (n. 8), xx-xxi.

[56] *Ibid.*, xxii.

[57] *Ibid.*, xix-xx.

[58] *Ibid.*, xviii-xix. D'Ardenne believes that the text in Bodley 855 is closely related to the lost Latin manuscript that served as source for Cynewulf's *Juliana* and provides a hypothetical stemma for both on xxiv.

preserved at an English monastery during the early thirteenth century. The Latin text of St.

Juliana's life in Bodley 285 is related closely enough to the English text of *Seinte Iuliene* in

Bodley 34 to be regarded as *Seinte Iuliene*'s source for all practical purposes, although

geography makes it unlikely that the that the scribe who produced Bodley 34 in

Herefordshire could have seen the Ramsey manuscript (if the latter were even in existence

when Bodley 34 was copied).[59] d'Ardennes describes Bodley 285 as a large, handsomely

produced collection of saints' lives in Latin, including a life of St. Margaret of Antioch

(textually unrelated to *Seinte Marherete* and thus probably not its source), Aelred's *vita* of St.

Edward the Confessor, and the *vitae* of numerous other saints, many of them Anglo-Saxon.[60]

Seinte Iuliene thus fits squarely into a rich hagiographic literary tradition recognized by the

compiler of Bodley 855 that was much larger, older, and more firmly established than that of

presumed thirteenth-century anchoritic writing in the West Midlands. In fact, more than fifty

different lives of saints in Anglo-Norman alone survive from the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries, [61] including (as M. Dominica Legge pointed out, a stanzaic Life of St. Margaret

that is textually unrelated to *Seinte Marherete*.[62] One can make similar observations about

Seinte Katerine, whose Latin source is the same repeatedly copied eleventh-century

"Vulgate" *passio* that served as the source for Clemence of Barking's life of St. Catherine.[63]

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[59] *Ibid.*, xvii.

[60] *Ibid.*, xvi-xvii.

[61] Johan Vising, *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature* (London, 1923, rpr. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970), 42-44, 53-56. See also M. Dominic Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 243-72.

[62] *Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background*, p. 258.

[63] Introduction, *Seinte Katerine* (n. 8), xv-xxxiv.

The author of *Seinte Katerine* was probably not familiar with Clemence's poem. Nor was Clemence likely familiar with *Seinte Katerine*; even though Clemence and the anonymous West Midlands author of *Seinte Katerine* were near-contemporaries, their two versions of Catherine's life omit and expand different parts of their Vulgate source.[64] Nonetheless, the authors of both *Seinte Katerine* and *Seinte Iuliene* (as well as the author of *Seinte Marherete*—and possibly they were all three the same author), reworked their Latin sources in distinctive stylistic ways that closely resembled Clemence's reworking of the Vulgate—even though the end products, three prose narratives in rhythmic, frequently alliterative English (suggestive of Old English poetry) and indulging in few formal rhetorical flourishes, are very different from Clemence's elegantly turned couplets with their studied wordplay. Like Clemence with the verbal encounters between Catherine and Maxentius in her poem, the authors of *Seinte Marherete*, *Seinte Iuliene*, and *Seinte Katerine* heightened the erotic element inherent in the tension between their martyr-heroines and the Roman officials who craved their bodies.

In the Bodley 285 version of Juliana's passion, the high-born young virgin is the love-object of Eleusius, a known persecutor of Christians who has persuaded the emperor Maximian to raise him to the office of prefect of Rome, second in command in the empire, in order to win Juliana's hand. When Juliana turns him down and also refuses to worship the pagan gods, her pagan father, Africanus, enraged at her intransigence, has her stripped of her clothes and beaten, and then, at daybreak, takes her to Eleusius's tribunal for the punishment he thinks she deserves. The Latin of Bodley 285 describes Eleusis's amorous reaction to Juliana's presence in this fashion: "uidens pulcritudinem [eius] mollisimis eam allocutus est

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[64] *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii-xxxiv.

ilicnesse ant rudi ase rose, ant under hire nebscheft al se freoliche ischapet, weorp as sic as a wiht þat sare were iwundet—his heorte feng to heaten, ant his meari mealten; þe rawen rahten of luue þurh euch lið of his limes—ant inwið bearnde of brune swa ant cwakede as of calde, þet him þuhte in his þonc þet no bede he i þe worlt nanes cunnes blisse bute hire bodi ane, to wealden hire wið wil efter þat he walde; ant bigon wið swotnesse softe to seggen: "Mi lif ant mi leofmon ant lefdi….[As he saw and beheld her lovely complexion, the likeness of a lily and red as a rose, and everything below her face beautifully shaped, he cast forth a sigh like a creature who has been sorely wounded—his heart began to grow hot and his marrow to melt, while the rays of love shot through each joint of his limbs—and within he burned as with fire and quaked as with cold, so that it seemed to him in his mind that he wished for no bliss of any kind in the world save her body alone, and to rule her with his will according to what he desired, and he began to say softly with sweetness, 'My life and my leman and my lady….]"[68]. This is quite an expansion of "uidens pulcritudinem [eius] mollisimis eam allocutus est uerbis. Dic dulcissima iuliana," even if we grant that the English author's actual Latin source was somewhat less succinct than the exceedingly concise text of Bodley 285.

The author of *Seinte Iuliene* thus proved himself to possess considerable verbal power and rhetorical skill. This remarkable passage evidences a mastery of ever-lengthening parallel constructions culminating in rhetorical climax ("his heorte feng to heaten, ant his meari mealten; þe rawen rahten of luue þurh euch lið of his limes") chiasmus ("lilies ilicnesse ant rudi ase rose"), and antithesis ("bearnde of brune swa ant cwakede as of calde"). This passage, like the rest of *Seinte Iuliene*, as well as the other Katherine Group saints' lives, is

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[68] *Ibid.*, 17, 19.

highly alliterative in a manner redolent of Old English prose and poetry,[69] but the author was also able to combine alliteration with assonance to particularly artful effect in "lilies ilicnesse ant rudi ase rose," where the lightness of the repeated "l"'s and "i"'s of "lilies ilicnesse" contrasts with the heaviness of the repeated "r's" together with the "u," the "d," and the "r" of "*rudi ase rose*, so that the sounds themselves embody the contrast between red and white, lily and rose, in Juliana's complexion.

The verbal artistry in *Seinte Iuliene* was not, however, designed solely to engage in literary pyrotechnics or even to heighten the drama of Juliana's conflict with her father, her highly placed suitor, and the decadent pagan order of Rome that Juliana and her Christian ilk had brought down. The textual adornments had an additional purpose that place *Seinte Iuliene* and the other Katherine Group hagiography squarely within the style of highly visual, intensely dramatic and emotional meditation upon Christ's humanity exemplified in Aelred's *De institutione*. In this respect *Seinte Iuliene*'s author's transformation of his Latin source was very much like Clemence of Barking's transformation of her own Latin source in her life of St. Catherine. Clemence and the author of *Seinte Iuliene* employed radically different literary techniques: elegant octosyllabic couplets versus thrumming alliterative prose, a glossing over in Clemence's version of the lurid details of Catherine's scourgings and beatings at the hands of Maxentius' minions (although she does not flinch from reporting that they occurred) versus a plenitude of such details in *Seinte Iuliene* (this is characteristic of the other two Katherine Group lives as well), and Clemence's learned interweaving of the theological

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[69] Bella Millett traces the alliterative features of the Katherine Group's saints' lives to the continuing influence on later English literature of eleventh-century Old English homiletic prose. Bella Millett, "The Audience of the Saints' Lives of the Katherine Group," *Reading Medieval Studies: Annual Proceedings of the Graduate Center for Medieval Studies in the University of Reading* 16 (1990): 127-56. The existence of the Lambeth 487 manuscript, which preserves homilies of Ælfric alongside a Wooing Group text, buttresses Millett's argument.

doctrine of Christ's atonement into her narrative versus a lack of interest in such matters on the part of the authors of the three Katherine Group lives.

Even the authors' assumptions about their audiences seem to be different in the Anglo-Norman and English treatment of the virgin martyr's deaths. Clemence is self-consciously aware of her aristocratic status as a nun at the royally endowed convent of Barking, and she includes in her poem an imagined audience of lay aristocrats ("segnurs") as well as the nuns of her convent. The author of *Seinte Iuliene*, by contrast, does not even limit his imagined audience to females as the author of *Seinte Marherete* does, but rather, addresses his story to a Latin-illiterate audience of both sexes: "[A]ll unlearned men who cannot understand the Latin language, hear and listen to a maiden's life-story that is turned from Latin into the English language ("alle leawede men þe understonden ne mahen latines ledene liðeð ant lusteþ þe liflade of a meiden þat is of latin inturned to englische leode").[70] Nonetheless, *Seinte Iuliene*'s author adapted his Latin source in fundamentally the same way that Clemence had adapted hers. In a manner similar to Clemence's, the author of *Seinte Iuliene* reworked his source to emphasize the fleshliness, the corporeality, of his characters, whether the floral red and white of Juliana's cheeks or the various graphically listed parts of Eleusius's body (his heart, his bone-marrow, his veins, his limbs) that are debilitated, even metaphorically destroyed (in burning, melting, freezing) by the force of his carnal passion. As with Catherine's goodness in Clemence's poem, Juliana's is manifested in the calm, paradisical radiance of her physical beauty (she is a walking garden of roses and lilies), in contrast to Eleusius, who is rendered sick and physically deformed by his uncontrollable desire.

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[70] *Seinte Iuliene*, 3.

Eleusius is also at the mercy of his passions, particularly his anger, much like Maxentius in Clemence's poem. When Juliana refuses to marry Eleusius unless he accepts Christianity, the author writes with typical vividness of anatomical detail that "the prefect began to redden, his heart swollen with rage ("Þe reue feng to rudnin i grome of great heorte").[71] Eleusis is like Juliana's father, another pagan whose passions the author portrays as out of control; it is Juliana's father who has her stripped naked and beaten bloody. Eleusius is also a slave of fear of the political order, in contrast to the calm and defiantly fearless Juliana. He tells her that if he accepted the Christian God, "it would soon be told to the Caesar and made known to the king, and he would turn me out of my office and condemn me to death" ("hit were sone iseid þe keiser ant icud to þe kinge, and he me walde warpen ut of mine wike ant demen me to deaðe").[72] As in Clemence's poem, human flesh can be a marker of either numinous goodness or of weakness, corruption, perversity, and contemptibility.

All of this amplification of the source's Latin is to the same theological end as that of Clemence's poem (and also of *Seinte Marherete*), for Juliana is another female image of Christ. As with Margaret in *Seinte Marherete*, Juliana's body is put on display as part of her torment; she is hung by the hair for a second beating after she refuses to forsake Christ for Eleusius: "ant hehte swiðe neomen hire ant teon bi þe top up. Ant swa me dude sone, swa þet ha hongende feor from þer eorðe, bi þe uax ane; ant ha leiden þa se luðerliche on hire on euch haue, þet euch dunt defde in hire leofliche lich, þe biȝet þe ȝerden al o gure-blode [and

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[71] *Ibid.*, 23. Savage and Watson disconcertingly translate the word "reue" (literally, "reeve") as "sheriff," a word whose modern and even medieval denotations are distracting. d'Ardenne offers "reeve, prefect, governor" as translations for "reue" in the glossary appended to *Seinte Iuliene*. Bodley 285 has "prefectus…commotus in iracundia" (*Ibid.*, 22), and it is not unreasonable to assume that the author of *Seinte Iuliene* used the word "reue" in a generic sense as referring to an official.

[72] *Ibid.*, 21.

he ordered them to seize her quickly and pull her up by the hair on her head, and so they did

at once, so that she hung far from the ground by the hair alone, and they laid on her so cruelly

on each side that each blow sank into her lovely body, which drenched the rods all in gore-

blood").[73] In this scene Juliana imitates Christ in both his crucifixion and his scourging.

Juliana is at the same time (in an innovation original to *Seinte Iuliene*'s author and not

to be found in his Latin source) Christ's lover—"Iuliene, ihesu cristes leofman," as the author

renders the simple "Sancta Iuliana" in his source.[74] Similarly, the author expanded Juliana's

straightforward oath to her father, "per filium dei [by the son of God]" to the intimate and

affective "for Ihesu Crist, godes sune, þet ich on leue, ant luuie as leoflukest ant lufsumest

lauerd [By Jesus Christ, God's son, in whom I believe and love as the loveliest and most

lovable lord]."[75] The Latin has Juliana declare to her father: "Non recedam a domini mei

ihesu christi precepto [I will not go back from the teaching of my lord Jesus Christ]."[76] The

author of *Seinte Iuliene* turned this simple declaration of religious fidelity to Christ's

teachings ("ihesu christi precepto") into a rhetorically elaborate declaration of marital fidelity

to Christ himself: "ich am to an iweddet þet ich chulle treowliche to halden ant wiðute leas

luuien, þet is unlich him ant all worltliche men. Ne nulle ich neauer mare him lihen ne leauen

for weole ne for wunne, for wa ne for wontreaðe þet ʒe me mahen wurchen. [I am wedded to

one to whom I shall faithfully hold fast and shall love without falseness, one who is unlike

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[73] *Ibid.*, 25. The Latin in MS Bodley 285 does not contain an equivalent to this passage, and d'Ardenne attributes the omission to a scribal error, for other eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts of the life of St. Juliana include a brief passage stating that she was hung by her hair for six hours. *Ibid.*, 22.

[74] *Ibid.,* 40, 41.

[75] *Ibid.*, 10, 11.

[76] *Ibid.*, 12, 14.

him—that is, Eleusius--and all worldly men. Nor will I ever prove false to him or leave him, neither for wealth nor for joy, nor for any woe nor any hardship that you can do to me.]"[77]

The author of *Seinte Iuliene* also imbued his heroine with Marian imagery that is not to be found in the Latin version of the tale. After the enraged Eleusius throws Juliana into a dungeon following her beating, she receives a visit from a demon in the guise of an angel who tells her that she ought to save herself by making the required sacrifices to the pagan gods. Juliana, made suspicious by his angelic appearance but most un-angelic advice, cries out a prayer to God for guidance, whereupon she hears a voice from heaven. In the Latin of Bodley 285 that speaker, who may be Christ or God the Father or merely an angel (he is never identified), assures Juliana that he will not forsake her and commands her to find out who the creature who purports to be an angel might be: "Confide iuliana: ego sum tecum glorificans te. Tu autem apprehende istum qui tecum loquitur: ut scias quis sit ille. [Have trust, Juliana; I am with you glorifying you. As for you, learn who it is who speaks with you, so that you may know who he is.]"[78] Juliana immediately rises from the floor of the prison, makes the sign of the cross, seizes and holds the demon, and asks him who he is and who sent him, at which point the demon breaks down and admits his identity. In *Seinte Iuliene* this same reassurance from above is couched in language of amorousness, affection, and protectiveness, and the author also identifies the speaker as an angel, a true angel in contrast to the devil's false angel.

The true angel's courtly speech to Juliana echoes the discourse of the angel Gabriel to Mary at the Annunciation in Luke's Gospel: Iuliene, þe eadie, iblescet beo þe time þet tu

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[77] *Ibid.*, 13.

[78] *Ibid.*, 32, ll. 115-116.

ibore were; nule nawt þi leofmon þolie na leas þing to lihe þe longe [Juliana the blessed,

blessed be the time that you were born; your lover will not let any false thing to lie to you for

long]."[79] In *Seinte Iuliene*, in contrast to its Latin analogue, it is the angel who tells Juliana

that she must seize and bind the devil, and that "God Almighty will give you the strength to

do it" ("Godd almihti ȝeueð þe mahte for to don hit").[80] This is another allusion to Gabriel's

reassurances to Mary. The angel also informs Juliana (and this detail is not in the Latin

version), that once she binds the devil, the devil will tell her, against his will, everything she

wishes to know—and so the devil goes so far as to reveal his name, Belial, a detail not to be

found in Bodley 285, which does not name the demon. (The Vulgate *passio* of St. Catherine

assigns to the demon the name Belial, and it is possible that the author of *Seinte Iuliene*

borrowed the name either from that Latin work or from the English *Seinte Katerine*.)

With the introduction of such rich Christological, bridal, and Marian imagery into the

familiar story of Saint Juliana, the author of *Seinte Iuliene* tied the tale to the same devotional

tradition inspired by Aelred of Rievaulx's *De institutione* that characterized *Speculum

ecclesie* and the meditations of Stephen of Sawley being written and read elsewhere in

England at about the same time. The imagery allowed those who read or heard *Seinte Iuliene*

to link the story imaginatively to other meditative material with which they might be

familiar, whether Aelred's *De institutione*, the works of Stephen or Edmund, or other English

works, such as *Ancrene Wisse*. The phrase "lilies ilicnesse ant rudi ase rose" in reference to

Juliana would not be for those readers and hearers merely a description of a lovely girl's red

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[79] *Ibid.*, 33. *Cf.* Lc 1:28, 30, 35: "have gratia plena Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus…ne timeas Maria invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum…et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi." [Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women….Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God….and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.]"

[80] *Ibid.*, See n. 79 for the Lucan language.

and white complexion, but also a strand in a thick web of scriptural and literary allusion that linked Juliana to the bridegroom ("candidus et rubicundus") of the Song of Songs and also to the bride with her breasts like lilies, to Christ on the cross and also to his mother, to Christ's passion and also to his incarnation effected in Mary's encounter with the angel Gabriel. As with Catherine and Maxentius in Clemence's life of St. Catherine, Juliana's fleshly beauty, here carefully delineated down to the shapeliness of her figure, contrasts with Eleusius' fleshliness that is discolored and rendered incoherent by his passions—and so *Seinte Iuliene* is a story of the flesh's possibility for redemption, indeed, its achievement of redemption through the crucifixion of Christ's flesh, which Juliana recapitulates when her body, like his, is hung for all to see in her own passion.

Seinte Katerine similarly expands upon its Latin source with "single words and phrases, many of which have the effect of emphasizing the love-bond between Christ and Katherine, and thus reminding the reader of Katherine's status as the bride of Christ," in the words of Savage and Watson.[81] Her salutation in the Latin to Christ when he visits her in her dungeon, "O sapientia et Dei uirtus altissimi, Iesu bone [O wisdom and power of the most high God, good Jesus]"[82] becomes "Crist, Godd Godes sune swete softe Iesu, alre smelle swotest, þu al-wealdinde Godd, þi feadres wisdom [Christ, God, son of God, sweet, soft Jesus, sweetest of all fragrances, you, the almighty God, wisdom of your father],"[83] which is another allusion to the Song of Songs: "odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata [the

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[81] *Anchoritic Spirituality* (n. 1), 261.

[82] *Seinte Katerine* (n. 8), 159, ll. 296-97.

[83] *Ibid.*, 34, ll. 228-29. All quotations herein from *Seinte Katerine* are from the edited text of d'Ardenne and Dobson, which uses Bodley 34 as a base manuscript.

odor of your ointments surpasses all sweet smells]."[84] In the same prayer Katherine addresses

Christ as "deorewurðe lauerd [beloved lord--literally, lord who has become dear to me]," a

phrase of tender endearment not found in the Latin *passio* but which is reminiscent of the

word "dilectus" in the Vulgate Bible, the bride's characterization of the bridegroom in the

Song of Songs.

The Latin *passio* of St. Catherine itself occasionally calls to mind the Song of Songs,

as when Catherine, baring her neck to the executioner, hears a voice from a cloud calling to

her: "Veni, dilecta mea, speciosa mea. Ecce tibi beatitudinis ianua aperitur…. [Come, my

beloved, my beautiful one; behold, the gate of blessedness is opened for you….]"[85] The

author of *Seinte Katerine* turned this invitation of Christs's into an extended amorous

rhapsody: "Cum, mi leoue leofmon, cum nu min iweddet, leouest an wummon! Low, þe ȝete

of eche lif abit te al iopenet….[Come, my beloved leman, come now, my wedded wife, most

beloved of women! Lo, the gate of eternal life awaits you all opened….]"[86] Similarly, the

author of *Seinte Katerine* transforms the conventional "lacteam ceruicem [milky-white

neck]"[87] in the Latin description of the saint into the vivid and alliterative English

snaw[w]hite swire [snow-white neck]"[88] as Catherine's readies herself for decapitation. Her

last words to her executioner, which in the Latin are declamatory ("Ecce ego uocor a domino

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[84] Ct 4:10.

[85] *Seinte Katerine*, 202, ll. 1124-25.

[86] *Ibid.*, 126, ll. 886-887.

[87] *Ibid.*, 202, l. 1132.

[88] *Ibid.*, 128, ll. 895-96.

Iesu Christo [Behold, I am called by the Lord Jesus Christ],"[89] are in the English of *Seinte*

Katerine as tender and amorous as those of Christ himself: "Mi lif ant mi leofmon, Iesu Crist

mi lauerd, haueð icleopet me [My life and my leman, Jesus Christ, my lord, has called me])."

The English text of *Seinte Katerine* also subtly alters the miracle of the milk that

flows instead of blood from Katherine's neck in the Latin *passio* ("lac pro sanguine") into a

mixture of milk and blood ("milc imenget wið blod, to beoren hire witnesse of hire hwite

meiðhad").[90] This mixed red and white liquid not only serves "to bear witness to her white

maidenhood," as the text informs the reader, and to remind the reader of the double crown of

red (bloodshed) and white (purity) worn by the virgin martyr, and of her double fruitfulness

in producing mother's milk along with martyr's blood, but it also recalls the floral redness and

whiteness of Juliana's complexion ("lilies ilicnesse ant rudi ase rose") that in turn recalls the

red and white of the bridegroom in the Song of Songs. Even more than Clemence in her life

of St. Catherine, the author of *Seinte Katerine* emphasized the significance of the fact that

Katherine's death takes place on a Friday: "i þe dei ant i þe time þet hire deore leofmon Iesu ,

ure Lauerd, leafde lif o rode for hire ant for us alle [on the day and at the time that her dear

leman, Jesus, our Lord, gave up his life on the cross for her and for us all]."[91] The Latin states

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[89] *Ibid.*, 202, l. 1133.

[90] *Ibid.*, 128, ll. 900-901.

[91] *Ibid.*, 130, ll. 915-916. Unlike Clemence, the author of *Seinte Katerine* did not move the time of Katherine's death to the ninth hour, the exact time of Christ's death in the Gospels, from the Latin *passio'*s third hour ("hora tertia"), when Christ merely began his passion ("ad passionem properauit"). Nonetheless, the author of *Seinte Katerine*, while faithful to "the third hour" in his source ("te under," 130, l. 915), qualifies the phrase "te under" with the preposition "onont [around]," so as to collapse chronological time in order to write that it was "around the third hour" that Christ "gave up his life on the cross" ("leafde lif o rode"), thus heightening the metaphoric parallel between Katherine's death and Christ's crucifixion and the identity between Katherine and Christ. It is interesting to see how Clemence and the author of *Seinte Katerine*, the latter apparently unaware of the former's text, used different literary strategies to achieve the same effect.

merely: "diem et horam qua Christus, pro mundi redemptione, ad passionem properauit [the day and hour at which Christ, for the redemption of the world, hastened to his passion]."[92]

Not only did the author of *Seinte Katerine* describe the crucified Christ with the same terms of endearment with which Katherine herself has described him (and Christ, Katherine), but the author stresses the reciprocity of the two bloody deaths: Christ has died for Katherine personally ("for hire," a phrase not in the Latin source), just as she has died for him personally because he is her spouse and her lover. This sense of amorous reciprocity at the very end of *Seinte Katerine*, in which the two deaths, Christ's and Katherine's, are images of each other, heightens that final, highly visual image that the author leaves his audience: Katherine as an icon of Christ, her dead body spilling blood and milk just as Christ's dead body spilled blood and water, her death sanctifying the day Friday just as Christ's had. The concrete and intimate phrase "for us alle" is also an authorial innovation, replacing the impersonal "pro mundi redemptione" of the Latin and so emphasizing the personal nature of Christ's sacrificial love for every human soul, as well as eliciting (surely in the hope of its author) a profound and tender emotional response that imitates Katherine's own response to the overtures of her heavenly lover. Katherine the character is in this sense a stand-in for the reader of *Seinte Katerine*.

It is clear, then, that the authors of the three saints' lives in the Katherine Group (or perhaps a single author who wrote all three) devoted considerable literary artistry to reshaping their texts' Latin sources into works that, while strongly narrative, were also meditative and richly allusive. The earliest of the thirteenth-century manuscripts in which they appear, MS Bodley 34, may well be the earliest surviving devotional miscellany in

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[92] *Ibid.*, 203, ll. 1148-49.

Middle English. It is an eclectic collection, comprising monastic allegory (<u>Sawles Warde</u>),

the homiletic literature of virginity (*Hali Meiðhad*), and the hagiography of virgin martyrs,

which the Katherine Group's authors transformed into the stuff of meditation. The last genre

had appeal that spanned the social classes. Thomas Heffernan has described the careers of the

virgin martyrs, including Margaret in *Seinte Marherete*, as variously suffering and

triumphant, erotic and celebratory of chastity—and thus as perhaps as especially appealing to

the lay lower classes, especially lay lower-class women, because the virgin martyrs embodied

defiance of authority, particularly male authority, and inversion of class- and gender-based

hierarchies. He writes: "The saintly women…are studies in paradox: they combine in a single

icon images of the virgin, the mother, the rich and the poor, the humble and the regal, the

frail and the strong, the captive and the free."[93]

The "polysemous virgin," as Heffernan calls this heroic female hagiographic type,

was indeed enormously appealing as a model with whom women of all social classes could

identify in complex ways. This writer argues argue that she also performed another function

as a creation of narrative. Through the power of the story told around her, the virgin martyr

could draw the reader or listener into experiencing imaginatively what the story said she had

experienced in the flesh: an intense, utterly self-giving, erotically charged relationship with

Christ her bridegroom that replicated Christ's own self-giving, erotically charged relationship

with the human soul, his bride. The story also endowed its virgin heroine with a breathing,

fleshly reality that evoked the incarnation of Christ. Her much-emphasized physical beauty

recalled the beauty of Christ, and her gruesome suffering, numinously displayed, evoked the

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[93] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 261.

pity to be evoked by the suffering of Christ on the cross. She was thus, like the Virgin Mary in the passion devotions that also invariably took narrative form, and like Aelred's ethereally holy yet quite fleshly sister in *De institutione inclusarum*, a female conduit for the reader's own emotionally charged imaginative experience.

In 1988 Bella Millett, while recognizing the artistry with which the authors of the Katherine Group lives altered their Latin sources, called their efforts a "cynical" attempt to please an unlettered audience uninterested, for example, in the theological intricacies of the doctrines of Christ's atonement and redemption that had preoccupied both the author of *Seinte Katerine*'s Latin source and Clemence of Barking.[94] Millett wrote: "The content is freely modified to reduce its intellectual demands and increase its appeal to the emotions."[95] In a later article, Millett appeared to have somehat altered her low estimate of the audience for the Katherine Group, for she concluded that it was at least in part a "relatively cultivated" audience—perhaps gentry in contrast to the noblilty—that expected at least a measure of the "comparative intellectual sophistication and stylistic elegance" that marked Clemence's life of St. Catherine, as well as other Anglo-Norman hagiography, much of which was being written during the same early thirteenth-century period as the Katherine Group lives.[96] Millett was thus able to place the Katherine Group lives, although written in English, into the mainstream of the Anglo-Norman literary culture that still dominated the early thirteenth century in England, arguing cogently against the theory put forth by Tolkien and others that the English lives represented a provincial survival of pre-Conquest English literary culture.

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[94] Bella Millett, "The Saints' Lives of the Katherine Group," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 87 (1988): 16-34, at 33.

[95] *Ibid.*

[96] "The Audience of the Saints' Lives of the Katherine Group" (n. 69), 145.

In fact, with their ties to both Old English alliterative technique and Anglo-Norman rhetorical sophistication, the Katherine Group lives are a testament to the richness of the trilingual literary culture that flourished in early thirteenth-century England.

Millett is correct to praise the literary qualities of the Katherine Group lives. She also correctly notes that those lives—and *pari passu* (although she herself does not make this point) the entire manuscripts of which they are part—were clearly meant to speak to multiple audiences, only some of whose members were likely to be anchoresses and many of whose members were probably lay people of some cultivation with exacting standards of taste. She fails to note, however, what seems evident from the particular kinds of literary artistry the authors of the Katherine Group lives employed: that the changes these authors made to their Latin sources were for the purpose of turning those lives into devotional works. It is customary among scholars to assume that devotional literature and literature *qua* literature are two different genres, and that the former is not really a literary genre at all, but rather, a sub-literary expression of cultural and religious *mentalité*. What the Katherine Group lives suggest is that literary art could be—or even could create--an expression of *mentalité*. The authors of the Katherine Group lives used their literary skills to turn Latin hagiography into well-wrought English literature, so that the saint was not only a model for the reader or listener as Heffernan has it, but an imaginative projection of the author's and the reader's own identification with Christ, who as the virgin's bridegroom is the central and controlling figure in all three lives.

As has been noted, the Katherine group lives appear in their three surviving manuscripts only in conjunction with other works. This writer argues that all three of those manuscripts, each of them conveniently sized for portability, were deliberately designed as

devotional reading for religious or lay people, possibly aimed at women in particular but women who were not necessarily anchoresses--because the majority of the texts in each of the three manuscripts, including the saints' lives themselves, were almost certainly not written for an anchoritic audience. Of the three, MS Bodley 34 is indisputably the earliest, and it contains not a single plausibly anchoritic text. Neither does MS Royal 17.A.xxvii, whose contents are nearly identical to those of Bodley 34. The last-composed of the four miscellanies, MS Cotton Nero A.xiv, and MS Cotton Titus D.xviii, include *Ancrene Wisse*, but as will be argued below, that work, although it might have been originally intended for anchoresses, quickly turned into a non-anchoritic devotional text that was readily adapted for use by both sexes.

The textual history of *Ancrene Wisse* is extremely difficult to trace, for its four earliest surviving manuscripts—Nero and Titus, along with Corpus Christi Cambridge MS 402 and British Library MS Cotton Cleopatra C.vi, the latter two dating from a generation earlier than Nero and Titus--vary so seriously from one another that there is no one text that can be said with certainly to represent fairly the author's original.[97] For example, it is

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[97] This extreme variance from manuscript to manuscript undoubtedly accounts for the fact that there has been no attempt to this day to collate all of them to produce a single critical text of *Ancrene Wisse*, with the exception of Ackerman's and Dahood's critical edition of the Introduction and Part One and, most recently, Bella Millett's variorum edition of the Corpus text. See n. 38 herein for a full reference to the Ackerman-Dahood edition. Also see n. 38 for references to the editions by Tolkien and Shepherd (Corpus manuscript) and Ackerman and Dahood (Cleopatra manuscript), as well as to Bella Millett's forthcoming variorum edition. The critical edition of the Cleopatra manuscript is E.J. Dobson, ed., *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle, Edited from B.M. Cotton MS. Cleopatra C.vi*, EETS, o.s., 267 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1972). The critical edition of the Nero manuscript is Mabel Day, ed., *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle, Edited from Cotton MS. Nero A.xiv*, EETS, o.s., 225 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952). The critical edition of the Titus manuscript is Frances M. Mack, ed., *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle, Edited from Cotton MS. Titus D.xviii, Early English Text Society*, o.s., 252 (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1963). The Corpus manuscript is the only one to bear the title *Ancrene Wisse*, and until recently most scholars used the title *Ancrene Riwle* to refer to the texts of all other manuscripts (which do not themselves title the work), for the author had indicated his desire to compose a "riwle" for anchoresses (in the Corpus text: "nu easki ȝe hwet riwle ȝe ancren schu innen len halden [you ask what rule to which you anchoresses should hold]." The title *Ancrene Riwle* is a strictly modern invention, however, and most scholars of the last two decades have preferred to use

commonly assumed that *Ancrene Wisse*, which, like Aelred's *De Institutione*, was written

largely in the second person, was originally addressed to three young women, blood sisters of

gentle breeding, who sought to live the anchoritic life.[98] This identification of the three

original readers, however, is based upon just two references to "three" women in all four pre-

1250 manuscripts. In the Corpus manuscript, which is the one that most (although by no

means all) scholars regard as preserving most faithfully the original author's text, the author

expresses this sentiment: "Godd hit wat as me were muche deale leouere þet isehe ow alle

þreo mine leoue sustren wummen me leouest hongin on a gibet. forte wiðbuhe sunne. þen ich

sehe an of ow ȝeouen anlepi cos eani mon on eorðe swa as ich meane. [God knows that I

would much more dearly see all three of you, my beloved sisters, women most beloved to

me, hanging on a gibbet so as to avoid sin than see one of you give just one kiss to any man

on earth in the way that I mean.]"[99] Versions of this passage also appear in the Cleopatra,

Titus, and Nero manuscripts.[100]

The second reference to the three women appears only in the Nero manuscript, and it

is in that manuscript alone that the redactor supplies specific information about the three

"sisters": that they share a father and mother, that they are of marriageable age, and that they

derive from good (and prosperous) stock: "vor mid mor eise ne mid more menke not ich none

ancre þet habbe al þet hi re-neod <is>: þene ȝe þreo habbeð [for I know no anchoress who

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the title *Ancrene Wisse* in referring to all texts of this work, even the vast majority that are untitled in their manuscripts. All translations from *Ancrene Wisse* are this writer's, although this writer has followed the guidance of Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson in their translation of the text in *Anchoritic Spirituality* (n. 1).

[98] See, *e.g*., "What Is *Ancrene Wisse*?" (n. 2), 4.

[99] *Ancrene Wisse*, Corpus text, 62.

[100] *Ancrene Wisse*, Cleopatra text, 92; Titus text, 30; Nero text, 50.

can have all that she needs with more ease and more honor than you three have]."[101] The

Nero redactor goes on to say: "Muche word is of ou hu gentile wummen ӡe beoð. vorgodleie

& for ureoleie iӡirned of monie. & sustren of one ueder & one moder. in ne blostme of ower

ӡoweðe uorheten all worldes blissen. & bicomen ancren. [There is much talk of you, how you

are gentlewomen sought after by many prospective bridegrooms for your goodness and for

your generosity, and sisters of one father and one mother who in the bloom of your youth

forsook all the world's joy and became anchoresses.]"[102] The Nero manuscript, then, would

appear to be the most "anchoritic" of all the four, preserving most faithfully the author's

intentions in writing his text and the identity of of its audience.

The problem is that the Nero manuscript is markedly later than Corpus and Cleopatra,

dating to close to 1250, in contrast to the pre-1225 date assigned to both Corpus and

Cleopatra.[103] That in itself would not necessarily indicate that the Nero text is less faithful to

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[101] *Ancrene Wisse*, Nero text, 85.

[102] *Ibid.*

[103] The Cleopatra manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* is the most challenging of the four early thirteenth-century versions. It is largely the handiwork of three scribes, one of whom, "scribe A," as he was designated by E.J. Dobson, editor of the critical edition of Cleopatra, wrote a base text that was soon thereafter (within two years) corrected by "scribe B," whom Dobson believed was the actual author of *Ancrene Wisse* because many of Scribe B's corrections are reflected in the Corpus manuscript, which Dobson believed had been written by Scribe B of Cleopatra. Dobson called the Corpus text a "fair copy" of Scribe B's corrections to Cleopatra. At a somewhat later date (between 1284 and 1289, according to Dobson), a "scribe D" made further corrections. See Introduction, *Ancrene Wisse*, Cleopatra text, ix-xi, cxlvii. Dobson believed, on the basis of a philological analysis of Scribe A's spelling and morphology, that Scribe A spoke West Midlands English but was not trained in the peculiar orthography of the AB scribal tradition (reflected in the Corpus manuscript and in MS Bodley 34), and that he in other ways made an inadequate copy (or copy of a copy) of the original holograph of *Ancrene Wisse* (although his text was probably two steps removed from that holograph, according to Dobson). Dobson argued that Scribe A's numerous errors necessitated Scribe B's corrections and later inspired Scribe D to make further corrections (Dobson attributed many of scribe A's lapses to the hypothesis that he worked on the manuscript piecemeal, and that Cleopatra was one of two copies of *Ancrene Wisse* commissioned to be made under the piecemeal *pecia* system to meet growing demand for the text. See Introduction, Cleopatra text, xxiv-cvii. Dobson believed that Scribe B was the author of *Ancrene Wisse* because the additions and revisions he made to Scribe A's errors of miscopying were inconsistent and did not bring Cleopatra entirely into line with Corpus, but rather simply restored its sense (Scribe B also missed many of Scribe A's minor omissions and shifts in word-order). Dobson concluded that Scribe B "seems to have worked as a modern author commonly

the author's original, but--also in contrast to the Corpus manuscript and at least parts of the

Cleopatra manuscript[104]-- the Nero manuscript bears only traces of the AB scribal system and

the Herefordshire dialect used by the scribes of Corpus and Cleopatra and by the compiler of

the clearly earlier Bodley 34. The text of Nero shows the influence of the more southerly

West Midlands English of Worcestershire—which comports with Mabel Day's assignment of

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does in reading his proofs, not checking them against copy but reading them through for sense." See Introduction, Cleopatra text, xcvi. From the conclusions he drew from the state of the Cleopatra manuscript as compared to the Corpus manuscript, Dobson constructed a stemma for *Ancrene Wisse* in which he hypothesized that the Corpus and Cleopatra manuscripts represented two separate redactions made from two separate lost copies of the author's lost original, the Corpus redaction having been made by the original author himself, probably after he had corrected Scribe A's faulty copying of the Cleopatra text. Dobson was thus was able to hypothesize that Corpus represented a further state of revision of the now-lost original text of *Ancrene Wisse* than Cleopatra, made by the author in recognition that his audience of anchoresses had substantially grown since he both made his original holograph and authored the Cleopatra corrections (see *The Origins of* Ancrene Wisse (n. 15), 287). Using this stemma, Dobson reconstructed a history of *Ancrene Wisse*'s circulation and re-copying and also of its audience. Dobson believed that the author's original holograph might well have been directed to written for three anchoress-sisters whom he believed had had lived communally at the Deerfold near Wigmore, but that original group of three quickly expanded to a much larger group of anchoresses whom Dobson designated a "community," necessitating frequent re-copying of *Ancrene Wisse* as well as alterations to its text (not always thoroughgoing) designed to accommodate the increase in readership. Because of the community's presumed cohesion despite the fact that anchoresses' cells were typically quite distant from one another, and because Dobson believed that anchoresses regularly communicated with one another via their maidservants, he concluded that the various manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse* in circulation during the early thirteenth century cross-influenced each other. *The Origins of* Ancrene Wisse, 238-311. See also "What Is *Ancrene Wisse*?," 6-13. Dobson went so far as to identify the author of *Ancrene Wisse* as Brian of Lingen, an Augustinian canon living at Wigmore (Dobson believed that Brian had revealed his identity by means of anagram embedded in the text). *The Origins of* Ancrene Wisse, 312-68. Sally Thompson later revealed a fatal flaw in Dobson's ingenious detective work; it turned out that there had been no "sisters" ("sororibus") living at the Deerfold, but rather, "brothers" ("fratribus"), according to the house's charter. Dobson's deduction that the author of *Ancrene Wisse* was Brian of Lingen or any other Augustinian canon has also been challenged. Sally Thompson, *Women Religious: The Founding of English Nunneries After the Norman Conquest* (see ch. 1 of this dissertation), 34, n. 126; "What is *Ancrene Wisse*?, 21-22.

[104] The Cleopatra scribe designated by Dobson as "scribe A" seemed to have been a West Midlands speaker, but he did not consistently use the distinctive AB orthography that marked the Corpus manuscript and also Bodley 34, an orthography that suggested to Dobson that both of the latter manuscripts were products of the same scriptorium (at Wigmore Abbey). Bodley 34 and the Corpus manuscript preserve the Old English letters "ð" (eth) and "ƿ" (wynn), which were rapidly falling out of use among other scribes in England (the "ƿ" in particular was disappearing because of its confusing resemblance to the letter "p," so that English scribes of the early thirteenth century increasingly used the "w" instead. Scribe A used both "ð" and "ƿ" but seemed to have trouble with making his "ƿ" legible and sometimes substituted "t" for "ð." Introduction, *Ancrene Wisse*¸Cleopatra text, lxviii-lxii and lxii-xciii.

the provenance of the manuscript to the Benedictine abbey of Winchcombe in Gloucestershire, still farther south from Herefordshire.[105]

Furthermore, of the four earliest manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*, the one most closely related to Nero textually is the Titus manuscript, also dating from around 1250; each of the two manuscripts seems to be at least two steps removed (in different directions) from a common exemplar.[106] Titus, however, is a text that seems to have been substantially altered not only to mute the specifically anchoritic content (Titus lacks Nero's description of the three anchoresses' social status) but also to address an audience of men, perhaps male monastics. In this respect the Titus manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* resembles the MS Hatton 101 manuscript of Aelred's *De institutione*,[107] with its pronoun change signaling the adaptation of a work originally made for a woman into a work that could be read by a man. Since Titus dates from the mid-thirteenth century, and Hatton 101 is also a thirteenth-century manuscript, it is not unreasonable to assign Titus to a place in a comprehensive thirteenth-century practice of adapting works designed for anchoresses into multivalent devotional works. Certainly that was the conscious aim of Stephen of Sawley, another mid-thirteenth-century figure, when he adapted Aelred's meditative methodology in *De institutione* into a devotional technique for Cistercian monks.

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[105] Introduction, *Ancrene Wisse*, Nero text, pp. xii-xvi.

[106] See n. 97. Dobson's stemma of the hypothetical text transmission in the various English, Anglo-Norman, and Latin manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse* shows five degrees of separation between Nero and Titus, in contrast to seven degrees between Nero and Corpus and six degrees between Nero and Cleopatra. It should also be noted that Dobson's stemma also shows five degrees of separation between Cleopatra and Corpus. Frances Mack, editor of the Titus manuscript, remarked that the text of Titus "is very close to that of Nero." Introduction, *Ancrene Wisse*, Titus text, p. xvii.

[107] See ch. 2 of this dissertation.

The revisions that the Titus scribe made to the text of *Ancrene Wisse* in order to adapt it to a male readership were numerous although somewhat haphazard, as Frances Mack, editor of the Titus text, has pointed out.[108] For example, in Part Two of *Ancrene Wisse*, which contains *Ancrene Wisse*'s allegory of the five senses, the redactor of the Nero manuscript bade his readers to imitate Mary in her silence, her control of her tongue, as she listened quietly to the angel Gabriel, contrasting Mary to Eve, who used her tongue to persuade Adam to eat the fateful fruit: "*e mine leoue sustren uo-leweð ure lefdi & nout Þe kakele eue* [you my beloved sisters, follow Our Lady and not the chattering Eve]."[109] In Titus the same line reads: "*Ȝe mine leo-ue frend. folhes ure lafdi. nawt te cakelinde eue* [you, my beloved friends, follow Our Lady, not the chattering Eve]."[110] The Titus scribe clearly considered Mary worthy of imitation by both sexes, and did not deem the holding of one's tongue to be a peculiarly female virtue.

Elsewhere, as Mack points out, the Titus scribe not only avoided references to the "sisters" of the other manuscripts but omitted hints in the Nero text that the author was addressing flesh-and-blood anchoresses. He also substituted the words "seruant(e") and "seruanz" [servant, servants]" for the "meidenes [maidens] who are the anchoresses' serving women in the Nero and other texts of *Ancrene Wisse*.[111] Mack cites numerous additional

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[108] It should be noted that the Titus manuscript is missing its first thirteen folios comprising the introduction and most of Part One of *Ancrene Wisse*.

[109] *Ancrene Wisse*, Nero text, 28.

[110] *Ancrene Wisse*, Titus text, 10. Frances Mack ascribed the orthographical and phonological differences between Nero and Titus to the likelihood that the Titus scribe spoke a northeast-Midlands dialect that he superimposed in an erratic fashion onto the text of an exemplar in the AB dialect that resembled that of the Corpus manuscript. *Ibid.*, Introduction, xiv, n. 1.

[111] *Ibid.*, xv-xvi.

instances in which the Titus scribe substituted "man" for "woman" and "son" for "daughter"
and makes similar gender changes in nouns—or interpolated a masculine-gender noun into a
feminine-gender reference. An example is this passage in which the Nero scribe compared
the anchoress's calling to that of "lady of the house," and the Titus scribe expanded that
comparison to include "husbands" as well: "Anker & [housbonde] oðer huswif. ah muche to
beo bitwe-nen [the anchorite and the [husband] or housewife possess much in common]."[112]
Needless to say, the very gender-neutral word "anker" in Titus denotes a recluse of either sex,
in contrast to other manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*, where the word "ancre" seems always to
refer to a female recluse. Most tellingly of all, Mack cites at least three instances wherein the
Titus scribe substituted the word "seruant" for "spuse [spouse]" where the Nero text describes
the anchoress as the bride of Christ.[113]

Nonetheless, the Titus scribe frequently addressed his audience as female, evidently
not bothering to correct his source. He sometimes referred to his audience in the singular as
"sister" ("mi leoue suster"),[114] and sometimes in the plural as "sisters," as when he bade his
readers: "For alle uuele speches mine leue sustre stoppes owre eares [before all evil talk, my
beloved sisters, stop up your ears]."[115] Frances Mack attributed such apparent oversights to

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[112] *Ibid.*, 11. See also Introduction, xvi, in which Mack points out that the bracketed word "housbonde" does not appear in the Nero text, which has "ancre & huseslefdi [lady of the house]": "ouh mu che to beon betweonen" (30). This passage from Part 2 of *Ancrene Wisse*, like the comparison of the anchorite to Mary (see nn. 110, 110 herein), deals with the anchorite's obligation to guard the tongue with silence. Mack also cites other examples of the Titus scribe's gender-inclusive interpolations in passages that in Nero refer exclusively to women.

[113] *Ancrene Wisse*, Titus text, 28: "Þis is ure lauerdes sahe. & tu seli anker þet art his deore seruant. leorne hit ȝerne of him….[This is Our Lord's saying, and you, blessed anchorite who are his dear servant, learn it eagerly from him....]." See also 32 and 33 of the Titus text for similar revisions.

[114] See, *e.g.*, *Ibid.*, 5, 6. See also, Introduction, xv.

[115] *Ibid.*, 16. See also 31 ("Mine leue sustre").

the scribe's "somewhat perfunctory attitude to his task as reviser."[116] They might not hae

been oversights at all, however, but rather, signs of scribe's awareness--and the awareness of

his readers--that they could use a text originally written for anchoresses (and perhaps for only

a single anchoress, that single "sister") for their own devotional purposes, be they

anchoresses or anchorites, male or female religious living in community, or even lay people.

They could imagine themselves metaphorically as anchoresses, or perhaps simply assume

that a spiritual methodology designed for anchoresses could apply equally well to them.

In fact, all of the four earliest manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*, including the two

earliest, Corpus and Cleopatra, display Titus-like inconsistencies and contradictions in their

authors' representation of their audiences. Although the "three sisters" referred to in all four

manuscripts who desired to become anchoresses seemed to have been the original readers for

whom the text was written, all four manuscripts use the singular "sister" as readily as the

plural "sisters" in addressing their readers.[117] Furthermore, the Corpus manuscript, the one

that seems to represent the version of the text closest to the author's original, not only refers

to the "three" sisters, but also to some "twenty" women. The Corpus scribe wrote: "ʒe beoð

þe ancrene of englond swa feole togederes. twenti nuðe oðer ma [you are the anchoresses of

England, so many together, twenty now or more]."[118]

This apostrophe contains a contradiction: There could be no such thing as a

community of twenty anchoresses living together in thirteenth-century England.

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[116] *Ibid.*, Introduction, xv.

[117] See, *e.g.*, *Ancrene Wisse*, Corpus text, 30.21-22 ("mine leoue sustren [you, my beloved sisters])," but 31.3 ("leoue suster [beloved sister])."

[118] *Ancrene Wisse*, Corpus text, 130.13-14.

Anchorholds, which by the thirteenth century in England were almost invariably attached to parish churches, were designed for solitaries. As Elizabeth Warren notes, the archaeological evidence in England indicates that the overwhelming majority of anchorites lived alone or with a single servant who slept in an outer room adjacent to the anchorite's cell and attended to the anchorite's needs. Double anchorholds, in which two anchorites slept and prayed in their own individual cells but shared a common outer room, were not unusual, Warren notes, but the existence of a triple anchorhold in England that would have housed three recluses living in common is not archaeologically supported and is documented in only one source: *Ancrene Wisse*.[119] Furthermore, as we have seen, the actual references to three anchoresses in *Ancrene Wisse* are scanty indeed.

As for the "twenty" women who figure in the Corpus text, it is difficult to figure out who they were, whether they actually lived together, or what relationship they might have had to the original three women. E.J. Dobson, who devoted much of his scholarly career to attempting to reconstruct the textual history of *Ancrene Wisse* and the circumstances of its composition, devised an ingenious theory: that the Corpus text constituted a massive revision by the original author of *Ancrene Wisse*, of a since-lost original version that had been addressed only to the three sisters and did not mention an expanded group of twenty.[120] The alternating references to the "three" and the "twenty" anchoresses in Corpus represent, according to Dobson, two successive stages of the text as the author revised a work he had written for three well-born sisters in order to appeal to a larger group of women.

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[119] *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (n. 16), 34-36.

[120] See n. 97 above for a summary of Dobson's beliefs about the relationship between the Corpus and Cleopatra texts as well as a reference to the stemma Dobson constructed.

Dobson's theory has strong philological support, for only the Corpus manuscript displays in pristine form the "AB" scribal characteristics that merely influence the three other early-thirteenth-century manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*. The pristine "AB" characteristics of Corpus, whose orthography matches that of Bodley 34, constitute the chief reason why most scholars regard the Corpus text as the most authoritative version of *Ancrene Wisse*. Dobson's theory also accounts for the problematic state of the Cleopatra manuscript, with its multiple emendations that tend to bring its text into line with the Corpus text. Dobson hypothesized that Cleopatra slightly predated Corpus in production and represented a clumsy copy made by a scribe (whom Dobson called "scribe A") not entirely familiar with "AB" orthography. Dobson agued that a subsequent scribe, "scribe B," was likely the original author of *Ancrene Wisse*, whose plentiful emendations found their way shortly afterwords into the Corpus manuscript. Furthermore, the distinctively "anchoritic" character of the Nero manuscript—in the form of biographical information about the three sisters that is lacking in either Cleopatra Corpus--can be accounted for under Dobson's theory if one views Nero, which does not mention the twenty women, as textually dependent upon copies of *Ancrene Wisse* that stemmed separately from the lost original and did not take the Corpus revisions into account.

Dobson attempted to account for the coexistence of the "twenty" anchoresses with the original three. In 1962 he hypothesized that, as copies of *Ancrene Wisse* circulated among widely scattered English anchorholds and anchoritism became an increasingly sought-after vocation for English women (a development that generated requests for even more copies), the anchoresses formed themselves into a kind of community, a literary community, in which they kept in touch, via their maidservants, with each other and also with the author of *Ancrene Wisse*, who constantly sent out revisions to his work, revisions that were often

inexpertly interpolated, perhaps by the anchoresses themselves, into the text (hence Scribe

A's version of Cleopatra). Both Cleopatra and the more "anchoritic" Nero manuscript, along

with Nero's distant cousin, Titus, descended from the family of manuscripts generated by this

burst of scribal activity around 1224, Dobson postulated.[121] That accounted for the references

to the "three" sisters in those three manuscripts, according to the stemma that Dobson

constructed to support his theory.

     As for the "twenty" women mentioned in Corpus, Dobson argued that Corpus

represented a different manuscript tradition, in which the author of *Ancrene Wisse* had

revised and expanded his text for a group of women who lived at Limebrook Priory about

three miles south of Wigmore Abbey, where Dobson hypothesized that the Augustinian

canon who wrote *Ancrene Wisse* lived, and that besides addressing the "twenty" women at

Limebrook, the author made numerous small revisions to Part Eight (which governs the

anchoress's food, dress, and relations with the outside world) in order to make the text more

suitable to a religious community as well as to individual anchoresses.[122] Dobson supported

his theory with considerable charter and other documentary evidence indicating that a

community of women had indeed lived at Limebrook during the early thirteenth century but

that only in around 1221 did their house come to be called a nunnery in the documents.

Dobson argued that the women had originally been a group of anchoresses that had gradually

coalesced into a group of nuns—Augustinian canonesses—under the spiritual direction of the

author of *Ancrene Wisse*, For them, the "anchoresses of England," as he called them, he made

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[121] E.J. Dobson, E.J., "The Affiliation of the Manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*," in *English and Medieval Studies Presented to J.R.R. Tolkien on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Norman Davis and C.L. Wrenn, 128-63 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962).

[122] *Origins of Ancrene Wisse* (n. 15), 174-301.

his last revision of *Ancrene Wisse* before he died, and the Corpus manuscript, with its pristine

AB orthography, was a copy made directly from that revised text.[123]

Dobson's elaborate reconstruction of the early textual history of *Ancrene Wisse*, its

author, and the people who read and copied it was ingenious, fulling accounting for the

existence of four radically different versions of the work within a short time after its initial

composition. A more parsimonious explanation for this phenomenon, however, may be

simply that *Ancrene Wisse* was a widely read and in-demand work from the time of its initial

composition. Although its author might have originally composed his text for three well-born

sisters seeking the anchoritic life, its audience never at any time consisted solely of

anchoresses, and that all of its copyists freely adapted it for their own particular audiences,

who might have indeed been nuns (Corpus) or monks (Titus). They might also have been

layfolk.[124] The Titus manuscript in particular, containing *Ancrene Wisse*, *Seinte Katerine*,

Hali Meiðhad, *Sawles Warde*, and *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, has the earmarks of a

devotional anthology that might have been intended for either religious or lay readers.

A.S.G. Edwards has noted that *Ancrene Wisse* "circulated for a longer period than any

other English prose work," and that it was still being copied by hand as late as the

seventeenth century.[125] Edwards has delineated the various ways in which *Ancrene Wisse*

was chopped up and rearranged, or extracted from, during the fourteenth and fifteenth

centuries. For example, it is the longest prose text (in a version closely related to the Nero

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[123] *Ibid.*, 300-301.

[124] Cate Gunn argues that *Ancrene Wisse* was essentially a work of vernacular spirituality, related to sermons and penitential literature, whose indended audience was chiefly laypeople. See n. 33 above.

[125] A.S.G. Edwards, "The Middle English Manuscripts and Early Readers of *Ancrene Wisse*," in *A Companion to* Ancrene Wisse (n. 2), 103-12, esp. 103.

text) in the Vernon manuscript (Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Eng.poet.a.1), a massive and richly decorated late-fourteenth-century devotional anthology almost certainly made for a wealthy laywoman in the West Midlands that contains, besides *Ancrene Wisse*, the *South English Legendary*, the *Northern Homily Cycle*, the late thirteenth-century passion text *Stimulus amoris*, and works by Richard Rolle and Walter Hilton. A fourteenth-century French translation of *Ancrene Wisse*, Cambridge University, Trinity College MS R.14.7, omits both Part One, outlining the anchoress's daily routine of prayers and devotions) and Part Eight, the instructions for her food, dress, and other aspects of her external behavior. By contrast, another fourteenth-century French manuscript, British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius F.vii, which does not appear to be textually related to Trinity 14.7, follows the version of the text in the Corpus manuscript so closely that several scholars have concluded that it is a faithful copy of a mid-thirteenth-century translation of a manuscript deriving from the Corpus-Cleopatra family.[126]

There is no reason not to suppose that this process of radical adaptation of *Ancrene Wisse* for multiple audiences did not begin even earlier than the fourteenth cetnury, and there is evidence to support this supposition. For example, from the second half of the thirteenth century comes the fifth-oldest surviving English manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*, Cambridge University, Gonville and Caius College MS 234/120, ff. 1-92.[127] This text is entirely gender-neutral, omitting all references to "sisters" and anchoritism, which suggests that it was

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[126] *Origins of* Ancrene Wisse (n. 15), 299-304; "What is *Ancrene Wisse*?," pp. 8-9. Dobson argued that the Vitellius translation was likely made in about 1230 for Annora de Braose, who was the lady of Wigmore Castle and,as a member of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy became, along with her sister Loretta, countess of Leicester, perhaps the highest-born of all English anchoresses.

[127] The critical edition is R.M. Wilson, ed., *The English Text of the Ancrene Riwle, Edited from Gonville and Caius College MS. 234/120*, intro. by N.R. Ker, EETS 224 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).

intended for a male audience. Its thirteenth-century redactor not only lopped off the anchoress-specific Parts One and Eight (like the fourteenth-century French redactor of the Trinity R.14.7 text) but also drastically abridged and rearranged large portions of the remaining text so as to transform *Ancrene Wisse* into a penitential manual flanked on either side by homiletic material focusing on the seven deadly sins and the appropriate virtues that one must cultivate in order to counter those sins (essentially Parts Four and Five of *Ancrene Wisse*, together with small portions of other parts). The scribe who copied *Ancrene Wisse* into Gonville and Caius 234/120 filled six additional folios of his manuscript with Latin extracts from *Vitas patrum*, a much-copied and widely circulating collection of lives of Eastern ascetic saints (there are several references to *Vitas patrum* in *Ancrene Wisse* itself),[128] but it is impossible to speculate for whom his extensively revised version of *Ancrene Wisse* was written. According to R.M. Wilson, an examination of the manuscript's letter forms indicates that its scribe "felt more at ease writing Latin than English."[129] One can only say that the Gonville and Caius redactor felt free to refashion *Ancrene Wisse* into a radically different literary genre that suited his own devotional purposes, all within about fifty years of the original composition of the work.

What all of this means, it would appear, is that, despite the best efforts of Dobson and others to reconstruct the routes by which *Ancrene Wisse* manifested itself in a multiplicity of versions so early in its textual history, and to identify what the original text must have looked like and who its audience might have been, it is in fact impossible to solve those problems on the basis of the surviving manuscripts. Was *Ancrene Wisse* addressed to a single anchoress or

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[128] *Ibid.*, Introduction, ix.

[129] *Ibid.*

"sister" like Aelred's *De institutione*, to the "three" well-born sisters so fleetingly alluded to in the four earliest surviving manuscripts, or to "twenty" women who might have been clustered in a single small convent or living in solitary and double anchorages widely scattered throughout England? Or were one, more than one, or all of these women merely literary fictions copied from Alfred's work for the benefit of audiences who revered anchoresses and accorded them unsurpassed spiritual authority? It is impossible to answer these questions and equally impossible to deem any one of the four early thirteenth-century texts of *Ancrene Wisse* more authoritative than the others. It is appropriate to give the Corpus manuscript pride of place—but only because the paleographic evidence indicates that it predates Nero and Titus, and because its pristine AB orthography and phonology places its composition close in time to the composition of Bodley 34, which is indubitably a product of the early thirteenth century.

It seems clear, then, that *Ancrene Wisse* was perceived from the beginning of its existence not as a narrowly anchoritic work but as a work with nearly infinite possibilities for adaptation to a wide range of audiences variously literate in English, Anglo-Norman, and Latin Its textual history resembles that of *Speculum ecclesie*, except that the breadth of its modifications and rearrangements is even greater. Even the contents of *Ancrene Wisse* and their arrangement signal its adaptability. On the one hand, its eight parts, organized into a bookend "outer rule" pair dealing with the routine and the mundane externals of the anchoress's daily life (Parts One and Eight) framing a six-part "inner rule" that outlines the anchoress's progress through the cleansing process of examination of conscience and sacramental confession (Parts Two, Three, Four, and Five) to penance (Part Six) and, finally, to pure contemplation of God's love (Part Seven) give the work, as Linda Georgianna has

pointed out, a tight structural and thematic unity that tracks the anchoress's own desired

progress of systematically shedding the dross of this world in her chosen self-confinement in

her anchorhold and of ultimately achieving a thrilling and utterly fulfilling spiritual union

with her chosen spouse, Christ.[130] On the other hand, the individual parts of *Ancrene Wisse*

are detachable and self-contained. Part Two is a standard-form allegory of the five senses

that resembles *Sawles Warde* (and, more than a century later, Chaucer's *Tale of Melibee*) and

could presumably be read for profit by any lay Christian, and Part Three, dealing with control

of the emotions, is a thematic extension of Part Two. The material on the seven deadly sins in

Part Four is penitential material that could be judged as suitable for layfolk as for

anchoresses, as is Part Five, dealing with the mechanics and spiritual benefits of a

good confession.

It is Parts Six and Seven of *Ancrene Wisse*, dealing with "penitence" and "love"

respectively, that are the work's devotional heart and clearly the reason for the work's

astonishing proliferation. The author began with a matter-of-fact declaration that "it is proper

to speak of penitence, that is, making amends, after confession, and so we have a transition

out of this fifth part into the sixth" ("Efter schrifte falleð to speoken of penitence, þet is dead

bote; ant swa we habbeð inʒong ut of þis fifte dal in to þe seste").[131] Yet the "penitence" that

the author had in mind was no ordinary confessional penance but the anchoress's

recapitulation in her hard and solitary life of the crucifixion and suffering of Christ on the

cross. In the Corpus text the author addressed the "sisters ("mine leoue sustren") and told

them: "Al is penitence, ant strong penitence þet ʒe eauer dreheð…; al þet ʒe eauer doð, al þet

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[130] *The Solitary Self* (n. 21).

[131] *Ancrene Wisse, Parts Six and Seven* (n.4), 3.4-8.

ʒe þolieð, is ow martirdom i se derf ordre, for ʒe beoð niht & dei up o Godes rode. [All is penitence, and strong penitence that you ever endure….All that you ever do, all that you suffer, is your martyrdom in this austere order, for you are upon God's cross day and night.]" He quoted St. Paul ("Mihi absit gloriari, nisi in cruce domini mei Iesu Christ [I am not glorified except in the cross of my lord Jesus Christ])"[132] and the introit of the Mass for the feast of the finding of the holy cross ("Nos opportet gloriari in cruce domini nostri Iesu Christi [It is necessary for us to be glorified in the cross of our lord Jesus Christ])" and then declared: "al ure blisse mot beon i Iesu Cristes rode. Þis word nomelich limpeð to recluses, hwas blisse ah to beon allunge i Godes rode. [All our joy must be in Jesus Christ's cross. This saying is pertinent above all to recluses, whose joy ought always to be in God's cross.])

Part Six is thus not really a treatise on penance in the conventional sense but an exhortation to the imitation of Christ. It is an extended meditation that intertwines the themes of martyrdom and the daily privations of the anchoress with the passion of Christ. The anchoress is the very image of Christ, and she imitates Christ's passion, not only because her life is a daily martyrdom but because she, in her very public exposure and even to possible ridicule (because her anchorhold in the church is a kind of public place known to all), Christ's humiliation and shame. The author of *Ancrene Wisse* emphasized repeatedly the public aspect of Christ's crucifixion, that he who was supremely innocent was subjected not just to physical injury but to the shame of being punished like a common criminal: "Ant nes Godes rode wið his deorwurðe blode irudet & ireadet forte schawin on him seolfe þet pine & sorhe & sar schulden wið scheome beon iheowt?...for swuch was Godes deað on þe deore rode, pinful & schentful ouer al oþre? [And was not God's cross ruddied and reddened with his

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[132] G1 6:14.

beloved blood in order to show in himself that pain and sorrow and suffering must be colored

with shame?....Such was God's death on the dear cross, painful and shameful beyond all

others.]"[133] The language is reminiscent of the scenes in *Seinte Marherete* and *Seinte Iuliene*

in which the virgin martyrs are displayed before the onlookers in their beauty and their

torments. The author of *Ancrene Wisse* presented the anchoresse's particular ability to imitate

Christ as an aspect of her very sex, asserting that Christ in his passion played the role of a

tender-hearted mother interposing herself between her errant child and their stern father and

thus taking their punishment on herself: "ase moder þet is reowðful deð hire betweonen te

wraðe sturne feader."[134]

Yet at the same time that the author of *Ancrene Wisse* focused upon the mortifications

and privations that are specific to the anchoress's imitation as a woman of Christ, he also took

pains to point out in Part Six that such mortifications and privations are not unique to

anchoresses or to women but are part of the experience of any Christian who seeks union

with God. He invoked the authority of Bernard of Clairvaux, who wrote for male Cistercians

and bore a name that by the thirteenth century was shorthand for affective meditation, to

characterize "shame and pain" as the "two sides of the ladder that goes straight up to

heaven"—incorporating those two conditions into the standard imagery of the

contemplative's ascent to God: "Vilitas & asperitas, vilte & asprete, þeos twa, scheome &

pine, as seint Beornard seið, beoð þe twa leaddre steolen þeoð up iriht to heouene…."[135] The

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[133] *Ancrene Wisse, Parts Six and Seven*, 7.4-7.

[134] *Ibid.*, 11.19-21.

[135] *Ibid.*, 6.12-14. The passage is trilingual, in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English: "Shame and pain, these two, shame and pain, as St. Bernard says, are the two sides of the ladder that goes straight up to heaven." The notes to this passage in Shepherd's edition and in Savage's and Watson's translation point out that this passage is a

appeal to Bernard universalizes the meditative experience, extends it beyond the anchoritic to the monastic and perhaps even the lay commonplace.

Similarly, the author concluded Part Six with the assertion that it is love that makes all the deprivations of the ascetic endurable, for even when the love is sinful, men and women (the allusion to both sexes is telling), are willing to endure great hardships for it: "Hweat þolieð men & wummen for fals luue & for ful luue, & mare walden þolien? [How much do men and women suffer for false love and for foul love and would suffer even more?]"[136] The vivid image that follows of the sufferer for true love—the love of Christ—is again not that of an anchoress but of a rugged male ascetic who wears both a heavy coat of mail and a hairshirt bound around him by iron bands throughout his prayer and physical labors but who does not mind the mortifications because he has taken them on for love of God: "Nawt for þi ich wat swuch þet bereð ba to gederes, heui brunie & here, ibunden hearde wið irn, middel, þeh, & earmes mid brade þicke bondes, swa þet tet swat þet is passiun to þolien; feasteð, wakeð, swinkeð & Crist hit wat, meaneð him þet hit ne greueð him nawt....Al þet is bitter, for ure lauerdes luue, al him þuncheð swete. [Nonetheless I know someone who wears both together a heavy mailcoat and hairshirt, his middle, thighs, and arms bound tightly with iron, with broad, thick bonds, so the sweat from it is suffering to endure; he fasts, keeps vigils, toils, and, Christ knows, he complains that it does not bother

paraphrase of *Declamationes de colloquio Simonis cum Iesu ex S. Bernardi sermonibus collectae*, which is not an authentic work by Bernard and is instead believed to have been written by his disciple and biographer Geoffrey of Auxerre (ca. 1115-ca. 1188). Savage and Watson note that a ladder is a common image for the stages of perfection, found in the Rule of St. Benedict and also in Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*. See *Ancrene Wisse, Parts Six and Seven*, 4; *Anchoritic Spirituality* (n.1), 393-94, nn. 8-9.

[136] *Ancrene Wisse, Parts Six and Seven*, 18. 7-8.

him….All that is bitter, for Our Lord's love, it seems sweet to him.]"[137] This staunchly masculine image of cheerful endurance can be read as the author's signal to anchoresses that they are expected to adopt a male style of sanctity, yet it also signals to male readers that the anchoress's imitation of Christ is for them, too. Like the reference to St. Bernard, it represents an effort to universalize the anchoritic experience and to make *Ancrene Wisse* into a polyvalent devotional treatise as well as a handbook for anchoresses.

The meditation on love in Part in Part Seven was the section of the Ancrene Wisse most frequently reproduced in manuscript during the later Middle Ages. In it the author presented a vivid allegory of the Christ and his beloved as a lady and her suitor who lays down his life for her ("wohere [wooer])" and "leofmon [lover or beloved]," a knight who is also a king of surpassing wealth and beauty, as in the Song of Songs: "He…schawede hire his feire neb, as þe þe wes of alle men feherest to bihalden. [He showed her his fair face, that of the one who was of all men fairest to behold.]"[138] The author explained:

> Þes king is Iesu, Godes sune, þet al o þisse wise wohede ure sawle þe deoflen hefden biset; ant he as nobele wohere efter monie messagers & feole goddeden, com to pruuien his luue & schawde þurh cnihtschipe þet he was luuewurðe, as weren sumhwile cnihtes iwunet to donne; dude him i turneiment & hefde for his leoues luue, his scheld i feht as kene cniht on euche half iþurlet. His scheld þe wreah his Goddehead, was his leoue licome þet ispread o rode, brad as scheld buuen in his istrahte earmes, nearow bineaoðen, as þe an fot, efter monies wene, set up o þe oðer….He bohte us wið his heorte blod—deorer pris nas neauer—forte ofdrahen of us ure luue toward him þet costnede him se sare. I scheld beoð þreo þinges, þe treo, & te leðer, & te litunge. Alswa was i þis scheld—þe treo of þe rode, þe leðer of Godes licome, þe litunge of þe reade blod þet heowede hire se feire….efter kene cnihtes deað, me hongeð hehe i chirche his scheld on his mungunge. Alswa is þis scheld, þet is, þe crucifix, i chirche iset i swuch stude þer me hit sonest seo forte þenchen þerbi o Iesu Cristes cnihtschipe i þet he dude o rode. His leofman bihalde þron hu he bohte

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[137] *Ibid.*, 18.11-18.

[138] *Ibid.*, 21.18-19.

her luue, lette þurlin his scheld, openin his side to schawin hire his heorte, to schawin hire openliche hu inwardliche he luuede hire, & to ofdrahen hire heorte.[139]

This passage, presenting Christ as king, knight, wooer, and lover, is the rhetorical tour de force of *Ancrene Wisse*, artfully employing rhythm, alliteration, parallel construction, chiasmus ("schawin hire openliche hu inwardliche he luuede hire"), and rhetorical climax to present its complex double allegory: first as a narrative in which Christ fights in a tournament and suffers the wounding of his shield for the sake of his beloved, and then as a static image in which Christ on the cross is presented as the knight's shield, its triangular shape replicating the position of Christ's nailed body, hanging as the rood-screen high in the church. The shield and the rood-screen and the crucified Christ that both shield and rood-screen represent are same entity in this image. Just as the narrative elevates Christ's suffering into something kingly and noble by recasting it as a tournament, the rood-screen image recasts the crucified Christ as an object of beauty, painted red and rendered beautiful by his blood ("þe reade blod þet heowede hire se feire"). The allusion to the royal lover in the Song of Songs ("dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus") is here again.

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[139] *Ibid.*: "This king is Jesus, God's son, who in this way wooed our soul that the devil had besieged. He, as a noble wooer, after many messengers and many acts of kindness, came to prove his love, and he showed through chivalry that he was worthy of love, as knights were formerly accustomed to do. He jousted in tournaments and for love of his love had had his shield pierced on every side in the fight. His shield, which concealed his Godhead, was his beloved body that was spread out on the cross, broad as a shield above in his outstretched arms, narrow below where the one foot was set upon the other as many think....He bought us with his heart's blood—a dearer price there never was that cost him so sorely—in order to draw out our love for him. Three things are on a shield: the wood and the leather and the paint. So it was with this shield—the wood of the cross, the leather of God's body, the paint of the red blood that colored it so beautifully....After a brave knight's death, his shield is hung high in the church in his memory. So it is with this shield, that is, the crucifix, set in such a place where it is soonest seen, so that one might think thereby upon Jesus Christ's deeds of chivalry that he performed upon the cross. Let his leman behold thereby how he bought her love, how he let his shield be pierced and his side opened to show her his heart, to show her openly how he loved her inwardly, and to draw out her heart."

 The emphasis is on display: the lady's royal suitor shows her ("schawede") his fair face that is the fairest to behold, and the cross hangs high ("hehe i chirche") as an object to be gazed upon—and here one thinks of the martyrs Juliana and Margaret in the Katherine Group lives whose bodies are hung high before the onlookers in numinous display. Finally, the piercing of Christ's side is recast as an amorous act, in which the element of display is paramount: Christ literally shows the lady his heart ("to schawin hire his heorte") in a uniting of corporeal realism and affective metaphor. The aim is for the beloved to gaze upon ("bihalde") her lover and the gift he has made of his heart. That very act of gazing will entails reciprocity; it will "draw out" her heart ("ofdrahen hire heorte") to love in return.

 The author's point was that the very power of the image of the crucified Christ upon the reader's imagination will elicit the desired response of overwhelming love; the reader need only look, by forming the requisite images in her imagination. The author continued: "Lo þus ur lauerd woheð....For þi seið þe salmwruhte, Non est qui se abscondat a calore eius: nis nan þet mahe edlutien þat ha ne mot him luuien. Þe soðe sunne i þe undertid wes for þi istihen on heh o þe hehe rode forte spreaden ouer al hate luue gleames; þus neodful he was & is aþet to tes dei to ontenden his luue i his leoues heorte....[Lo, thus Our Lord woos....Therefore says the Psalm-writer, 'There is no one who may hide himself from his heat.' There is none who can hide away so that he may not love him. Therefore the true sun was lifted up on high, on the high cross, in order to spread over all things the rays of his hot love, so eager he was, and is to this day, to enkindle his love in his beloved's heart....]"[140] The author piled atop the image of Christ as utterly self-sacrificing lover-knight the image of a burning sun raised high upon the cross that can consume the beloved thoroughly and

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[140] *Ibid.*, 26.9-14. The reference is to Ps 18:7.

irresistibly. She need not even gaze upon him; he will fix her with a gaze from which she cannot hide.

These complex mental pictures of the crucified Christ eliciting the imaginative participation of the reader via emotional response and drawing upon the erotic resonance and royal epithets of the Song of Songs resemble the passion meditations in *Speculum ecclesie* and the treatises of Stephen of Sawley, as well as those in Aelred's triple meditation in *De institutione inclusarum*, a known source of *Ancrene Wisse*. The images in Part Seven of *Ancrene Wisse* are, moreover, much more elaborate than those in *De institutione*. Aelred bade his sister to suck from the breasts of Christ, her beloved, and to kiss and drink from his bloody wounds in her imagination. The author of *Ancrene Wisse* seemed in Part Seven to paraphrase Aelred's exhortation, telling his readers to look often upon the cross in their minds: "Þenceð ȝef ȝe ne ahen eaðe to luuien þe king of blisse þe tospreat swa his earmes toward ow & buheð, as to beoden cos, duneward his heaued [Think whether you ought not easily to love the king of bliss who stretches out his arms toward you and bends his head downward as if to ask for a kiss]." He also built an entire narrative upon this image with his chivalric story of the knight and king who fights in a tournament, presumably against the devil, who has besieged the lady's castle. He follows that narrative with a detailed allegorical interpretation that turns into a meditation upon the crucifix that is a metaphor for both the royal lover-knight and his shield. The treatment of Aelred's themes in *Ancrene Wisse* is at once more sophisticated and more accessible to readers, for it draws (as do the saints' lives in the Katherine Group) upon the concrete power of story.

Furthermore, the author of *Ancrene Wisse* did not allegorize the lady, Christ's leman, as an anchoress or other consecrated virgin, but rather, as the human soul ("ure sawle"), and

even, as the author explains, the church: "Þus lo, Iesu Cristes luue toward his deore spuse, þet is hali chirche oðer cleane sawle, passeð alle. [Thus, lo, Jesus Christ's love for he dear spouse, which is holy church or a pure soul, surpasses all.]"[141] This change of focus from the individual woman as object of Christ's bridal love to the soul of every Christian seems to be further evidence of the author's intention to universalize his treatise, to blur the line between anchoresses and all Christians as its intended audience.

Certainly the transcriber of the mid-thirteenth-century Caius and Gonville manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* interpreted Part Seven as entirely non-anchoritic in his abridged version of the treatise. That scribe lopped off the entire first segment of Part Seven, including the narrative of the knight and his tournament, along with most of its allegorical interpretation. Nonetheless, he retained the allegory of the shield as the crucifix hanging high in the church as a memorial of the knight, along with its three allegorial parts of wood, leather, and painting with blood, rewriting the text only minimally to take into account his deliberate abridgment. The Gonville and Caius scribe also retained the language that exhorts the knight's beloved to look upon the shield/crucifix and contemplate how dearly the knight had bought her love and how he had let his shield be pierced so as to show her his heart and to draw out her heart.[142]

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[141] *Ibid.*, 27.3-5.

[142] The Corpus text of Part Seven calls the story of the lover-knight a "tale" ("Hereto falleð a tale") illustrating the "first" reason why one should love God: because God loves mankind with the ardor of a bridegroom ("as a mon þe woheð—as a king þet luuede a gentil poure leafdi of feorrene londe [as a man who woos—as a king who loved a poor noble lady of a foreign land]." See 20.37-21.1-8. The second reason is explicitly noted as such in the Corpus text, but it seems to be implicit in the allegory of the shield: Christ's passion as a joust fought for the sake of one's lady. The author offers the shield's position hanging high in church—a demonstration of Christ's suffering--is offered as a "third" reason. The abridgment made by the Gonville and Caius scribe left him with only two reasons instead of three, so he altered the Corpus text's "third reason" ("þridde reisun," 22.36-37) to "another half" ("An oþer half"). *Ancrene Wisse*, Gonville and Caius text, pp. 43.4.

The Gonville and Caius scribe also preserved the Corpus author's summing-up: "O

þus ure lauerd ƿohed [Oh, thus Our Lord woos]."[143] Significantly, that scribe broke off his

abridgment of Part Seven at this point and stitched to it a passage lifted from Part Three of

Ancrene Wisse that fleshed out what he clearly considered the amorous nature of Christ's

wooing. It is an elaboration of several verses from the second chapter of the Song of Songs,

the Latin alternating with a loose and interpretive English translation:

> [L]oked nu hu properlich þe leafdi in canticis godes deore spuse leared oƿ bi hire
> sahe: hu ge shu-len seggen. En dilectus meus loquitur michi. Surge propera amica
> mea. & cetera. Loƿ ha seið hercne ich here mi leof speken he cleopeð me imot gan.
> And ge gan anan rich to oƿre deore leof-mon. & meane oƿ te his earen. þat luueliche
> cleopeð oƿ to him ið þeos ƿeordes. Surge propera amica mea formosa mea. & ueni &
> ostende michi faciem tuam. Sonet uo(x) tua in auribus meis. þat is. Aris up. hihe
> ieorne toƿard me. & cum to me mi culure. mi leofmon. mi feire & mi shene spuse.
> Ostende michi faciem tum. Shaƿ to me þi leoue neb. & þi lufsume leor. ƿent þe from
> oþre. Sonet uox tua in auribus meis Sei hƿa haueð ido þe ihurt mi deore. sing imin
> hearen. for þi þat þu ne ƿilnest bute te seon mi ƿlite: ne seoken buten te me. þe
> steuene is me sƿete. & þi ƿlite shene. Unde & subditur. Vox tua dulcis & facies tua
> decora. þis beod nu-t a þinges. þat beod iluued sƿiþe. Sƿete speche & shene ƿlite.
> hƿa se ham haued te ge-deres. Sƿucche cheoseð iesu crist: to leofmon & to spuse. Gef
> þu ƿult sƿuch beon: ne sha þu namon þi ƿlite. ne ne leote bluþeliche heren þi speche.
> Ah turn ba te iesu crist. to þi deoreƿur-de spus as he bit þer uppe. As þu ƿult þat þe
> speche. þunche him sƿete. & þi ƿlite shene. & habben him to leofmon. þat is þusent
> shenre þen þe sunne. [144]

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[143] *Ibid.*, 45.98
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[144] *Ibid.*, 47.11-36 (*cf.* *Ancrene Wisse*, Corpus text, 52.16-53-.12): "Look now how properly the lady in the Canticles, God's dear spouse, teaches you through her speech how you must speak. Lo, my beloved speaks to me: Arise, my own love, et cetera [Ct 2.10]. Lo, she says, hearken, I hear my love speak. He calls me, I must go. And you go right anon to your dear leman. And you complain into his ears, he who calls you to him with these words: Arise, my own love, my lovely one, and come and show me your face. Let your voice sound in my ears [Ct 2.12-14], that is, rise up and come eagerly toward me and come to me, my dove, my leman, my fair and my bright spouse. Show me your face, show to me your beloved face and your lovely looks, come you away from others. Let your voice sound in my ears. Say who has done this to you, who has hurt my dear one. Sing to my ears, because you wish nothing but to see my face, nor to speak but to me. Your voice to me is sweet and and your face bright. This is how it is explained: Your voice is sweet and your face comely [Ct 2.14]. Now there are these two things that are loved exceedingly: sweet speech and a bright face in whoever has both of them together. Such a one Jesus Christ chooses for his leman, for his spouse. If you will be such, show to no man your face nor let him hear your speech joyfully, but turn both to Jesus Christ, to your precious spouse as he bids

In the context of the Corpus text's Part Three, which deals with the guarding of the five senses, the above passage uses the Song of Songs primarily for didactic and tropological purposes, as an instruction to the anchoresses that they should reserve their sight, hearing, and speech—three of those senses--for their beloved spouse, Christ, who longs to speak words of love and show his beautiful face to them, if only they will be present for him alone and listen to him in silence. In the Gonville and Caius scribe's transposition of the passage to the narrative of the lover-knight, it acquires additional resonance as the very words of Jesus' wooing ("þus ure lauerd ƿohed"), a rapturous iteration of loving epithets. The rhythmic, repetitive, often alliterative English verbally extends and emotionally intensifies the Latin: "Surge propera amica mea formosa mea" becomes "Aris up. hihe ieorne toƿard me. & cum to me mi culure. mi leofmon. mi feire & mi shene spuse; Ostende michi faciem tuam becomes Shaƿ to me þi leoue neb. & þi lufsume leor." In the freely rearranged Gonville and Caius text of *Ancrene Wisse*, there is almost nothing left of its original anchoritic context and almost no trace of the female audience for which it was apparently originally intended. There is, however, a large residue of its affective overlay, which the author clearly deemed suitable for the non-anchorites for whom he crafted a penitential manual out of *Ancrene Wisse*'s text. The Gonville and Caius scribe imaginatively adapted and put to double use a passage of moral instruction, linking it to and making it expressive of the overwhelming love of Christ for even the most truculent and recidivous of sinners, whom Christ courts like a suitor wooing a beautiful bride.

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from above, if you wish your speech to seem sweet to him and your face bright, and to have him for your leman, him who is a thousandfold brighter than the sun."

The above passage from Part Three of *Ancrene Wisse* and the use that the Gonville and Caius scribe made of it are helpful for understanding the context and purpose of *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*. Like the passage from Part Three, the *Wohunge* is a lyrical string of amorous sentiments directed at the beloved; its full manuscript title is *Her biginnes þe wohunge of ure laure[d]* [Here begins the wooing of Our Lord]. Nonetheless, the speaker is not Christ as the title might suggest, but the object of his courtship. The text begins: "Iesu swete iesu. mi druð. mi derling. mi drihtin. mi healend mi huniter. mi haliwei. [Jesus, sweet Jesus, my dearest, my darling, my lord, my savior, my honey-drop, my healing balm.]"[145] The *Wohunge*'s anonymous author likely had the Song of Songs in mind as a model, for he (or perhaps she, since the speaker is apparently female) imitated its alternating passages of dialogue between lovers. Indeed, the *Wohunge* is essentially a response by the courted soul to the wooing passage attributed to Christ in Part Three of *Ancrene Wisse* and to the allegory of Christ as wooer in Part Seven. Like the wooing passage in Part Three, the *Wohunge* uses quasi-poetic repetition for rhetorical effect. The rhythmic and alliterative line "A iesu swete iesu leue þet te luue of þe beo al mi likinge [Ah, Jesus, sweet Jesus, grant that love of you be all my delight]" occurs ten times in full or truncated form in this relatively brief work of six small-size double-column folios.[146] The "A iesu swete iesu" functions as a poetic refrain in the quasi-poetic extended prayer to Christ that the *Wohunge* essentially is.[147]

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[145]*Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* (n. 9), 21.1-3.

[146] *Ibid.*, 21.55-57, 22.77-79, 23.105-07, 117-19, 24.158-59, 25.194-95, 26.215-17, 27.251-52, 30.363-64, 32. 437-440, 37.642-44.

[147] Douglas Gray argues that the *Wohunge*, which combines rhyme with highly rhythmic prose, actually is a poem. Douglas Gray, "Medieval English Mystical Lyrics," in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, ed William F. Pollard and Douglas Boening (Cambridge, U.K.: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 203-18.

Yet unlike the wooing passages in Part Three and Part Seven of *Ancrene Wisse*, the *Wohunge* contains a detailed, non-allegorical narrative of Christ's life and passion that does not appear in *Ancrene Wisse* and that might well have been a direct imitation of Aelred's *De institutione* or of Edmund of Abingdon's *Speculum*, both of which were in wide circulation by the mid-thirteenth century. The meditative technique that the *Wohunge*'s author uses is identical to that employed by both Aelred and Stephen of Sawley: an invitation to the reader (addressed as "mi leue suster [my beloved sister]" at the *Wohunge*'s end)[148] to participate in her imagination in Christ's crucifixion as she reads: "…[Hwen þu art on eise carpe toward iesu & seie þise wordes. & þenc as tah he heng biside þe blodi up o rode. And he þurh his grace opn[e] þin heorte to his luue & to reowðe of his pine. [When you are at leisure, speak to Jesus and say these words, and think that he hangs beside you bloody upon the cross, and may he through his grace open your heart to his love and to pity for his pain.]" In other words, the author bade his reader to identify with Christ so thoroughly that she was to imagine herself nailed to the cross and suffering alongside him.The purpose of this exercise was, as it was in the meditations of Aelred and Stephen, to elicit the requisite emotions of pity and reciprocated love for Christ.

Furthermore—and this respect the *Wohunge* resembles the life-of-Christ meditations in Edmund's *Speculum* rather than the second-person meditations of Aelred and Stephen—the author presented his narrative in the first person, as part of the speaker's long prayer to Christ. Indeed, the narrative, like the other parts of the *Wohunge*, is punctuated by the refrain-like "*A iesu suete iesu*" that closely resembles the direct addresses to Jesus and Mary interpolated into Edmund's *Speculum* when it became *Mirour de seinte eglyse* at about the

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[148] *Ibid.*, 37.6.645-46.

same time that the *Wohunge* was composed. The *Wohunge*'s narrative is also clearly

influenced by the meditations on Christ's poverty, shame, and suffering in Part Six of

Ancrene Wisse. The speaker presents a short synopsis of Christ's birth and ministry as

exempla of his poverty: "Poure þu born was of þe meiden þi moder [poor were you born of

the maiden, your mother]."[149] The speaker briefly delineates the scriptural allusions to

Christ's poverty: that he was wrapped in rags and laid in a manger at his birth and endured

hunger and homelessness during his ministry. Christ's shame and humiliation, as well as his

physical suffering, is a central theme of the *Wohunge*'s narrative of Christ's passion. Indeed,

the author of the *Wohunge* divides the passion into two separate narratives, the first

emphasizing Christ's shame (his being spat upon and executed between two thieves), and the

second his physical torments (the tight binding of his hands, the scourging, the nailing of his

hands and feet, his thirst, the opening of of his side with a spear).

The final section of the *Wohunge* is a lengthy description of Christ upon the cross.

Here the narrative ends and becomes subsumed in the reactive emotion of the speaker, who

simultaneously describes the various details of Christ's physical suffering—in the present

tense, which is static--and and also her own response, which is not static. The entire passion

narrative is suffused with the emotional presence of the speaker ("[Þ]u wes for mi luue wið

cnotti swepes swungen swa þet ti luueliche lich mih te beo to torn & to rent. & al þi blisfule

bodi stremed on a Girre blod....[You were for my love flogged with knotty whips so that your

lovely body could be all torn and all rent, and your whole blissful body streamed with a

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[149] *Ibid.*, 28.321-22.

bloody stream.]"[150] The refrain for this final section is simply "A [Ah]," a moan of pity

repeated as an anaphora seventeen times.[151] The speaker frames the vivid vivid verbal picture

she has painted of of Christ's death with heartfelt exclamation that doubles back to her own

grief: "A þet luueliche bodi þet henges swa rewli swa blodi & swa kalde. A hu schal i nu liue

for nu deies mi lef for me up o þe deore rode? [Ah, that lovely body that hangs so pitiful and

so bloody and so cold! Ah, how shall I now live, for now my love dies for me upon the dear

cross?]"[152] The speaker then describes the piercing of the dead Christ's side by Longinus,

whose spear also cleaves Christ's heart in two, whereupon the speaker exclaims: "A swete

iesu þu oppnes me þin herte for to cnawe witerliche & in to reden trewe luue lettres. for þer I

mai openlich seo hu muchel þu me luudes. Wið wrange schuldi þe min heorte wearnen siðen

þet tu bohtes herete for herte. [Ah, sweet Jesus, you open your heart to me in order for me to

know you truly and in it read true love-letters, for there I may openly see how much you

loved me; wrongly should I refuse you my heart, since you have bought me heart for

heart.]"[153] She next directs her prayer to Mary at the foot of the cross (the only place in the

Wohunge where she is not speaking to Christ), Mary who is empathetically suffering the

same spear-wound in the heart as her son: "Lauedi moder & meiden þu stod here ful neh &

seh al his sorhe vpo þi deorewurðe sune. was wið in martird iþi moderliche her te. þet seh to

cleue his heorte wið þe speres ord. ("Lady, mother and maiden, you stood here full nigh and

saw all this sorrow visted upon your precious son. You were martyred within your motherly

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[150] *Ibid.*, 33.475-81.

[151] *Ibid.*, 33.488, 491, 494, 498, 502, 503, 505, 506, 507, 34.511, 514, 517, 523, 532, 534, 35.546, 577.

[152] *Ibid.*, 34.332-36.

[153] *Ibid.,* 35.546-53.

heart, you who saw his heart cleaved with the spear's point").[154] There is the same emotional

connection as in *Speculum ecclesie* between Mary's looking at Christ and feeling his

suffering and the speaker's looking at both Mary and Christ and feeling, or hoping to feel, the

suffering of both.

As the *Wohunge* closes, the speaker arrives emotionally at the complete identification

of herself and Christ. First there is physical union; she tells Christ that although she is a

"wretch" ("wrecche"), a sinner, he has made her his leman and spouse ("leofmon & spuse"),

and that he has brought her from "the world" ("Broht tu haues me fra þe world") to the

"bower of his birth" ("to bur of þi burðe") where he has "locked" her in a "chamber" ("steked

me i chaumbre") so that she may "sweetly kiss and embrace" him ("I mai þer þe swa sweteli

kiss & cluppen").[155] Second, there is the speaker's desire to become the very image of the

crucified Christ that she has made in her mind: "Mi bodi henge wið þi bodie neiled o rode.

sperred querfaste ið inne fowr fowr wahes & henge i wile wið þe & neauer mare of mi rode

cume til þet I deie. [May my body hang with your body nailed on the cross, shut up

transversely within four walls, and may I wish to hang with you and never more come off my

cross until I die.]"[156]

Finally, there is the experiential pleasure, described entirely in terms of "sweetness,"

of realizing that Christ's love for her is bottomless and surrendering herself to that love: "A.

iesu swa swete hit is wið þe to henge. forhwen þet iseo o þe þet henges me biside: þe

muchele swetnesse of þe reaues me fele of pine. Bote swete iesu hwat mai mi bodi aȝaines

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[154] *Ibid.*, ll. 554-59.

[155] *Ibid.*, ll. 572-76.

[156] *Ibid.*, 36.590-95.

tin. For ȝif ich mihte a þusend fald ȝiue þe me seluen nere hit nowt onont te þet ȝef þe seluen forme…for ne mai ich nowhwer mi luue bettre sette þen o þe iesu crist þet bohtes hit swa dere. [Ah, Jesus, so sweet it is with you to hang, for when I look on you who hangs beside me, the great sweetness of you snatches me very much from pain. But, sweet Jesus, what may my body do compared to yours? For If I could give myself a thousandfold to you, it would be nothing compared to you who gave yourself for me…for I may nowhere better set my love than on you, Jesus Christ, who bought me so dearly.]" This language is perfectly rational, expressing an Anselmian theology of redemption ("bohtes hit swa dere") by someone who loves like a mortal man but whose love is also divine and thus infinite, but at the same time, it shatters into repetitive lyrical murmurings of sweetness and love—sweet nothings, as it were, directed at Christ. The culmination of this prayer is the tenth and final "leue þet te luue of þe beo al mi likinge."

The speaker then turns away from Christ to address the reader ("mi leue suster"), and to direct that reader to imagine ("þenc as") Christ, especially Christ hanging on the cross beside her. It is this image of the crucified Christ, along with the references to the "four walls" and the "chamber" where the apparently female speaker, shut up in her room, will kiss and embrace her lover Christ that have led many critics to deem the *Wohunge* particularly anchoritic, composed either by one anchoress for another or by an anchoress's confessor as the end-point of a trajectory of increasingly anchoritic literature written in early thirteenth-century Herefordshire. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that the Titus manuscript, in which the sole extant text of the *Wohunge* appears, contains a version of *Ancrene Wisse* adapted specifically for men.

The question arises: What are these two seemingly enantiomorphic works, the "male" *Ancrene Wisse* and the "female" *Wohunge* doing together in the same Titus manuscript? The answer might be the same one that accounts for the "wooing" features of the Gonville and Caius manuscript that turned *Ancrene Wisse* into a lay penitential; for the language in the Katherine Group saints' lives that describes those lives' readers as layfolk; and for the use of the triple meditation in Aelred's anchoritic *De institutione inclusarum* as a multivalent guide to contemplation for monks and lay people alike. The particular kind of devotional literature that *De institutione*, *Ancrene Wisse*, and *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* represented, fusing contemplation of Christ's passion with erotic evocation of his spousal role quickly transcended those works' original anchoritic context. Their readers, whether male or female, religious or lay, were doubtless eager to consider themselves as anchoresses, too, in a metaphoric sense. They could find themselves drawn to contemplation of God's boundless love by imagined pictures of Christ as a fleshly human lover and heavenly bridegroom, whether of particular female recluses such as Aelred's sister or the three sisters of *Ancrene Wisse*, or of their own frail souls. Devotional works of this nature generated more devotional works written by those who read them, including the quasi-poetic, nearly incoherently lyrical *Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*. They also, as the next chapter will reveal, generated metrically regular lyrics whose aim was the same fostering of emotional response to the passion of Christ and the sorrowing of his mother that the prose works that often accompanied them in manuscript sought to foster.

Chapter 4

Thirteenth-Century Religious Lyrics in Their Meditative Context

The earliest Middle English religious lyrics were part of the same efflorescence of trilingual devotional literature during the early thirteenth century that nearly simultaneously spawned the prose *Speculum ecclesie*, its Anglo-Norman adaptation *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, and the English *Ancrene Wisse*. Those prose texts sought to reach a wide range of clerical, monastic, and lay readers. It may be argued that the lyrics were aimed at the same range of audiences and were written to invoke a similar response of emotional empathy with the suffering and loving Christ and his mother. Nearly all the surviving thirteenth-century religious lyrics in English have as their themes Christ's passion and the suffering participation of his mother, Mary, as their central themes—themes that were also central to the prose *Speculum*/*Mirour* and *Ancrene Wisse*.

Indeed, the two contenders for the very earliest extant thirteenth-century religious lyric, dating from the first or second quarter of the century, were clearly meditative in purpose, for they were explicitly linked to *Speculum*/*Mirour* and *Ancrene Wisse* themselves. The first contender is the now well-known quatrain "Nou Goth Sonne" ("Now Goes the Sun," Brown XIII, no.1, *Index* 2320), whose brevity and artfulness ensured that modern critics, especially the New Critics of the twentieth century, would devote more attention to it than to any other single medieval religious lyric.[1] "Nou Goth Sonne" was also widely disseminated

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[1] Examples of the lavish critical attention expended upon the scant four lines of "Nou goth Sonne," particularly during the mid-twentieth century, include: Stephen Manning, "'Nou goth Sonne vnder wod'" (see Introduction, this dissertation), 578-581, and *Wisdom and Number* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 80-84; W.B. Lockwood, "A Note on the Middle English 'Sunset on Calvary,': Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik 9 (1961): 410-12; Peter Dronke, *The Medieval Lyric* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 265; Rosemary Woolf,

during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, having been interpolated into all but

two of the eighty surviving Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English manuscripts of the *Speculum*

Ecclesie/Mirour de seinte eglyse family as well as into that text's print incunabula. There are

more extant medieval copies of "Nou Goth Sonne" than of any other Middle English

religious poem—so that it can be reasonably inferred that the quatrain was as popular among

medieval readers as it has been among twentieth- and twenty-first-century readers.

The second contender is a 171-line poem, *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* ("A Good

Prayer to Our Lady)," (Brown XIII, no. 3, *Index* 631) that has received scarcely any modern

critical attention at all.[2] In fact its very existence seems to have been forgotten by many

critics, although it was edited and published, first by Richard Morris in 1868,[3] and then by

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The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages (see Introduction, this dissertation), 242; Raymond Oliver, *Poems Without Names* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 61, n. 1; Theodore Silverstein, ed., *Medieval English Lyrics*, (see Introduction, this dissertation), 5-6); Douglas Gray, *Themes and Images in the Medieval Religious Lyric* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 139; Edmund Reiss, *The Art of the Middle English Lyric* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 15-22; Bennett, J.A.W., *Poetry of the Passion* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 34-37; Susan Innes, "The Flower of God: A Note on Line 2 of 'Now Goth Sonne Under Wode,'" *Notes and Queries* 23 (1985): 130-1. Carleton Brown invented a title for the quatrain, *Sunset on Calvary*, and gave it pride of place as the first entry (no. 1) in his *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*. Brown chose to publish the version of the quatrain contained in Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Arch. Selden Supra 74, fol. 55v. This manuscript, dating to the second half of the thirteenth century, preserves, at fols. 44r-59r, a version of the "A," or "religious" recension of *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, in the terminology of A.D. Wilshere (see ch. 2 of this dissertation). Brown's edition thus represents an early and presumably reliable version of the quatrain, although, in fact, there is almost no variation, except in orthography, in the texts of any of the dozens of manuscripts preserving the quatrain. Its brevity undoubtedly accounts for this, but it is also likely that its scribes did not wish to tamper with its succinctness and emotive power. Because Brown's edition of the quatrain remains definitive, so does the orthography of Selden Supra 74 for the quatrain's critics (it will be used herein), although it is interesting to note that neither Helen Forshaw's edition of *Speculum ecclesie* nor A.D. Wilshere's edition of *Mirour* uses Selden Supra 74 as a base manuscript.

[2] References to *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* are absent from most twentieth- and twenty-first-century criticism. An exception is a passing reference in Richard H. Osberg, "Collocation and Theme in the Middle Englissh Lyric 'Foweles in þe Frith,'" *Modern Language Quarterly* 46 (1985): 115-27. Osberg describes *On god ureisun* as a "thirteenth-century devotional piece" at 117.

[3] *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (see ch. 3 of this dissertation). The text of the poem, with Morris's *en face* translation into modern English, appears on 190-99.

Carleton Brown in 1932.[4] *On god ureisun* merits more critical attention than it has hitherto received, for it provides important evidence of the scribal and literary context in which the first Middle English religious lyrics were written.

The two lyrics represent contrasting literary strategies. "Nou goth sonne" is incorporated into and made a thematic part of an existing prose meditative work. As a brief and succinct quatrain, it is part of a distinctively English literary tradition that can be traced, in terms of stylistic similarity, to the three surviving brief English hymns attributed to the twelfth-century Northern English hermit Godric of Finchale, that in turn likely had their origins in Latin hymnology. The far longer *On god ureisun* is a uniquely surviving English exemplar of a Francophone literary, but primarily musical, genre, the lai, that flourished on the Continent, in France and elsewhere, during the thirteenth century. Nonetheless, although the author of *On god ureisun* displayed in his work his consciousness of contributing to a distinct musical tradition (although it is probable that he did not write his poem to be sung), the anonymous scribe who produced the sole manuscript version of that lyric chose to append it to a manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*, indicating his belief that the lyric was designed not so much to be sung as to be read contemplatively as an appendix to *Ancrene Wisse*. That scribe followed his transcription of *On god ureisun* with the texts of several brief English prose meditations that modern scholars have deemed components of the so-called Wooing Group. In so doing, the scribe created a devotional miscellany of a sort that became commonplace in thirteenth-century English manuscripts. Thus, the two earliest surviving English lyrics, although both of derivative of musical forms vastly different in shape and genre, had in common the belief of their scribes that they could serve a devotional purpose when read in a

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[4] Brown XIII.

devotional context. The two English lyrics can thus be seen as springing from the same English devotional and meditative tradition that had given rise to *Ancrene Wisse* and *Mirour de seinte eglyse* perhaps a generation before the lyrics were written.

On god ureisun will be considered first. It survives only in the "Nero" manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* (British Library, MS Cotton Nero A.xiv, fols. 120v-123v), immediately following the end of the text of *Ancrene Wisse* itself. As Mabel Day, modern editor of the Nero *Ancrene Wisse*, has pointed out, the compact Nero manuscript contains only 139 leaves, of which the first and last four are flyleaves, and of the remaining 131, *Ancrene Wisse* occupies the vast bulk (fols. 1-120v).[5] As Day has also noted, the Nero manuscript was the handiwork of only two scribes, one of whom was responsible for the entire *Ancrene Wisse*, and the other of whom filled up the remaining eleven leaves of Nero with shorter texts.

The two Nero scribes worked in tandem, at least on the page (fol. 120v), where *Ancrene Wisse* ends on the very same line (line 13) of the manuscript on which the title of *On god ureisun* appears. The first scribe completed his version of *Ancrene Wisse* with a colophon found in no other manuscript of that work, asking his readers: "ase ofte ase ȝe readeð out o þisse boc: greteð þe lefdi mid one aue marie uor him þet makede þeos riwle. and for him þet hire wrot and swonc her abuten. Inouh meðful ich am: þet bidde so lutel. ["As often as you read out of this book, greet Our Lady with one Ave Maria for him who made this 'rule' and for him who wrote it and toiled over it. I am rewarded enough, I who ask for so

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[5] For a full citation to Day's edition of the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*, see ch. 3 of this dissertation. For Day's analysis of the Nero manuscript, see ix-xxiv of her edition.

little.]"[6] The second scribe aptly followed those words with a prayer to Our Lady, *On god Ureisun*. Indeed, the first scribe had carefully made room for the second scribe to take over, writing the last three words of his colophon, "bidde so lutel" on the far right of line 13, leaving the rest of the line blank for the second scribe to fill with his title (indeed, that first scribe, whose spacing of individual letters was more generous that of his successor, left more than enough space in the line). .

After finishing *On god ureisun* on fol. 123v of the manuscript, the second Nero scribe wrote the three prose texts that, along with *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* from the Titus manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*, make up the Wooing Group: *Þis is on wel swuðe god ureisun of God almihti* (fols. 123v-126v), *On lofsong of ure lefdi* (fols 126v.-128r), and *On lofsong of ure louerde* (fols. 128r-131r). All three titles, like the title *On god ureisun of ure lefdi*, are those given their texts by the second Nero scribe. The four titles make it clear that this scribe had a clear structural design in mind in arranging the four works: an "ureisun," or "prayer," to Mary, followed by an "ureisun," or "prayer," to Christ, followed by a "lofsong,," or "song of praise," to Mary, followed by a "lofsong," or "song of praise," to Christ. Yet *On god ureisun*, the prayer to Mary that precedes the other three texts, is not classified as part of the Wooing Group. This makes no sense, for *On god ureisun* is clearly an integral and textually substantial part of the four post-*Ancrene Wisse* devotions in Nero, two addressed to Christ and two addressed to Mary. At a length of six manuscript pages, *On gGod ureisun* is also

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[6] *Ibid.*, 296, ll. 18-21.

about the same length as the three other Nero texts. Yet the critics who have commented

extensively on the three prose texts have simply ignored *On god ureisun*.[7]

The reason for that is simple: the so-called Wooing Group is essentially the creation

of W. Meredith Thompson,[8] who cobbled it together out of *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*,

found in one early manuscript (Titus) of *Ancrene Wisse* and the three other prose texts found

in another (Nero). Thompson's stitching together of texts from different manuscripts,

preserved in his critical edition of *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* for the Early English English

Text Society in 1958, was not entirely adventitious, for the Titus and Nero manuscripts are

fairly closely related to each other textually, and both preserve fairly faithfully the "AB"

scribal mannerisms and diction that characterize the earlier Corpus and Cleopatra

manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse*. Furthermore, Thompson correctly identified certain themes

and literary features that the four works he assembled into the Wooing Group have in

common: they are all highly lyrical and highly affective prose works centering on "the

tradition of the mystical marriage of the Heavenly Bridegroom with Holy Church or the

human soul"[9] and they link that marriage to the extreme suffering of Christ in his passion,

seen as an utterly selfless outpouring of human love. The *God ureisun of God almihti*, for

example, addresses Christ in intensely amorous terms: "Swete iesu mi leof. mi lif. mi leome.

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[7] Ann Savage and Nicholas Watson, for example, assign no place to *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* in the trajectory of increasing anchoritic spirituality that they discerned in the ten texts comprising the Katherine Group, *Ancrene Wisse*, and the Wooing Group (the *Wohunge* together with the three Nero prose texts), with the four components of the Wooing Group exemplifying the most purely anchoritic texts of all, according to Savage and Watson. See *Anchoritic Spirituality* (ch. 3 of this dissertation). *On god ureisun* would, of course, constitute an eleventh text that does not quite fit.

[8] The very name "Wooing Group" is Thompson's own coinage. He wrote, "This designation is especially chosen because these pieces are all concerned with wooing (praise, and especially, supplication)." See Introduction, *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, xiv, n. 1 (for a full citation of this edition, see ch. 3 of this dissertation).

[9] *Ibid.*, xiii.

min healewei. min huni ter....Let me beon þi leomon. & ler me for to louien þe liuinde louerd....hwi ne bihold ich hu þu streihetest þe for me on þe rode ? hwi ne worpe ich me bi tweonen þeoilke ermes so swiðe wiðe to spredde. & openeð so þe moder deð her ermes. hir leoue child for to bi cluppen? [Sweet Jesus, my love, my life, my light, my healing, my honey drop....Let me be your leman and teach me to love the living lord.....Why do I not behold how you stretch yourself out for me on the cross? Why do I not cast myself between those same arms spread so wide and opened as a mother opens her arms to embrace her beloved child?]"[10] These lines from the Nero manuscript recall similar lines from the *Wohunge* in the Titus manuscript.

Also similar in tone and theme are these lines from Nero's *On lofsong of ure louerde*: "auh leue me ðet ich mote soðliche seggen wið ðe meiden þet of þe seið þeors wordes. Mi leofmonnes luft erm halt up min heaued heo seið. & his riht erm schal bi-clupen me abuten. let me beo þi leouemon....[Grant me that I may truly say with the maiden who said these words concerning you: 'My leman's left arm holds up my head,' she said, 'and his right arm shall embrace me about.' Let me be your leman....]" The *Lofsong of ure lefdi* also rehearses Christ's passion as contemplated in detail by the narrator: "bi þe holie rode. bihis side openunge. bi his blodi Rune þet ron inne monie studen [by the holy cross, by the opening in his side, by his bloody stream that ran in many places]." As Thompson pointed out, the three prose texts at the end of the Nero manuscript have in common, besides their themes of affective contemplation of Christ's crucifixion (which they also have in common with the *Wohunge* and with *Ancrene Wisse*), their rhythmic, frequently alliterative style and their frequent use of such rhetorical devices as antithesis and anaphora. Furthermore, each of the

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 5, ll. 4-5, 19-20; 6, ll. 47-51.

three prose texts in Nero is a first-person prayer (as is the *Wohunge*) whose narrator

recapitulates the sufferings of Christ and his mother as the narrator's own empathetic

experience. None of the three Nero prose texts is quite so intense or dramatic as the

Wohunge, but they are similar to it in feeling. Even if Thompson's judgment that the four

works assembled from two manuscripts of *Ancrene Wisse* constitute a unified "group" can be

disputed, the four works do represent a distinct devotional genre. All four are highly affective

first-person prose meditations whose themes echo those of the second- and third-person prose

meditations in *Ancrene Wisse*.

Thompson deliberately excluded the poem *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* from the

Wooing Group. He wrote, "*On God Ureisun of ure Lefdi*...is not here included, because it is

in rhymed and metred couplets, and is in other ways very different from this group."[11] Yet it

is clear that although *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* did not fit Thompson's structural design for

the collection of texts that he called the Wooing Group,[12] it very much fit the structural

design of the scribe who copied it into the Nero manuscript. That scribe paired that lyric

prayer addressed to Mary (and written in the first person like the three Nero prose texts) with

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[11] *Ibid.*, xiv, n. 1.

[12] Besides omitting the *God ureisun of ure lefdi*, Thompson also deliberately rearranged the order of the Nero prose texts as they appear in the Nero manuscript for his critical edition of the Wooing Group for the Early English Text Society. He led off with the *God ureisun of God almihti* from Nero and its shorter version in Lambeth MS 487, following with the *Lofsong of ure louerde* from Nero and then the *Lofsong of ure lefdi* from Nero and its shorter version in British Library, Royal MS 17.A.xxvii. The *Wohunge* (from Titus) is the Wooing Group's culminating work in Thompson's edition. The order in which Thompson arranged the texts obscures the arrangement chosen by the Nero scribe and the important place of the *God ureisun of ure lefdi* in that arrangement as the prayer to Mary that precedes the prayer to Christ. Thompson believed that the *Wohunge*, the *God ureisun of god almihti*, and the *Lofsong of ure louerde* had possibly been written by (as well as for) "devout women" (Introduction, xiii.). The fact that the author of <u>*On god ureisun of ure lefdi*</u> identified himself as a "monk" ("Munuch," l. 169) would not accord with his ascription of likely female authorship to the other three English texts in Nero. Similarly, Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson omit *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* from the trajectory of increasing anchoritic focus that they discern in the Katherine Group, *Ancrene Wisse*, and the Wooing Group, with (as was the case for Thompson) *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* as the culminating and therefore most supremely anchoritic work of all. See ch. 3 of this dissertation..

the similarly titled prayer to Christ *God ureisun of God almihti*. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that the other Nero scribe, the scribe who left room in his last line after finishing his colophon to *Ancrene Wisse* for the second scribe to take up the prayer to the "Lady" to which the first scribe had alluded, also had a structural design for the manuscript to which he had contributed the overwhelming bulk. This design, clearly evident in the Nero manuscript itself, bears examination, for it contains clues as the purpose for which *On god ureisun of ure lefdi*, one of the earliest Middle English lyrics of any kind, was written.

For one thing, it is unlikely that the second Nero scribe was the author of any of the four English texts in Nero that are his scribal handiwork. Two of those texts also appear in other thirteenth-century manuscripts, although in somewhat shorter versions. *On wel swuðe god ureisun of God almihti* is in Lambeth MS 487, fols 65v-674r with the title *On ureisun of ure louerde*. The *lofsong of ure lefdi* appears in British Library, MS Royal 17 A.xxvii under the title *Here cumseð þe oreisun of seinte Marie*. It is not unreasonable to assume that *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* and *On lofsong of ure louerde* were not original compositions either. This suggests that the last nine folios of the Nero manuscript constitute a carefully assembled, arranged, and titled collection of texts that were already in existence when the second scribe set them down. Certainly *Ancrene Wisse*, the work that occupies the first 120 folios of the Nero manuscript, was already in existence.

The fact that the second scribe chose those texts and formed from them a symmetrical quartet of literarily related works is additional evidence that the Nero manuscript is not necessarily an anchoritic work but rather a devotional compilation from divers sources, the product of a collaboration between the first and second scribes whose intended audience

might or might not have been anchoresses. It is only when one mentally severs the three Nero prose meditations from the artificial construct of the Wooing Group and places them into their proper context—as of a piece with the manuscript's English poetic meditation *On god ureisun of ure lefdi*—that one can see that no text in Nero is necessarily a work of "anchoritic spirituality." Even the *Wohunge* itself, in which the narrator seems to be female and refers to her body as "sperred querfaste wið inne fowr wahes," is uniquely found in a manuscript in which *Ancrene Wisse* has been revised for male readers.

Furthermore, *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* is unique among the surviving thirteenth-century English religious lyrics in that its author takes pains in the poem itself to identify himself, if not by name, by his religious profession as a monk. In a parallel to the colophon of *Ancrene Wisse* in the same manuscript, in which the scribe asks his readers to pray to "þe lefdi" Mary for him, the author of *On god ureisun*, in its two antepenultimate lines asks Mary to bring him to joy with her ("Þet þu bringe...to þire glednesse"), informing his readers that he is "þene Munuch...þet funde ðesne song bi ðe, mi loue leafdi [the monk...who constructed this song concerning you, my beloved lady]."[13] The explicit male identity of the "Munuch" and the lack of any conceivable allusion to a specifically female audience for the poem militates against any reading of *On god ureisun* as an anchoritic work (and *pari passu*, any designation of the Nero manuscript as a whole as a compilation intended solely for anchoresses). The monk's self-identification emphasizes as well the author's sense of his own particularity; as narrator, he is not simply a generic abject sinner begging Mary's intercession but a distinct and particular individual. The author of *On god ureisun* not only recalls Aelred

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[13] Brown XIII, no. 3, at 8, ll. 169-70.

of Rievaulx's sense of his own autobiographical particularity in *De institutione inclusarum*, but displays a pride of authorship in a work of literary art.

This scribe who copied *On god ureisun* onto the Nero manuscript (if he was indeed a copyist and not the author himself) was quite aware of its literary qualities and pretensions. Unlike the three prose texts that follow *Ancrene Wisse* in Nero, *On god ureisun* is carefully transcribed as poetry, one line per ruled line on the manuscript page. The intitial letter of each line is a small rubricated capital followed by a space and then the rest of the line, leaving considerable blank space on the right side of the page. On the left side of the page the capitals form a column of their own. This was a common and highly distinctive scribal practice for transcribing secular French verse in Gothic book hands during the thirteenth century, partly because the manuscripts preserving secular romances were typically luxury fare for the upper classes who could afford to waste parchment by leaving blank spaces,[14] but it was anomalous for English verse during those centuries unless that verse was accompanied by musical notation. As Anthony S.G. Edwards has noted, the custom of pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon scribes had been to transcribe English poetry as though it were prose (because Old English poetry was not rhyme-based like the French verse of the high Middle Ages, lineation was not important to those scribes), and partly because English was a basilect of dubious cultural and literary status in Anglo-Norman England and likely deemed unworthy of special treatment in manuscripts. As Edwards has further noted, the linguistically conservative West Midlands where *Ancrene Wisse* and its related texts were

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[14] M. Dominica Legge, <u>Anglo-Norman Literature and Its Background</u> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 367-68.

composed tended to preserve pre-Conquest scribal and orthographic practices.[15] The

common practice in transcribing non-musical English poetry during the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries, even when that poetry was composed in couplets in the fashion of French and

Latin, was to write it out continuously, using only a *punctus elevatus* to mark off

line endings.

Not until the very end of the thirteenth century, in, for example, Oxford University,

Bodleian Library MS Digby 86, a Latin/Anglo-Norman/English verse and prose compilation

possibly produced for a gentry household[16] (and transcribed in the formal-cursive Anglicana

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[15] Anthony S.G. Edwards, "Editing in Manuscript Form: Middle English Verse Written as Prose," *English Studies in Canada* 27 (2001); 15-28. Edwards notes, for example, that Laȝamon's Brut follows "Old English conventions of verse transcription" in both its thirteenth-century manuscripts (18). Both of those manuscripts, British Library Cotton Caligula A.ix and Cotton Otho C.xiii, were copied by scribes in the west of English (Caligula A.ix comes from Worcestershire in the northern West Midlands, while Otho C.xiii is from Somersetshire). Edwards also notes that some of the "Harley lyrics," the Middle English poems found in British Library Harley MS 2253, another West Midlands manuscript dating to the early fourteenth century, are written out as prose, even though the Harley manuscript elsewhere indicates that space on the page was not a constraint for its well-off owner. Edwards ascribes the propensity of the scribes of western England to prosify English verse to what he refers to as a pattern of western "regional recidivism" and "scribal resistance" to Anglo-Norman cultural hegemony (17-18). This is in essence a restatement of J.R.R. Tolkien's argument that the "AB" language of the Bodley manuscript of the Katherine Group and the Corpus manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* was a product of a holdout in the west of England to the cultural and linguistic sea-changes that the Norman Conquest effected elsewhere. Seth Lerer also discerns what he calls a "form of resistance, a defense of the vernacular against the imposition of the foreign" in thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century lyrics that are arguably secular, many of which make frequent use of alliteration (and thus recall Old English poetry) and are almost always written out as prose unless notated musically. "The Genre of the Grave and Origins of the Middle English Lyric" (see Introduction to this dissertation). Lerer argues that the themes of alienation, physical decay, mortality, and lover's lament found in such lyrics as "Foweles in the friþ" ("birds in the wood," Brown XIII, no. 8), "Mirie it is while sumer ilast" ("merry it is while summer lasts," Brown XIII, no. 7), "Wen þe turuf is þi tuur," ("when the turf is your tower," Brown XIII, no. 30), and "Bryd one brere" ("bird on a briar," Rossell Hope Robbins, ed., *Secular Lyrics of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952, 146-47) bespeak the fact that the poems' real theme is "a country stripped of its familiarities, an exile now internal and...a language and a landscape taken over" by William the Conqueror's Norman lords and their Francophone descendants (152).

[16] Judith Tschann and M.B. Parkes characterize Digby 86, a collection of prayers, medical prescriptions, prognostications, romances, a fabliau (*Dame Sirith*), tidbits of humorous information, and lyrics both secular and religious, as a "layman's commonplace book." *Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86,* introduction by Judith Tschann and M.B. Parkes, Early English Text Society, s.s., 16 (Oxford *et al.*: Oxford University Press, 1996), x. John Frankis, who notes that Digby 86 is almost entirely the product of a single hand, argues that although its audience might have been a lay household, its author was probably a cleric, possibly a private chaplain in a Worcestershire manor; Frankis notes that he first eight leaves of Digby 86 constitute a confessional manual and that the content of the manuscript is "fundamentally devout," despite the

hand characteristic of nearly all fourteenth-century literary English vernacular manuscripts,

does one see English lyric poetry (except in the presence of musical notation) written in

poetic lineation with initial capitals heading each line. To see such lines in an austerely

produced early-to-mid-thirteenth-century manuscript such as Nero A.xiv is to witness

something quite surprising for its time: a scribe who, although writing in English, considered

the text he transcribed to be part of an aristocratic French scribal tradition.

Furthermore, the author of *On god ureisun* considered his work to be part of an

aristocratic French literary tradition. He styled his poem an "englissce lai"—an English *lai*—

addressing Mary: "ich habbe i-sungen þe ðesne englissce lai [I have sung to you this English

lai.]"[17] With evident pride of authorship he identified and boldly included his own poem in a

genre that was at its height of creative development on the other side of the English Channel

during the early thirteenth century, with the flourishing of the French *trouvères* and the

German *Meistersinger*. The French *lai* was a bifurcated genre. On the one hand, the word

"lai" referred to the rhymed (in octosyllabic couplets) and relatively brief "Breton" and

Arthurian narratives, courtly in theme and fairy tale-like in plot, of Marie de France and her

imitators; Marie's *lais* might have been meant to be sung, but there is no surviving music

associated with them. Coexisting with the narrative *lai* was the lyrical *lai*, an even shorter

(ranging in length from about fifty to about 250 lines) rhymed form extant in both Old

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ribald aspects of some of its individual texts. "The Social Context of Vernacular Writing in Thirteenth Century England (see Introduction to this dissertation).

[17] Brown XIII, no. 3, l.67.

French and Old Provençal manuscripts. The *lai* was both a poetic and a musical genre, and the word "lai" could refer to a melody, an instrumental piece, a song, or a poem.[18]

The origins of the lyrical *lai* are obscure. The British and Breton settings of Marie's narrative *lais*, along with the appearance of the word "lai" in twelfth-century narrative romances with Arthurian themes have led some scholars to speculate on a Celtic origin for the lyrical genre, although there are no surviving pre-twelfth-century Welsh or Breton songs that could be said to be precursors of the lyrical *lai*.[19] The most that can be said is that Marie and the romance-writers of the twelfth century consistently referred to the *lai* as a kind of Breton, or perhaps British, song or melody, and that there might have been some connection between the *lai* and the lyrical intermissions in Irish prose sagas that bore the name *laíd* or *loíd* (although there are no surviving Welsh or Breton analogues to the Irish sagas). More certain is the fact that the lyrical *lai*, like many other kinds of Latin and vernacular songs of

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[18] Jean Maillard points out that the word "lai" first appears in Wace's Anglo-Norman *Roman de Brut*, written in about 1155, where it refers to an instrumental melody. "Lai/Leich," in *Gattungen der Musik in Einzeldarstellungen: Gedenkschrift Leo Schrade*, vol. 1, ed. Wulf Arlt *et al.*, 323-45, (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1973). Olive Sayce notes that the titles of two surviving French lyrical *lais* from the thirteenth century match the titles of Marie's twelfth-century narrative lais: the anonymous "Lai des amans" (Alfred Jeanroy, ed., *Lais et descorts français du XIIIe siècle: texte et musique*, Paris: Welter, 1901, repr. New York: AMS Press, 1976, no. 20) shares its title with Marie's *Lai de deus amans*, and the *Lai du chèvrefeuille* (Jeanroy, no. 22) shares its title with Marie's *Lai du chievrefoil*. Olive Sayce, *The Medieval German Lyric, 1150-1300: The Development of Its Themes and Forms in Their European Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 358. See also, generally, E. de Coussemaker, *Histoire de l'harmonie au moyen âge* (Paris, 1882, rpr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966).

[19] The surviving Old French lyrical *lais* are collected in Jeanroy (n. 18) and Arthur Långfors, ed., "Mélanges de poésie lyrique français," *Romania* 53 (1927): 474-538. Critical discussion of the lyric *lai* and its possible origins appears in Maillard and Sayce (n. 18); Ardis Butterfield, *Poetry and Music in Medieval France: From Jean Renart to Guillaume de Machaut* (Cambridge, U.K., *et al.:* Cambridge University Press, 2002); Patrick S. Diehl, *The Medieval European Religious Lyric* (see Introduction, this dissertation), 82-104; Peter Dronke, The Medieval Lyric (see Introduction, this dissertation), and "Types of Poetic Art in Tropes," ch. 7 in *Latin and Vernacular Poets of the Middle Ages* (Hampshire, U.K., and Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1991), originally Originally published in *Liturgische Tropen*, Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung 56 (Munich: Arbeo-Gesellschaft, 1985); John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama,1050-1350* (Cambridge Studies in Music. Cambridge, U.K., *et al.*: Cambridge University Press, 1986). The technical analysis and musical and literary history herein of the lyrical *lai* and its possible model, the liturgical sequence, derive from the above-cited secondary works.

the high Middle Ages (exemplified in the eleventh- and twelfth-century Latin compilations

known as the *Cambridge Songs* and the multilingual thirteenth-century compilation known as

Carmina burana), were literarily and musically related to the Latin liturgical sequence.[20]

This musical form became a part of the Carolingian liturgy during the ninth century as an

ornamental addition to the increasingly melismatic sung "Alleluia" that preceded the reading

of the Gospel in the elaborate Masses celebrated on Christmas, Easter, and other solemn feast

days of the church. (The Latin word "sequentia" referred to material that followed the

Alleluia preceding the Gospel of the Mass--either to the Alleluia's own melismatic extra

notes or to the additional lyrics.)

The typical Carolingian sequence consisted of a single-line initial stanza, or strophe,

followed by a series of any number of rhyming (or assonance-linked) pairs of stanzas

followed by a single-line concluding stanza. As for the pairs of stanzas, the only prosodic

requirement was that their last syllables rhyme; there was no set meter, and the number of

syllables in each of the two lines of the responses, or stanza-pairs, did not have to be

identical (although many sequences were in fact isosyllabic), for it was typically only the

end-rhymes (or end-assonances), and the symmetrical (although not identical) music for each

stanza that bound the couplet together metrically and harmonically, along with the fact that

sequences were always sung antiphonally. As music, the sequence was characterized by its

composers' practice of assigning a separate melodic note to every syllable (this distinguished

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[20] It should be noted that Jeanroy (n. 18), whose critical edition of thirteenth-century French lyrical lais remains canonical after more than a century, adamantly rejected the theory that the lai and the sequence were formally related and insisted on a Celtic (likely Breton) secular provenance for the lyric lai (xix-xxviii). Later critics, including Maillard, Diehl, Butterfield, and Sayce (see n. 19) disagree or are less certain. Olive Sayce (n. 19) has noted the existence of Latin secular sequences with classical themes in the *Cambridge Songs* and *Carmina burana*, evidence that the authors of secular poems used religious exemplars.

the sequence from Gregorian chant and also the melodic tropes, or sung parts of the Mass, that characterized the Carolingian liturgy); there was no melisma in the sequence.

As Patrick Diehl has pointed out, the sequence's lack of firm attachment to the proper of the Mass, as well as its loose prosody, made it an ideal vehicle for poetic innovation.[21] The finest maker of Carolingian sequences, Notker Balbulus (ca. 840-ca. 912), a monk at St. Gall in today's Switzerland, composed many lyrics that seemed detached from the liturgy altogether and tending, rather, to follow Notker's "particular interests" as a poet and maker of music.[22] Most of Notker's sequences centered on Christmas and Eastertide, anticipating (as Diehl has also noted) the themes relating to Christ's redemption that characterized the vast majority of the vernacular religious lyrics of the later Middle Ages. Notker's sequences seem to have been only a step away from fully independent hymns that had no liturgical connection at all. The sequence, perhaps alone of all liturgical forms in the West, allowed its creators to impose their individual stamps and even their individual identities upon the lyrics they fashioned; it was a potentially self-conscious form that encouraged poetic artistry and innovation, and also, as Notker's example attests, the ascription of the composers' names to their creations. By the beginning of the twelfth century, the sequence had inspired the composition of other genres of non-liturgical sequence-like hymns, such as the *planctus*, a lament of Mary or other biblical figures; Peter Abelard was a composer of both sequences and *planctus*.

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[21] *The Medieval Religious Lyric* (n. 19), 83-84.

[22] F. Llewellyn Harrison points out that the melodies of the early sequences, especially Notker's, were based on existing tunes, probably secular tunes, and the manuscript evidence indicates the existence of several sequence-texts for some melodies; thus began the practice of *contrafactura,* the deliberate creation of new texts for existing music, according to Harrison. "Introduction to the Music," *Medieval English Songs*, ed. E.J. Dobson and F. Llewellyn Harrison (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 77-78.

Also during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries the composers of sequences began to impose strict metrical regularity on the form, so that sequences tended to look like ordinary hymns. The typical pattern of the new "Victorine" sequence, named for one of its most artful early practitioners, Adam of St. Victor (d. 1146), consisted of paired stanzas in tail-rhyme, each individual stanza consisting of two rhyming eight-syllable trochaic lines (rather like an octosyllabic couplet in the vernacular) followed by a single catalectic trochaic line of seven syllables; the two concluding seven-syllable-lines in each stanza-pair rhymed with each other. Musically every stanza in a Victorine sequence was identical, a feature that made it similar to the hymn and distinguished it from its less regular Carolingian predecessor. The Victorine sequence inherited nonetheless a number of features of the Carolingian sequence: its dyadic structure, its function in the Mass, and its assignment of a separate musical note to every syllable.

The lyrical *lai* as it developed in Provence and France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries shared with the Latin sequence the dyadic structure of strophic responsion: paired stanzas arranged as rhyming couplets, often with internal rhyme as well. The *lai* also resembled the sequence and the *planctus* musically, to the point that Latin *planctus* were sometimes adapted as vernacular *lais*; F. Llewellyn Harrison has made a detailed analysis of technical parallels in the cadences and music units among sequences, *planctus*, and *lais* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[23] The *lai*'s development over time was also something like that of sequence. The earliest *lais*, like the earliest sequences, were highly irregular metrically, featuring varying numbers of stanzas and also varying line-

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[23] *Ibid.*, 83-89. Harrison attributes these parallels in part to cross-borrowing of tunes. The anonymous thirteenth-century secular *Lai des pucelles* (Jeanroy, no. 23) closely follows Peter Abelard's *Planctus virginum*, whose theme is Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter in the Book of Judges.

lengths in the stanzas themselves (which often employed internal as well as end-rhyme),

until, during the early fourteenth century the poet and musician Guillaume de Machaut (ca

1300-1377) standardized the *lai* as twelve sections of two to four stanza pairs. Alfred Jeanroy

distinguished another feature of the *lai*: what he called "le trouble le plus extrème & une

sorte de déséquilibrement produit par la rapide succession de sentiments contraires."[24]

Extreme emotion and swings of emotion were characteristic features of the *lai*. A third

defining feature of the lyric *lai* was its solemnity. Although the theme of the lyrical *lai* was

often courtly love, and the *lai* itself often addressed to the unattainable beloved who was a

standard figure in courtly-love literature, the *lai* seemed to have been just as commonly a

religious form.[25] Of twenty surviving French lyrics from the thirteenth century that style

themselves *lais* in either their texts or their rubrics, only half are secular in theme, and only

one of those secular *lais* has a named author: the *trouvère* Gautier de Dargies (ca. 1165-

1236),[26] who seemed to have chosen the designation of *lai* for his poem because it treats of a

sorrowful theme; it is the poet's lament for his dead beloved.

The named secular writers of the thirteenth century who wrote strophic lyrics in

French and Provençal preferred to style their songs as *descorts* (from the Latin "discors,"

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[24] Introduction, Jeanroy (n. 18), vii.

[25] The tabulation is Olive Sayce's, derived from her analysis of the thirty poems classified as *lais* or *descorts* in Jeanroy (n. 18) together with two others collected by Långfors (n. 18). Sayce notes that eighteen poems in Jeanroy's collection are ascribed to named authors, while twelve are anonymous.. Of those thirty, five poems by named authors and three anonymous texts treat religious themes. The two additional texts found by Långfors are anonymous and religious, bringing the total of religious poems to ten. Sayce points out that the word <u>lai</u> does not appear in any of thirteen secular poems by the named authors in Jeanroy, with the exception of Jeanroy, no. 2, by Gautier de Dargies (who refers to the "lé" he has composed in the forty-fourth of his forty-seven lines). Gautier's *lai* is a lament over the death of his beloved, and Sayce notes that funereal laments are associated with the sequence in the *Cambridge Songs* and *Carmina burana*. Of the nine anonymous secular poems in Jeanroy, most have the designation *lai* in their opening or closing formulas or in their rubrics, Sayce points out. *The Medieval German Lyric*, 346-68.

[26] See n. 24.

meaning "disharmonious") and calling to mind not only lovers' quarrels but the social and psychic disharmony inherent in amorous fixation upon an unattainable and in many cases, married love-object).[27] The *descort* resembled the *lai* in that it consisted of rhyming pairs of lines, but the composers sometimes used the same monorhyme for six or eight lines in a row, giving their verses a light-hearted, almost humorous quality entirely lacking in the *lai*.[28] It is almost as though the famous secular *trouvères* of the thirteenth century, knights and vavasours who celebrated a form of love that was, at least literarily speaking, adulterous, shunned the word "lai" with its quasi-religious literary associations. It would be a mistake, however, to assert that the *lai* could have been deemed a religious or even quasi-religious form, for two of the best-known anonymous thirteenth-century *lais* (so styled in their manuscript rubrics), the *Lai de la pastourelle* and the *Lai d'Aélis*, deal with romantic love, and indeed in the case of the former, outright seduction.[29] Nonetheless, the authors, whether named or anonymous, of the ten religious *lais* that survive from the thirteenth century never styled their works *descorts*, suggesting that they drew a distinction between the venerational form of the former and the more playful form of the latter.

The religious *lai*, as it developed in France, and indeed elsewhere in Western Europe during the thirteenth century, was nearly exclusively Marian in theme.[30] Of the ten extant

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[27] Jeanroy argued that the *descort* was simply a Midi version of the *lai* (xv-xvi), and that the French *trouvères* who used the word "descort in their lyrics were simply following a Provençal fashion.

[28] Some Carolingian sequences, however, also featured extremely short lines (perhaps consisting of a single word) and monorhymes.

[29] These two *lais* are published as Jeanroy, nos. 14 and 15. Notably, the *Lai de la Pastourelle* is actually a first-person narrative related by a knight who decides to comfort a lovely shepherdess longing for the return of her absent rustic swain by availing himself of whatever kisses and other carnal favors he can wrest from her.

[30] The tenth is Ernoul le Vieux's *Lai de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament*, Jeanroy, no. 18.

thirteenth-century religious *lais* from France, eight are addressed to Mary as prayers, and a

ninth[31] is an anonymous lament of 100 lines spoken by Mary to Jesus on the cross. Although

several critics have dismissed the thirteenth-century French Marian *lais* as artistically

mediocre graftings of the rhetoric and conventions of courtly love upon Mary viewed as the

ultimate courtly lady,[32] such an assessment slights the genre, whose theme is typically not

simply Mary's grandeur and perfection, but her boundless pity for the abject sinner-speaker,

as in these poignant lines from the Marian *lai* of Thibaut (1201-1253), count of Champagne

and king of Navarre:

> Et j'ai forfait, douce dame,
> A perdre le cors & ame.
> Se ne m'aidiés,
> Dous Diex, de mes vix pechiés,
> Ou sera mercis trovee,
> S'ele est de vous refusee,
> Qui tant valés? [33]

As this excerpt from Thibaut's lyric indicates, the Marian *lai* of the thirteenth century was

never simply a courtly encomium to Mary but a plea for her intercession theologically

grounded in her capacity for pity that could gainsay even God's justice.[34]

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[31] Jeanroy, no. 29.

[32] This is the assessment of Patrick Diehl (n. 19), 97. Pierre Bec argues that the twelfth- and thirteenth-century French religious lyric in general cannot be described as an autonomous genre, but is entirely derivative in theme, style, and imagery on secular song and poetry. Pierre Bec, *La lyrique française au moyen âge (XIIe-XIIIc siècles): Contribution a un typologie des genres poétiques médiévaux*, vol. 1 (Paris: Picard, 1977), 149-50.

[33] Jeanroy, no. 14, ll. 16-21: "And I have deserved, sweet lady, to lose both body and soul. If you do not rescue me from my wretched sins—sweet God, where will mercy be found if it is refused by you who are so worthy?"

[34] Daniel E. O'Sullivan reminds the readers of Marian *lais* that despite the songs' theological content, the melodies of the *lais* were typically adaptations of secular songs, and that thirteenth-century hearers of the *lais* would have been inescapably aware of an undercurrent of secular themes (such as the amorous pleas of a courtly lover) even as those listeners responded to the *lais*' theological and devotional language. Daniel E. O'Sullivan, *Marian Devotion in Thirteenth-Century French Lyric* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 4-8.

Among the Middle High German poet-composers who were the contemporaries of the French *trouvères*, the religious *leich*, as the *lai* was called, became a highly sophisticated literary and musical form whose authors included the most skilled literary artists of the thirteenth century, beginning with Walther von der Vogelweide (ca. 1170-ca. 1230). The most virtuosic of all those German *leiche*, the *Marienleich* of Frauenlob, or Heinrich von Meissen (ca. 1250-1318), is a rich and intricate interweaving of bridal, vernal, and garden imagery from the Song of Songs, the Garden of Eden, the garden where Mary Magdalene encounters the risen Christ in John's Gospel, and the Feast of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation. In *Marienleich* Mary herself is the speaker, describing herself in dense concatenations of metaphor as Solomon's bride, the virgin in Luke's Gospel whose chamber is burst open by the angel Gabriel so that she might conceive Christ, the powerful queen of the New Jerusalem, and a co-redemptrix with her son who along with him (indeed as nearly the equal of him and his father) reverses the curse of death brought on by the traduced Eve, who appears as a pitiful creature like the sinners for whom Mary promises to be a blossoming tree of mercy:

> er was sun des alden gerteneres,
> der bebelzet het in sinem garten
> den boum, dar an er selbet sit des todes wolde warten,
> min muter an der menscheit da gewaldiclich zerbrochen und zerstöret wart.
> min kint des lebens tet nach sines vater art.
> nu secht, ich binz daz bette Salomones
> rich hochwebendes lones,
> daz die sechzic starken ummehalden:
> vier und zweinzic ist der wisen alden,
> niur zwelfe sint der boten, die des cristentumes walden,
> der ordenunge niune sint, die nie min lop volzalten,
> dri patriarchen, vier ewangelisten wunder stalten,
> noch sint ir achte,
> den ich sache,

daz ir heilikeit min berndez lop bewache,
zwar si sint solcher slachte.

Nu streuwet mir die blumen in min klosen,
bestecket mich mit liljen und mit rosen!
er blume von mir blume wolde entspriezen,
und daz was in der zit, daz sich die blumen schouwen liezen.
die stat hiez Blume, da der blume uz mir blume warf sich in der blumen zit,
und mit dem blumen han ich mich geblümet wit.
er chin, ich glast, wir liuchten und erglenzen,
merzen, meien, lenzen.
swaz der sumer speher varbe erzücket,
dar in so hat min vriedel sich gesmücket.
er wil, daz ich sin herbest si, und hat in mich dedrücket
die truben, da min vater sich hat selben in gebücket.
sust wart min kint min swager under min bruder ungestücket.
des vluches winter
wir verdrungen
ab dem blumen mun ist trostes vil entsprungen.
sünder, da bir dich hinder! [35]

This passage is a thick, nearly untranslatable agglomeration of scriptural allusion; complex

theological wordplay concerning Mary's relation to the persons of the Trinity (she is

daughter, spouse, mother, sister, and even sister-in-law to God—because Christ is her brother

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[35] *Marienleich* 19.2-34: "He was the son of the old gardener who grafted the tree in his garden, the one on which he himself would be put to death. There my mother was brutally broken and destroyed for all mankind. My son acted in the manner of his father. Now behold, I am the bed of Solomon, rich in sublime rewards, so that sixty strong men surround me; four and twenty of them are the wise elders, twelve are the apostles who are the rulers of Christendom, nine the orders of angels that have never fully fathomed my praise, three the patriarchs, and four the evangelists who work wonders, and still eight more stand at my command, so that their holiness guards my fruitful praise. Now strew me with flowers in my chamber, cover me with lilies and with roses! A blossom wished to spring from my blossom, and that was in the time when the fields began to blossom; the very city was called Blossom, where the divine blossom flung forth his blossomy fragrance in the time of blossoms, and I was blossoming with blossoms. He shone, and I glowed, we blazed and glittered, we were March and May and springtime, and the garment in which my love covered himself was afire with the brilliant colors of summer. He wishes that I be his harvest, and he has pressed in me the vintage-wine from the grapes my father himself has plucked. Thus my child became my brother and my husband's brother. We have driven out the curse of winter. From my blossom comfort has bloomed. Sinner, shelter yourself here!" The German text is from Barbara Newman, ed., *Frauenlob's Song of Songs: A Medieval German Poet and His Masterpiece* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 38. Newman in turn used the text of the critical edition of *Marienleich* appearing in Frauenlob (Heinrich von Meissen), *Sangsprüche, Lieider*, ed. Karl Stackmann and Karl Bertau, 2 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981). Newman also made a verse translation of *Marienleich* that closely follows its metrics, internal-rhyme features, and principles of strophic responson.. The prose translation above is this writer's but has been influenced by Newman's verse translation.

as well as her bridegroom and her son, since they are both children of their common mother,
Eve); and viscous, elliptic imagery touching on springtime (the season of the Annunciation
and the cross as well as of the wedding in the Song of Songs), harvest time, erotic (even
orgasmic) union, pregnancy, and boundless fertility.

The incarnation of Christ in Mary's human flesh ripens to a redemption of all human
flesh; and in her very body the wine of the harvest of human souls is pressed out--a reference
to Isaiah 63:2-3-4, where the wine-stained apparel of the vintner as he tramples the grapes
was interpreted in traditional Christian exegesis as an allegory of Christ's bloody sacrifice:
"Quare ergo rubrum est indumentum tuum et vestimenta tu sicut alcantium in torculari /
torcular calcavi solus et de gentibus non est vir mecum."[36] Elsewhere Frauenlob similarly
melded the identities of Mary and her son in antithesis and paradox as they endure the
passion and effect the redemption: "er kint und ich muter. / er tet, ich leit [he the child, I the
mother; he did it, I suffered through it]."[37] *Marienleich* is not simply a song: it is a complex
meditative text that demands hard work of its reader, who must untangle its knotted
exegetical strands, and then rewards that reader with the most sensuous and imaginatively
elastic imagery—and also with the promise (reiterated in its very last line) that Mary will pity
her supplicants and lift them to the bejeweled paradise where she reigns as queen with her
companies of angels: "sust werdet ir des humels margariten [you will be pearls of heaven]."[38]
Frauenlob's *leich* offers an *ars poetica* for the religious *lai* and other religious lyric poetry of

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[36] "Why is your garment red and your clothes like those of the ones who tread at the winepress? I alone treaded
at the winepress and no man among the people was with me."

[37] *Marienleich* 16.5-6 (Newman, p. 32).

[38] *Ibid.*, 20.36 (Newman, 40).

the thirteenth century, reminding its audience by its very existence that a devotional work could also be thick with layered imagery and meaning and a piece of consciously crafted poetic artistry of the highest order.

It was exactly this sort of poetic artistry that the author of *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* strove to attain in his "englissce lai," and the manner in which he crafted his poem indicates that he was quite familiar with the French models of his continental contemporaries, the *trouvères*. The theme of *On god ureisun* is, of course, Marian, and the poem's length at 171 lines is entirely consonant with the typical length of a French *lai*. In form, *On god ureisun* follows the *lai*'s prosodic principle of strophic responsion, or paired stanzas linked by end-rhyme.[39] The poem's line-lengths are strikingly inconsistent, even within the individual stanza-pairs, and while this feature, too, is consistent with the *lai* form (as well as with the Carolingian sequence), as the above excerpt from *Marienleich* demonstrates, it may also be due to the uncertainty of the author, experimenting in a form that was not indigenously English, about exactly what sort of meter to use.

The first stanza-pair in *On god ureisun* is an octosyllabic couplet:

Cristes milde moder seynte marie,
Mines liues leome, mi leoue lefdi....[40]

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[39] The odd number of lines in "On God Ureisun" is accounted for by a unique tripling of rhyme in ll. 163-165:
Ʒeme mine licame ine clenenesse
God almihti unne me vor his mild-heortnesse
Þet ich mote þe iseo in ðire heie blisse.
[Keep my body in purity. / May God almighty on account of his merciful-heartedness / Grant that I may see you in your high bliss.]
The poet frequently rhymed stressed "e" and "i" (*e.g.* ll. 45-46, "chelle," "wille," as well as stressed "o" and "u" (ll. 39-40, "sumer," "Ʒeomer"), stressed "i" and "u" (ll. 84-85, "gretunge," "kinge") and stressed "a" and "e" (ll. 99-100, "was," "þes"). In addition, he frequently rhymed unstressed "e" and unstressed "en" (e.g., ll. 73-74, "ore," "uorloren"). Feminine rhymes greatly outnumber masculine rhymes in *On god ureisun*.

[40] Brown XIII, no. 2, ll 1-2: "Christ's gentle mother, holy Mary, / My life's light, my beloved lady."

The two lines of the second stanza-pair, however, contain fourteen syllables apiece with

seven stresses, and are trochaic septenaries, with a caesura after the fourth stress:

> To þe ich buþe & mine kneon ich beie,
> And al mine heorte blod to ðe ich offrie.... [41]

Most of the lines in *On god ureisun* follow this septenary pattern, although there are

occasional irregular couplets, such as this one, whose lines are thirteen and fifteen syllables

respectively:

> Alle cristene men oþen don ðe þurschipe,
> And singen ðe lofsong mid sþuðe muchele gledschipe.... [42]

Couplets in trochaic septenary, sometimes employing alliteration reminiscent of Old English

poetry, were an apparently common early Middle English poetic form, used, for example, in

Poema morale, a verse homily of about 200 couplets composed during the latter half of the

twelfth century.[43] It is likely that the author of *On god ureisun* simply combined two metrical

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[41] *Ibid.*, ll. 3-4: "To you I bow, and my knees I bend / And all my heart's blood I offer to you."

[42] *Ibid.*, ll. 15-16: "All Christian men ought to do you worship / And sing songs of praise to you with very great gladness."

[43] *Poema morale* was widely copied, and at least six manuscripts survive dating from the late twelfth century to around 1300. The critical edition is in Joseph Hall, ed., *Selections from Early Middle English, 1130-1250*, Part 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), 30-53. *Poema morale*, like *On god ureisun*, contains many lines with extra syllables that seem to violate the meter, but Robert D. Fulk argues that *Poema*'s prosody is actually a holdover from Old English prosody, which allowed two short syllables to be "resolved" as a single long syllable. Robert D. Fulk, "Early Middle English Evidence for Old English Meter: Resolution in *Poema Morale*," *Journal of Germanic Linguistics* 14 (2002): 331-55. Without carefully examining the syllabic values of <u>*On god ureisun*</u>, it is impossible to say whether the same kind of syllabic resolution occurs in the Nero poem, probably composed some fifty years after *Poema morale*, but it may well be likely. Besides *Poema Morale*, there is also *Ormulum*, a collection of homiletic exegeses of the Gospels, composed by the monk Orm in extremely regular non-rhyming English septenary in about the year 1200. Every one of *Ormulum*'s more than 10,000 lines is metrically identical: fifteen syllables (Orm always added an extra unstressed syllable via anacrusis at the beginning of his line and placed his caesura after the eighth syllable, which was always stressed, so that the second hemistich of the line always consisted of three syllables, with the final syllable unstressed. See R.M. Wilson, *Early Middle English Literature* (London: Methuen, 1939, 2nd ed., 1968), 173-76. By contrast, most, although by no means all, the final syllables of *On god ureisun* are unstressed—that is, they are feminine rhymes. The septenary is accentually a four-stress line, and so recalls the four-stress alliterative line of Old English poetry, where, as in trochaic septenary verse, the first stress in the line usually falls on its first syllable.

forms based upon rhymed couplets, one of which he knew from reading familiar English texts and the other from the Continental literature that he strove to imitate in both appearance and theme. His was an "englissce lai" in many senses, an experiment in duplicating another language's poetic form in the familiar cadences of his own language. No doubt, too, the flexible line-lengths of the French *lai* inspired the author of *On god ureisun* to combine septenary and octosyllabic couplets as he chose.

It was in theme and style, however, that the author of *On god ureisun* planted his work firmly in French literary tradition. The poem has two parts, in fact divides almost exactly in half at its eightieth line. The first section consists of extravagant praise of the Blessed Virgin as queen of heaven and assurance that she will answer all prayers. If this has a specific continental model, it is the *lai* titled *Royne celestre* of Gautier de Coinci (1177/78-1236), a monk like the author of *On god ureisun* (and probably his exact contemporary in age), who embedded numerous songs to the Virgin into his *Miracles de Nostre Dame*.[44] In *Royne celestre* ("Queen of Heaven") Gautier wrote:

> Tant es de haut estre,
> Pucele sacree
> Qu'em ciel a sa destre
> T'a Diex coronnee:
> Car de ta mamele
> Qui tant est mielee

Septenary—iambic septenary in contrast to trochaic septenary--is also the "ballad" poetic form, not only of modern folk-ballads but of several re brief narrative poems dating to the mid-thirteenth century found in Cambridge University, Trinity College MS 323: the *Judas Ballad* (fol. 34r, Brown XIII, no. 25) and the *Journey of the Three Kings* (fol. 35r, Brown XIII, no. 26). Septenary also appears in numerous religious lyrics in Trinity 323.

[44] Jeanroy (n. 18), no.15. A more recent edition of Gautier's songs is Jacques Chailley, ed., *Les chansons à la Vierge de Gautier de Coinci*, Publications de la Societé Française de Musicologie (Paris: Heugel, 1959). *Royne celestre*, no. 3 in Chailley's edition, appears at 166-68.

Fu sa bouche bele
Peüe et abevree.[45]

The author of *On god ureisun* also celebrated Mary's high place in heaven next to her son, although his verses lack the affective sweetness of Gautier's evocation of Mary's nourishing breast:

nis no ƿummon iboren þet ðe beo iliche,
ne non þer nis þin efning ƿið-inne heoueriche,
Heih is þi kinestol on-uppe cherubine,
Bi-uoren ðine leoue sune ƿiðinnen seraphine.
[There is no woman born who is your like, / nor is there your equal in heaven's kingdom, / High is your royal seat above the cherubim/ before your beloved son amid the seraphim.][46]

In *On god ureisun* Mary's mercy and generosity are evoked by a different and more archaic sort of visual image: that of the gift-dispensing lord reminiscent of Old English poetry—as though, just as with his combining of septenary and octosyllabic couplets to make the poem's metrical form, *On god ureisun*'s author leavened the conventional royal and heavenly imagery of the French Marian *lai* with evocations of their concrete earthly equivalents, the precious metal of the ceremonial gift-exchange in lordly relations here below:

Alle þine ureondes þu makest rich kinges,
Þu ham ȝiuest kinescrud, beies & gold ringes;...
Al is þe heouene ful of þine blisse,
And so is all þes middel-eard of þine mild-heortnesse.
[All your friends you make rich kings. / You give them royal clothing, necklaces, and gold rings....All heaven is full of your bliss/ and all Middle Earth is thus full of your gentle-heartedness.][47]

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[45] *Royne celestre*, ll. 5-12: "You are placed so high, holy maiden, that God has crowned you at his right hand in heaven, because from your breast that is honey-sweet was his lovely mouth nourished and given drink." The text is from Chailley's edition.

[46] *On god ureisun*, ll. 23-26.

[47] *Ibid.*, ll. 33-34, 77-78. The word "beies" derives from the OId English plural "beagas," torques or neck-rings. Here Mary calls to mind Wealhtheow, queen of the Danes, who gives a gold neck-ring to Beowulf on the

Still, the author of *On god ureisun* was able to use his predilection for concrete language to create ethereal and vivid passages, such as this description of Mary's court of virgins, with its plethora of liquid consonants evoking the shining dresses and the glittering gold and jewels that adorn her handmaidens, who are brides of her son:

> al thin hird is i-schrude mid hƿite ciclatune,
> And alle heo beoð ikruned mid guldene krune;
> Heo beoð so read so rose, so hƿit so þe lilie,
> and euer-more heo beoð gled & singeð þuruhut murie.
> Mid brihte ȝimstones hore krune is al biset,
> And al heo doð þet ham likeð, so þet mƿ þing ham ne let.
> Þe leoue sune is hore king & þu ert hore kƿene.
> [All your retinue is clothed with white silky-satin, / And all of them are crowned with golden crowns; / They are as red as the rose, as white as the lily, and they are glad evermore and sing merrily throughout. / Their crowns are set all with bright gemstones / And all of them do as they please so that nothing restrains them. / Your beloved son is their king, and you are their queen.][48]

In the second part of *On god ureisun* the speaker turns to his awareness of his own abject and sinful condition and his plea for Mary's intercession so that he might avoid the fate he deserves:

> Ich ðe bidde, lefdi, uor þere gretunge
> þet Gabriel ðe brouhte urom ure heouen-kinge;
> And ek ich ðe biseche uor ihesu cristes blode,
> þet for ure note as i-sched o ðere rode,
> Vor ðe muchele seorue ðet ƿas o ðine mode
> þo þu er ðe deaðe him bi-uore stode,
> þet tu me makie cleane iðuten & eke ƿið-innen,
> So þet me ne schende none kunnes sunne....
> Mi leoue lif urom þine luue ne schal me no þing to-dealen
> Vor o ðe is al ilong mi lif & eke min heale.
> Vor þine luue i sƿinke & sike ƿel ilome,
> Vor þine luue ich ham ibrouht in-to þeoudome,

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evening before he fights the giant Grendel. Beowulf, ed. Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson (Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), ll. 1215-1220.

[48] *Ibid.*, ll. 50-56.

Vor þine luue ich uorsoc al þet me leo ƿas
And ȝef ðe al min suluen looue life iþench þu þes.
Þet ich ðe redede sume siðe hit me reoƿeð sore,
Vor cristes fif ƿunden þu ȝif me milce & ore;
Ȝif þu milce nauest of me þet ich ƿot ƿel ȝeorne.
Þet ine helle pine sƿelten ich schel & beornen.
[I beg you, lady, for the greeting / That Gabriel brought you from the king of heaven / And also I beseech you for Jesus Christ's blood / That for our benefit was shed upon the cross, / For the great sorrow that was in your heart / When you stood before him at his death / that you make me clean without and also within / so that no kind of sin shame me... / My beloved life, from your love nothing shall separate me, / For on you my life and also my salvation are all-dependent. / For your love I toil and sigh very frequently, / For your love I am brought into bondage, / For your love I forsake all that was dear to me / And gave you all my self, beloved life, think on this. / That I made you angry on some occasions I regret, / For Christ's five wounds give me mercy and grace; / If you will not have mercy on me, I know full well / that I shall swelter and burn in hell's torments.][49]

This passage lacks the delicacy and verbal economy of Thibaut de Champagne's penitential lai, but the substance is the same: a plea that Mary, the speaker's very "life" as well as his love, will save him from his deserved fate of eternal suffering in hell by her power and mercy. As can be seen from the above passage, _On god ureisun_ is no *Marienleich.* It is verbose, its diction is often clumsy (its author borrows the courtly notion of a lover bound to his lady's service but characterizes that service with the inelegant word "swinke," l.97), and when it uses a rhetorical figure such as anaphora ("Vor" and "Vor þine luue" in ll.96-99), it overuses it to the point of tedium, without the climactic effect that a more skilled writer might achieve with that figure. No other lines in the lyric display the artistic polish of the description of Mary's heavenly court in lines 50-56. Nonetheless, the author of *On god ureisun* set his sights on a sophisticated French literary tradition in which he believed that he, although writing in a presumably debased language, English, could fully participate.

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[49] *Ibid.*, ll. 85-92, 95-104.

What is most interesting about *On god ureisun* is that it represents the transformation of a fundamentally musical form, the *lai*, into a purely meditative form. As far as can be known from surviving manuscripts, trochaic septenary was never used as a song-form in early Middle English; its two late twelfth-century exemplars, *Poema morale* and *Ormulum*, are essentially verse homilies. It is not inconceivable that *On god ureisun* could have been sung, but given the conventions of its most-used metrical line, it is more likely that it was meant to be read. That certainly explains its presence in the devotional book that was the Nero manuscript, where *On god ureisun* precedes three prose meditations that, like *On god ureisun*, are in the form of prayers to Christ and Mary. Furthermore, *On god ureisun* is not thematically out of place among the Nero prayers, for all four employ intensely amorous diction in the service of abject supplication. The poet's address to Mary, "Mines liues leome," in the second line of *On god ureisun* foreshadows the opening encomium to Christ in *Ureisun of God almihti*: "Swete iesu mi leof . mi lif . mi leome." The first line, "Cristes milde moder seynte marie," in *On god ureisun* is similar to the opening phrase of the prose *On lofsong of ure lefdi*: "Swete leafdi seinte marie"—and the author of *On god ureisun* also styled his work a "lofsong" (l. 8).

On god ureisun also bears a sriking literary resemblance to *On lofsong of ure louerde*, in which Christ is invoked through his mother by a self-proclaimed sinner:

> Iesu crist godes sune soð godd & soð mon of þe eide meiden iboren maria . þet is meiden & bute make moder . ich of all sunfulle am on mest ifuled of sunne aase ich drede . ich bidde & bi seche þe wið inwarde heorte þin akennednesse <ine> meidenes licame of þe holi-Goste. & þuruh þin iborenesse wið uten bruche of hir bodie þuruh al þet ðu tawhtest . & þoledest for sunfule in eorðe . þurh þine vif wunden & þe eadie flod of ham fledde . þuruh ðe irene neiles & þe þornene crune . & þuruh þe pinen & þe schomen & þi deorewurðe deað oðe rode & þuruh ðe ilke rode ihalewed of þine deorewurðe limen . ðet þu on hire milde lich streihtest . & þine moderes ream & sein i[o]hanes soruwe þo þu somnedest ham ase sune & moder....

[Jesus Christ, God's son, true God and true man born of the blessed maiden Mary who is maiden and mother without match. I am of all the sinful the most fouled by sin, as I fear. I beg and beseech you with my inmost heart through your conception in a maiden's body by the Holy Ghost and through your birth without breach of her body, and through all that you taught and suffered for the sinful on earth, through your five wounds and the blessed flood that flowed from them, through the iron nails and the crown of thorns, and through the pains and the shame and your precious death on the cross, and through the same cross hallowed by your precious limbs on which you stretched your gentle body, and your mother's crying and St. John's sorrow when you united them as son and mother....][50]

The structure and even the diction of this passage (the begging and beseeching, the allusions to Christ's incarnation and passion, the self-denigration of the supplicant/sinner who declares that he deserves hell, and even the "five wounds" of Christ and the cross itself) echo the poet's plea to Mary in *On god ureisun* quoted above, to deliver him, a sinner, from damnation by reason of her bearing of Christ and her suffering with him at the cross. Clearly all four of the English prayers in the Nero manuscript are linked by their affective, even intimate tone, their calling to mind of Christ's sufferings, and their joining of Christ and Mary as co-redeemers and co-sufferers of the passion. In all four prayers the sinner experiences God's love as a particularly physical form of human love: the courtly lover's amorous stance toward his lady, the mother's bonds with her son, and the love of both for even the worst of sinners, a love that supersedes even the justice of God that would cast those sinners into hell.

The presence of *On god ureisun* in the Nero manuscript indicates that its scribe believed that a lyric composition could stand on the same footing as a prose meditation, indeed even introduce a series of prose meditations. Fittingly, in fact, the Nero manuscript ends, on fol. 131, with two meditations in Latin, the first in verse, the second in prose, that again recapitulate the theme of Christ's passion. The Latin meditations are clearly filler for

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[50] *On lofsong of ure louerde*, ll. 1-17, in *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* (see n. 8), 10.

the folio; for the last of the four English meditations, *On lofsong of ure louerde*, ends on line 19 of fol. 131r, leaving nine more lines on that page and all of fol. 131v otherwise empty. The scribe gamely continued, however, copying out an Apostle's Creed in English that occupies the remainder of fol. 131r and the top three lines of fol. 131v.

He filled the next twelve lines of fol. 131v with his Latin verse, using the same scribal style he had used with *On god ureisun*: Each line of the Latin poem occupies a single line of the manuscript and is headed by a rubricated capital. The poem, in dactylic hexameter that begins in rhyming couplet, starts out as a commentary on the transitory nature of earthly goods in the face of mortality: "O quam iocundum quam dulce foret dominari / Si mors non posset: dominantibus insidiari. [O how agreeable, how sweet it would be to rule / If it were not possible for death to lie in wait for rulers.]"[51] Appended as the poem's last two lines, however, is another Latin text, an epigrammatic reproach of Christ from the cross in dactylic hexameter with leonine internal rhyme: "Aspice mortalis pro te detur hostia talis / In cruce sum pro te quid peccas desine pro me. [Look, mortal man, what a sacrifice may be offered for you. / I am on the cross for you; desist from whatever way you sin for me.]"[52] The epigram was clearly already in currency when the scribe added it to the end of a poem that

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[51] Mabel Day transcribes the Latin in the introduction to the Nero text of *Ancrene Wisse* (see n. 5), at xxii. After the first two couplets, however, the lines-endings no longer rhyme. According to Day, those ten lines make up the conclusion in certain manuscripts to *Cur mundus militat sub vana gloria*, a widely copied moral lyric sometimes attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux and also to Henry II's court cleric Walter Map (ca. 1140-ca. 1210). Those lines, however are not to be found in the version of *Cur mundus* in Thomas Wright, ed., *Poems of Walter Mapes (*London: Camden Society, 1841), 147.

[52] The "quid" in the second line may be a scribal error. Day notes that the same epigram appears with the word "qui" instead of "quid" ("you who sin") in a collection of Latin epigrams in British Library, MS Arundel 507. She points out that the two verses were later translated into English before the beginning of the fourteenth century and were ultimately attributed to Richard Rolle:
> Man, þus on rode I hing for þe:
> forsake þi sin for luf of me.
> [Man, thus on the cross I hang for you. / Forsake your sin for love of me.]
Introduction, Nero text, xxiii. The *Aspice* epigram clearly derives from the "O vos omnes" of the Lamentations of Jeremiah (Lam 12-13).

was already in currency, and it made a bridge, albeit a crude one, that the scribe used to link

that lyric thematically to the entire corpus of Nero material that preceded it. The second Nero

scribe thus reminded his readers that all the preceding texts--*Ancrene Wisse* and its

accompanying prayers in Latin and English--had as their focus Christ's deeply self-giving

love that should rightly be responded to in gratitude.

   The Latin prose passage, the final text in the manuscript, another pastiche of older

and familiar texts with which the Nero scribe filled the last ten lines on fol. 131v, reiterated

that message explicitly and eloquently:

> Circuire possum celum et terram domine numquam te inuenio nisi in cruce ibi pascis.
> ibi potes, ibi uestis, ibi cubas. ibi omnia nobis. id est. te teipsum dulciter & affluenter
> das. Item quis non rapitur ad spem & fiduciam impetrandi qui eius attenderet corporis
> in cruce dispositionem. uidelicet caput inclinatum ad osculum, brachia extensa ad
> amplexum. Manus perferatos ad largiendum. latus apertum ad dilgendum. corpus
> extensum ad se totum nobis impendendum
> [I can search heaven and earth, Lord, and never find you, except on the cross. There
> you feed me, there you clothe me, there you remain. There everything exists for us--
> that is, you give yourself sweetly and extravagantly. Likewise, who is not borne to
> hope and confidence when begging for mercy while observing how Christ's body is
> displayed on the cross--namely, his head inclined for a kiss, his arms extended for an
> embrace, his pierced hands for giving abundantly, his opened side for loving, his
> body stretched out for leaning his whole self over us?)[53]

The closing lines of this passage ("caput inclinatum" to the end) is an excerpt from the tenth

Meditation attributed to Anselm of Canterbury[54] but probably written by an unknown author

only a few decades before the Nero scribe (or his source) incorporated them into his own

meditation. The opening lines of the passage ("Possum circuire" to "cubas") come from the

equally anonymous (and also likely early thirteenth-century) *Meditatio passionem et*

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[53] *Ibid.*, xxii.

[54] PL 158:761.

resurrectionem domini attributed to Bernard of Clairvaus.[55] Those two passages, as will be seen, often appear in English manuscripts either in conjunction with translated into English passion lyrics of the middle and late thirteenth century. In the Nero manuscript they sum up the intimate and reciprocal relationship that one might have with Christ by calling up in one's mind a detailed picture of his suffering on the cross, re-imagined as a loving gift of self. It is with such a mental picture that the Nero manuscript ends, encapsulating what its scribes believed would be the imaginative experiences of the audience for *Ancrene Wisse* and its related prayers—and also, very likely, the scribe's own imaginative experiences.

Reading *On God Ureisun* in the context of its manuscript and the texts that surround it demonstrates how a thirteenth-century religious lyric could function primarily as a spur to contemplation. The far better-known "Nou goth sonne," probably composed at about the same time as *On god ureisun* during the first or second quarter of the thirteenth century, was another kind of spur to contemplation. It was not simply transcribed in conjunction with meditative texts, but formed an integral part of an explicitly meditative text, *Speculum ecclesie/Mirour de seinte eglyse*. Specifically, the quatrain appears near the end of Chapter 23 of *Speculum* and Chapter 24 of *Mirour*: the meditation for the sixth canonical hour that joins the annunciation to Mary to Christ's passion on the cross. The quatrain, in its critical edition by Carleton Brown taken from Arch. Selden Supra 74, a manuscript of *Mirour* that dates to the second half of the thirteenth century,[56] reads as follows:

> Nou goth sonne vnder wod,--
> me reweth, marie, þi faire Rode,

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[55] PL 184:751.

[56] The dating of Arch. Selden Supra 74 is A.D. Wilshere's. Introduction, *Mirour de seinte eglyse (St Edmund of Abingdon's Speculum Ecclesiae)* (see ch. 3 of this dissertation), vi.

Nou goþ sonne vnder tre,--
me reweþ, marie, þi sone and þe.
(Now goes the sun under wood—I pity, Mary, your fair face. Now goes the sun under tree—I pity, Mary, your son and you.) [57]

The manuscript text attributes the authorship of the quatrain in this fashion: "& pur ceo dit un engleis en tel manere de pite [and regarding this, an Englishman says in such a mood of pity.]"[58] According to A.D. Wilshere, Arch. Selden Supra 74 is one of the earliest exemplars of the "A" or "religious" recension of *Mirour*, the version of *Mirour* most faithful to Edmund of Abingdon's original Latin text before it had been significantly altered in its "B" recension.

One of the characteristic features of "Nou goth sonne" is that, except for very minor variations in orthography, the scribes who copied the quatrain into the dozens of extant manuscripts of *Mirour* and *Speculum* preserved it faithfully; they seemed to regard it, if not as Edmund's *ipsissima verba,* as at the very least an irreducible component of his *Mirour*. In Oxford University, St. John's College MS 190, a manuscript of *Mirour* that may predate Arch.Selden Supra 74,[59] the same text reads (at fol. 197r, col. 1, ll. 27-28):

E pur ço dist un Engloys en teu manere de pité:
Nu goth sonne under wode:
Me reweth, Marie, þi fayre rude:

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[57] Brown XIII, no 1, at 1.

[58] Arch. Selden Supra 74, fol. 155v, col. 2, ll. 12-14.

[59] A.D. Wilshere uses St. John's Oxford 190 as the base manuscript for his critical edition of the "A" recension of *Mirour*. This manuscript is written in a double-column Gothic book hand with many abbreviations, in contrast to the relatively abbreviation-free cursive of Arch. Selden Supra 74. British Library MS. Arundel 288, fols. 103r-122r, dating from the second half of the thirteenth century and the base manuscript used by Wilshere in his critical edition of the "B" recension of Mirour, preserves a nearly identical version of the quatrain (at fol. 118v), as does the contemporaneously produced Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 20, fols. 143r-157v (the quatrain is at fol. 197r, col. 1).

> Nu goth sonne under tre:
> Me reweth, Marie, þi sune and þe.[60]

Speculum Ecclesie, the likely re-translation of Edmund's work from Anglo-Norman back into

Latin during the second half of the thirteenth century, has:

> Ideo dicit unus anglicus, pietate motus [Therefore says a certain Englishman moved by pity]:
> Now gothe þe son undir wodde,
> Me rewey Mary þu faire rodde.
> Now gothe þe son undir þe tree,
> Me rewei Marie þi son and þee.[61]

There are several observations to be made. The first is that the scribes who interpolated the

English quatrain into their Anglo-Norman and Latin texts did so seamlessly, without

suggestion that English lacked the cultural status to stand side by side with the other

languages. Those scribes displayed the same willingness to accept English as a literary

language as did the "Munuche" in *On god ureisun* who boldly proffered his "englissce lai" as

the equal of any French work.

It should also be noted that in contrast to modern editors, who almost invariably

typeset "Nou goth sonne" as four separate lines of verse, the manuscripts of *Speculum*

ecclesie and *Mirour* display the quatrain as prose, with only *punctus elevati* marking off the

lines. Furthermore, this writing out of the quatrain may not be simply a matter of English

scribal convention during the thirteenth century. One manuscript in which the quatrain

appears, Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 20, precedes the quatrain with

another interpolation, unique to Digby 20 out of all other manuscripts of *Mirour*, of twenty-

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[60] This text is taken from Wilshere's edition of *Mirour*, 66, 67, ll. 48-51. Wilshire supplies modern capitalization and punctuation to the quatrain; the scribe of St. John's 190 capitalizes only the "n" of the first "nu."

[61] This text is from British Library MS Royal 7.A.1, fols. 12r-22v, dating from around 1400 and used by Helen Forshaw as the base manuscript for her critical edition of *Speculum Ecclesie* (see ch. 2 of this dissertation).

one lines of Anglo-Norman verse, also written as prose. To the scribes who copied the quatrain, the anonymous "Englishman" who had written the quatrain was a literary equal to Edmund of Abingdon himself, as well as to the redactors who had amplified the emotional and affective nature of Edmund's meditations when they turned them into Anglo-Norman.

Speculum/Mirour testified to the recognition that English could be a valid literary language in the Norman England of the early thirteenth century. Even the orthography that the scribes chose for copying the quatrain pointed to their recognition of English's claims to equal footing with Anglo-Norman. The scribes seemed as comfortable using the Middle English letter "þ" as they were with its phonetic equivalent (at least in Middle English texts), the continentally derived digraph "th" when transcribing the voiceless dental fricative [θ] in the word "goth"/"goþ" (ll. 1 and 3 respectively in Arch.Selden Supra 74, paired orthographically with "reweth"/"reweþ" in ll. 2 and 4 respectively). The phoneme [θ] was a sound unknown to either Anglo-Norman or medieval Latin, but its presence in English did not seem to faze those scribes, who seemed to be as familiar with Middle English orthography as they were with Anglo-Norman. The fact that the scribes who copied both the Mirour and the Speculum jointlessly worked a four-line English lyric into a passage of mid-thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman or Latin prose (and in the case of MS Digby 20, an Anglo-Norman verse passage as well) suggests that England possessed a fully trilingual literary culture even at this early date.

Second, it seems fairly clear that, brief as it is, "Nou goth sonne" is nonetheless a complete poem copied in its entirely into the text of *Mirour/Speculum*. Carleton Brown, who edited "Nou goth sonne" in 1932, speculated that Edmund of Abingdon himself had

composed the quatrain and was the very "engleis" referred to in Arch.Selden Supra 74.[62] As

Helen Forshaw has argued persuasively, however, the manuscript of *Speculum* that preserves

Edmund's original text most faithfully, Hatton 26, does not include the quatrain.[63] That

suggests that the quatrain is an interpolation, if a very early one. Many of the earliest

surviving English lyrics are very short: seven lines for the song "Mirie it is while sumer ilast"

preserved in a unique copy together with its musical notation on a single sheet that became a

flyleaf in Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson G.22 ; and five lines for

"Foweles in þe frith," also accompanied by musical notation in its unique copy in Oxford

University, Bodleian Library MS Douce 139 at fol. 5r. The earliest extant Middle English

Marian hymn was composed in the mid-twelfth century by Godric of Finchale. It consists of

two four-line stanzas whose couplet rhyme scheme, four stresses per line,[64] and most striking

rhetorical adornment, anaphoristic repetition, bear certain similarities to "Nou goth sonne":

> Sainte marie virgine
> moder ihesu cristes nazarene
> onfo schild help thin godric .
> onfang, bring heʒilich wið the in godes riche . 1
>
> Sainte marie xristes bur
> maidenes clenhad moderes flur .
> dilie min sinne rix in min mod .
> bring me to winne witð þe selfd God.

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[62] Brown XIII, 166, n. 1.

[63] See ch. 2 of this dissertation.

[64] Joseph Hall noted that Godric modeled his four-stress, generally trochaic lines in this hymn and the two others of his that survive in manuscripts on the metrics of many of the Latin hymns of Anselm of Canterbury. Hall added that Godric "applies to them the license of native prosody, elision, slurring, omission, and doubling of light syllables." *Selections from Early Middle English* (n. 42), 242. E.J. Dobson argues that the seeming metrical irregularities in Godric's verse can be explained by the likelihood that Godric was not so much imitating Anselm as incorporating into Anselm's verse-form features of Old English prosody: stress-based rather than syllable-based metrics, alliteration, and the frequent use of caesura. *Medieval English Songs* (n. 22), 104-05.

[Holy Mary, virgin, / Mother of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, / Receive, shield, help your Godric, / And when he is received, / bring him on high with you into God's kingdom. / Holy Mary, Christ's bower, / Maiden's purity, mother's flower, / Blot out my sins, reign in my heart, / Bring me to joy with God himself.][65]

By this measure, "Nou goth sonne" was certainly not too brief to be a complete poem in its own right.

Furthermore, the quatrain is strikingly dissimilar to Godric's works in one respect: it was probably never meant to be sung as a hymn. Godric's hagiographer, Reginald of Durham, wrote that Godric had been taught both the words and the melody of the hymn by Mary herself, who had appeared to him in a vision; two of the earliest manuscripts of Reginald's *vita* of Godric contain musical notation for his hymn as well as its text.[66] By contrast, the author of *Mirour* uses the word "dist [says]" with reference to the quatrain's author, in a parallel construction to the "dist" that precedes the quotation from the Song of Songs and the "dit [said]" of Naomi's reproach. No manuscript containing "Nou goth sonne" supplies music for the lyric.[67]

Furthermore, "Nou goth sonne" was not only a seamlessly woven textual component of the meditation on the sixth hour in *Speculum/Mirour*; it was also woven seamlessly into

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[65] *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 5. A description of this and two other brief lyrics attributed to Godric appears in R.M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (London: Methuen, 1952), 160-64. E.J. Dobson summarizes the various manuscripts in which Godric's three surviving lyrics appear in *Medieval English Songs* (n. 22), 105-106. As can be seen, the meter of Godric's Marian lyric looks rough and uneven, but Dobson argues that the lyric's lines are not crude attempts to imitate Anselm's metrics but, rather, rhymed versions of the Old English alliterative line, in which the number of syllables can vary considerably as long as the line contains four stresses, with a caesura after the first two feet. *Ibid.*, 104-105. The lack of consistent alliteration, caesura, and even four stresses in every line of "Sainte marie virgine" militates against this argument, however.

[66] Dobson lists two early manuscripts of Reginald's *vita* of Godric that include both text and music for "Sainte marie virgine": Cambridge University Library MS Mm. iv.28, fol. 149, dating to about 1200; and British Library MS Harley 322, fol. 49v, dating to about the late twelfth century (the latter manuscript contains an anonymous redaction of Reginald's text). *Ibid.*, 105-106.

[67] *Speculum ecclesie* translates these as "dicit [says]," "potuit dicere [could say]," and "dixit [said]" respectively. *Speculum ecclesie* (see n. 62), 92, ll. 3 and 1-2; 90, l. 31.

Speculum/Mirour's its dense web of scriptural allusion and its thematic structure of ever-escalating provocation of emotional response to the spectacle of Christ hanging on the cross and his anguished mother standing with the disciple John beneath it. "Nul creature ne pust sufrir tant cum Jhesu," says the "A" version of *Mirour*,[68] as the text invites its reader to contemplate first Jesus, then Mary, in his mind's eye. When Jesus speaks, through the voice of Jeremiah in his Lamentations, the author of the "A" version seemed to foreshadow the English quatrain by turning the familiar "O vos omnes qui transitis per viam atttendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus"[69] into Anglo-Norman rhyme: "Entendez a moy trestuz ki passez par la voye, e veez si il i a dolur semblable a moy."[70]

It is the suffering of Mary that receives the most extended treatment in this passage, as the author draws out the pathos of her standing so close to her crucified son as to be at his right hand ("de quele angoisse ele estoit replenie")[71] her taking the son of a fisherman for her son, when she once had the son of the ruler of heaven, and her anguished cry of distress as she calls attention to her sorrows in the voice of the exiled Naomi in the Book of Ruth.and the bride of the Song of Songs who describes herself as "black but beautiful," dark because she has been burned by the sun, and wretched because her own brothers have tormented her.[72] The author presented those scriptural parallels in parallel clauses, the first beginning

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[68] *Mirour de seinte eglyse* (see n. 1), 66, ll. 26-27. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations herein are from the "A" version.

[69] "O all of you who pass by the way, draw near and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow." Lam 1:12-13.

[70] *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 66, ll. 32-33. The "B" version retains the Latin.

[71] *Ibid.*, lines 36-37: "With what anguish she was filled."

[72] Ct 1:4-5.

with "E pur ço [and for that reason]" and the second with "Meymes cele tenur [in the same

fashion]," followed by a second "E pur ço" that introduces the English quatrain:

> ...E pur ço poet ele dire de soy ço ke dit Noemie: "Ne me apelez mes bele
> tant ne quant, mes amere me apelez desoreenavant, kar de de amertume e dolur
> grant m'ad replenie le tut poissant." Meymes cele tenur dist ele en la Chaunsun
> d'Amur: "ne vus esmerveillez ke suy brunette e haslee, kar le soleil m'ad desculuree."
> E pur ço dist un Engloys en teu manere de pité: Nu goth sonne under wode: me
> reweth, Marie, þi fayre rude; nu goth sonne under tre: me reweth, Marie, þi sune
> and þe.[73]

It is highly likely that the scribe who copied the above into St. John's MS 190, likely the

earliest extant copy of the "A" version of *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, believed that he was

copying out a bilingual Anglo-Norman/English text in which the three anaphoristic

repetitions create a rhetorical climax. They each introduce quotations as well, the first two

from female figures in scripture (and putatively attributed to Mary herself), and the third

from the English poet, who addresses Mary directly. Although the original adaptor of

Mirour, translating and elaborating upon Edmund's *Speculum* for an Anglo-Norman audience

and boldly inserting the English passage into it, might have used the first "e pur ço" as a

model for the introduction of his interpolation, the scribes who followed him probably read

the entire piece of Anglo-Norman and English as an integrated whole.

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[73] *Ibid.*, 66, l. 40 and 68, l. 51: "And for this reason she [Mary] could say of herself what Naomi said: 'Do not call me greatly beautiful, but rather, call me bitter, for he who is all-powerful has filled me with bitterness and sorrow.' And in the same fashion she says in the Song of Love, 'Do not marvel that I am dark and burned, for the sun has discolored me.'" Wilshere's edition sets the quatrain as four lines of verse, although it is written as prose in St. John's 190. In order to replicate the way the text read to a thirteenth-century reader, the quatrain has been set as prose by this writer, although with Wilshere's modern punctuation (with two exceptions: The manuscript uses only one capital letter in the entire quatrain, the initial "n" with which it begins, and this practice has been followed here; and the letter "w" has been substituted for Wilshere's "uu" because the manuscript uses the "w."). Wilshere's edition of the Marian passage in the meditation for sext places a paragraph break between the first and second scriptural passages that is not present in the manuscript, and that break has been omitted here. The "B" version of the passage, on 67 and 69, has virtually the same text, except that the quotation from the Song of Songs is in Latin, abbreviated: "Nolite considerare quod fusca sim, etc."

Such an integrated reading would have come naturally to a late-medieval audience, for the passage moves smoothly and climatically from the analogy of Mary to the grieving Naomi in the Book of Ruth, who has lost two sons of her own as well as a husband, to the traditional allegorical identification of Mary with the bride of the Song of Songs, whose face darkened by the sun was interpreted as a prefiguring of Mary's face darkened by grief. The nouns "sun" and "son" are homonyms in modern English, while their Middle English equivalents "sunne" (or "sonne") and "sune" (or "sone") were not, the latter having a long (open) vowel to the former's short (closed) vowel, but their vowel sounds were close enough for readers and listeners to connect them via paronomasia, especially because Christ had for centuries been associated liturgically with the rising sun. Similarly, the closed-vowel noun "rode" (or "rodde" or "rude"), derived from the Old Norse "roði [red]," meaning "face" or "blush," was not a homonym to the open-vowel rode, meaning "rood" or "crucifix," but it would have looked similar enough on the written page and sounded close enough to the ear. Thus the pity evoked in the anonymous Englishman by *Mirour*'s allusion to the bereft mother Naomi, her self-described bitterness (amertume) suggesting sound of the name "Marie," and the second, direct allusion to Mary herself as discolored by the sun, flowed exegetically, theologically, and linguistically into the quatrain.

"Nou goth sonne" deserves the detailed and loving close reading that the New Critics of the mid-twentieth century bestowed upon it. The quatrain is in fact the dense amalgam of wordplay, scriptural allusion, visual picture, and meditative focus that those scholars understood it to be—because it would have been read as such during the thirteenth century. It was the culmination of the carefully arranged series of evocations of Mary's grief in a

passage that first invited its audience to look upon Mary in its imagination ("penser de"),[74] and then to hear her anguish, unexpressed in words in the passion narratives of the Gospels but given scriptural voice via the Old Testament by the historical figure of Naomi and the allegorical figure of the bride in the Song of Songs. Finally, climactically, the reader/viewer responds (or is invited to respond), in the voice of the English poet, with the quatrain that encapsulates deep empathy and pity, spoken in the English poet's own first-person voice and addressing Mary.

The author of the quatrain recreates the same visual picture that the author of the surrounding prose meditation recreates: the cross with Mary standing underneath. The point of view of the poem, however, is paradoxically both narrower (the poet scarcely "sees" Jesus but only the face of his mother, in which he reads Jesus' suffering) and broader than that of the prose meditation that surrounds it (for the poet also sees what the third-person narrator of the meditation does not: the geography and chronology of the crucifixion, with the sun dropping below the tree-line on Calvary and the horizon itself as the Good Friday afternoon passes from the sixth hour to the ninth, the same canonical hours marked in the prose meditation). The poet's evocation of the scenic backdrop of the crucifixion places Mary's grief into a cosmological context (the death of the son of God, already alluded to in the prose meditation) that is also a precise scriptural one, as in this passage from Luke's passion narrative: "erat autem fere hora sexta et tenebrae factae sunt in universa terra usque in nonam horam et obscuratus est sol."[75]

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[74] *Ibid.*, 66, l. 66.

[75] Lc 23: 44-45: "And moreover it became dark in all the earth from about the sixth hour all the way to the ninth hour, and the sun was obscured."

Nearly every word of the quatrain is similarly dense with scriptural and liturgical allusion, as well as complex paronomasia that goes well beyond the near-punning of "rode"/"rode"" and "sone"/"sonne." The two words "faire," with its connotations of both beauty and whiteness of skin, and "Rode," with its connotations of ruddiness and rosiness, not only distill the to-be-pitied darkening and disfigurement by sorrow of Mary's appearance foreshadowed in the quoted pasages from the Book of Ruth and the Song of Songs, but the two words are also medieval verbal commonplaces for conventional red-and-white ("candidus et rubicundus"), lily-and-rose beauty of men and women in secular romances and martyrs' passions. With verbal economy the poet calls to mind both Mary's grief-ruined beauty and its original pristinity. The words "wod" and "tre" would have naturally been read as references to the wood and the tree of the cross,[76] and also to the tree of which Adam ate in the Book of Genesis, bringing about the fall of mankind repaired by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This concise double use of "wood' and "tree" was Clemence of Barking's trope in her verse life of Catherine of Alexandria: "N'est tei avis que ço dreit fust / Que cil ki venqui par le fust, / Que par le fust fust poi vencu, / Par le fruit ki fud poi rependu."[77] The author of "Nou goth sonne" compressed similar allusive layers into his own four lines, and also amplified them. The closed-vowel noun "wode" (or "wod," or "wodde," or "wude") meant

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[76] The use of the words "wood" and "tree" as synecdoche and metonymy respectively for Christ's cross is one of Christian literature's oldest traditions. Venantius Fortunatus' sixth-century hymn "Pange lingua gloriosi lauream certaminis" is replete with such usage: "Crux fidelis, inter omnes arbor una nobilis / nulla silva talem profert fronde flore germine; / Dulce lignum dulce clavo dulce pondus sustinet [Faithful cross, unique and noble among all the trees / no wood brings forth such a tree in leaf, flower, and seed. / The sweet wood sustains a sweet burden with a sweet nail.]" Mary Carruthers views Fortunatus' hymn as an early harbinger of medieval affective piety, suggesting that this devotional tradition has much older roots in Christian spirituality than is commonly thought. Mary Carruthers, "Sweetness," *Speculum* 81 (2006): 999-1013.

[77] See ch. 2 of this dissertation. The translation is: "Do you not think it were fitting that he [the devil] who conquered by the wood of a tree was then conquered by the wood of a tree, by the fruit that was hung (on the tree)?"

"wood" in the sense of "forest" as well as building material in Middle English, so that the phrase "vnder wode" could mean the darkening of an entire stand of trees as well as the tree of the cross.[78] The quatrain is a rich and complex evocation of premature nightfall: the sun dips, Mary's face grows dusky, her son's life fades, the shadows of the sinful, fallen world blot out the divine light, and all of nature is clothed in Mary's sorrow.

"Nou goth sonne" derives its literary power from the emotion of pity that was the poet's sole and anaphoristically repeated response to the tableau of maternal suffering that he sees before him: "Me reweth, marie." When the English interpolation is finished, the Anglo-Norman text concludes on an even higher register of expressed pity: "Or avez, pucele"—and this direct and tender apostrophe to Mary is an embellishment upon Edmund's original *Speculum*, in which she and her son are referred to only in the third person—"esprovee la tranchaunte pointe de cele espee dunt Symeon vus fist mencion le jur de vostre purificacion. Or avez receuhe la promesse ke Anne vus promist, la prophetesse."[79] The parallelism here— the twice-repeated "or avez" at the beginning of each of the two phrases—echoes the twice-repeated "me reweth" in the English quatrain and the twice-repeated "e pur ço" in the Anglo-Norman passage that precedes the quatrain. This triple, bilingual anaphora binds together all three sections of the meditation linguistically and thematically and guides the reader from his first glimpse of Mary at the foot of the cross receiving the apostle John as a substitute son to

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[78] W.B. Lockwood argues to the contrary that "under wode" and "under tre" were simply elegantly varied but commonplace euphemisms for "the sun is setting," reflecting similar usages in Old Norse and other north-Germanic literature, although he concedes that the English poet used them to artful emotional effect. "A Note on the Middle English 'Sunset on Calvary'" (n.1).

[79] *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 68, ll. 52-55: "Now, maiden, you have experienced the sharp point of that sword of which Simeon first made mention on the day of your purification. Now you have realized the promise that Anna the prophetess promised you."

the full and immediate realization—Mary's, the author's, the reader's--that the prophesied sword of sorrow has truly been plunged into her heart.

Finally, whoever turned Edmund's original *Speculum religiosorum* into the Anglo-Norman *Mirour de seinte eglyse* in the mid-thirteenth century himself had a stylistic penchant for rewriting Edmund's Latin into a poetic or quasi-poetic form that was, if not outright octosyllabic couplets, at the very least rhyming prose with (usually) a pronounced four-beat rhythm.[80] This is the very poetic form of "Nou goth sonne," whose meter, perhaps imitating Old French octosyllabic couplets, is iambic tetrameter (the word "goth" in the first and third lines is probably an orthographic syneresis of the common Middle English third-person singular "goeth").[81] The Anglo-Norman writer's seemingly instinctive feeling for heavily accentual four-beat meter—the meter of Old English alliterative poetry—suggests that he might have been a native English speaker with some familiarity as well with the highly rhythmic early thirteenth-century English prose of, for example, *Ancrene Wisse* or the saints' lives in the Katherine Group.

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[80] Both Carleton Brown (Brown XIII, 165-66, n. 1) and A.D. Wilshere (Introduction, *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, xli-xl1ii) have noted this feature of the Anglo-Norman translator's style. Brown seemed to believe that it was found only in the portion of the meditation on Mary that immediately precedes "Nou goth sonne" in *Mirour*, while Wilshere asserted that the feature was merely "occasional." It is, in fact, ubiquitous in *Mirour* and one of the many ways in which that text is not merely a translation of Edmund's *Speculum religiosorum* but a highly original work in its own right. It is likely that the Anglo-Norman translator was influenced by Latin examples of rhymed meditative prose, such as the meditations on Christ's passion by Jean de Fécamp that were attributed variously to Augustine of Hippo and Anselm of Canterbury.

[81] Thomas Duncan argues persuasively that thirteenth-century Middle English lyrics, although generally assumed by reason of their orthography to be metrically rough and irregular, were actually extremely metrically regular for the most part, if one accounts for syneresis, elision, hiatus, and other devices regularly used in classical Latin and continental vernacular poetry to maintain regular meter. Duncan bases his argument on the fact that many of the lyrics were written as songs with musical accompaniment. "Middle English Lyrics: Metre and Editorial Practice, " in *A Companion to the Middle English Lyric* (see Introduction to this dissertation), 19-38.

Nearly every page and every separate meditation in the *Mirour*'s canonical-hours reflections on the life of Christ contains long passages in rhyme, always written as prose in the manuscripts. Strikingly, the entire section on Mary's sorrow in the meditation on sext (including the English quatrain, of course) is in rhyme, and if it were written as such in the manuscripts, it would look like this:

> Ci devez penser de la duz Marie,
> de quele angoisse ele estoit replenie
> quant ele estut a sun destre
> et receust le desciple pur le meistre,
> cum ele avoit grant dolur
> quant le serf receut pur le seynur,
> le fiz al peschur pur le fiz a l'empereur,
> Johan le fiz Zebedeu
> pur Jhesu le Fiz Deu.
> E pur ço poet ele dire de soy
> ço ke dit Noemie:
> "Ne me apelez bele mes tant ne quant,
> mes amere me apelez desoreenavant,
> kar de amertume e dolur grant
> m'ad replenie le tut poissant."
> Meymes cele tenur
> dist ele en la Chaunsun d'Amur:
> "Ne vus esmerveillez ke suy brunette e haslee,
> kar le soleil m'ad desculuree."
> E pur ço dist un Engloys
> en teu maner de pité:
> Nu goth sonne under wode:
> me reweth, Marie, þi fayre rude;
> nu goth sonne under tre;
> me reweth, Marie, þi sune and þe.
> Ore avez, pucele, esprovee
> la tranchaunte pointe de cele espee
> dunt Symeon vus fist mencion
> le jur de vostre purificacion.
> Ore avez receuhe la promesse
> ke Anne vus promist, la prophetesse.[82]

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[82] *Mirour de seinte eglyse*, 66, 68, ll. 36-55. See n. 69 for a translation of this passage beginning with "E pur ço." at l. 11 here. The first ten lines here translate as follows: "Here you should think of the sweet Mary, of the great anguish with which she was filled when she was at his [Jesus'] right side and received the disciple instead of the master, when she with great sorrow received the servant instead of the lord, the son of the fisherman

When *Mirour* was translated back into Latin as *Speculum ecclesie* later in the thirteenth century, the translator mostly obliterated the Anglo-Norman rhymes, even as he rendered the Anglo-Norman diction of *Mirour* almost exactly, as in this Latin ending to the Marian meditation, which turned Edmund's original third-person reflection on Simeon's sword into the second-person apostrophe to Mary that Edmund's Anglo-Norman translator had devised: "O puella speciosa, iam veraciter es experta acutissimum punctum illius gladii, de quo Symeon fecit tibi mencionem in die Purificacionis tue. Modo eciam recipisti promissa, que tibi promisit Anna prophetissa."[83] The English "Nou goth sonne," however, survived intact in the Latin manuscripts, with only minor orthographical variations.[84]

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instead of the son of the king, John, the son of Zebedee, instead of Jesus, the son of God." Wilshere has pointed out that Naomi's words ("Ne me...poissant"), which form a pair of octosyllabic couplets, make up a quatrain of their own, Wilshere remarks: "Given the suitability of inserting four lines of English verse into these meditations, the translator may have felt that it would not come amiss to try his hand at some verse of his own." Introduction, xlii. Neither Brown nor Wilshere seemed to realize that the entire Anglo-Norman meditation on Mary is in either verse or rhymed prose. In addition, the immediately preceding meditation on Jesus' crucifixion is also largely in rhyme, ending not only with the Anglo-Norman versification of "O vos omnes" (see n. 66), but with this apostrophe to Christ:

> Certes nul a, ne unkes fu
> dolur [semblable] a la vostre, tresduz Jhesu!
> [Certainly there is no sorrow, nor ever was, like yours, most sweet Jesus!]

Ibid., ll. 34-35. Finally, it should be noted that the "B" text of *Mirour* preserves the same rhymes as the "A" text throughout *Mirour*, indicating that they were a stylistic innovation of the original, early thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman translator of Edmund's *Speculum*.

[83] *Speculum ecclesie* (see n. 60), 60, ll. 8-10: "O lovely maiden, now truly you have felt the most sharp point of that sword of which Simeon made mention on the day of your purification. Now also you have received the promises that Anna the prophetess promised you." There is a hint of the Latin translator's awareness of the Anglo-Norman rhymes in the last sentence of this, in which he, in apparent imitation of his model, rendered the Anglo-Norman feminine singular "promesse" as the Latin neuter plural "promissa," which rhymes with "prophetissa."

[84] The bilingual Vernon manuscript, an Anglo-Norman and English devotional anthology that is lavishly illustrated and was likely compiled for a wealthy laywoman in about 1390, includes an English translation of *Mirour* called (in its own text) *Þe Mirour of seint Edmound* that, like the Latin translation of *Mirour*, generally ignores the Anglo-Norman rhymes. An exception is the quotation from the Song of Songs immediately preceding "Nou goth sonne." The English translator wrote in rhyming prose: "Þe selue heo seide in hire song of love: 'Ne haue no merueile þat i am blo, for þe sonne haþ discolurd me so.' [She said the self-same in her song of love: 'Do not marvel that I am blue-black, for the sun has so discolored me.]" For the sake of making a rhyme, the fourteenth-century English translator changed the color of Mary's dark and sunburned skin from

The Anglo-Norman manuscript context of "Nu goth sonne" demonstrates that thirteenth-century authors of meditative texts knew well how to write in verse themselves from time to time, and also how incorporate verse written by others as a means of enhancing their own works' theological meaning and emotional effect. The scribe of the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* incorporated an English lyric poem written in the form of an Old French lyrical *lai*, *On god ureisun of ure lefdi*, into a unique English devotional anthology of unified theme. His contemporary, the Anglo-Norman translator of Edmund of Abdingdon's *Speculum religiosorum*, incorporated an English lyric written in the form of two Old French octosyllabic couplets into a Latin prose devotional work that he substantially reworked when he rendered it in the vernacular. "Nu goth sonne" and *On god ureisun* are the oldest surviving Middle English lyrics other than Godric of Finchale's hymns—but they are not hymns, and they appear in a context that is meant for reading.

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brown ("brunette") in the Anglo-Norman *Mirour* to midnight blue ("blo"). Carl Horstman, ed., *The Mirror of St. Edmund: Vernon Text*, in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole, an English Father of the Church and His Followers* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, and New York: Macmillan, 1895), 240-61, at 256-57. Horstman believed that the English translation was a rendering of the Latin *Speculum*, but it far more closely tracks the language of the Anglo-Norman *Mirour*, of whose existence Horstman might have been unaware.

Chapter Five

The Birth of the English Passion-Lyric Miscellaney

On god ureisun and "Nou Goth Sonne" represent two different literary strategies for

creating and using English lyrics as meditative texts: the brief lyric incorporated into a longer

meditation and the longer lyric that served as as part of a collection of thematically related

meditations. There was a third literary strategy that also seemed to date from the early

thirteenth century and incorporated features of each of the first two. The form that this third

sort of lyric took was the translation, sometimes close, sometimes very free, into English

verse of Latin prose meditations and hymns, along with the use of those those translations in

many cases to create compact devotional miscellanies much like the one that forms the final

folios of the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*. The English lyrics of this third form

invariably have the passion of Christ as their theme, and they invariably appear in their

manuscripts, either singly or together with other lyrics and bits of prose, at the end of longer

prose texts or in the margins of those texts. They are usually the handiwork of different

scribes from those who wrote down the longer texts with which they appear in conjunction.

The Latin passages selected for such transformation into English verse were typically

excerpts from longer meditative works that the translators themselves had probably

committed to memory and that they, often in their rubrics or in the margins of their

manuscripts, attributed to the well-known authors they believed had originally composed

them, usually Augustine of Hippo and Bernard of Clairvaux. The favorite among those

excerpts was a passage from the *Meditationes*, a series of meditations on the persons of the

Trinity that throughout the later Middle Ages was attributed to Augustine because in form—a

highly emotional first-person reflection—it resembles Augustine's *Soliloquia* and

Confessiones. The *Meditationes* were actually written, as André Wilmart demonstrated,

partly by John of Fécamp, some of whose other meditations were attributed to Anselm of

Canterbury.[1] The heart of the *Meditationes* is the meditation on the Son, which begins with a

lengthy prayer to God the Father in which the speaker implores the Father to look upon his

son as he dies on the cross ("Aspice, Pater pie").[2]

The source of the prayer was the Vulgate's Psalm 83:10: "clipeus noster vide Deus et

adtende faciem christi tui [God our shield, see and look upon the face of your anointed one]."

John turned this verse into a locus of meditation, in which the Father, and also the reader,

were invited to examine in vivid and meticulous detail the magnitude of what Christ,

although sinless, endured for the sake of the human beings whose fleshly nature he shared:

> Aspice, mitissime Conditor, dilectae sobolis humanitatem; et miserere super infirmi
> plasmatis debilitatem. Candet nudatum pectus, rubet cruentum latus, tensa arent
> viscera, decora languent lumina, regia pallent ora, procera rigent brachia, crura
> pendent marmorea, rigat terebratos pedes beati sanguinis unda.
> [Look, most gentle creator, on the humanity of your beloved offspring, and take pity
> on the weakness of his frail form. His naked breast gleams white, his bloody side
> glows ruby-red, his distended entrails are parched, his noble eyes are listless, his royal
> face grows pale, his upraised arms grow stiff, his marble-like limbs hang down, a
> wave of his blessed blood gushes over his pierced feet.][3]

The operative figure here is violent paradox, for John lifted from the Vulgate Song of Songs

the vocabulary of the royal bridegroom's physical beauty and amorous longing—"candet,"

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[1] The *Meditationes* are in PL 40:901-42. Wilmart used stylistic comparisons to John's other works to establish
that John was the author of the first nine chapters (901-09) of the *Meditationes*, of which there are no surviving
manuscripts earlier than the twelfth century. André Wilmart, ed., "Deux préfaces spirituelles de Jean de
Fécamp," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 18 (1937): 3-44.

[2] *Meditationes* 1.6 (PL 40:905).

[3] *Ibid.*, 906.

"rubet," "languent," "regia" and inserted that vocabulary into a picture that freezes the very moment of dying, when the eyes blur, the face grows pale, the limbs grow stone-stiff, and every part of the body is drenched with blood, the redemptive blood that is the only living thing in the picture. It is a vision of Christ that is simultaneously beautiful and horrifying, reinforced by the antithesis, anaphora, rhyme, and deft use of rhetorical climax, with the long final clause flowing like the wave of Christ's blood over his feet. There is artful, delicate use of alliteration here, too: "rubet," "regia," "rigent," "rigat," "languent lumina," along with many other liquid sounds ("latus," "pallent," "brachia," "marmorea," "terebratos") that imitate the flowing of the blood as the body of Christ slips into the immobility of death.

The primary quality of this passage is its pictorial nature.[4] The speaker repeatedly pleads with the Father in an elegant variation of words to gaze upon the spectacle of his dying son: not simply "aspice," but also "respice," "reduc...oculos," "conspicare," "vide." The point of the paradox of the divine Son's death is a further and larger paradox: the abjectness of the speaker in contrast to the supremely innocence of Christ, who out of pure love takes on the full punishment for the speaker's sins.

The meditation then turns from a plea to the Father to a grateful apostrophe to the Son, the second actor in the drama of human redemption: "Peccat iniquus, et punitur justus; deliquat reus, et vapulat innocens; offendit impius, et damnatur pius; quod meretur malus, patitur bonus; quod perpetrat servus, exsolvit dominus; quod committit homo, sustinet Deus. Quo, Nate Dei, quo tua descendit humilitas? quo tua flagravit charitas? quo processit pietas? quo excrevit benignitas? quo attigit amor? quo pervenit compassio? Ego inique egi, tu poena

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[4] Thomas Bestul has noted the "orientation to the visual" of the meditation on the Son. See *Texts of the Passion* (Introduction to this dissertation), 37-38

multaris; ego facinis admisi, tu ultione plecteris; ego crimen edidi, tu torturae subjiceris...ego fruor deliciis, tu laniaris clavis; ego pomi dulcidinem, tu felis gustas amaritudinem; mihi ridens congaudet Eva, tibi plorans compatitur Maria. [The wicked man sins, and the just man is punished; the guilty man offends, the innocent man is beaten; the impious man commits the wrongdoing, and the good man is condemned; what the evil man deserves the good man suffers, what the servant does, the master undoes, what man does, God endures. Why, son of God, did your humility stoop down? Why did your charity burn? Why did your devotion go forth? Why did your kindness shoot forth? Why did your love touch me? Why did your compassion reach me? I acted wickedly: you bore the punishment. I let myself loose to the flames of hell; you are beaten in recompense. I caused the crime; you are subjected to the torment. I enjoy pleasures; you are mutilated by nails. I taste the sweetness of the apple; you taste the bitterness of the thief. Eve, laughing, rejoices along with me; Mary, weeping, suffers along with you.]"

The *Meditationes*, with its extended and effective use of paradox, antithesis, anaphora, and climax, its diction replete with Virgilian echoes (the poetic plural "regia...ora" and the apostrophe "nate Dei" (instead of "fili Dei") for Christ, reminiscent of the classical apostrophe "nate dea" for the goddess-born Aeneas, and its high emotional pitch as it repeatedly contrasts the speaker's abject sense of his sinfulness to the innocence of Christ (visually exemplified in his shining white body) who lovingly endures what the speaker deserves, was one of the most popular Latin devotional texts of the later Middle Ages. John's propensity to turn the rhythmic final *cursus* of medieval Latin prose rhetoric into something close to outright rhyme probably made it easy to memorize. In particular, by the late twelfth century the passage "Aspice mitissime Conditor," as the passage became known, had

acquired an identity of its own in English manuscripts as an independent meditation on

Christ's passion, sometimes as the prayer to God the Father that John of Fécamp had

originally written but more often with the apostrophe to the Father shaved away so that only

the verbal picture of Christ dying on the cross remained as the subject of meditation. Eight

clauses beginning with "Candet nudatum pectus" and ending with "beati sanguinis unda"

remained--eight rhythmic clauses of near-rhyme that resembled four couplets of poetry.

A Latin manuscript at the Hereford Cathedral library, MS O.IX.5, dating from either

the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth, typifies the use to which

many scribes of the thirteenth century put this eight-clause passage from John of Fécamp's

text.[5] The manuscript itself, 104 folios in all,[6] consists of two Latin glosses (together with

their pertinent texts from the Vulgate Bible) on portions of the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel

made by two scribes writing in early Gothic book hands; the manuscript is believed to be of

monastic origin.[7] The Ezekiel text and its surrounding gloss end on the tenth line of the very

last folio in the manuscript (as numbered, fol. 102v[8]), which originally left a mostly blank

page. At some point not long afterwards, a third scribe used a similar early Gothic book

hand, markedly tidier than that of the second scribe, to fill in the rest of fol.102v with

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[5] Hereford Cathedral MS O.IX.5 has never been published, nor has any part of it apparently been transcribed to this date. Thomas Bestul alluded to one of its texts, an adaptation on fol. 102v of a portion of *Meditatio passionem et resurrectionem domini* attributed during the later Middle Ages to Bernard of Clairvaux (PL 184:751, and see ch. 2 of this dissertation) in *Texts of the Passion*. Appendix 2, 188, but Bestul does not discuss this text, nor does he mention the "Candet nudatum pectus" passage that the teet's scribe paired with excerpts from the pseudo-Bernardian text on that page.

[6] R.A.B. Mynors and R.M. Thomson, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library* (Cambridge, U.K.: Boydell & Brewer, 1993), 61. Mynors and Thomson note that the first and last leaf of the manuscript are pasted down, so for practical purposes, and also for purposes of numbering, the manuscript contains only 102 folios, with fol. 102v as the last page of the manuscript.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] See n. 6. Fol. 102 is the final numbered leaf in this manuscript.

devotional material in Latin. In this respect, what the third Hereford scribe did resembled the second Nero scribe's filling in the leftover leaves of *Ancrene Wisse* with English and Latin devotional material.

Indeed, the Nero and the Hereford scribes used an identical strategy for the verso pages of their very last leaves: finishing up their manuscripts with Latin meditations on Christ's passion. The Hereford scribe, in fact, devoted his last verso page to an adaptation of a portion of the same *Meditatio passionem et resurrectionem domini* then attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux[9] that the Nero scribe had excerpted on his own verso page. In the right-hand margin next to the first line of his text the Hereford scribe wrote (in abbreviated form), "Bernardus de passione Christi," and began: "Si considero vultum pendentis in cruce, primo modo ocurrit mihi quod flevisti, O bone Ihesu, sed cur flevisti, O bone Ihesu, cum potius esset gaudendum quam flendum?... [If I look closely at the face of you hanging on the cross, it occurs to me in the first instance that you wept, O good Jesus, but why did you weep, O good Jesus, when it was an occasion for rejoicing rather than weeping?...]"[10] In the right margin of the fourth line of this text, the scribe wrote an abbreviation for "Idem [the same]," and continued his text: "O quam vehementi amplexu amplexatus es me, O bone Ihesu.... [With what a violent embrace you have embraced me, O good Jesus....]"[11]

On the twenty-seventh line of the page, however, the scribe inserted a new text that he attributed in the right margin as an abbreviated "Augustinus." The text consists of the eight-clause "Candet nudatum pectus" from John of Fécamp's meditation. The "Candet," each

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[9] See ch. 4 of this dissertation.

[10] MS O.IX.5, fol. 102v, ll. 11-12. Transcriptions from this page are this writer's.

[11] *Ibid.*, l. 14.

of its clauses punctuated with a period, continues past the middle of the twenty-eighth line, ending with "beati sanguinis unda," at which point the scribe wrote another abbreviated "Bernardus" and continued from *Meditatio passionem*: "Arborem ascendit ut ab hominibus videretur, arbore clamavit ut ab hominibus audiretur, lacrimas fundit ut homo compateretur....[He ascended the tree so that he would be seen by men; he cried out upon the tree so that he would be heard by men; he shed tears so that man would suffer with him....]"[12] These lines are not known to have been written by Bernard, but it is clear that they were believed during the thirteenth century to have been his, just as the lines of the "Candet" were believed to have been Augustine's. The last page of the Hereford manuscript (or rather the forty-seven lines—lines 11 through 58--on fol. 102v that follow the conclusion of the twelfth-century Ezekiel gloss),[13] constitutes a miscellany of brief excerpts, clearly drawn from longer works and focused on the theme of Christ's passion. Unconnected to any contextual texts (such as, for example, sermon material), those brief excerpts, visual, emotional, and couched as direct addresses to Christ when not as third-person reflections upon his passion, could only have served as brief meditations, perhaps prayers, for the scribe who compiled them and the monks who came across them and read them. The "Candet" passage from John of Fécamp's *Meditationes* had, by the mid-thirteenth-century in England, acquired a separate existence as one of those brief meditations.

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[12] *Ibid.*, ll. 28-29.

[13] On line 59 of fol. 102v a fourth scribe began a disquisition on the seven deadly sins, with the incipit "Dicit Augustinus." That scribe continued for twenty-one lines in total, then abruptly broke off his text mid-sentence (the surviving explicit is the provocative "sibi copulavit ut eum"). The remainder of fol. 102v, perhaps two inches of usable space excluding the lower margin, is blank. The last quire (no. 11) of Hereford MS O.IX.5 lacks its four last leaves (Mynors and Thomson, *Catalogue*, 61), so it is impossible to say whether the fourth scribe stopped writing at that point or continued his text on the missing leaves.

The meditative miscellany exemplified by the Latin passion prayers on fol. 102v of the Hereford manuscript (and at greater length and in English as well as Latin, by the final eleven folios of the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*) proved to be a generator of English religious lyrics. The most significant development in this regard was the translation of the "Candet nudatum pectus" into English verse during the first half of the thirteenth century, at about the same time that the third Hereford scribe compiled his miscellany containing the Latin "Candet." At least eight extant manuscripts dating from the early thirteenth century to the early fourteenth century contain such a translation,[14] and seven of those eight manuscripts preserve nearly identical texts, suggesting that all derived from a single source upon which the individual scribes evidently worked their own variations. The earliest manuscript of the eight, Durham Cathedral Library MS A.III.12, fol. 49r, dating to the first third of the thirteenth century, contains this text that turns the eight clauses of the Latin into four six-beat lines arranged in two rhyming couplets, with each line divided metrically by a caesura):

> Wyth was hys nakede brest and red of blod hys side,
> Bleye was his fair handled, his wunde dop ant wide,r
> and his arms ystreith hey up-hon þe rode;

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[14] The manuscripts in question are as follows: Durham Cathedral Library MS A.III.12, fol. 49r (early thirteenth century); Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 42, fol. 250r (mid-thirteenth century); Cambridge University, St. John's College MS A.15, fol. 115v (mid-thirteenth century); Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 55, fol. 49r (mid-thirteenth century); British Library, MS Additional 11579, fol. 35v (third quarter of thirteenth century); Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 45, fol. 25r (late thirteenth century); Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson C.317, fol. 89v (late thirteenth to early fourteenth century); and Cambridge University, Sidney Sussex College MS 97, fol. 110r (early fourteenth century). This list excludes two well-known later versions of the English "Candet" (along with the Latin original) preserved in the commonplace book compiled by the Franciscan friar John of Grimestone in 1372 (Advocates MS 18.7.21, fols. 117r and 120r), and Richard Rolle's use of a stanza from the English "Candet" in his "Ego Dormio"; this list thus differs somewhat from the list of manuscripts of the English "Candet" assembled by Rita Copeland in "The Middle English 'Candet Nudatum Pectus' and Norms of Early Vernacular Translation Practice," *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 15 (1984): 56-81. S. Harrison Thomson conducted a paleographical analysis and assigned early- and mid- thirteenth-century dates to the Durham, Bodley 42, Digby 55, and British Library Additiional 11579 manuscripts in "The Date of the Early English Translation of the *Candet Nudatum Pectus*,' Medium Aevum 4 (1935): 100-05. In so doing, Thomson corrected the dating of Carleton Brown, who believed that the Durham, Bodley 42, and Additional manuscripts of the "Candet" translation were no older than early fourteenth-century. Brown XIV, 241-42, nn. 1-2.

On fif studes on his body þe stremes ran o blode.
[White was his naked breast and blood-red his side. / Pale was his fair face, his wound deep and wide, / and his arms stretched high upon the cross. / In five places on his body the streams of blood ran.][15]

A slightly later (second quarter of the thirteenth-century) version of the text, in Oxford

University, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 42, fol. 250r, reads as follows:

Wit was his nakede brest and red of blod his side,
Blod was his faire neb, his wnden depe an uide,
starke waren his armes hi-spred op-on þe rode;
In fif steden an his bodi streme hurne of blode.
[White was his naked breast, and blood-red his side. / Bloody (?) was his fair face, his wounds deep and wide. / Rigidly were his arms spread upon the cross. / In five places on his body ran streams of blood.)[16]

The Bodley scribe was clearly familiar with the Durham text (or a similar text traceable to

the same source), for the text of Bodley 42 is nearly identical to that of the Durham scribe.[17]

Tellingly, the Bodley scribe's substitution of the puzzling word "Blod" (which is a

noun meaning meaning "blood," not an adjective, and thus does not grammatically modify

the noun "neb [face]" as it should), for the Durham scribe's adjective "Bleye" suggests that

that the Bodley scribe had seen or heard the word "Bleye" in the quatrain but was unfamiliar

with that northern word (it derives from the Old Norse adjective "bleikr," meaning pale or

sallow) and substituted a more familiar monosyllable that retains the meter of the original but

makes no sense unless one reads the word "Blod" to mean "bloody," which, grammatically

speaking, it does not. A second mid-thirteenth-century text of the English "Candet," found in

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[15] Brown XIV, no. 1. Brown modernized the punctuation.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Thomson (n. 14) describes the Durham and Bodley texts as "recensions of the same trranslation." "The Date of the Early English Translation of the *Candet Nudatum Pectus*," 104. It is likely that the four-line late fourteenth-century version of the English "Candet" found in John of Grimestone's Franciscan preaching book (n. 14), whose text is quite similar to the Durham and Bodley texts, is a related recension. For Grimestone's text, see Brown XIV, 241, n. 1.

Cambridge University, St. John's College MS A.15, fol. 115v, also seems to derive from the

Durham version (or a text derived from a common source), except that its scribe, while

seeming to understand what the word "Bleye" meant (he substituted the word "wan," which

also means "pale" in modern English, as it still does), apparently remembered it imperfectly

(or copied it imperfectly), writing this truncated version::

> Wyt was hys nakede brest. and his blodi side: wan
> was his fayre neb. hys wnden depe and wyde: on fif
> stedes of hys bodi þe stremes renne of blode.
> [White was his naked breast, and his side bloody; / Wan was his fair face, his wounds
> deep and wide; and on five places of his body ran the streams of blood.][18]

The St. John's Cambridge scribe skipped the entire third line of the Durham and Bodley texts.

What is most interesting about the English "Candet"—at least from the evidence

presented in its earliest extant version, the Durham Cathedral manuscript—is that its author

intended it to be not simply an English rendering of the eight semi-rhyming clauses of the

prose Latin "Candet" but a poem in its own right. As such, the English "Candet" vies with *On

god ureisun* and "Nou Goth Sonne" for the status of earliest surviving thirteenth-century

religious lyric. The Durham manuscript of the "Candet" is actually a stained, faded, and torn

fragment of a long and narrow parchment roll that was inserted into the codex of MS A.III.12

sometime between 1231 and 1258, for the roll ("rotulus") is listed in the manuscript's table of

contents, written in a hand that dates to about 1260, according to S. Harrison Thomson.[19]

Thomson dated the codex itself, which had belonged to Bertram of Middleton, prior of the

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[18] This is a diplomatic transcription (maintaining the original punctuation) made from a microfilm facsimile of the manuscript, which has never been published. The manuscript renders the word "neb" as "nebeb," but the scribe carefully expuncted the final "eb." Although the St. John's Cambridge manuscript is listed in the Index and seems to date paleographically to the mid-thirteenth century, Thomson took no note of it.

[19] "The Date of the Early English Translation of the *Candet Nudatum Pectus*" (n. 14), 101.

Durham abbey from 1244 to 1258 (the codex describes itself as a gift from Bertram to the cathedral before he died), to "not later than 1231."[20] The codex, a compilation by at least a dozen scribes, consists of 265 leaves whose contents include a life of St. Cuthbert (whose remains are in the Durham cathedral), sermons by the Dominican master general Jordan of Saxony (c. 1190-1237), who had visited England in 1229, and works by the bishop of Lincoln and theologian Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175-1253) that had been composed from 1225 to 1230.[21]

The roll on which the English "Candet" appears was written in a different hand—dating to sometime before 1233, according to Thomson--from that of any of any of the scribes who provided the texts in the codex itself. Yet when the manuscript was put first put together before 1258, the "Candet" roll, undoubtedly intact at the time, seemed to have been bound with it, so that it was noted in the table of contents prepared in about 1260 (all the Durham manuscript's contents—except for the second section of the "Candet" roll--still appear in the same order in which they are referenced in the table of contents). Now in two pieces, the roll is bound into two separate places in the codex, the first piece as fol. 58 and the second as fol. 49 (the numbering is modern). The scribe who composed the table of contents in 1260 and who seemed not particularly interested in what the roll said, described it as follows: "Quedam questio in quodam rotulo [a certain *quaestio* on a certain roll]," and indeed, two scholastic

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[20] *Ibid.*, 100-01. As evidence for this precise *terminus ad quem*, Thomson cited notes made by a single hand in plummet throughout the codex, although not the roll on which the English "Candet" appears. On fol. 131r, Thomson notes, that writer made a list in plummet of certain penances and fasts that he intended to perform (it appeared to be around Lent), and he dated his list February 25, 1231 ("iiii kalendas Marcii anno ab incarnacione domini mo cco xxxi").

[21] Ibid. Thomson misidentified Jordan as a Franciscan. See also Thomas Rud, *Catalogus classicus codicum manuscriptorum ecclesiae cathedralis dunelmensis* (Durham: G. Andrews; London: Payne & Foss, 1825), 29-37.

quaestiones concerning moral issues, one attributed to Pope Leo I and neither related thematically to the "Candet," occupy about two-thirds of the original roll (both *quaestiones* appear on fol. 58r, which is what appears to be the entire roll's original place in the manuscript). After the *quaestiones* the scribe wrote, "Augustinus in meditacionibus de passione Christi" together with a short passage from John of Fécamp's text. At this point the roll is torn diagonally, and the remainder of the roll (fol. 49) continues, with a marginal "Idem," next to a version of the Latin "Candet" laid out as follows:

> attende quod candet nudatum pectus. rubet cruentum latus
> tensa arent viscera. decora languent lumina. regia pallent ora.
> procera rigent brachia. cura pendent marmorea. rigat terebratos pedes
> beati sanguinis unda.[22]

It was this version of the "Candet," set forth as prose that the Durham scribe (after leaving a line or two blank) turned into the two English rhyming couplets that followed. The remainder of this second section of the roll is empty.

The Durham scribe (or whoever preceded him in making an English quatrain out of the Latin prose), who must have been a monk working in the scriptorium at the Durham monastery where Bertram presided as prior, used considerable artistry to improve upon the Latin text even as he simplified and streamlined its numerous parallelisms. He sharpened the antithesis between white and red ("Wyth" and "red'), between the pallor and beauty of Christ's face ("Bleye was his fair handled") and the startling disfigurement of the wounds ("dop ant wyde"), between the arms stretched high and horizontally on the cross and the blood coursing vertically downward. He altered the Latin word order of several clauses so that they opened dramatically with strong-accented English monosyllables "Wyth," "red,"

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[22] This is a diplomatic transcription made from the Durham manuscript.

"Bleye," "hey"). The Latin is a study in the paradox of a suffering God. The English is a

study in color, whose verbal surface of stark contrasts downplays—and thus perhaps

heightens—the pathos of that suffering by making it implicit: the breast, face, arms, and body

of Christ bleached white in death, the five wounds gushing brilliant red. Furthermore, the

scribe himself was quite conscious that he was turning prose into poetry. In contrast to the

Latin, the English is set out in lines of poetry: two rhyming couplets. The scribe also

capitalized the initial letters of the initial words in three of the four lines: "Wyth," "Bleye,"

"On." His scribal practice somewhat resembled the French manuscript tradition for rhyming

couplets that the scribe who copied *On god ureisun* into the Nero manuscript had

also followed.

The English "Candet" clearly had no other function except as a meditative poem

unrelated to any texts in its host manuscript produced at the Durham abbey (even the texts on

its own roll) except for the Latin meditation that preceded.it. The evidence from the other

extant early manuscripts of the lyric supports supports this interpretation of the lyric's

purpose. The Bodley 42 text (which is set out as prose) leads a series of brief meditations on

Christ's passion (mostly in Latin but with one other English lyric) written in a single, highly

informal hand and occupying the left column of its two-column page. After finishing the

"Candet" (in the first five lines and the beginning of a sixth), the scribe wrote in a macaronic

combination of Latin and English): "Hic debemus cogitare de Christi passione et dicere: 'O

bone Ihesu'; 'Wit was,' etc., hic dicit Augustinus: 'Candet,' etc.[Here we ought to think on the

passion of Christ and say: 'O good Jesus': 'White was'; here Augustine says, 'Candet,' etc.]"[23]

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[23] This is a transcription from a microfilm facsimile of fol. 250r of Bodley 42, with modern capitalization
and punctuation.

In this cryptic passage, densely abbreviated in the manuscript, the scribe informed his readers that in reading the English "Candet," they were to think about ("cogitare de") Christ's passion, and that the English "Candet," like the Latin "Candet" in the Hereford manuscript," should be accompanied by a prayer of gratitude to the "good Jesus" who had suffered his crucifixion for humankind. The scribe also informed his readers that the English lyric was a translation of a meditation by Augustine.

Similarly, the shortened text of the English "Candet" in the St. John's Cambridge manuscript leads off an English-Latin mélange of meditations on Christ's passion, all written in a small, informal hand near the bottom of the right margin of fol. 115v. (The main text is a theological treatise in a larger, more formal Gothic hand, one of several thirteenth-century works copied at different dates starting in the thirteenth century and compiled together during the fifteenth century.)[24] The scribe who wrote out the "Candet" (noting in the left margin, "Augustinus de passione Christi") followed it in midline without a break with a rhythmic Latin prose text that he attributed to "Bernardus": "Quis non rapitur ad spem impetrandi et ad fiduciam qui eius attendit corporis disposicionem? Tuum caput inclinat ad osculum, brachia extendunt ad amplexum, manus aperit ad largiendum, figit pedes ad manendum, cor suum aperit ad te diligendum, totum corpus suum tibi ostendit ad impendendum. [Who is not lifted to hope in his entreaties, and to trust, who gazes upon the arrangement of his body? He inclines his head for a kiss, he extends his arms for an embrace, he opens his hands for giving

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[24] Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press), 19-21.

generously, he nails down his feet for remaining steadfast, he opens his heart for loving you, he displays his whole body for devoting it to you.]"[25]

This is, of course, a version of the Latin excerpt from the pseudo-Anselmian tenth Meditation that the second scribe of the Nero *Ancrene Wisse* had copied onto his final verso.[26] The Nero scribe might have thought that he was quoting Anselm of Canterbury (although we do not know), while the St. John's Cambridge scribe thought that he was quoting Bernard of Clairvaux. In a third and final section of the "Candet" paragraph, the St. John's scribe added an "O bone Ihesu" prayer that he also attributed (in the right margin) to "Bernardus." By placing the three excerpts into a single continuous paragraph, the St. John's Cambridge scribe imposed structural unity upon them. The reader was meant to move from a third-person visualization of Christ's crucified body, to a second-person explanation that each element of the crucifix conveyed a meaning of love, to a first-person prayer of gratitude addressed directly to Christ.

Two somewhat later manuscripts of the English "Candet," Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 55, fol. 49r, and British Library, MS Additional 11579, fol. 35v, dating to the mid-thirteenth century and the beginning of the third quarter of the thirteenth century respectively, preserve a six-line version (in three rhyming couplets) of the English "Candet." (The Digby 55 version is not written as lines of poetry, but the scribe marked off the beginning of each of the six lines with a pilcrow [¶].) The six-line version seems to be textually related to the four-line version but, as S. Harrison Thomson observes, it preserves

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[25] This is a transcription from a facsimile of fol. 115v of St. John's Cambridge A.15, with modern capitalization and pronunciation.

[26] See ch. 4 of this dissertation.

more of descriptive details of the Latin "Candet."[27] The Digby text (although not the

Additional text) alters the Latin in a significant respect; it turns the third-person description

of the crucified Christ into a second-person address to the crucified Christ. The Digby text,

transcribed in a small hand at the bottom of its page in a codex that is otherwise devoted to

miscellaneous philosophical treatises in several hands, is preceded by the Latin "Candet"

(with the word "Augustinus" written in the left margin) written as prose preceded by a

single pilcrow):

> Wyt is þi nachede brest and blodi is þi side.
> starke veren þine armes zat strekede weren so vyde.
> Falu is thi faire ler and dummes þi sithe
> drie es þin ende body on rode so ytycthe.
> Zine zedes hongen colde al so ze marbre ston.
> þine thirlede fet; þi rede blod by ron.

[White is your naked breast and bloody is your side. / Strong were your arms that were
extended so wide. / Pale is your fair cheek and dim is your sight / Dried-out is your gracious
body stretched so tight on the cross. / Your thighs hang cold like the marble stone, / your red
blood runs along your pierced feet.)[28]

The Additional text is titled, in macaronic Anglo-Norman and Latin, in red ink, *Vne*

remembrance de la passion ihu crist, anglice. It first presents the Latin "Candet" on lines 15-

21 of the manuscript page, and then (on lines 22-23 and continuing through lines 1-7 of fol.

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[27] "The English Translation of *Candet Nudatum Pectus*" (n. 14) 104.

[28] The above follows S. Harrison Thomson's diplomatic transcription, *Ibid.*, 104. Rosemary Woolf, who
amended the manuscript text to make it conformable to thirteenth-century orthography, substituting the
conventional "þ" for the scribe's "z," believed the Digby 55 text to be superior to the Durham text because the
change to direct address to the crucified Christ, a manifestation of the translator's "stylistic freedom," meant that
"the meditator is given here not only the details of a visual image but also a personal lament," so that "in his
imagination he is standing at the foot of the Cross, present in the historical scene, and able to take part in it."
She thus traced a direct line from the Digby 55 lyric back to the passion meditation in Aelred of Rievaulx's *De
institutione inclusarum. The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (see Introduction to this dissertation),
29-30. It may be argued, *contra* Woolf, that the third-person text, which survives in many more versions,
seemed perfectly adequate to many late-medieval scribes as an imaginative vehicle for affective meditation; it
had certainly so seemed to John of Fécamp, who had used the third person in composing the original Latin text.

36r) presents an English version that both follows and elaborates rhetorically upon the Digby

version, while also preserving echoes of the Durham text):

> Wit was his naked brest, and red blodi his side.
> Hise faire eyen woxen dasewe, hyse armes weren spradde wyde.
> Hise leichende lyppes bycomen pale, and hys bodi al dreie.
> As cheld marbre hengen hyse lemes, þat blod was al a-weye.
> Hys fet were þerled þat weren so þwyte, hee bledde from fot til heued.
> Þere : for man he þschedde hys blod, ne was þere noust by-leued.
> [White was his naked breast, and bloody red his side. / His fair eyes grew dim, his
> arms were spread wide. / His lovely lips became pale, and his body all dried out. /
> Like cold marble his limbs hung where the blood was all gone. / His feet were pierced
> that were so white; he bled from foot to head. / There he shed his blood for man—
> which was not at all believed.)[29]

The scribe wrote in red ink at the end of the English text: "Hec fuerunt verba sancti augustini

[these were the words of St. Augustine]."

The six-line recension of the English "Candet" survives in only those two manuscripts

(Digby 55 and Additional 11579), however. It was the four-line version that (judging from

the number of extant copies), that scribes of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century

remembered (or sometimes misremembered), revised, and rewrote in various ways.[30] In

Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 45, a quarto-size collection of sermons and

theological tracts dating from the late thirteenth century, the four-line English "Candet"

appears on fol. 25r as a note in the bottom margin of one of a series of sermons devoted to

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[29] Brown XIV, 241, n. 1.

[30] The four-line version, with clear literary ties to the Durham recension, was the one that John of Grimestone
copied into his preaching book during the late fourteenth century. Grimestone's text (in Advocates MS 18.7.21,
fol. 117r), reads as follows:
> With it was his naked brest & red is blodi side
> Bleike were his leres his wondis depe & wyde
> Starke weren his armis spred vpon þe rode
> On fiue stedes vpon his bodi þe stremes ronnen on blode

Grimestone preceded his version of the English "Candet" with the Latin "Candet," which he titled *Augustinus in
quadam meditacione*. Brown XIV, 241, n. 1.

Christ's passion comprising fols. 22-39. In a bold hand the scribe wrote as prose in

large letters:

> Anglicum. Naked was hys wite brest. red o
> blod hys side. bloc. was hys faire
> neb hys wounde dep and wide. starke
> were hys armes ysprad op hon þe rode.
> on fif stede on his bodie stremes
> ourne of blode.[31]

There is no Latin "Candet" or other Latin or English meditative material accompanying the

Digby 45 text.

By contrast, Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson C.317, a sermon

collection dating from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, preserves, on fol. 89v,

one of the Latin apostrophes to Christ that the Hereford scribe had included in his collection

of meditations on the passion: "¶ O quam vehementi amplexu amplexatus est me dicite. O

bone ihesu." He followed this with the Latin "Candet" and then with the English "Candet"

written as prose:

> ¶ With was is nakede brest
> and red his blodi side. Blake were is
> lives is wundes depe ant wy-
> de. I trad he wern is
> armes sprad op on þe rode. In
> fife fondes on his bodi stremes
> urnen on blodes. ¶[32]

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[31] This is a diplomatic transcription from Digby 45. The translation is: "The English: 'Naked was his white breast, red from blood his side. Pale was his fair face, his wounds deep and wide. Extended were his arms stretched upon the cross. On five places on his body streams of blood ran." See R.W. Hunt and A.G. Watson, *Digby Manuscripts, Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogue 9* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1999).

[32] This is a diplomatic transcription from Rawlinson C.317. The translation is: "White was his naked breast, and bloody red his side. Pale were his cheeks, his wounds deep and wide, stretched out were his arms / spread across the tree. / In five fonts on his body streams run with blood."

Finally, an eighth text of the English "Candet," Cambridge University, Sidney Sussex MS 97,

fol. 111r, is another final manuscript entry (fol. 111v, the last page in the codex, is blank),

written in a late thirteenth or early fourteenth-century hand. On this page the scribe wrote out

the Latin "Candet," with the notation "Augustinus fecit" above the text, and followed the

Latin with an English translation that resembles no other extant version and was perhaps

wholly the scribe's own:

> His unwrowene breste bigan to syne. his blodegede side bigan
> to rudien. istreit bodi bigan to druinen. his faire eine bigan to
> dwinnien. the kinges lippes biganne to wannie his longe eremes
> biganne to stynien. his faire thies biganne to cheldi. a stremes [word scraped off]
> wyse [word scraped off] of þat blod fro his borede fot.
> (His unclothed breast began to shine, his bloody side began to redden, his stretched-
> out body began to dry out, the king's lips began to grow pale, his long arms began to
> droop, his fair thighs began to grow cold, and streams...of that blood...from his
> pierced foot.][33]

Thus it can be seen that in at least seven of the extant thirteenth-century manuscripts of the

English "Candet," the passion lyric is thematically unrelated to any of the religious or

philosophical texts with which it appears in conjunction, whether those texts be scholastic

quaestiones (Durham), philosophical treatises (Digby 55), miscellaneous religious material

(St. John's Cambridge and Sidney Sussex), or sermon collections (Rawlinson). In only two

manuscripts, both containing collections of sermons on Christ's passion (Digby 45,

Additional 11579), is the "Candet" thematically germane to its surrounding material, and in

one of those manuscripts, Digby 45, the lyric seems to be a scribal afterthought, entered in a

margin in a different hand from that of the scribe who wrote down the sermons.

Instead, in seven of the eight manuscripts (the exception is the freestanding marginal

"Candet" in Digby 45), each English "Candet" has its own separate textual context

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[33] This is a diplomatic transcription from Sidney Sussex MS 97.

constructed by its scribe. The textual contexts are surprisingly similar: a Latin "Candet"

preceding the English "Candet" (Durham, St. John's Cambridge, Rawlinson, Sidney Sussex),

either with or without accompanying brief Latin (and also, as will be seen, English)

meditations on the passion (Bodley 42, St. John's Cambridge, Rawlinson, Digby 55,

Additional 11579). In one manuscript (St. John's Cambridge), the scribe attributed the

accompanying material to "Bernard." In five manuscripts (Durham, Bodley 42, St. John's

Cambridge, Sidney Sussex, and Additional 11579), the scribe attributed the "Candet" itself to

"Augustine." All those scribal practices seemed to derive from the mélange of Latin passion

meditations for which fol. 102v of Hereford Cathedral MS O.9.5 seems to be a kind of

template. In all the "Candet" manuscripts except Additional 11579, where the lyric appears

between a sermon for Good Friday (*Sermo in die parasceve*, ending on fol. 35r) and a second

sermon on Christ's passion ("Absit mihi gloriari in mihi cruce domini nostri ihesu cristi")

beginning on fol. 36r, all in the same hand),[34] the English "Candet," whether with or without

its accompanying meditations, was written to fill up otherwise unused space on a page: in

margins, on blank versos, at the bottom of a roll. This practice seemed to be a scribal custom

that persisted throughout the thirteenth century (exemplified in the Hereford manuscript and

in the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*).

　　　The scribes clearly viewed those packages of brief meditations on Christ's passion as

opportunities for meditation and prayer on their own part and that of their readers. Filling up

blank pages in manuscripts in front of them, they wrote down Latin texts that were so clearly

familiar to them, so much part of their own devotional lives that they were practically

commonplaces. It is clear, as well, that the scribes viewed the Latin "Candet," with its

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[34] This information comes from this writer's examination of Additional 11579.

parallelisms and semi-rhymes, as a source of inspiration for metrically regular English poetry that was distinctively different in style and emphasis from the Latin it purported to translate (the Sidney Sussex scribe, or his source, turned the Latin into something quite divergent indeed). Finally, as the orthography of the Durham and Digby 55 scribes indicates, the thirteenth-century scribes regarded the English "Candet" not simply as an English version of a Latin prose passage but as a poem in its own right. The four-line version in the Durham manuscript in fact became canonical. Like "Nou goth sonne," it was repeatedly recopied in more or less its original form, subject to slightly greater variations of vocabulary and diction than "Nou goth sonne" (the "Candet"'s scribes were likely writing from memory, not copying another manuscript), but remaining fairly intact. The Franciscan preacher John of Grimestone wrote a version of the English "Candet" in 1372 that was not much different from the version that a monk at Durham Abbey had written in about 1225. Grimestone even preceded his text with the Latin "Candet," just as the Durham monk had done a century and a half earlier.[35]

      Possibly because of the dense mixture of other affective texts surrounding them, both the Latin and English "Candet" texts proved to be an incubator of still more English passion lyrics. Two of the mid-thirteenth-century manuscripts, Bodley 42 and St. John's College Cambridge A.15, paired versions of the English "Candet" with a translation into English verse of another Latin semi-poetic prose passage that had, like John of Fécamp's Meditationes, elaborated upon the verse "aspice Deus et respice in faciem christi tui" (look upon, O God, and gaze upon the face of your anointed one) in the Vulgate Bible's Psalm 83:10. The Bodley scribe preceded the English with the Latin text (occupying lines 9-14 in the manuscript and directly underneath the English "Candet." The Latin is a version of an

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[35] For Grimestone's text, see n. 21.

anonymous meditation that was copied frequently into the devotional literature of the later

Middle Ages. It reads as follows:

> Respice in faciem christi et videbis dorso fla
> gellato. latere sauciato. capite puncto vepri
> bus. manibus perforatis. pedibus confossis. volve
> et revolve illud dominicum corpus. a latere
> ad latus a summo usque deorsum et circumquaque inveni-
> es dolorem et cruorem.
> [Gaze upon the face of Christ, and you will see him with his back scourged, his side
> gashed, his head pierced by thorns, his hands punctured, his feet stabbed through.
> Turn and turn around the Lord's body, from side to side, from top to bottom, and all
> around you will find pain and blood.][36]

As Carleton Brown noted, the "Respice" (which, unlike the "Candet," is not an excerpt from

any known longer text) was commonly attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux during the later

Middle Ages, and like the English "Candet," it enjoyed a popularity that endured well into

the fourteenth century. Richard Rolle inserted a version of the "Respice" into his *Incendium*

amoris, and John of Grimestone copied it into his preaching book.[37] The "Respice" is an

instruction for visual meditation, with the reader given explicit directions concerning where

and how to examine mentally the tortured body of Christ. Its numerous parallel constructions

and its rhymes and near-rhymes ("flagellato"/"sauciato," "perforatis"/"confossis") seemed to

suggest that it could be turned into English rhyme. Following the word "cruorem" in the

Bodley manuscript, the scribe continued: "et hoc post anglice sic exponitur [and this is thus

set forth afterwards in English]." The scribe then wrote:

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[36] This is a diplomatic transcription, with abbreviations expanded, of a facsimile of ll. 9-14 of Bodley 42, fol. 250r, col. 1. The phrase "a summo usque deorsum" comes from the narrative of Christ's death in Matthew's Gospel (Mt 27:51): "Et ecce velum templi scissum est in duas partes a summo usque deorsum. [And behold the veil of the Temple was cut into two parts from top to bottom.]" See also Mc 15:38: "a sursum usque deorsum."

[37] Brown XIV, 242, n. 2.

Loke man to iesu crist
hi-neiled an þo rode,
an hi-þicȝ his nakede bodi
red hi-maked mid blode;
his reg mid scurge i-suunge,
his heued þorne prikede,
þo nailes in him stikede.
þuend and trend þi lordes bodi,
þurch wam þu art i boruhe,
þer þu mit hi-uinde blode an sorue.
[Look, man, on Jesus Christ, / nailed on the cross, / and meditate on his naked body /
made red with blood; / his back with scourges beaten, / his head pricked with thorns, /
the nails stuck in him. / Turn and turn about your lord's body, / through which you
were ransomed, / and you will find him amid blood and sorrow.][38]

The Bodley 42 version of the English "Respice" is metrically irregular: The first four lines

are actually a rhyming couplet of two septenaries, lines 5-9 are iambic trimeter, with lines 6-

7 forming a rhyming couplet, and lines 9-10 form another rhyming couplet, although line 10

contains four stresses in a rhetorical climax to the lyric.

The St. John's Cambridge version, written as prose in the bottom margin of fol., 72r,

below a text in a different although contemporary hand that seems to be material derived

from Grosseteste's *Templum Dei*,[39] is more metrically regular as a series of septenary

couplets, and also more rhetorically sophisticated. The St. John's lyric folds nearly the entire

English "Candet" into its adaptation of the English "Respice":

Loke to þi louerd, man, þar hanget he a rode,
and wep hyf þo mist terres al of blode.
Vor loke hu his heued biis mid þornes bi-wnde,
and to his neb so bispet and to þe spere-wnde.
Faluet his feyre luer, and delewet his sicte,

[38] Brown XIV, no. 2, *Index* 1940. Brown edited the lyric, which is laid out as prose with medial points marking
the lines (ll. 15-22 in the first column of fol. 250r of Bodley 42) into ten metrical lines and added
modern punctuation.

[39] See n. 16.

drowepet his hendi bodi þat on rode biis itiht.
Blikied his brest nacked and bledet hiis side,
stiuiet hiis arms þat istreid beð so wide.
Loke to þe nailes on honde and on fete,
hu þe stremes hurned of þat blode suete.
Bigin at his molde and loke to his to,
ne saltu no wit vinde bute anguisse and wo.
[Look at your lord, man, who hangs high on a cross, / and weep, if you can, tears all of blood. / For look how his head is wound with thorns, / and on his face so spit upon and his spear-wound. / Pale is his fair cheek, and his sight fails, / his noble body droops that is stretched on the cross. / His naked breast glistens, and his side bleeds. / His arms become rigid that are extended so wide. / Look at the nails on his hands and on his feet, / how the streams ran of that sweet blood. / Begin at the crown of his head and look [down] to his toe: / you shall find naught but anguish and woe.)[40]

Furthermore, the St. John's Cambridge version of the English "Respice," with its emotional elaboration that not only describes Christ's suffering in greater detail but informs the reader that his natural response ought to be bloody tears of the sort that Christ wept in Gethsemane ("wep hyf þo mist terres al of blode"), is immediately preceded by yet another passion lyric in the same hand in English, also written as prose and also helping fill the bottom margin of fol. 72r:

Wenne hic soe on rode idon
ihesus mi leman
and bi him stonde
maria and iohan,
his herte duepe i-stunge,
his bodi þis scurge i-ssuenge,
for þe sunne of man,
Hiþe hi mai wepen
and selte teres leten
ief hic of luue chan.
[When I see placed on the cross / Jesus my leman / and by him standing / Mary and John, / his heart deeply pierced, / his body so beaten by the scourge, / for the sin of man, / greatly I may weep / and let loose salt tears / if I know anything of love.][41]

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[40] Brown XIV, no. 2. *Index* 3964.

[41] Brown XIII, no. 35, *Index* 4141.

As can be seen, the "Wenne hic soe on rode" in the St. John's Cambridge manuscript contains literary elements reminiscent of the Bodley 42 "Loke man": the short lines of rhyming iambic trimeter, the "scurge i-ssuenge." It is as though the St. John's scribe (or his source) knew a version of "Loke man" that he partially transposed into a first-person expression of his own response to the suffering Christ. It is an artful response indeed: regular in meter, confined in the traces of a careful rhyme/assonance scheme (ab/ab/ccb/ddb), and couched in consciously affective language not to be found in the English "Candet" or "Respice," but redolent of the themes of *Ancrene Wisse* and *Þe Wohung of Ure Lauerd*. Jesus here is a lover ("mi leman"), and there is not simply an imprecation to weep, but a speaker who is actually weeping, or wishing with all his heart to weep ("Hiþe hi mai wepen / and selte teres leten"), if only he, representative of unworthy and imperfect humankind ("þe sunne of man") were able to mirror and reciprocate the bottomless and perfect love of Christ ("ief hic of luue chan").

Furthermore, high in the right margin of "Wenne hic soe," the scribe wrote in abbreviated form, "Verba sancti augustini et sancti bernardi anglice."[42] Technically this marginal note would seem to apply not to the "Wenne hic soe," but to the "Loke to þi louerd" (the amalgam of the "Respice" attributed to Bernard and the "Candet" attributed to Augustine) that immediately follows the "Wenne hic soe." The placement (or apparent misplacement) of the marginal note in turn suggests that the scribe intended that both lyrics form a single meditation, in which the speaker first describes the crucified Christ in a context of the amorous intimacy that would be familiar to anyone who knew <u>Ancrene Wisse</u> or its related prose devotions, and then bids the reader (in the " Loke to þi louerd" amalgam of the "Candet" and "Respice") to see what the speaker sees on the cross, and also to weep along

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[42] This is a transcription from a microfilm facsimile of fol. 72r of St. John's Cambridge 15.

with the speaker—that is, if the reader, another sinner perhaps hardened by sin, is able to

weep ("hyf þo mist").

Pairing the "Candet" (and attributing it to Augustine) with another text attributed to

Bernard (sometimes the "Respice" and sometimes not) seemed to be a common practice

among the English scribes of the thirteenth century and even later (as John of Grimestone's

late-fourteenth-century preaching book indicates). Those scribes filled blank places in their

manuscripts by stitching together meditative material, as the numerous examples in Latin and

English cited above indicate. The Additional manuscript of the English "Candet," for

example, has this trilingual text attributed to Bernard immediately following the last seven

lines of the Augustine-attributed "Candet" text, on fols. fol. 36r, lines 8-23, and

36v, lines 1-3:

> Aspicias capud inclinatum ad te salutandam [in red rubric] Bernardus de eadem
> Os clausum ad te osculandum
> Brachia extensa ad te aplectandum
> Latus apertum ad te diligendum
> Pedes clauis confixos ad te commorandum
> Totum corpus in cruce extensum
> ad se tibi totum largiendum
> [Bernard concerning the same: May you look on his head inclined for greeting you, /
> his mouth closed for kissing you, / his arms stretched out for embracing you, / his side
> opened for loving you, / his feet fastened with nails for lingering with you, / his whole
> body streatched out on the cross / for giving himself wholly and generously to you.]
> Seint bernard oez ke ben le dist. [in red rubric] Gallice ad idem
> Regardez en la face Ihesu crist
> Veez cum encline la teste pur nus beiser
> Cum il estent lez braz pur nus en-bracer
> Sun coste oure son quer mostre pur nos amer
> Trestot son cors est mis en croiz pur nus sanner
> [The same in French: Listen to what St. Bernard says well: / Look on the face of Jesus
> Christ, / see how he inclines his head in order to kiss us, / how he stretches his arms
> in order to to embrace us. / His side now displays his heart in order to love us; / his
> whole body is placed upon the cross in order to save us.]
> [in red rubric] Anglice ad idem
> Man, folwe seintt Bernardes trac

And loke in ihesu cristes face,
How hee lut hys heued to þe
Swetlike for to kessen þe,
And sprat hise armes on þe tre,
Senful man, to klippen þe,
In synge of loue ys open his syde;
Hiis feet y-nayled wit þe tabyde.
Al his bodi is done on rode,
Sinful man, for þyne goode.
[The same in English: Man, follow St. Bernard's path, / and look on Jesus Christ's face, / how he inclines his head to you / sweetly in order to kiss you, / and stretched out his arms on the tree, / sinful man, to embrace you. / In a sign of love his side is open, / his feet nailed to stay with you. / All his body is placed on the cross, / sinful man, for your good.][43]

The text of the Latin closely resembles and is clearly derived from (or is a variant of) the "caput inclinatum" passage from the tenth meditation erroneously attributed to Anselm of Canterbury that appears on the last page (fol. 131v) of the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*.[44]

The Nero scribe did not expressly attribute the Latin "caput inclinatum" passage to Bernard, as the Additional scribe did, although the Nero scribe did assert that Bernard had composed the dozen lines of rhyming dactylic hexameter that preceded it. Furthermore, there are overtones of the final couplet of of Nero's leonine hexameter ("Aspice mortalis pro te detur hostia talis / In cruce sum pro te quid peccas desine pro me") in the trilingual "Aspicias" in the Additional manuscript: the very word "Aspicias" in the Latin version, and the inclusion in the English version of an additonal element of reproach not found in either the Latin or the Anglo Norman: the repetition of the apostrophe "senful man." It is as though the Additional scribe knew the Nero manuscript, or at least knew the devotional tradition it

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[43] The text is from Brown XIII, no. 69, *Index* 2051.

[44] See ch. 4 of this dissertation.

represented, and he sought to preserve that tradition in his own version of a pairing of Augustinian and Bernardine prayers some fifty years after the Nero manuscript was completed. The Additional scribe insisted, for example, on preserving the intimate and personal second-person singular of the Latin in his English version ("te," "þe"), for which the Anglo-Norman version had substituted a generalized and impersonal first-person plural "nus." The Additional scribe was also aware of the literary tradition of coupling the "Candet" believed to have been composed by Augustine with material believed to have been compsed by Bernard. He thus knew a manuscript tradition represented not only by Bodley 42 and St. John's Cambridge A.15, but also by Hereford O.IX.9 and, at least on the Bernardine side, Nero.

The St. John's Cambridge scribe who inscribed English lyrics in the bottom margin of fol. 72r did not merely string together traditional texts as his fellows often did. He also constructed out of those texts a unified meditative progression (indeed, there is not even a line-break in the manuscript between the two English texts), so that the reader would move in his imagination from the vivid, rood-screen-like picture that the speaker "sees" in "Wenne hic soe" (hence the presence of Mary and John) to the speaker's invitation for the reader to see the same scene in greater detail his own imagination in " Loke man to þi louerd." The two lyrics dovetail, with the ending (the last three lines) of "Wenne hic soe," in which the speaker weeps, recapitulated by the beginning (the second line) of "Loke man to þi louerd," in which the speaker invites his reader to weep in turn. The scribe who wrote the two lyrics in the margin of fol. 72r also displayed a discerning eye for prosody in the two metrically regular and carefully rhymed texts he that chose. In the English "Candet"/"Respice," that he composed (or copied or wrote down from memory), he presented a detailed and elaborate

description of Christ's body that turned the somewhat pedestrian prose diction of the Latin source-text ("volve et revolve illud dominicum corpus a latere ad latus a summo usque deorsum et circumquaque invenies dolorem et cruorem") into vivid English verse ("Bigin at his molde and loke to his to, / ne saltu no wit vinde bute anguisse and wo.") whose concise and concrete near-colloquialisms reinforce the "anguish and woe" that the reader has been invited to perceive in equally concrete detail everywhere on Christ's suffering body. The St. John's scribe (or the writer or writers whose words he copied) was a literary artist who used the genre of marginal devotional compilation to fashion a carefully composed set-piece.

The lyric "Wenne hic soe," like the English "Candet" and the English "Respice," was known to and treasured by other English scribes, who reworked the lyric, expanded it, and transcribed it into at least three other extant manuscripts, all dating from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The earliest of the three is Oxford University, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 360, fol. 145v. The Ashmole 360 codex is a quarto-size compilation of eight different manuscripts, 160 leaves in total, dating from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, the seventh of which (comprising fols 138-150) is a collection of Latin scientific, philosophical, and religious texts, all in the same small thirteenth-century hand. [45] Fol. 145 consists of double columns of Latin devotional excerpts variously attributed (according to the leaf's numerous marginal initials) to Jerome, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, Gregory the Great, and the *Glossa*

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[45] William Henry Black, *A Descriptive, Analytical, and Critical Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed unto the University of Oxford by Elias Ashmole, Esq.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1845), cols. 271-76.

Ordinaria.[46] The Ashmole version of "Wenne hic soe" fills up a blank space left at the bottom of the second column on fol. 145v left by the first scribe.

The Ashmole scribe (or his source, if any), took great care with his version of "Wenne hic soe," working (or preserving) many alterations to the original text that made it more metrically regular. The Ashmole version of "Wenne hic soe" expands the lyric to eighteen lines of sequence-style tail-rhyme: all six tails rhyme with each other, and each tail is preceded by a rhyme-assonance couplet. Furthermore, the Ashmole scribe wrote the lyric out, not as prose as the St. John's Cambridge scribe had done, but as self-conscious poetry, in six stanzas, each stanza beginning on its own line and punctuated by a medial point, with the first word of each stanza marked by an initial capital. The Ashmole lyric appears on the page like this (the medial points are shown as periods):

> Quanne I zenke onne ze rode quorupe
> one þu stode squete ihesu mi leman.
> Hu bi þe was stondende þi moder wepende an
> þi disciple sei iohan.
> Hu þi rige was I.squngen a ti side zurc stungen
> for þe gilte of man.
> Hu þe fet I.bledden an ti honden he spredden
> þat he miten telle þe boan.
> Hu þe stoannes tobreken þe dede arisen
> an speken þe sunne vex al wan.
> No selli þeth I wepe an mi sinnes bette
> if I luuien wel can.
> [When I think on the cross upon which you stood, sweet Jesus, my leman, / how
> beside you stood your mother weeping and your disciple St. John, / how your back
> was beaten and your side pierced for the guilt of man, / how your feet bled and your
> hands were stretched out high so they could count the bones, / how the gravestones
> broke, the dead rose and spoke, the sun grew all pale, / now I shall both weep and
> make amends for my sins, if I know how to love well.][47]

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[46] *Ibid.*

[47] Brown XIII, no. 37, <u>Index</u> 3968. Brown sets the lyric in three six-line stanzas, each comprising a pair of tail-rhymes, and also modernizes the punctuation.

This version of the lyric not only abounds with attempts at literary artfulness—the six matching "-an" end-rhymes, the parallelisms in the "Hu" construction that begins the four medial stanzas—but it also expands the visual experience of the crucified Christ by adding scriptural details to the picture. The clause "þe sunne vex al wan" recalls the darkening of the earth during the passion (the same image as in "Nou goth sonne"), and also calls to mind the pallor of Christ's face evoked in the "Candet," while the breaking of the stones and the rising of the dead are details from Matthew's Gospel that would have been familiar to the lyric's readers: "et petrae scissae sunt et monumenta aperta sunt et multa corpora sanctorum qui dormierant surrexerunt [and rocks were broken and tombs were opened and many bodies of the holy ones who had been sleeping arose]."[48] The clause "he miten telle þe boan" alludes to the Vulgate's Psalm 21:18 ("dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea [they have counted all my bones]"), traditionally read as a prophecy of Christ's passion. Directly underneath the last line of "Quanne I zenke," the scribe wrote an initial, "B" (clearly an abbreviation of "Bernardus"), followed by a medial point and the three words "O bone ihesu." The cataloguer William Henry Black believed that this was a reference to one of the Latin excerpts that the first Ashmole scribe had written (and attributed to"Bernardus" in the right margin), high in the first column (at lines 8-14) of fol. 145v: "O bone Ihesu, quam dulciter cum hominibus....ut non peniteat his diebus," expounding the proposition that the sufferings of Christ were so great that everyone should be moved to do penance. Indeed, the scribe might indeed been referring to that passage, but it is equally likely that the "O bone Ihesu" was shorthand for a different "O bone Ihesu" prayer, part of the scribe's personal strategy for filling a blank space in the manuscript by creating a brief devotional miscellany of his own devising.

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[48] Mt 27:51-52.

A similar reworking of "Wenne hic soe," dating to the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the beginning of the fourteenth, survives in Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 57, a compilation of twelve different manuscripts, mostly in Latin although with some Anglo-Norman texts, on moral and theological subjects.[49] The rewritten "Wenne hic soe," whose incipit in Bodley 57 is "Vyen i o þe rode se [When I see on the cross]," appears at the bottom of a page (fol. 102v) of what appear to be medical excerpts in Latin and Anglo-Norman. Here the hand is that of the same scribe who wrote the excerpts, which occupy, along with other material, chiefly religious (including some Marian prayers), the section of the manuscript comprising fols. 91r.-104v.[50] The visual appearance of the lyric indicates that, like the Ashmole scribe, the Bodley scribe viewed his version of "Wenn hic soe" as a poetic composition. Like the Ashmole "Quanne I zenke," the Bodley "Vyen i o þe rode se" has transformed "Wenne hic soe" into metrically regular tail-rhyme: twelve lines of it (aab/ccb/ddb/eeb), in contrast to "Quanne I zenke"'s eighteen. Furthermore, he divided the lyric in half in order to fit it into two columns at the bottom of his page, whose main text he wrote in long lines stretching across the entire page.[51] The Bodley 57 text is as follows:

> Vyen i o þe rode se,
> Faste nailed to þe tre,
> Iesu mi lefman,
> Ibunden bloc an blodi,
> An his hys moder stant him bi
> Wepande an Iohan,
> Hys bac wid scuurge iswungen,
> Hys side depe istungen,

[49] Falconer Madan and H. E. Craster, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, vol. 2, Part 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), 156-8.

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] This information was learned from examining a facsimile of the pertinent leaves of Bodley 57.

> For sinne an lowe of man,
> Weil auti sinne lete,
> An neb wit teres wette,
> ʒif I of lowe can.
> [When I see on the cross, / nailed fast to the tree, / Jesus my leman, / bound pale and bloody, / and his mother standing by him / weeping, and John, / his back with the scourge beaten, / his side deeply pierced, / for sin and love of man, / well should I leave off from sin, / and wet my face with tears, / if I know anything of love.][52]

 This version of "Wenne hic soe" incorporates a textual allusion to the red-white antithesis of the English "Candet" ("Ibunden bloc an blodi"), and also makes explicit, as "Wenne hic soe" merely implies, that Christ suffered his passion as a gift of love ("an lowe of man") as well as in expiation for human sin.

A third reworking of "Wenne hic soe" appears in another early fourteenth-century manuscript that is part of British Library, MS Royal 12.E.i. The manuscript context of this version is the most unusual of the four. Royal 12.E.i seems to be a binding together of two separate manuscripts: the first comprising a variety of Latin texts, mostly arithmetical and medicinal, in several fifteenth-century hands (fols. 1-114), and the second comprising nearly entirely religious texts, mostly extracts from Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* and other hagiographic sources, together with a small amount of sermon material, all in several hands dating from the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries (fols. 128-195).[53] The Royal 12 version of "Wenne hic soe," unlike the other three, is not a scribal filling-in of a margin or a blank space at the end of a text, but rather, an integral part of two

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[52] Brown XIII, no. 36, *Index* 3961. Brown divided the lyric into two six-line stanzas, evidently presuming that the two columns into which it is divided in the manuscript represented two separate parts of the poem. Otherwise, grammatically (the entire lyric forms a single sentence) and textually, there is no evidence that the scribe conceived of the lyric as being broken into stanzas. Indeed, metrically speaking, the lyric's rhyme scheme demonstrates that it comprises four stanzas, not two.

[53] George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and Kings Collection*, vol. 2 (London: Longmans, Green & Co. *et al.*, 1921), 48-50.

leaves, fols. 193 and 194, that preserve (except for a large tear in fol. 194) four poetic texts in

English and Anglo-Norman concerning the passion of Christ, two of them set to music. All

four texts are carefully transcribed in the same large Gothic book hand (not the same hand as

that of the texts on the leaves that precede and follow the two folios) and decorated by red

capitals.[54] Those two leaves arguably comprise, in essence, a small anthology of devotional

material, both musical and non-musical, that the Royal 12 scribe did not simply scribble

down but arranged upon the two leaves at his disposal with studious care.

The Royal 12 version of "Wenne hic soe," which occupies lines 6-9 of fol. 194v and

whose incipit is "Quanne hic se on rode" (the "Q" is a large rubricated capital), follows the

text of the St. John's Cambridge version most closely, nearly identically, in fact, even though

the Royal version is perhaps the latest chronologically of the three adaptations:

> Quanne hic se on rode
> ihesu mi lemman,
> An be-side him stonden
> marie an Iohan,
> And his rig i-suongen,
> and his side i-stungen,
> for þe luue of man,
> Wel ou hic to wepen
> and sinnes for-leten,
> yif hic of luue kan,
> yif hic of luue kan,
> yif hic of luue kan.
> [When I see on the cross Jesus my leman, and beside him standing Mary and John,
> and his back beaten, and his side pierced, well ought I to weep and forsake my sins, if
> I know anything of love, if I know anything of love, if I know anything of love.][55]

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[54] This information comes from this writer's examination of Royal 12.E.i.

[55] Brown XIII, no 35B. Brown, in publishing the lyric, preserved the manuscript's capitals but turned the lyric into twelve lines of verse. The Royal scribe's capitalization (preserved by Brown) and punctuation (modernized by Brown), however, indicate that the scribe read the lyric as comprising either four or seven lines..

The lyric is written as prose, but the scribe seemed aware that he was writing out poetry, for

he used medial points and capitals decorated with red ink to separate the text into four

rhyming lines (indicated by initial capitals in the above modern presentation), each ending

with a medial period. The end-rhyme is the syllable "-an," tripled in the last line with the

three refrain-like repetitions of "yif hic of luue kan" (each of the of the "y"'s, although not

capitalized, is decorated with a bit of red ink and separated from its fellows by a medial

point), that constitute the chief textual difference between the Royal version of the lyric and

the earlier St. John's Cambridge version.

Furthermore, the Royal 12 scribe paired his "Quanne hic se" with a second lyric upon

Christ's passion bearing identical stylistic features: prose layout, initial red capital, and lines

marked off by decorated initial capitals and medial points. This second lyric, which occupies

lines 10-14 of fol.194v, seems to have a title, or at least an epigraph-like, internally rhyming

incipit line that is metrically unrelated to the rest of the text and whose speaker is

Christ himself:

> Þenc man of min harde stundes;
> þenc of mine harde wndes.
> [Think, man, of my hard suffering, / think of my hard wounds.][56]

This text stretches in a single line (line 10) all the way across the manuscript page. At the

beginning of line 11, directly underneath the first "Þenc" (whose capital "Þ" is written in red

ink), the scribe drew a horizontal line, a kind of indentation, in red ink, and continued with

the following text, its initial capitals decorated in red:

> Man, þu haue þine þout one me,
> þenc hou dere i bouthe þe;

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[56] Brown XIV, no. 3, *Index* 2079.

> I let me nailen to þe tre—
> hardere deth ne mai non ben—
> þenc, man, al it was for þe.
> I gaf mi fles, i gaf mi blod,
> for þe me let i-don on rod,
> Vt of mi side ern þe flod;
> I þoled hit al wid milde mod—
> Man, hit <was> al for þi god.
> Min peines weren hard and stronge,
> Mi moder þouth es swiþe longe:
> þenc, man, er þu do þi sinne,
> Wath i þolede for man-kinne;
> Min harde deth þe shal don blinne.

[Man, have your thought upon me, / think how dearly I bought you. / I let myself be nailed to the tree; / harder death there cannot be. / Think, man, it was all for you. / I gave my flesh, I gave my blood, / for you I let myself be put on the cross; / out of my side ran the flood. / I endured it all with a gentle mind-- / man, it was all for your good. / My pains were hard and strong, / My mother thought my suffering exceedingly long. / Think, man, before you commit your sin. / What I suffered for mankind-- / my hard death--shall make you cease sinning.][57]

This is, of course, an English amplication of the Latin couplet on the last page of the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*: "In cruce sum pro te quid peccas desine pro me." The "Þenc man" lyric is not thematically unique to Royal 12.E.i. Another manuscript dating from the early fourteenth century, Oxford University, New College MS 88, fol 181r, combines a literarily related version of "Þenc man" with Latin and English versions of the "Respice" similar to those found in the Bodley 42 and St. John's Cambridge A.15 manuscripts, except that the English version is put into the mouth of Christ, just as it is in the Royal "Þenc man." The context of the New College lyric is a sermon collection.[58] At the conclusion of one of the

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[57] *Ibid.* Brown's edition preserves the manuscript's capitalization but modernizes the punctuation. Brown turned the manuscript's seven lines laid out as prose into three five-line stanzas, preceded by the first line of the manuscript text ("Þenc man...") set as a two-line epigraph.

[58] Coxe, Henry O., *Catalogus codicum MSS. qui in collegibus aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie adservantur* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1852), repr. with intro. by K.W. Humphreys, Wakefield: E.P. Publishing, 1972), vol.1, 28-29. Fol. 179v of New College 88 also contains a second English lyric:

sermons the scribe wrote this underlined title on line 18: <u>de passione</u>. On lines 19, 20, and 21,

the New College scribe copied out the Latin "Respice," preceding it with the initial "B" in an

evident attribution to Bernard of Clairvaux that ties the text to the "Respice." In the middle of

line 21 and continuing through the end of line 26, the scribe wrote this English verse:

> Man and wyman, loket to me.
> u michel pine ich þolede for þe;
> loke up-one mi rig, u sore ich was i-biten;
> loke to mi side, wat Blode ich hauue i-leten.
> mine uet an mine honden nailed beth to þe rode;
> of þe þornes prikung min hiued urnth a blode.
> fram side to side, fro hiued to þe fot,
> turn mi bodi abuten, oueral þu findest blod.
> man, þin hurte, þin hurte, þu turne to me,
> for þe vif wndes þe ich tholede for þe.

[Man and woman, look at me, / how much pain I suffered for you. / Look upon my back, how sorely I was beaten; / look at my side, what blood I have shed. / My feet and my hands are nailed to the cross; / from the pricking of the thorns my head runs with blood. / From side to side, from head to the foot, / turn my body around, and everywhere you find blood. / Man, your heart, your heart, may you turn it to me, / for the five wounds that I suffered for you.)[59]

The New College "Man and wyman," like the Royal "Þenc man," combined elements of the

other topoi of the brief passion mediation found in many thirteenth-century and early

fourteenth-century manuscripts (including Royal 12.E.i) discussed in this chapter: the

reference to Bernard of Clairvaux, the "Respice"'s bid to examine imaginatively every part of

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> LOuerd, þu clepedest me
> an ich nagt ne ansuarde þe
> Bute wordes schloe and schlepie:
> 'þole yet! þole a litel1'
> Bute 'yiet' and 'yiet' was endeli,
> and 'þole a litel' a long wey is.
> [Lord, you called me, and I answered nothing except slow and sleepy words: "Wait a while, wait a little bit!" But the "while" and the "while" were endless, and "wait a little bit" takes a long time.)

The text is from Brown XIV, no. 5. As Brown noted, the lyric is a translation of Augustine's *Confessiones* 8.5, from which a Latin passage precedes the English lyric on fol. 179v: "Non erat quid responderem tibi ueritate conuictus dicenti mihi. *Surge qui dormis & exurge a mortuis & illuminabit tibi Christus* [<u>Eph</u> 5:14]. nisi uerba lenta & sompnolenta. modo ecce modo. sine paululum. sed modo & modo non habebant modum & sine paululum in longum ibat. similiter est de differentibus penitencie."

[59] The text is from Brown XIV, no. 4. *Index* 2042. Brown listed the lyric as appearing on fol. 179r of New College 88, but the pages have since been renumbered.

Christ's body, the reproach by the suffering Christ, the call to repentance. The Royal "Þenc man," like the Royal "Quanne hic se," is an elaboration of meditative commonplaces found in the New College "Man and wyman" and in the various other English versions of the "Respice" found in other manuscripts.

Serving as bookends for those two Royal lyrics, "Quanne hic se" and "Þenc man," are two other vernacular texts, both accompanied by musical notation and both written in the same hand as the two non-musical lyrics. The first of the two musical texts, taking up all of fol. 193r and the top portion of fol. 194v (where it is immediately followed by "Þenc man") is an English *contrafactum*, a set of new lyrics, to a Victorine, or "regular," liturgical sequence in Latin with the incipit "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem [She stood next to the cross of Christ]." The Latin "Stabat" text, possibly composed in England because it survives in two manuscripts of English provenance,[60] probably dates to the early thirteenth century, preceding and likely serving as a literary model for the famous late-thirteenth-century sequence "Stabat mater dolorosa" attributed to the Franciscan friar Iacopone da Todi (ca. 1225-1306). The text of the Royal "Stabat" reads as follows:

> Stabat iuxta Christi crucem
> stabat videns vitae ducem
> vitae vale facere.
> Stabat mater, nec jam mater,
> et quid sit eventus ater
> novo novit funere.
> [She stood next to the cross of Christ, / she stood watching the lord of life / bid farewell to life. / The mother stood, no longer a mother, / and she underwent that dark event / in this second death, her own.]

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[60] The two manuscripts, noted by E.J. Dobson in E.J. Dobson and F. Llewellyn Harrison, eds., *Medieval English Songs* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 147, are Paris, Arsenal MS 135, which Dobson described as "a missal originating in Canterbury," and Cambridge University, St. John's College MS 111, fol. 106v.

Stabat virgo spectans crucem
et utramque pati lucem,
sed plus suam doluit.
Ista stabat, hic pendebat,
et, quae foris hic ferebat,
intus haec sustinuit.
[The virgin stood looking at the cross / and she grieved for the waning of two lights/ but more for the light that was her son. / She stood, while he hung, / and whatever he endured externally, / she endured the same within.]

Intus cruci conclavatur,
intus suo jugulatur
mater agni gladio;
intus martyr consecratur,
intus tota concrematur
amoris incendio.
[Within she is nailed on the cross with her son, / within the mother is slain / by the sword of the lamb, / within she is consecrated a martyr, / within she is entirely burned / by the fire of love.]

Modo manus, modo latus,
modo ferro pes foratus
oculis resumitur;
modo caput spinis sutum
cujus orbis totus nutum
et sentit et sequitur.
[Now, the hand, now the side, / now the foot pierced by the iron nail / is taken in by her eyes; / now the head stitched with thorns / of him whose command the whole world / knows and follows.]

Os verendum litum sputis
et flagellis rupta cutis
et tot rivi sanguinis;
probra, risus, et quae restant
orbitati tela praestant
et dolori virginis.
[The mouth that should be venerated smeared with spit, the skin broken by whips and so many streams of blood, the insults, the laughter, and all else function as darts that provoke the grief and the pain of the virgin.]

Tempus, nacta trux natura
nunc reposcit sua jura;
nunc dolores acuit.
Nunc extorquet cum usura

gemitus quos paritura
natura detinuit.
[Time, which is savage by its very nature, / now claims its rights, / now incites the
pains in her, now extorts with interest the groans of childbirth that the virginal nature
of her childbearing allowed her to forestall.]

Nunc, nunc parit, nunc scit vere
quam maternum sit dolere,
quam amarum parere;
nunc se dolor orbitatis
dilatus in partu nati
praesentat in funere.
[Now, now she endures the pains of childbirth, / now she truly knows / how it is the
mother's lot to suffer, / how bitter it is to give birth. / Now the pain inherent in that
role, / delayed when she gave birth to her son, / makes itself present in his death.]

Nunc fit mater, sed maeroris
servat tamen hic pudoris
virginalis gratiam;
nam pudicos gestus foris
non deflorat vis doloris
intus urens anxiam.
[Now she becomes a mother, but a mother of sorrow. / She nonetheless preserves /
the gift of virginal modesty, / for the force of her sorrow / does not dishonor her
modest bearing externally, / although it burns her within as she suffers.]

Triduanus ergo fletus
laeta demum est deletus
surgentis victoria;
laeta luce spes dolenti,
nato namque resurgenti
conresurgunt gaudia.
[Now her three days of weeping / are finally ended / by the joyful victory of the one
who rises from the dead. / Joyful hope brings light to the suffering mother, / for her
joys are resurrected / in her son's resurrection.]

Christi novus hic natalis
formam partus virginalis
clauso servat tumulo;
hinc processit, hinc surresxit,
hinc et inde Christus exit
intacto signaculo.
[This new birthday of Christ / preserves the form of her virginal childbirth / in the
closed-up tomb. / From the first he emerges, from the second he rises. / From both
places marked by an unbroken seal / Christ comes forth.]

> Eja mater, eja laeta!
> Fletus tui nox expleta
> lucescit in gaudium.
> Nostrae quoque laetum mane
> nocti plus quam triduanae
> tuum redde filium.
> Amen.[61]
> [Oh joy, mother, oh joy, joyful one! / The night of your weeping is finished / and
> dawns into joy. / Give us, too, a joyful morning / in place of our night that is longer
> than your three days, / --in the form of your son. / Amen.)

The first five stanzas of the Latin "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem" use the trope of the mental

picture of Christ's suffering body (stanzas 1-5) familiar from the English "Candet nudatum"

lyrics, the "Wenne hic soe" lyrics, "Þenc man," and even, and perhaps especially, "Nou goth

sonne," which also explicitly evokes Mary's presence at the cross and her pitiable suffering.

Indeed, the "Stabat," like "Nou goth sonne," uses the imagery of the two declining "suns"

("utramque...lucem"), one of which is Mary's son. Behind the intricate poetry of the Latin

"Stabat" are the Latin prose meditations on Christ's passion and their exhortation to their

readers to experience *compassio*, an imaginative sharing in Christ's suffering of which Mary,

Christ's mother, was the consummate example. "Intus cruci conclavatur"—she is nailed to the

cross with him in her mind--declares the "Stabat," in language that recalls the phrase "Mi

bodi henge wið þi bodie neiled o rode" in *Þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*.[62]

   The second part of the "Stabat" (stanzas 6-11) make up a theologically and verbally

intricate series of paradoxes in which Mary, traditionally believed to have been miraculously

spared the pains of childbirth in her virginal parturition of Christ, finally experiences the

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[61] The Latin text is E.J. Dobson's, largely following the text of the "Stabat iuxta cruci crucem" in the Arsenal
manuscript (see n. 60), together with readings from the St. John's Cambridge manuscript and the published text
of the sequence in Guido Maria Dreves, ed., *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*, vol. 8, 55-58. Dobson's Latin text is
at 46-47 of *Medieval English Songs*. The translation is this writer's.

[62] See ch. 4 of this dissertation.

depth of those maternal pains in observing her son's death—and her virginal body is also an

image of the sealed tomb from which Christ emerges on Easter in a second birth

("novus...natalis") that is his resurrection. Indeed, there is a likely pun in the second stanza:

The verb "conclavatur," meaning "nailed with" (for Mary is in her grieving mind affixed to

the cross with her son) that evokes the noun "conclave," or locked room, referring to Mary's

chamber entered by the angel Gabriel during the annunciation, and also to Mary's own

inviolate body that is, like Christ's tomb, sealed by her intact virginity. That single word

"conclavatur" binds together the "Stabat"'s two parts—Christ's death and his resurrection as

experienced vicariously by Mary--and also its two paradoxes.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, or so believed Carleton Brown on philological

grounds, someone produced an English version of the "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem" that

survives in truncated form, along with musical notation that matches that of the Latin

"Stabat," on a single leaf written in a hand dating from the third quarter of the thirteenth

century. That leaf was later, possibly during the fourteenth century, inserted into a twelfth-

century manuscript, Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Tanner 169, a compendium of

prayers and other material seemingly designed for monastic used, including a kalendar and a

list of abbots. John Stainer surmised that the codex had been produced at the abbey of St.

Werberg at Chester.[63] The text of the Tanner lyric,[64] which is thorough-composed (meaning

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[63] Brown XIII, 167, n 4. The leaf, typically cited with an asterisk as Tanner MS 169*, is preserved at fol. 175 of the Tanner manuscript. A facsimile of the leaf is found in John Stainer, ed., *Early Bodleian Music: Sacred & Secular Songs, Together with Other MS.: Compositions of the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Ranging from about A.D. 1185 to about A.D. 1505* (London: Novello; New York; Novello, Ewer, 1901), vol. 1, fasc. 5. For a description of the manuscript, see vol. 1, xiv-xv. The Tanner folio bears a centered but quite unrelated title at the top of its recto page in a distinctly fourteenth-century hand: *Translatio sancte elene* [The Translation of St. Helen]. indicating that the page that faced the Tanner lyric and probably contained its missing first four stanzas had long since disappeared, and that the scribe who affixed that title did not bother to read the contents of the page. E.J. Dobson (n. 60) noted many West Midlands dialectical forms in the English version of the "Stabat," although he believed it to have been originally composed in a northern dialect (of which traces remain

there is musical notation for every syllable), is clearly incomplete. The leaf on which the lyric was written is blank on its verso, and it begins with an incomplete line: "stod ho þere neh" ("she stood there near") at its top. From all appearances, the page on which the Tanner lyric appears is the surviving second half of a pair of facing pages. Stainer also noted that the blank verso side of the Tanner folio shows signs of weathering, as though it were an end-page of a manuscript that had long lost its cover.[65] If this is so, it is not unlikely that the Tanner lyric, with its theme of Christ's passion, was yet another of those devotional texts with which thirteenth-century scribes filled blank pages at the ends of their manuscripts.

As an English version of the Latin "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem," the Tanner lyric is incomplete, missing nearly all of the first four stanzas. Furthermore, although the English stanzas in the Tanner manuscript roughly follow the Latin and use the aab/ccb rhyme scheme of the Victorine sequence that marks the Latin, the changes in the English version are considerable, including a marked alteration of tone. For one thing, while the Latin version (except for its final stanza) is a third-person description of Mary and what she saw and felt at the cross, nearly all of the surviving English version (except for its first line, which appears to be the last line of a preceding stanza) is a second-person prayer addressed to Mary:

> stod ho þere neh
> [She stood there nearby.]

in the Tanner version) whose philological characteristics (the preservation of the sounded final "e" that gradually disappeared from Middle English during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for example) suggest that the English "Stabat" does not date from later than the mid-thirteenth century. See Harrison and Dobson, 148. The manuscript's frequent use of the archaic letter "wynn" (ƿ), which fell out of use during the late thirteenth century, suggests that the scribe's exemplar might have been a generation older than his hand.

[64] *Index* 52.

[65] *Early Bodleian Music*, vol. 1, xv.

Þat leuli leor wid spalt ischent,
þat feire fel wid s[cur]ges rend—
Þe blod out stremed oueral.
Skoarn, upbraide and schome speche,
al hit was to sorhes eche—
i ƿoa þu was biluken al.
[That lovely face shamed with spit, / that fair skin torn with scourges-- / the blood streamed out everywhere. / Scorn, upbraiding, and shameful speech-- / all was in addition to his suffering. / You were all encompassed in pain.]

I þat blisful bearnes buirde
wrong w[e]s wroht to wommone wirde,
ah kuinde craued nou þi riht.
Þenne þu loch ah nou þu wep,
þe wa wes waken þat tenne slep—
childing-pine haues te nou picht.
[In that blissful birth of your child / women's usual condition was not honored, / but nature has now demanded its due. / Then you laughed, but now you weep. / What was then dormant has been awakened, / the pain of childbirth has now stabbed you.]

Nou þu moostes, lauedi, lere
wmmone wo, þat barnes bere,
þa bit[t]er and ta bale þrehes;
For in his dead þe wo þu ʒulde
in childing þat tu þole schulde
þurd modres kuindeliche lahes.
[Now, lady, you must learn / the agony of women who bear children, / those bitter and baleful throes, for in his death you made amends for the pain / of childbirth that you should have endured / according to the natural laws of motherhood.]

Ah, lauedi, þah þu wonges wete,
þah þe were wo at unimete,
þine loates were lasteles;
Þe wep ne wemmede noht þin heau
þat made þi leor ful louk and leƿ—
swa sari wmmon neuer neas.
[Ah, lady, although you wet your cheeks, / although your pain was exceeding, / your looks remained unblemished. / Your weeping did not at all mar your complexion, / although it made your face very pale and wan. / So sorrowful a woman there never was.]

Ah, þi kare was ouer-comen,
þe þridde dai þi ioie comen,
ded and deuel driuen doun

Þþen Þo sone risen wes
to þine wele and ure peas—
blisse he brochte in icha toun.
[Ah, your cares were overcome-- / the third day your joy came, / death and the devil
driven down / when your son was raised / for your well-being and our peace. / He
brought bliss into every town.]

Þi luue sune uprisinge
was selli liik to his birdinge—
bi-tƿene tƿa his litel schead—
For, so gleam glidis þurt þe glas,
of þi bodi born he was,
and þurt þe hole þurch he gload.
[Your beloved son's rising / was strangely like his birthing. / Between the two there
was little difference, / for as a gleam of light glides through glass, / of your body he
was born, / and through the solid sepulcher he glided.]

Milde moder, maiden oa,
of al þi kare come þou þoa
þþen þi sone rise ƿes.
Leuedi, bring us out of wa,
of sinne, of sorhe, of sich al-sƿa,
to bliss[e] þat is endeles. AM[EN]
(Merciful mother, ever a maiden, / you shed all your cares / when your son was
raised. / Lady, bring us out of woe, / out of sin, out of sorrow, out of sighing, too, / to
bliss that is endless. Amen.)[66]

In comparison to the stylistically intricate and artful Latin "Stabat" the English *contrafactum*

in the Tanner manuscript is blunt, crude, and even ungrammatical in places, evidence of the

author's struggle to fit English words into the demanding metrics of the Latin sequence. (The

word "bale," for example, in the English third stanza, a version of the Latin seventh stanza, is

a noun, just as it is in modern English, but the English author has used it as an adjective in a

parallel construction with "bit[t]er" to modifying "þrehes.") The final three stanzas of the

English version seem peculiarly flat in comparison to the Latin, with such meter-filling

phrases as "blisse he brochte in icha toun" substituting for the concise and melodious "laeta

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[66] The text is that of Brown XIII, no. 4. The translation is this writer's.

luce spes dolenti." As E.J. Dobson noted, the English author could not quite master the meter of the Latin regular sequence, with its pair of eight-syllable lines followed by a tail-rhyming seven-syllable line. The lines in the English version are often one or two syllables too long— or else they are a syllable short, which meant that as the author tried to fit the words to the music, he occasionally stretched a single syllable of text over two notes, a musical practice that violated the rules of the Latin sequence.[67]

More striking, and more literarily successful, were the English author's importation of Old English-derived alliteration ("blisful bearnes buirde," "wonges wete," "ded and deuel driuen doun") into the sequence form, his turning the entire lyric (except for that fragmented top line) into a second-person invocation to Mary, giving it an intimacy entirely lacking in the Latin, and his repeated concretization of what is merely paradoxical and metaphorical in the Latin "Stabat." The Latin version delicately describes the labor pains delayed for Mary in her painless virgin birth but realized in her contemplation of her son's death, using such powerful but unspecific words as "gemitus" and "dolores." The English comes straight to the literal point with "childing-pine" and "wmmone wo, þat barnes bere." The English also makes explicit the concept, only hinted at in the Latin, that Mary is repaying a contractual debt to nature in her suffering at the cross since she has unfairly (according to the natural order) escaped women's usual painful lot in childbirth ("For in his dead þe wo þu ʒulde / in childing þat tu þole schulde"). In the Latin, time is the vengeful actor ("trux natura") claiming its rights from Mary by exacting a full measure of pain from her. In the English it is Mary herself who has wrought "wrong" for which she must make amends by enduring the torment that her son is enduring.

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[67] Dobson and Harrison (n. 60), 148.

The second English *contrafactum* of the Latin "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem," the one that appears in MS Royal 12.E.i, is completely different from the Tanner *contrafactum*, although it is just as closely related to the Latin text. The author of this second *contrafactum* has transformed the "Stabat" into an eleven-stanza poem (the same length as the Latin) that is largely (the first nine stanzas) a dramatic dialogue set on Calvary between the crucified Christ and his mother that is unprecedented in either English or the extant continental literature of the first half of the thirteenth century. Heightening the dramatic tension is the fact that in the Royal 12 representation of the passion Mary suffers all the maternal anguish that the Latin "Stabat" expresses, but Christ, although enduring all the physical torment of the crucifixion, is filled with joy over his work of redemption, a joy that foreshadows the joy of the resurrection encapsulated in the last stanzas. The Royal 12 "Stabat" turns the Latin version on its head in a sense, for the sorrowful "standing" of the Latin verb form is transformed into Christ's bidding his weeping and incredulous mother to stand "well," with joy that parallels his own. The Royal version reads as follows:

> "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode,
> behold þi child wyth glade mode,
> blyþe moder mittu ben."
> "Svne, quu may bliþe stonden?
> hi se þin feet, hi se þin honden,
> nayled to þe harde tre."
> ("Stand well, mother, under the cross, / behold your child with a glad mind, / you
> should be a joyous mother." / "Son, how may I stand joyfully? / I see your feet, I see
> your hands / nailed to the hard tree."]
>
> "Moder, do wey þi wepinge;
> hi þole þis ded for mannes thinge—
> for owen gilte þoli non."
> "Svne, hi fele þe dede stunde,
> þe swerd is hat mine herte grunde,
> þat me byhitte symeon."

["Mother, away with your weeping! / I suffer this death for man's sake, / for he does not suffer what he deserves." / "Son, I feel the hour of your death; / the sword is ground into my heart / that Simeon promised me."]

"Moder, reu vpon þi bern!
Þu wasse awey þo blodi teren,
it don me werse þan mi ded."
"Sune, hu mittie teres wernen?
hy se þo blodi flodes hernen
huth of þin herte to min fet."
("Mother, have pity on your child! / You wash away those bloody tears! / They do me worse than my death." / "Son, how might I restrain my tears? I see those bloody floods running / out of your heart to my feet."]

"Moder, nu y may þe seyn,
bettere is þat one deye
þan al man-kyn to helle go."
"Sune, y se þi body swngen,
þi brest, þin hond, þi fot þur-stungen—
no selli þou me be wo."
["Mother, now I may say to you, / it is better that I alone die / than all mankind go to hell." / "Son, I see your scourged body, / your breast, your hand, your foot pierced through-- / it is no strange thing that I am in grief."]

"Moder, if y dar þe tellen,
yif y ne deye þu gost to helle;
hi þole þis ded for þine sake."
"Sune, þu best me so minde,
with me nout; it is mi kindde
þat y for þe sorye make."
["Mother, if I dare tell you, / if I do not die, you go to hell; / I suffer this death for your sake." "Son, you are so merciful to me. / With me it is nothing; it is my nature / that I make sorrow for you."]

"Moder merci! let me deyen,
for adam ut of helle beyne,
and al mankin þat is for-loren."
"Sune, wat sal me to rede?
þi pine pined me to dede,
let me deyn þe bi-foren."
["Mother, mercy! Let me die / to redeem Adam out of hell / and all mankind that is lost." "Son, what comfort shall there be for me? / Your pain has pained me to death. / Let me die before you die."]

"Moder, mitarst þu mith leren
wat pine þolen þat childre beren
wat sorwe hauen þat child for-gon."
"Sune, y wot y kan þe tellen,
bute it be þe pine of helle
more sorwe ne woth y non."
[Mother, for the first time you might learn / what pains they suffer who bear children,
what sorrow they have who have lost a child." / "I know that I can tell you, / that
except if it be the pains of hell, / greater sorrow I know of none."]

"Moder, reu of moder kare!
nu þu wost of moder fare,
þou þu be clene mayden m[an]."
"Sune, help alle at nede,
alle þo þat to me greden—
m[ay]den, wyf and fol wyman."
["Mother, have pity on the cares of mothers! Now you know the condition of
mothers, although you are a pure maiden." "Son, help all in need, / all those who cry
out to me-- / maiden, wife, or sinful woman."]

"Moder, y may no [lenger] duellen,
þe time is cumen y fare to helle,
þe [þridde] day] y rise upon."
"Sune, y wyle wi'the funden,
y [deye ywis] of þine wnden,
so reuful ded was neu[re non]."
["Mother, I may not live longer. / The time is come that I go to hell. / Upon the third
day I rise." / "Son, I wish to go with you. / Indeed, I die from your wounds. / So
pitiable a death there was none ever.")

[When] he ros þan fel þi sorwe,
þe blisse spr[ong þe þridde morewe],
wen bliþe moder wer þu þo.
Mod[er],for þat ilke blisse],
bisech vre god, vre sinnes lesse,
þu be hure chel ayen hure fo.
[When he rose, your sorrow fell away. / Bliss sprang up on the third morrow, / when you
were then a joyous mother. / Mother, for the sake of that same bliss, / beseech our God, that
he abate our sins. / You are our shield against our foe.]

Blisced be þu, quen of heuene,
bring us ut of helle leuene,
þurth þi dere sune mith.
Moder, for þat hithe blode

þat he sadde vpon þe rode,
led us in-to heuvene lith. AmeN.
(Blessed may you be, queen of heaven, / bring us out of hell's flames, / through your dear son's power. / Mother, for the sake of that precious blood / that he shed upon the cross, / lead us into heaven's light. Amen.)[68]

E. J. Dobson believed that the author of "Stonde wel, moder" knew the Tanner "Stabat" or a similar version and modified it into a dialogue, perhaps (as Carleton Brown argued), influenced by two thirteenth-century Latin prose devotional texts purporting to be narrative dialogues between Mary and saints Anselm and Bernard respectively on the subject of Christ's passion. As Dobson pointed out, however, "Stond wel, moder" is something quite different as a dialogue between Mary and Christ himself that has no direct models in extant late-medieval religious prose, and if anything more closely resembles medieval drama.[69] Certainly "Stond wel, moder" shares certain literary features with the Tanner "Stabat," most notably such details as the reference to the sword of Simeon's prophecy (not in the Latin version) but also the poet's prayer to Mary that ends the lyric: the begging for release from the consequences of sin and the reminder that on the third day after Good Friday, Easter, Mary's sorrow turned to joy. The lines "When] he ros þan fel þi sorwe, / þe blisse spr[ong þe þridde morewe], / wen bliþe moder wer þu þo" in "Stond wel" perhaps consciously echo "Ah, þi kare was ouer-comen, / þe þridde dai þi ioie comen" in the Tanner lyric.

It is even more likely that the English poet who composed "Stond wel, moder" knew the Latin "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem." Not only are both the English (in the Royal 12 manuscript) and the Latin lyrics eleven stanzas long, but as Dobson points out, the English

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[68] The text is from Brown XIII, no. 49B. As Brown points out, a corner of fol. 194 has been torn off; the bracketed words at the ends of lines represent Brown's approximation of what the missing words in the manuscript might be. The translation is this writer's.

[69] For Brown's theories, see Brown XIII, 204. For Dobson's argument, see Dobson and Harrison, 154.

poet seemed to have striven to imitate the rhythmical regularity of the Latin model. Thematically, the English lyric follows the Latin, moving from an exploration of Mary's compassio ("Svne, hy fele þe dede stunde," "þi pine pined me to dede") and her contemplation of every part of her son's tortured body ("þi brest, þin hond, þi fot þur-stungen") to the trope of Mary's delayed labor pains ("nu þu wost of moder fare") to the evocation of Mary's Easter transformation into joy ("bliþe moder wer þu þo") followed by the poet's prayer that Mary will similarly bring him out of darkness into light ("led us in-to heuen lith"). The only element found in the "Stabat" but missing from "Stond wel, moder" is the "Stabat'" figure of Christ's birth from Mary's virginal womb as a metaphor for his resurrection from the sealed tomb.

"Stond wel, moder" is a remarkable reworking of the Latin "Stabat" that not only transforms a third-person past-tense meditation into a dynamic real-time dialogue (from "stabat" to "'stond well'") whose emotional effect is heightened by the immediacy of the conversation but which artfully melds the lyric's disparate thematic elements into a unified literary whole. At the lyric's beginning Christ bids his mother to be joyful ("blyþe moder mittu ben") and a deliberate variation on that same phrase at the lyric's end ("bliþe moder wer þu þo") declares that she has indeed achieved that joyful state. The agent of that transformation is thus not simply Christ's returning to life but the redemption he has worked through his suffering, death, and harrowing of hell. Christ, being the son of God, can see beyond his own agony into its ultimate purpose and the light-filled future that it will accomplish, while Mary is simply a human mother who suffers grievously, with full compassio, alongside her crucified son, but who cannot comprehend that suffering's meaning until she realizes its glorious Easter culmination. Both characters in the dialogue experience

their own full humanity in their experiencing Christ's death: the son by dying, the mother by

finally enduring the excruciating pain that is ordinary women's lot in childbirth. There is also

the rhetorical effect of antithesis in the balancing of the half-stanzas, each alternately

beginning with (or containing) the words "moder" or "sune." It should be remembered that

"Stond wel, moder" is set to the music of a Victorine sequence, in which the melody repeats

itself every half-stanza, reinforcing the rhetorical parallelism, antithesis, and symmetry of the

each of the two stanza-halves of the lyric's text.

In contrast to the Tanner version of the "Stabat iuxta Christi crucemn," which

survives in only a single incomplete manuscript, the Royal 12 "Stond wel, moder" is one of

six extant manuscript texts of the lyric dating from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth

centuries.[70] Those six manuscripts reveal that, although "Stond wel, moder" was almost

certainly composed as an English sequence--that is, as a piece of music designed as an

English version of the Latin "Stabat"--the English lyric quickly became detached from its

musical context. Only one other manuscript besides Royal 12.E.i.includes musical notation

for "Stond wel, moder": Cambridge University, St. John's College MS 111, fol. 106v, dating,

as E.J. Dobson points out, from the latter part of the thirteenth century.[71] As Dobson noted,

the St. John's Cambridge manuscript includes the text of the Latin "Stabat" (a near-certain

indication that the original composer of "Stond wel, moder" had the Latin sequence in mind)

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[70] The other five manuscripts are: Cambridge University, St. John's College MS 111, fol. 106v; Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 86, fol. 127; Dublin, Trinity College MS 301, fol. 194; British Library MS Royal 8.F.ii (flyleaf); and British Library MS Harley 2253, fol. 79.

[71] Dobson and Harrison, 153. Carleton Brown, relying on a catalogue description, dated the St. John's Cambridge version of the lyric to the "early thirteenth century" (Brown XIII, 203), but Dobson argued that the text's linguistic forms placed it no earlier than the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

along with its music, and beneath it the words of the English lyric—yet as Dobson pointed out, the English words are "not properly aligned with the Latin words and the music."[72]

   That suggests that even the St. John's scribe copied "Stond wel, moder" not so much as a song to be sung as a rhyming prayer that the scribe knew followed the music and literary themes of the Latin "Stabat." Fol. 106v is, like many of the manuscript leaves that preserve thirteenth-century English religious lyrics, one of a series of end-leaves in a manuscript whose main texts were written at least half a century earlier, with a few final leaves left blank. Dobson pointed out that the last two and a half folios of the St. John's manuscript (fols 105v-107) contain a number of short passages written in various hands. The Latin "Stabat" and the English "Stond wel" constitute the fifth of these short items, and as both lyrics appear on a verso page and are incomplete (ending on line 27, at the exact middle of the fifth stanza, of each), Dobson speculated that the Latin and English lyrics continued to their conclusion on the recto page of a following leaf that was subsequently lost.[73]

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[72] Dobson and Harrison, 153.

[73] *Ibid.* The St. John's version of the lyric reads as follows:

> Stand wel moder vnder rode
> bihalt þi child vyt glede mode
> bliþe moder mai þu bie
> Sune hu mai blyþe stonde
> i se þi fote and þine honden
> nailed to þo harde trie
>
> Do wai moder þi wepynge
> i thole þie ded for man-kende
> for mine gelte tholi noone
> Sune i fele dede wunde
> þe suerd is hat mine herte grunde
> þat me bihet simeon
>
> Moder rewen of þi barne
> þu vipe avei þi blodi teres
> þeo do me werse þan mi ded
> sone hv mai teres vernen

The other four surviving versions of "Stond wel, moder" present only the text (or parts of it) without accompanying music. Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 86 and British Library, MS Harley 2253, which will be briefly discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation, are "anthologies" (deliberately assembled collections of lyrics and other material), dating from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries respectively;[74] Trinity College Dublin MS 301 is an early fourteenth-century manuscript that gives the entire eleven-stanza lyric but no music. The fourth manuscript, British Library MS Royal 8.F.ii,

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> is se þi blod on flod erne
> fro þi herte onto mi fot
>
> Moder nu hi mai þe sai
> betere is þet ic hauen deit
> þan mankenne to helle go
> Sone i si þi bodi suingen
> brest and hend ond fet þurtet sting
> ne sali þat me is woe
>
> Moder wel i mai þe telle
> bpt i deie þu gost to helle
> i tholie det for þine sake

This text is from Brown XIII, 203-204.

[74] The Digby version of "Stond wel, moder" (Brown XIII, no. 49A, in Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 86, fol. 127), contains only nine of the eleven stanzas, in contrast to the Harley version (British Library, MS Harley 2253, fol. 79v0, which closely follows the Royal text and gives all eleven stanzas, although the Harley text was copied one or two generations after the Royal text, that is, between 1325 and 1350. The Digby text is undeniably earlier than the Royal 12 text, but its incomplete state, its abrupt ending, and the relative weakness and wordiness, nearly to the point of textual corruption, of Mary's final response (in the second half of the ninth stanza) to Christ ("Sone, I-wis I wille founde, / I deye almest, I falle to grounde, / So serwful deþ nes never non [Son, indeed I wish to go, / I die almost, I fall to the ground, / so sorrowful a death was there never])," in contrast to the Royal 12 text 's clear, concise, and powerful expression of *compassio* ("Sune, y wyle wi'the funden, / I [deye ywis] of þine wnden, / so reuful ded was neue[re non] [Son, I wish to go with you, / I die indeed of your wounds, / so pitiful a death there never was])," led Brown to conclude that the Royal 12 version seemed to "offer the most authentic text of this poem" (Brown XIII, 205). E.J. Dobson also concluded that the Royal text offered the most "reliable" of the six versions of "Stond wel, moder" (Dobson and Harrison, 154), although it varies markedly from the texts of the Digby, Trinity, and Harley versions. Dobson believed that the Digby, Trinity, and Harley versions sprang from a lost intermediate version of "Stond wel, moder" marked by "deliberate re-writing" that muddled the clarity and *punch* of the Royal text. Interestingly, the Harley version of Mary's response in the ninth stanza closely follows the Digby version ("Sone, y wil wiþ þe founden, / y deye ywis for þine wounden, / so soreweful ded nes neuer non"). See *Facsimile of British Museum MS. Harley 2253*, intro. by N.R. Ker, EETS 255 (Oxford, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965); and G.L. Brook, ed., *The Harley Lyrics: The Middle English Lyrics of MS. Harley 2253*, Publications of the University of Manchester 302, English Series 25 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), no. 20, at 56-57.

consists of flyleaves containing extracts from a Latin sermon on the sorrows of Mary written

(according to Carleton Brown) in about 1300.[75] The Royal 8 version includes only the first

stanza of the lyric, framed by brief explanations by the preacher to his audience as to how the

lines might be interpreted: as a meditation on Simeon's prophecy of Mary's sword of sorrow

in Luke 2:35:

> Vnde secundum sanctos dolor Beate Virginis in morte filii excellebat [MS: excellabat] dolorem cuiuscumque martyris. Unde cum in quodam cantu dicatur in persona filii ad Beatam Virginem sic [Therefore, according to the saints, the pain of the Blessed Virgin over the death of her son exceeded the pain of any martyr; therefore, when in a certain song it is thus said to the Blessed Virgin in the person of her son]:

> Stond wel moder under rode,
> byholt þy sone wyth glade mode
> blize moder miȝt tu ben

> Respondetur sic in persona matris (It is responded to in the person of his mother thus]:

> Son hou may hi bliþe stonde
> i se þi fet i se þe honde
> nayled to þat harde tre.

> quasi diceret: non possum esse leta. Set post istum dolorem secutum est gaudium resurreccionis. Unde dicitur [as though she were saying, "I cannot be joyful." But after this sorrow the joy of the resurrection followed. Therefore it is said]:

> Gaude, quia tui nati,
> Quem dolebas mortem pati,
> Fulget resurrectio.
> [Rejoice, because the resurrection of your son, for whom you sorrowed as he suffered death, shines bright].[76]

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[75] See Brown XIII, no. 204; Dobson and Harrison, 153-54.

[76] The English text is from Brown XIII, 204. The Latin text is from Siegfried Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric* (see Introduction to this dissertation), 51-52. Wenzel points out that the Latin half-stanza quoted by the Royal 8 scribe (which is not in the Latin "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem") occurs in various sequences on the joys of Mary, all beginning "Gaude virgo, mater Christi," two of them in English (*Analecta Hymnica* 31: 172, 176, 188).

The existence of four manuscripts of "Stond wel moder" whose scribes did not consider it important to include the music (and in two cases even the full text) suggests that the lyric early on acquired an identity as something more than simply a liturgical song; it was a remembered prayer or fragment of a prayer with a meditative life of its own, or, as in the Royal 8 flyleaves, an *exemplum* in a sermon.

As Siegfried Wenzel points out, the text of "Stond wel, moder" in Trinity College Dublin 301 "may simply have been entered to fill a blank page" in a theological miscellany.[77] In other words, the scribe who inserted it into the Dublin manuscript was following the customary thirteenth-century practice of filling empty spaces with brief devotional texts. To the Dublin scribe, "Stond wel moder" was not so much a hymn in that manuscript as a prayerful text. Similarly, the Royal 8 text of the lyric treats the first stanza of "Stond wel, moder," as well as the Latin half-stanza that follows it, simply as vivid illustrations of the point that the preacher is trying to make about Mary's inconsolable sorrow and subsequent Easter joy. During the first century of its existence, from the middle of the thirteenth century to the middle of the fourteenth century, "Stond wel, moder" had become a multivalent text. It could be written down (and read) as a song, as a meditation in the context of other meditations, as a brief prayer, or as a rhetorical aid to a preacher who wanted his message to resonate emotionally with his audience.

Returning briefly to the Royal 12 version of "Stond wel, moder," the full text of the lyric, along with musical notation for the first stanza, precedes two English passion lyrics "Quanne hic se on rode" and "Þenc man" that are clearly non-musical. The Anglo-Norman lyric with its musical notation follows, filling up the remaining space on fol. 194v. Because a

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[77] *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric*, 51.

portion of fol. 194 has been torn off, the incipit of this last lyric is incomplete, but it appears

to be a song praising Christ's love for the speaker and for all humankind: "[...]mer me estut a

tute fin e mun....nus saunz fin amer [strong love for me wholly and completely....love for us

without end]."[78]

The four texts occupying fols 193 and 194 of Royal 12 thus seem to be thematically

related, focusing on meditative and affective responses (by the poet, the reader, and by

projection, Mary), to Christ's passion, death, and overwhelming love for the human soul.

Significantly, fols. 193 and 194 are the antepenultimate and penultimate leaves respectively

of Royal 12.E.i, so the four lyrics, all apparently in the same hand, may represent yet another

scribe's attempt to fill empty pages in a collection of saints' lives and other edifying stories

with brief devotional texts. (The very last leaf of the Royal manuscript, fol. 195, also

contains miscellaneous short texts, in a new hand: a Latin sermon by Robert Grosseteste, and

other Latin sermon material). It would appear then that the scribe who filled in fols.193 and

194 was, like so many English scribes of this period, adding a small devotional anthology of

remembered short texts to a manuscript at hand that contained a few blank pages. The Royal

12 scribe happened to include musical as well as non-musical texts in his compilation.

Another English passion lyric preserved in one of those mini-devotional anthologies

(if so they might be called) that filled empty manuscript pages appears on fol. 145 of

Ashmole 360, the codex that contains "Quanne I zenke onne þe rode" (a version of Royal

12's "Quanne hic se on rode" and its variants in St. John's Cambridge 15 and Bodley 57). It

should be remembered that fol. 145 of the Ashmole codex, while not an end-leaf, comprises

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[78] This text has not been published. The incipit is from *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and Kings Collection* (n 53), 50. The explicit is a transcription from the manuscript.

another collection of short texts written in a single hand that follows a longer treatise

occupying fols. 141-144, *Libellus de sphaera* by Johannes de Sacrobosco (1195-1256),[79] an

English astronomer and astrologer who taught at the University of Paris during the first half

of the thirteenth century. Whereas the Ashmole "Quanne hic se on rode" appears at the very

end of fol. 145, on its verso page, and is set out clearly as poetry, separated into six stanzas,

each headed with an initial capital, the second lyric appears on the ninth line of the first

column of the recto page of fol. 145 and looks like this:

> Memoria passionis tue o bone ihesu lacrimas tollit oculos
> effundit faciem humectat cor dulcorat. þe minde of þi
> passiun suete ihesu þe teres it tollid þe heine it bolled
> þe neb it wetth in herte sueteth.
> [The "mind," or memory, of your passion, O good Jesus, draws forth tears, floods the
> eyes, moistens the face, softens the heart. The memory of your passion, sweet Jesus, /
> draws forth the tears, / swells the eyes, / wets the face, / sweetens in the heart.][80]

The Latin/English Ashmole "Mind of the Passion" follows the template of the "Candet" lyric

as it appears in many English manuscripts: a piece of rhythmic, near-rhyming Latin prose

that epitomized the writer's emotional response to Christ's passion, followed by an English

translation largely in rhyme.

 The contents of the English "Mind" lyric, like those of its Latin prose model, consist

of a rhyming list of the powerful physical effects—upon eyes, face, and heart—that

meditating upon the sufferings of Christ wreaks upon the one who meditates, who is moved

to tears and whose heart is simultaneously both literally and figuratively softened, so that it is

filled with the same sweetness that saturates the mind in thinking about Christ. The lyric

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[79] *A Descriptive, Analytical, and Critical Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed unto the University of Oxford by Elias Ashmole, Esq.* (n. 45), col. 274.

[80] This is a diplomatic copy of the manuscript text, although abbreviations have been expanded. The English lyric is Brown XIII, no.56A (*Index* 1977). A transcription of the Latin text, with modern punctuation, appears in Brown XIII, 211.

looks at first glance like a mere jingle of little literary value ("teres it tollid þe heine it

bolled," and so forth). In fact, it is an exposition of the way in which mind, body, and

emotion work together in affective meditation, which is both a mental and a

physical process.

Like the English "Candet" lyric, the "Mind of the Passion" seemed to be a favorite of

English scribes from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries. It survives in complete or

fragmented form in five published texts representing manuscript versions, in four

unpublished texts noted by Siegfried Wenzel, and in a tenth unpublished text hitherto

unnoted in the scholarly literature and discovered by this writer while perusing the Latin

"Candet" text on the unpublished final page of Hereford O.IX.5.[81] In many of those

manuscripts, as far as can be discerned, the "Mind of the Passion" appears as a piece of

marginalia, filling blank page spaces after the conclusion of longer prose texts.[82]

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[81] The most recent edition of the *Index*, published in 2005, lists four published versions of the "Mind of the Passion" lyric. Two of those are the Ashmole 360 text (listed as Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS. 6641, fol. 45r) and Cambridge University, St. John's College MS 62, fol. 126v, both published in Brown XIII (nos. 56a and 56b). The third is Oxford University, St. John's College MS 190, fol. 232r, published by Siegfried Wenzel as no. 62 in "Unrecorded Middle-English Verses," *Anglia* 92 (1974): 55-78, at 71 (see n. 82 below for Wenzel's published text). The fourth text listed in the *Index*, published by Wenzel as a variant of no. 62 in the *Anglia* article, appears in Oxford University, Cambridge University, Gonville & Caius College MS 408, fol. 135v, is a fragment: "teres tollet, eyne bollet, loeres wetet,.and herte swetet." Rosemary Woolf published a fifth text, apparently dating to the thirteenth century and appearing in British Library, MS Laud Misc. 112, fol. 175f, in *The Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (see Introduction to this dissertation), at 373, n. 2. Woolf's published text reads as follows:

> Lovert þe mincginge of þe it is so swete,
> þat min einen it to-bolneþ,
> and min tere in tollet,
> minne leres it weteþ,
> and min erte it sweteþ.

Wenzel lists these additional manuscripts containing the "Mind" lyric: Oxford University, Balliol College MS 149, fol. 31v (copied sometime after 1381); Oxford University, Magdalen College, MS 93 (a collection of sermons by the fifteenth-century recluse John Dygon); Cambridge University Library, MS Kk.IV.24, fol. 144 (a fifteenth-century sermon collection; and Dublin, Trinity College MS 277 (another sermon collection). See *Verses in Sermons* (Introduction to this dissertation), 129 (esp. n. 64)-131.

[82] This writer has examined the Ashmole and St. John's Cambridge manuscripts in facsimile but not the Laud, St. John's Oxford, Gonville & Caius, Balliol, Magdalen, or Dublin Trinity manuscripts. Rosemary Woolf

In Cambridge University, St. John's College MS 62, a miscellaneous collection of sermons, saints' lives, and other religious material written in several late thirteenth-century hands (the first text is Robert Grosseteste's *Templum dei*), the "Mind" lyric is the penultimate item on fol. 126v, a page that winds up two leaves (fols. 125 and 126) made up of short items in Latin compiled by a single scribe: sermons, a table of degrees of consanguinity, a short disquisition on the Friday fast, an outline of the elements of the Mass.[83] Fol. 126v.is a curious page. Its scribe seemed to have originally divided his page into two columns each comprising a vertical half-page and then, on afterthought, divided the vertical half-page into two very narrow columns, so that the page actually contains three columns of text, the second and third columns exceedingly narrow. The division nicely accommodated the scribe's consanguinity table but left him with a few inches of blank space at the end of the narrow second column along with an equally narrow and empty third column that the disquisition on the Mass did not entirely fill. The English "Mind" lyric, followed by a thematically unrelated Latin quatrain, occupies the very bottom of the narrow third column on fol. 126v:

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described the Laud text of the "Mind of the Passion" as appearing "in the bottom margin" of a text of portions of Defensor's *Liber scintillarum* (PL 88: 605-08), an eighth-century florilegium of biblical and patristic sentences. Woolf noted that the Laud version of the lyric is "followed by its equivalent in Latin prose"—most likely a version of the "Memoria passionis" commonly attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux that precedes the English lyric in the Ashmole manuscript. She also noted that the Latin is followed by an aphoristic "scrap of verse in English (also with Latin translation): 'þe name Ihesu honiit is in muþe, murie drem in ere, michel blisse in herte'" [the name of Jesus is honey in the mouth, pleasant sound in the ear, great bliss in the heart.] Similarly, an attribution to Bernard and a variant of the Ashmole text's Latin preface appear in the St. John's Oxford text published by Wenzel (see n. 81.):

> Bernardus: Memoria passionis Christi lacrimas elicit, oculos infundit, facies humescit, corda dulcessit.
> Þe munde of Cristes passion,
> þat was hure alre ransun,
> teres hit tollez,
> eches [read eyes] hit bollez,
> nebbes hit wetez,
> and hertes hit swetes.

[83] Montague R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1913), viewed online at http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/manuscripts/medieval_manuscripts/medman/C12.html.

Loverd þi passion.
Who þe þenchet arist
þaron. teres hit
tollet. and eyen hit
bollet. nebbes hit
wetet ant hertes
hit swetet. Cur
homo securus vivit. cum
moriturus. Et cur letat
cum mors et vita pereat.
(Lord, your passion, whoever thinks rightly upon it—it draws forth tears and it floods the eyes, it wets the cheeks and it sweetens the heart. Why does man live free from care when he is bound to die? And why does he rejoice when life and death both perish?)[84]

The manuscript arrangement of fol. 126v, with its placement of the passion lyric at the very bottom of a page of thematically unrelated short texts on religious subjects suggests that for the scribe who composed the page, the passion lyric was simply a familiar and beloved rhyming English prayer that helped fill out the end of a column--and when the English lyric proved not quite long enough to finish out the column, the scribe added a few lines of Latin verse on the fleeting nature of human life.[85] His literary strategy was thus identical to that of the Ashmole scribe.

The unpublished tenth text of "Mind of the Passion" points to the same scribal strategy. As described above, the final page of Hereford O.IX.5, fol. 102v., contains a rich compendium of meditative material added by a thirteenth-century scribe to a manuscript consisting of two scriptural glosses that otherwise entirely dates from the twelfth century.

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[84] This is a diplomatic transcription from fol. 126v, with modernized punctuation (the manuscript uses medial points). The English text, which includes an expanded abbreviation, is that of Brown XIII, no 56B.

[85] *Cf.* n. 82, for Rosemary Woolf's observation that the "Mind" lyric in the Laud manuscript similarly led off a group of brief Latin and English fragments.

Lines 38-40 include the following, accompanied by the marginal notation "Bernardus de passione christi" and written as prose in Latin and English:

> ...Tua domine tam dulcis [l. 38]
> est memoria quod oculos suffundit. lacrimas elicit. ora humectat. corda dulcorat.
> Anglice. Louerd swege is þe mynde of þe. eyen hit bollet. teres hit tol- [l. 39]
> let. lores hit wetet. horten hit sweteth. [l. 40]
> (...The memory of you is so sweet, Lord, because it fills up the eyes, it draws forth
> tears, it wets the face, it softens the heart. In English: Lord, sweet is the memory of
> you. It floods the eyes, it draws forth tears, it wets the cheeks, it sweetens
> the heart.].[86]

The English "Mind" lyric is the only vernacular text in fol. 102v's collection of otherwise entirely Latin.meditations, and the text's bilingual format—the Latin quasi-poetic "Memoria" followed by an English verse translation—is identical to that of the Ashmole and St. John's Oxford versions of the lyric (although the texts of all three versions are somewhat different from one another). There may be some literary dependency among the three texts, or, as is more likely, the bilingual format was simply a commonplace, akin to pairing texts attributed to Augustine with those attributed to Bernard. As fol. 102v of the Hereford manuscript appears from the paleographic evidence to date from the mid-thirteenth century, the Hereford "Mind" text may in fact be the earliest of any of the six extant versions, made at about the same time as the Nero manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse* and its own devotional collection. This writer's discovery of the Hereford "Mind" provides further evidence of the robust production of writings in English in the West Midlands during the early thirteenth century. It also provides further evidence of the wide diffusion and popularity, at least among monastic scribes, of short English lyrics on the subject of Christ's passion whose placement in their surrounding manuscripts indicated that their primary purpose was either to trigger meditation

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[86] This is a diplomatic transcription made from an electronic facsimile of fol. 102v. The manuscript's medial points have been replaced by periods.

or to serve as prayers. It is telling that the same scribe who preserved a version of the widely copied English "Mind" lyric also preserved a text of the "Candet," also widely copied in both Latin and English. Why the two texts were favorites of thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century scribes is easy to surmise: They were both vivid, brief, easy-to-memorize, and highly moving summations of the physical and emotional associations connected to Christ's passion, the "Candet" a portrait of the bodily all-consuming nature of the sufferings themselves, the "Mind" an epitomization of the transformation of the meditator's body and mind in the contemplation of those sufferings and the one who willingly endured them.

This chapter has considered twenty-one thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century manuscripts (twenty-three if the anthology-manuscripts Digby 86 and Harley 2253 are included) preserving variant texts of six English lyrics, all dealing with Christ's passion: the English "Candet," the English "Respice" ("Loke to þi louerd"), "When hic soe," "Þenc man," "Stond wel moder," and "Mind of the Passion." Each of the six lyrics is preserved in multiple manuscripts: eight for the English "Candet" (Durham A.III.12, Bodley 42, Digby 55, St. John's Cambridge A.15, Additional 11579, Digby 45, Rawlinson C.37, and Sidney Sussex 97, together with two fourteenth-century versions in Richard Rolle's *Incendium amoris* and John of Grimestone's preaching book, bringing the total to ten); five for "Stond wel" in its various versions (Tanner 169, Royal 12.E.i, St. John's Cambridge 111, Trinity Dublin 301, and Royal 8.F.ii, together with two texts in Digby 86 and Harley 2253, bringing the total to seven); six for the "Mind" lyric (Hereford O.IX.5. Ashmole 360, St. John's Cambridge 62, St. John's Oxford 190, Gonville & Caius 408, and Laud Misc. 112); three for the "Respice"/"Loke to þi louerd" texts (Bodley 42, St. John's Cambridge A.15, New College 88); and two for "Þenc man" (Royal 12.E and New College 88).

Furthermore, the scribes who wrote down those six lyrics almost invariably paired them with other lyric or rhythmic prose texts, creating small collections of brief items.[87] Those paired texts might consist of one or more of the other English lyrics among the six (Bodley 42, St. John's Cambridge A.15, Ashmole 360, Royal 12.E); Latin prose texts that the English lyrics translated (Durham A.III.12, Hereford O.IX.5, Rawlinson C.317, Sidney Sussex 97, New College 88, Ashmole 360, St. John's Oxford 190, Laud Misc. 112, and Additional 11579, together with Digby 55, whose text of the English "Candet" is paired with two lines of the Latin "Candet"); thematically related passion texts in English, Latin or Anglo-Norman (Hereford O.IX.5, Digby 55, Additional 11579, Royal 12.E.i), or somewhat less thematically related Latin and English texts (St. John's Cambridge 62, Laud Misc. 112.).

Two manuscripts (Bodley 42 and St. John's Cambridge A.15) pair the English "Candet" with the English "Respice" ("Loke to þi louerd") in a clearly conventional twinning continued through the fourteenth century by Rolle and Grimestone, and two manuscripts (Bodley 42 and Digby 55) pair the English "Candet" with the Latin "Respice." Six manuscripts of the English "Candet" attribute the text to "Augustine" (Durham A.III.12, Bodley 42, St. John's Cambridge A.15, Digby 55, Additional 11579, and Sidney Sussex 97), as does the Hereford O.IX.5 manuscript of the Latin "Candet." Only one manuscript, St. John's Cambridge A.15, attributes its text of the English "Respice" ("Loke to þi louerd) to "Bernard" in symmetry with its attribution of the "Candet" to "Augustine"(as did Grimestone later with his own "Candet"/"Respice" pairing). One manuscript, Additional 11579, pairs the English "Candet" with a Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English "Aspicias capud inclinatum" that

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[87] Of the twenty-three manuscripts, this writer has not personally examined five in either original or facsimile: St. John's Oxford 190, Gonville & Caius 408, and Laud Misc. 112 (the "Mind" lyric); Trinity Dublin 301 and Royal 8.F.ii ("Stond wel moder").

its scribe attributes to Bernard. Two "Candet" manuscripts, Bodley 42 and Rawlinson C.317, pair the English lyric with the Latin invocation "o bone ihesu" commonly attributed to Bernard. The scribe who wrote down the Ashmole 360 version of "When hic soe" followed it with "o bone ihesu" accompanied by the initial "B" in a clear reference to Bernard. Furthermore, the Latin "Candet" in Hereford O.IX.5 appears, attributed to Augustine, in conjunction with several Latin devotional items attributed to Bernard, including two separate "o bone ihesu" texts on the theme of Christ's passion, along with the Latin/English "Memoria"/"Mind" lyric also attributed in the margin to Bernard.[88]

This suggests that all six lyrics, even the musical "Stond wel moder," functioned for the scribes who wrote them down as often-interchangeable components of brief collections of passion meditations to be processed imaginatively by readers. The collections typically lead their readers from visual contemplation of the sufferings endured by Christ and his mother to empathetic identification with Christ, and thence to a sinner's remorse and gratitude, as in the "o bone ihesu" invocations. The collections in almost all cases have no thematic connection to the other material in the manuscripts in which they appeared (the two exceptions are Digby 45 and Additional 11579, where "Candet" lyrics appear in connection with sermons on Christ's passion, as well as Bodley 42, where the "Candet" and "Respice"/"Loke man" appear in conjunction with other material related to Christ's passion). The collections most frequently fill end-pages or blank spaces at the end of manuscripts or texts within manuscripts (Hereford O.IX.5, Durham A.II.12 on its roll, Digby 55, Ashmole 360, Bodley 57, Royal 12.E.i, Laud Misc. 112, Sidney Sussex 97, St. John's Cambridge 62, St. John's

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[88] Siegfried Wenzel notes that the "Mind" lyric preceded by the Latin "Memoria" in St. John's Oxford 190 was also attributed to Bernard. See n. 81 above.

Cambridge 111, Trinity Dublin 301, and possibly Tanner 169). Elsewhere, the lyrics occupy

bottom margins of unrelated texts (St. John's Cambridge A.15, Bodley 57, Digby 45) and

end-leaves or flyleaves (St. John's Cambridge 111, Royal 8.F.iii). Rarely, the lyrics are

interpolated into the texts themselves: Bodley 42, Rawlinson C.317 (between sermons), and

Additional 11579 (also between sermons). Equally rarely do the English lyrics stand alone,

unaccompanied by either their Latin originals or other lyrics in Latin, English, or Anglo-

Norman: Tanner 169 (which is only a fragment in any event), Bodley 57, and Ashmole 360.

It thus seems clear that building or discovering a meditative context around lyrics

pertaining to Christ's passion was almost as important to most of the scribes who transcribed

them as writing down the lyrics themselves. The quatrain "Nou goth sonne" could stand

alone because it already had a rich devotional and exegetic context in *Speculum ecclesie*/

Mirour de seinte eglyse. Readers of that treatise knew how they should read "Nou goth

sonne": as an imaginative expansion of the complex affective material that surrounded it.

This context was not so automatically clear for other lyrics—so their scribes supplied that

context, arranging the lyrics in conjunction with other material in English, Latin, and Anglo-

Norman designed by its arrangement to produce an intense emotional response to Christ's

death and the selfless love his sacrifice represented. In doing so, the scribes frequently

invoked the names of revered theologians whose names had become shorthand by the

thirteenth century for intense affective spirituality: Augustine of Hippo and the Cistercian

Bernard of Clarivaux. This meant that the scribes not only contextualized the lyrics but

tended to anthologize them, often placing them side by side with other lyrics. Those

thirteenth-century scribes thus not only paved the way for similar anthologizing (and

invocation of the names of Bernard and others) in the sermons and English devotional works

of the fourteenth century, such as Grimestone's preaching and Rolle's *Incendium amoris*, but for the creation of anthologies of the lyrics themselves, a process most famously represented by the mid-fourteenth-century "Harley Lyrics" but well under way by the third quarter of the thirteenth century.

Conclusion

By the third quarter of the thirteenth century Middle English lyrics had begun to be

collected and grouped together in what modern scholars have called miscellanies or

anthologies containing substantial numbers of verses along with other texts. That process had

actually begun much earlier in informal fashion, as this dissertation has argued, on the end

pages and other blank spaces in manuscripts of other works. The major difference between

the miscellanies and those informal efforts by scribes to fill available writing spaces with

small collections of prayers and meditations is that the miscellanies display deliberate efforts

to collect the verses as integral parts of their texts, so that the miscellanies display distinct

structural patterns and principles of organization.

Nonetheless, the most striking aspect of the four thirteenth-century miscellanies that

contain substantial collections of Middle English religious lyrics—Cambridge University,

Trinity College MS 323, Oxford University, Jesus College MS 29, British Library, MS

Cotton Caligula A.ix, and Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 86—is that they

defy most scholarly efforts to pinpoint their origins and function. As the introduction to this

dissertation has noted, John Frankis has pointed to the scant textual and codicological

evidence to support the once-predominant theory, held by Rossell Hope Robbins, David

Jeffrey, and others, that the miscellanies were made by and for friars.[1] Frankis questioned

that characterization on the basis of scant evidence in the manuscripts themselves that they

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[1] See the Introduction to this dissertation. Karl Reichl also asserted that Trinity 323 was a specifically
Franciscan text in his 1973 critical edition of the poems in that manuscript. Karl Reichl, *Religiöse Dichtung in
Englischen Hochmittelalter: Untersuchung und Edition der Handschirft B.14.39 des Trinity College in
Cambridge*, Münchener Universitäts-Schriften, Philosophie Fakultät, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen
Philologie, vol. 1 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1973), 55-58.

were compiled by or intended for use by friars, and scholars who have worked with the manuscripts more recently have proffered alternate, more cautious theories about their purpose and function. All four of these leading miscellanies (as well as some of those containing smaller numbers of lyrics, such as British Library, MS Egerton 13 and Oxford University, Bodleian Library MS Digby 2) are trilingual, with items in Latin and Anglo-Norman as well as in English. Furthermore, with the exception of Trinity 323, whose contents, including its twenty-two English lyrics, are entirely religious or, far more rarely, aphoristic, the miscellanies freely mix secular and religious texts. Cotton Caligula and Jesus Oxford, for example, preserve, besides religious lyrics (seven in Cotton Caligula, twenty-four in Jesus Oxford) the worldly debate poem *The Owl and the Nightingale* and, in Cotton Caligula, Laȝamon's early thirteenth-century English adaptation of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman poet Wace's metrical British history, *Roman de Brut.* The eighty texts in Digby 86, including seventeen Middle English religious lyrics, also comprise *Dame Sirith* and *The Fox and the Wolf*, the former the only surviving pre-Chaucerian English *fabliau* and the latter an adaptation of a story in the twelfth-century French *Roman de Renart*. It is not surprising, then, that "friars' miscellany" has come to seem an inadequate characterization of any of those four codices except, arguably Trinity Cambridge 323.

John Scahill contends, for example, that Trinity Cambridge 323, a collection, in thirteen different hands, of 140 Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English items, including a long English verse narrative of the martyrdom of St. Margaret, was definitely a book for clerics, but that at least some of the items were intended for the churchmen's own personal

reading rather than for teaching the laity.[2] Neil Cartlidge, writing about Oxford Jesus and

Cotton Caligula, which have nine texts in common, including six religious lyrics, believes

that both volumes, handsome and elegant in appearance, were, along with their probable

common exemplar, products of a religious house that was likely monastic. Cartlidge posits,

on the basis of linguistic evidence pointing to a West Midlands geographic and cultural

origin, the Premonstratensian house at Titchfield in Hampshire, a daughter of the

Premonstratensian foundation at Halesowen near Birmingham—hence the "Thomas de hales"

of the "Love Ron" in the Jesus Oxford manuscript). Nonetheless, Cartlidge writes, "there is

no evidence...that [Jesus Oxford and Cotton Caligula] were designed for any other

specifically definable milieu. One may speculate that they were read in a friary, a convent, a

cathedral chapter or the household of a country gentlemen; but the contents of the

manuscripts are not specialized enough to support any of these hypotheses. On the contrary

even what limited evidence there is suggests only a great diversity of the social and

functional origins of their texts."[3]

Marilyn Corrie, examining Digby 86, compiled, mostly by a single hand, likely

between 1271 and 1285, concludes that the scribe responsible for that hand seemed to have

carefully arranged both the individual contents (by cutting and expanding) and structural

organization of his material (all the Middle English religious lyrics are in a single quire, and

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[2] John Scahill, "Trilingualism in Early Middle English Miscellanies: Languages and Literature," *Yearbook of English Studies* 33 (2003): 18-32. This writer has examined a microfilm facsimile of Trinity 323.

[3] Neil Cartlidge, "The Composition and Social Context of Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29(II) and London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix," *Medium Aevum* 66 (1997): 250-259. This writer has examined both manuscripts. For a brief discussion of the "Love Ron" and the theories surrounding its composition, see the Introduction to this dissertation.

several are arranged in thematic pairs) so that "MS Digby 86 would seem to be the product of someone who enjoyed putting his own stamp on his collection of texts...."[4]

What all of this indicates is the extraordinary diffusion of both Middle English religious lyrics and their meditative subject-matter (Christ's passion and supplication of the Virgin Mary) during less than a single century. By the end of the thirteenth century it is highly probable that literate laypeople were reading and likely using as their own prayers verses that might have been written by friars, secular priests, monks, and perhaps nuns for their own kinds of devotions. In this respect, the circulation of the lyrics exactly paralleled the circulation of thirteenth-century religious prose texts such as *Ancrene Wisse* and *Mirour de seinte eglyse.* The same hypothetical lay owner of Digby 86 who chuckled at the ribald tale of Dame Sirith and the spell she cast so that a young cleric could seduce a merchant's wife might also be moved to empathetic tears by "Stond wel, moder" on another page.

At the very end of this thirteenth-century poetic trajectory lies the most famous collection of medieval English lyrics, Harley 2253. The Harley manuscript is another trilingual miscellany whose eclectic 121texts, slightly over half of them religious, include bits of scriptural exegesis, catechetical material, romances, fabliaux, romances, love songs, political commentary, and even recipes as well as lyrics. It appears to be a purely lay codex, in that its bulk (140 of its 148 folios) were written in a cursive business hand (not the Gothic book hand of the other major miscellanies) sometime before 1340 by a commercial scribe who specialized in turning out charters and conveyancing documents in western and southern

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[4] Marilyn Corrie, "The Compilation of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86," *Medium Aevum* 66 (1997): 236-49. See also *Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86*, introduction by Judith Tschann and M.B. Parker, EETS, s.s., 16 (Oxford *et al.*: Oxford University Press, 1996.

England [5] The person who commissioned Harley 2253 was also likely a layman or laywoman as well. Many of the English religious lyrics in Harley 2253 are versions of thirteenth-century lyrics, eight of them also found in Digby 86 (among those the clearly popular "Stond wel, moder") and one found in Trinity Cambridge 323 that appears in Digby 86 as well. Indeed, David Jeffrey has identified a manuscript culture of religious lyrics spanning the turn of the fourteenth century and eleven different manuscripts. Its existence testifies, as Jeffrey argues, the important role that the Franciscans and other friars played in transmitting a devotional ethos to lay people during that period,[6] but it also attests to the imaginative and generative power of the lyrics themselves.

The Harley manuscript was not, of course, the endpoint of the trajectory of devotional literature glossing the Song of Songs and centered around Christ's passion and his mother that had begun in monasteries more than two centuries previously. Chaucer's *Parson's Tale* (along with his powerful lyric prayers to the Virgin in the *Prioress's Tale* and the *Second Nun's Tale*), the *Showings* of Julian of Norwich, and the mystical writings of Richard Rolle and his contemporaries are all progeny in a sense of this revolution in private spirituality. We have "the men of the west" (to borrow a phrase from J.R.R. Tolkien's non-scholarly work)—the authors and scribes of Worcestershire and Herefordshire--to thank for the explosion of

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[5] Carter L. Revard has located and identified many other exemplars of the chief Harley scribe's hand. Carter Revard, "Scribe and Provenance," in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2000), 21-109. See also *Facsimile of B.M. MS. Harley 2253* (see ch. 4 of this dissertation). The texts of the Harley lyrics are published in *The Harley Lyrics: The Middle English Lyrics of MS. Harley 2253* (see ch. 4 of this dissertation).

[6] David L. Jeffrey, "Authors, Anthologists, and Franciscan Spirituality," in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, 261-70. Regarding the relationship between Harley 2253 and Digby 86, Marilyn Corrie believes that there is no direct connection between the two manuscripts (some of the Harley versions are longer than their earlier Digby counterparts), but she does make a case that lyrics found in both manuscripts circulated in the West Midlands as part of a wider literary culture. Marilyn Corrie, "Harley 2253, Digby 86, and the Circulation of Literature in Pre-Chaucerian England," in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, 427-43.

beautiful writing by those determined to see beauty in the cross. We also have a man of the north to thank, the Cistercian abbot Aelred of Rievalux, writing to the sister he venerated, for providing a compelling model of how exegesis of the Song could fire the imagination.

Nor have the thirteenth-century English religious lyrics lost their resonance even in this age, and not just for the New Critics of two generations ago. This writer had the privilege of meeting the distinguished medievalist Miri Rubin in early 2009. She told Dr. Rubin a little about this dissertation project. Dr. Rubin's immediate response was not a suggestion for further research or a query about secondary sources. It was an ejaculation: "Stond wel, moder, under rode!" This was a reminder that the rhymed prayers of Englishmen writing at a time when there was nearly no other English literature to read, could thrum with compelling force eight centuries later.

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