THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

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

A DISSERTATION

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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

______________________________
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"
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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

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:

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.

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

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."

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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.

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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thematically;\textsuperscript{10} and, most recently, Thomas G. Duncan's *Medieval English Lyrics, 1200-1400* (1996)\textsuperscript{11} and John C. Hirsch's *Medieval Lyric* (2005).\textsuperscript{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).\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{10} See n. 3.


\textsuperscript{13} See n. 3.

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

Many of the anthologies were published during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the era of the ascendency 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 \textit{The Medieval Lyric}:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Carleton Brown and John L. Cutler, \textit{The Index of Middle English Verse} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943).
\item \textsuperscript{18} Rossell Hope Robbins and Carleton Brown, \textit{Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse} (Lexinton, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1965).
\item \textsuperscript{19} Julia Boffey and Anthony S.W. Edwards, \textit{A New Index of Middle English Verse} (London: British Library, 2005).
\end{itemize}
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


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

23 Widsom and Number, x.


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). 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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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."  

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." 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 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 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.  

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 nake 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


31 *Ibid.*, 29. For an extended discussion of *Candet nudatum pectus*, its authorship, and its relation to "Whyt was his nake 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." 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. 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), 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

33 Ibid., 28.

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

35 See n. 3.
traditionally 'charged'—'nakede', bleye', ystreith', etc. 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 use."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

36 Ibid., 128.

37 Ibid., 59-60.

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

³⁹ Ibid., 195.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 197.

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.*

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), 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.

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. The first indisputably Franciscan author of the English Middle Ages, Frankis noted, was Nicholas Bozon, whose

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42 Ibid., 30.


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; 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," 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. Frankis found this proffered evidence for Franciscan

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.\(^4^9\) 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."\(^5^0\)

Wenzel argued, however, that the verses, which he said were characterized by "lack of artistry, and general poetic unambitiousness,"\(^5^1\) were neither the English counterparts of


\(^{50}\) *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'


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

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 Red Book 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 Gestalt 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.


\(^ {60}\) 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

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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century lyrics, "Sumer is icumen in," 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. The most sustained of these 

contemporary analyses is Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou's "I Have a Yong Suster": Popular 

Song and the Middle English Lyric. 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.

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 


66 Brown XII, no. 6, Index 3223.

67 Andrew Taylor, Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers, Material Texts 


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." 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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who were often objects of popular reverence helped transmit monastic values to ordinary people.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.

thirteenth century, mostly in Yorkshire and Wales). That phenomenal growth rate, as Jane Burton points out, was at least partly 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). 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. 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.

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.


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. 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 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. 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 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. 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 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. 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 topos 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) "[pe] 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." 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. 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

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*, 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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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*. Fulton attributes the development to the failure of Christ to

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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.  

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, 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." 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. Scarru also argues that beautiful things are so powerfully attractive that they generate a desire to create more

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83 Ibid., 42-92.
85 Ibid., 4.
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.

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. 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." Charles H. Talbot listed a variety of titles that the treatise had assumed in its various manuscripts over the centuries. The title *De institutione inclusarum* ("on the instruction of enclosed women"), taken from one of the three oldest surviving manuscripts, is probably closest in meaning to the title Aelred gave his treatise. In his *Vita Ailredi, abbatis Rievall'* Walter Daniel stated that "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). Walter Daniel wrote this for his Vita after he had written the *Vita Ailredi, abbatis Rievall'*—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.


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 fernerum 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.

manuscripts of Aelred's work, all dating from the thirteenth century, was chosen by Talbot and Anselm Hoste for their critical edition of the treatise published in 1971.

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") 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"), 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, 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").

*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--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 aliquid 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 tangam praebat uel palpandum. [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 male members arouses and enervates even dead old age, let her not even extend her hand to him for touching or stroking.]


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,\textsuperscript{11} and to Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in two different sixteenth-century printed editions.\textsuperscript{12} Besides generating thirteen surviving manuscripts from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, \textit{De institutione} was translated into Middle English during the late fourteenth century as part of the Vernon Manuscript.\textsuperscript{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: \textit{De arrha animae}, ascribed to Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141),\textsuperscript{14} and the compilation \textit{De diligendo Deo}, ascribed to the twelfth-century Cistercian monk Alcher of Clairvaux and also to Augustine himself.\textsuperscript{15} According to Charles Talbot, \textit{De diligendo Deo} contains some twelve passages "taken bodily" from Aelred's book.\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{12} Talbot (n. 3), 167-68.

\textsuperscript{13} See Introduction.

\textsuperscript{14} PL 176: 951-70.

\textsuperscript{15} PL 40: 847-64.

\textsuperscript{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. 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 politicaldomination 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\textsuperscript{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 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 became their patron. The next morning, according to Walter Daniel, Aelred set out homeward on horseback to the Scottish court, but as he rode

\textsuperscript{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), xcvi. 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.,

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. As Mathers writes, "[W]hat is striking about Aelred is the sense that, for him, Bede's Northumbria was still somehow a reality." Indeed, Reginald of Durham (fl.1162-73), a Benedictine monk and prolific hagiographer in that cathedral city, dedicated his vita 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.

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

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]aepeius 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 cris
t 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 cris
t 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

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

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.

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), 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, 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.

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. 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:

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

29 Talbot (n. 3), 171.


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

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 Ecclesiasticus 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

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.

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 melioria 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,

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: "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 consecravit."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 "copulavit" (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 copulavit, 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 reminding 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."
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
The section concerning the past, which Aelred called a "recollection" ("praeteritorum recordatione"), 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.

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.
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

45 Lc 2:41-51.

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


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 omnis 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

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").\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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

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

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{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 closeness 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, 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. 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."

53 Lc 1:39-56.

54 De institutione inclusarum 29 (CCCM, 663): "Quid agis, o virgo? Accurre, quaeso, accurre, et tantis gaudiiis admiscere, prostermare ad pedes utriusque, et in unius uentre tuum Sponsum amplexetere, 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. Amplexetere dulce illud praesepium, unicat uerecundium 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\textsuperscript{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;\textsuperscript{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;\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 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.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{57} Io 8:3-11.

\textsuperscript{58} Lc 7:36-50.

\textsuperscript{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 spirituales inuitata nuptias, sponsum suscipis datum a Patre, purgationem a Filio, pignus amoris a Spiritu sancto." 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's baptism in Luke's Gospel, 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. 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 Jo 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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” ("suavi sermone") of Jesus, to touch her bare feet to his hands to be washed at the Last Supper, and to lick the dust from

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotemark[63] \textit{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."

\footnotemark[64] \textit{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").

\footnotemark[65] \textit{Ibid.} (CCCM, 669-70).
\end{footnotes}
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 water67 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." \textit{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, but he embellished John's barebones narrative concerning a distraught and weeping Mary who mistakes the risen Jesus for a gardener until he addresses 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. Maria, o beata, quid tibi mentis fuit, quid animi, cum ad hanc uocem te prostereres, et reddens uicem salutantes inclamare: Rabbi. Quo rogo affectu, quo desiderio, quo mentis ardore, qua deuotione cordis clamasti; Rabbi. Nam plura dicere lacrymae prohibent, cum uocem occludat affectus, omnesque animae corporisque sensus nimius amor absorbeat.

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]," 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 her 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 urchum durum, urchum intolerabile: Noli me tangere. Vt quid, Domine? Quare non tangam? Desiderata illa uestigia tua pro me perforata clausi, 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 them77—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

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, may I 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, virgo, 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"). 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, 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,

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) 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." 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, dulcior 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., Bibliothèque 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

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 ocularum
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 aloes 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. According to Jewish and Christian tradition, the composer of the Song had been King Solomon, celebrating one of his many nuptials with an unnamed bride occasionally called "the Shulamite," who is perhaps an Egyptian or an Ethiopian and who describes herself as "black but beautiful" ("nigra sed formosa" in the Vulgate) because she has 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.

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.


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 dispiononis 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, Eneddi, 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") 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. 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." 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.

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 cæm / 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. 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." 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," 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. 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.
bride addresses her longing and laments. 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. 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..." In the Song of Songs the male speaker had declared, "You are all beautiful, my love, and there is no stain in you." 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." 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 refinatorium 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 Jesus 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."
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 preexistence 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 uxor mei / 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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\(^{107}\) *The Voice of My Beloved*, 26.

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")

\(^{109}\) *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 sensum 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"). 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 introductur et, aliis accedentibus, aliis etiam discendentibus, a diversis et ad diversos textos narrationis expletur." 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 Songs 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.

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. 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. "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

114 The Voice of My Beloved (n. 102), 3, 35.
115 Ibid., pp. 7-12.
116 Ibid., p. 11.
and afterwards. 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).

Beginning in the eleventh century and certainly throughout the twelfth, what had been a handful of patristic and monastic Western commentaries on the Song began to generate

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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 appellantur"), a love that plants itself in the flesh and is fundamentally as base as the body


itself, tainted by Adam's fall, and "amor spiritualis," 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

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 affectus 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 text129 but also reminiscent of the arrows of Cupid, the pagan god of love specifically condemned by Origen

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. 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*, 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. 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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131 William of Saint-Thierry, *Exposé sur le Cantique des Canticites* (see n. 120).

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::


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 insinuatus: 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."\(^\text{136}\)

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

\(^{136}\) 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 Interpretation 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."\(^{137}\)

Renevey 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

\(^{137}\) 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:

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\text{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 foraminibus petrae et cavernis maceriae.}^{141}
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Bernard projected onto the Song's dialogue an even more intense and erotic drama than the words themselves necessarily implied: a bashful ("verecondus") 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 \textit{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 \textit{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

\[^{140}\text{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}\text{Sermon 61.2, }\textit{Sancti Bernardi opera}, \text{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..." 

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." 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 reediturus, 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....

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." 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, literally 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.

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." 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. 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.’"

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 abit sibi. tunc angeli mirabuntur et dicent: quae est ista prospeciens quasi diluculum, speciosa ut luna, electa ut sol? 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." 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." 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). 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. 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


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:

\[\text{Christus uirginis sponsus est et, si dici potest, Christus uirgineae castitatis; uirginitas enim Christi, non uirginitatis est Christus. Virgo est ergo quae nupsit, uirgo quae proprio lacte nutrit, de qua legimus: Quanta fecit uirgo Hierusalem! Non deficient de petra ubera neque nix a Libano aut declinabat aqua ualido uento quae portatur. Qualis est haec uirgo, quae trinitatis fontibus irrigatur, cui de petra fluunt aquae, no deficiunt ubera, melia funduntur?}\]

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." 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

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{1.22 (124)}: \text{"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 Jer 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).

\[\text{Ibid.}, \text{1.7 (106): "She is said that to have made her martyrdom at the age of twelve years."} \]
nupta properaret ut ad suplicii locum laeta successu gradu festina uirgo processit, non intorto crine caput compta, sed Christo, non flosculis redimita, sed moribus."\textsuperscript{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:

\textit{Ergo sancta Maria disciplinam vitae informet. Thecla doceat immolari, quae copulam fugens nuptialem et sponsi furori damnata natural etiam bestiarum virginitatis ueneratione mutauit.}\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{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."

\textsuperscript{158} \textit{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 \textit{Medieval Religious Women}, vol. 2: \textit{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 utriusque naturae. Memento tamen antiquiora in eo divinitatis 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...
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, 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. 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 institutione* 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
derit cubiculo, qui prostibulo non defuit."\textsuperscript{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...."\textsuperscript{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"\textsuperscript{165}

In a passage of \textit{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

\textsuperscript{163} \textit{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."

\textsuperscript{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...."

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{De virginitibus} 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. Contempetur 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 coninquiniati, uirgines enim sunt.*

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 coquininati / 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."

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.  

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."  

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." 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.  

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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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). 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. 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


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


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. 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." 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

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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).

devil, who delights in the fall of the holiest. 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 by vivid 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.

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), repositories 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;\textsuperscript{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.").\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{185} The seventh letter in the correspondence of Peter Abelard (ca. 1079-1142) and his onetime lover and wife, Heloise (ca.1101-1164), who

\textsuperscript{182} The Rupertsberg manuscript of *Scivias* was housed at the Hessische Landesbibliothek 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).

\textsuperscript{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).

\textsuperscript{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).

\textsuperscript{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 innumeratas videamus virgines matrem Domini in hujus excellentiae proposito sequi, paucos agnoscamus viros hujus virtutis gratiam adeptos; qua, quocunque ierit, ipsum sequi agnum valerent." 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.\footnote{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.} The \textit{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.\footnote{A critical edition is \textit{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 exemplar 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." \textit{St. Albans Psalter: An Anglo-Norman Song of Faith}, Studies in the Humanities: Literature—Politics—Society 60 (New York \textit{et al}: Peter Lang, 2002), 344.} Like the virgins of the early Christian hagiography whose topoi clearly influenced her \textit{vita}, Christina is described as both beautiful and charming ("tale decus, tanta gratia"),\footnote{\textit{The Life of Christina of Markyate} 20 (66).} 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
English specifics, including many local place names, that seem unquestionably real. The hermit, Roger, even gives her a pet name in English: "sunendaeg dohter" ("Sunday daughter").

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 dico"). 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 delectatione nunc et virginali illum in suo tenebat sinu. nunc intra se immo per ipsam cratam pectoris apprehen
debat intuitu." 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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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. 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. There is no record of the celebration

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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

195 Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, ed., *Liber sacramentorum romanae aeclesiae ordinis anni circuli (Sacramentarium
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
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,
holly 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

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 pertinent 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. On the basis of this evidence Matter argues that Radbertus "must have been quite familiar 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 imagery, 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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spent most of his monastic life. 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").

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.). 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: Desclée, 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."  

Rupert's *Commentaria in Canticum Canticorum*, written 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") as a future-tense

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203 *The Voice of My Beloved*, 159.


205 Ct 4:6.
description by Christ of his own passion and resurrection: "Ascendam Hierosolymam, et consommabuntur omnia, quae scripta sunt de me: Tradar enim gentibus ad illundendum et flagellantum, 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

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 speech 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"\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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 relationship..."\textsuperscript{212}

\textsuperscript{208} Lc 1:41. Mary's prayer, the "Magnificat," is in Lc 1:46-55.

\textsuperscript{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 Elisabeth. And what are those storerooms of God the king? Doubtless they are the sacred mysteries, whatever is contained in Holy Scripture."

\textsuperscript{210} The Voice of My Beloved, 163.

\textsuperscript{211} The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages (n. 122), 44.
than was offered by the Gospels."\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Cantica Canticorum ad laudem Deiparae Virginis Mariae elucidatio},\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Cogitis me}, it is far more likely that Aelred knew Rupert's mariological commentary or some of its progeny. Aelred's homiletic text was the Song's "in lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea / quaesivi illum et non inveni."\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{213} PL 210: 55-110.
\textsuperscript{214} Aelred of Rievaulx, Sermon 18, \textit{In assumptione Beatae Mariae}, PL 195: 309-16.
\textsuperscript{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 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 directly to God 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. 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 amauui, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam noua, sero te amauui! et ecce intus eras et ego foris, et ibi te quarebamus, et in ista formosa, quae fecisti, deformis inruebamus. 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, gustauui et esurio et sitio, tetigisti me, et exarsi in pacem tuam.

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 ('spiritualiter' 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 Spiritus 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.\textsuperscript{218}

Augustine's \textit{Confessiones}, as well as his \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{Confessiones}.\textsuperscript{219} Indeed Abelard claimed to quote knowledgeably from the \textit{Confessiones} in the eighth letter of his correspondence with Heloise.\textsuperscript{220} The \textit{Confessiones} were an even more immediate and compelling model for Aelred, as his hagiographer Walter Daniel related in his \textit{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 secolo conuerteretur."\textsuperscript{221}


\textsuperscript{219} See \textit{Historia calamitatum}.

\textsuperscript{220} \textit{Petri Abaelardi opera}, vol 1, 81. Abelard misattributed this passage to the \textit{Confessiones}: "Multum pecat qui inobediens est suis prelatis in aliqua, si vel meliora eligat quam ea quae sibi judentur [he sins greatly by disobeying his superiors even if he chooses something better than what he was ordered to do]" This passage is nowhere to be found in the \textit{Confessiones}.

\textsuperscript{221} \textit{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 \textit{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 meum praecipitauit arbitrium, et scito te in haec omnia corruisse, si non te Christi misericordia conserausset....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 delectionibus attraxit et illexit, quod indissolubilia malae consuetudinis uinclula 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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\(^{222}\) *De institutione inclusarum* (n.1) 32 (CCCMM, 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."

The influence of the *Confessiones* upon the works of Anselm of Canterbury—another spiritual 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.'" 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). 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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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 Philosophique 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, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (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 religious 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


²²⁷ Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio 2, Orationes sive meditatioes*, 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 imaginatively 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 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?" 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. 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 prayers attributed to him (Aelred's triple
meditation accounted for three of the spurious prayers).

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 secretly left England to join a community of anchoresses in
Angers in northwestern France. 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 Augustine'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. 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

231 See Thomas H. Bestul, "The Verdun Anselm, Ralph of Battle, and the Formation of the Alnselmian

232 The critical edition is Charles H. Talbot, ed., The Liber Confortatorius of Goscelin of Saint Bertin, Studia
Anselmiana 37, Analecta Monastica, 3rd ser. (Rome: Herder, 1955). An English translation is The Book of

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.\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{234} \textit{Liber confortatorius} 1 (31 in Talbot's edition: "Miseratus est benignus Ihesus flentem et ulito excepisset ruentem, sed utisque 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]."

\textsuperscript{235} \textit{Ibid.} See Ct 7:4: "oculi tui sicut piscinae in Esebon [your eyes are like the fishpools of Heshbon]."

\textsuperscript{236} \textit{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

238 Reginald of Durham, *De vita et miraculis S. Godrici, heremita de Finchale*, Publications of the Surtees

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 efficium plenissiam 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

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240 Ibid., 157-58: "Loving Jesus, Jesus overflowing with sweetness, merciful and kindest Jesus, have mercy 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]," 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.

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 himself. 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. An eighth pseudepigraphal passion text, titled *Lamentatio in passionem Christi* 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:


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," "osulum 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 also with Augustine:

> 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 cistercienne 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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Confessiones} well) wrote a Marian commentary on the Song that interpreted parts of the Song as a passion text.\textsuperscript{250} Concerning the Song's verse "nolite me considerare quod nigra sum quia deoloravit me sol,"\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Soliloquia} probably composed during the thirteenth century. \textit{Texts of the Passion}, 4-7, 187-90.

\textsuperscript{250} Philip of Harvengt, \textit{Commentaria in Cantica Canticorum}, PL 203: 181-490.

\textsuperscript{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

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 down 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
Trente* (La Roche-sur-Yon: l'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 relationhip 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 image 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 naturalistic 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 a 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
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
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

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—were just as important for male monastics.

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." 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.]


6 *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (see ch. 1 of this dissertation), 47, 49.
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; moreover, 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 emphasizing 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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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 Anglo-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 ecclesie, 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 exercised considerable influence.

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?" 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 substitutionary atonement, worked out in his Cur deus homo ("Why God Became

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 martyrdom, 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. If it can be argued that Clemence wrote an Anselmian work despite the difference in genre and failure to allude explicitly 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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the first part of *De institutione* 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")—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." 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." 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.

*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)

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 uoluiisti, haec inserenda putaui."


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 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.

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.]

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


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." 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. 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") an exceedingly popular eleventh-century Latin prose *passio* narrating the martyrdom in the

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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 abess of Barking from 1173 to 1175; and Adgar's *Le gracil*, 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 Katherine, 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. 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. 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." 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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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 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

\(^{30}\) 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").

received the Ten Commandments. 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."  

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. 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.

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. 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"). In a lecture to Maxentius on the futility of worshipping idols, Catherine declares in the Vulgate *passio* that she is "bride" ("sponsam") of Christ. 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]."

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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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.


37 Vulgate (n. 30), 159, l. 296; 160, l. 311: 172, l. 544


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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\ldots\text{Jhesu Crist le mien espus} \\
\text{Est de m'amur si cuveitus,} \\
\text{Que ja avum fait cuvenant} \\
\text{Que amie sui et il amant\ldots} \\
\text{Jo l'aim tant que n'en puis partir,} \\
\text{Kar lui sul aim, lui sul desir.}\quad\text{\footnote{1}}
\end{align*}
\]

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

\(^{40}\) 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\ldots 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"). 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." 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," 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"). 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.'"


46 *The Life of St. Catherine*, l. 1871: "li fel tyrant."
food, with the apparent aim of putting the disobedient employee to death)\textsuperscript{47}; uncontrollable anger (his heart is seized by a "great rage"\textsuperscript{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,"\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., l. 1889.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., l. 1112: "De grant ire sun cuer esprent."
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., ll. 1959-61: "Les denz escrinne cume liun; / Un reguart fait d'ume felun."
\end{flushright}
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]." 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." 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 virginem 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")\textsuperscript{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.)\textsuperscript{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"),\textsuperscript{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")\textsuperscript{56} that is scourged, his "sweet hands and feet" ("dulces manus eius et pedes")\textsuperscript{57} that are punctured with nails, his "most sweet breast"

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., l. 2484.

\textsuperscript{54} Vulgate, 199, ll. 1083-84: "poteras nobiscum feliciter regnare et prima in regno nostro nominari."

\textsuperscript{55} Life of St. Catherine, l. 620.

\textsuperscript{56} De institutione inclusarum 31 (CCCM, 670).

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
("dulcissimum pectus")\textsuperscript{58} from which he forgives those who crucified him. Like Catherine in Clemence's poem, Christ in Aelred's \textit{De institutione}, has a "most beautiful face" ("speciocissima facie").\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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;\textsuperscript{61} ecce tu pulcher es dilecte mi et decorus."\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Ibid.} CCCM, 667.

\textsuperscript{60} It is also possible that Clemence had Béroul's \textit{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 \textit{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).

\textsuperscript{61} Ct 1:14.

\textsuperscript{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. This was a profound and positive corrective to the general medieval misogynistic notion of women as men's inferiors.

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


64 Ibid., 204.
Clemence's poem 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," 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"). 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,"

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 acceptable / 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)

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.\footnote{The Life of St. Catherine, ll. 967, 969, 973, 983, 991, 993, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1005, 1006 (twice).} 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].\footnote{Ibid., ll. 959-60.} 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].\footnote{Ibid., l. 975.} 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,\emph{ 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
guari,"\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{verbatim}
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.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{verbatim}

Still earlier, Clemence rewrote another passage of the Vulgate, a speech of Maxentius to Catherine, so as to emphasize those same two motifs:

\begin{verbatim}
…[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; \textsuperscript{77}
\end{verbatim}

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…."\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., ll. 717-18: "The son of God suffered death in the flesh; / By his death he rescued us from death."

\textsuperscript{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."

\textsuperscript{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."

\textsuperscript{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.

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." 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…." 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." 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 fuisse, mortui 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"). 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 charm 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 creature
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

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." 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"), one of Stephen's four extant treatises, all of which he addressed to monastic readers. All four show signs of Aelred's influence and that of other twelfth-century Cistercians, notably Bernard of Clairvaux and Gilbert of Hoyland, from whom, as Edmund Mikkers notes, Stephen did not simply draw influence but boldly borrowed. 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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89 The other three treatises are *De informatione mentis circa psalmodiam diei et noctis*, *Meditationes de gaudiiis 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 Stephen 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 gaudiiis* 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.  
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." 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.\textsuperscript{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."\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{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

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{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."

\textsuperscript{95} \textit{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. 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 compungaritis 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,

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.
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." 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."

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:

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."


99 *Ibid.*: "Hic pedes, illic manus crucifixae fuerunt, hic reclinat caput, hi per latus in aqua aet sanguine emanat misericoroda et copiosa redemptio.
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")\textsuperscript{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")\textsuperscript{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")\textsuperscript{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"),\textsuperscript{104} sometimes to the point of physical arousal ("quandoque movetur caro")\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{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 techniques 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 diletio pretioso 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.\textsuperscript{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")\textsuperscript{107} of Jesus. Stephen made it clear that he did not wish to control his reader's

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}, 50: "...in his thinking about and his marveling at the wonderful exaltations, that is, the blows and the
anguish of Christ'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."

\textsuperscript{107} \textit{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"), 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. 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 none 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. 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]," and he also used other imperatives that instructed his reader where to direct his eyes: "considera [consider]," "mira [wonder at]," "attende [observe]." 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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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. Attendite pium Iesum illos misericordes oculos suos ad suos convertentem, matrem discipulorum 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., II. 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., II. 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., II. 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 Le 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 literally—is the emotional center of the meditation. Stephen invited his reader to release that emotion in double pathos, not only suffering 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. 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, 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

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.
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 uidet preciosissimum filii corpus, quod ipsa nouit sanctissiumum et mundissiumum ab omni labe, extensum in ligno crucis, caput tremendum angelis coronatum spinis, manus et pedes transfixos clausis, 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, incomparabilis et indicibilis doloris amaritudine assisteres ulcerata in cruce pendentii, cum uideres tam potentem, tam innocentem, tam dulcem, tam amabilem tam abjekte morti addici ab impiis, tam immaniter a crudelibus lacerari, tam irreuerenter cum latronibus deputari, nunquid non in tanti doloris

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?"
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 nostrae… 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 virginis"). 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").

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 suavitas, 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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Blessed Virgin was overcome in the presence of her son exceeded and eluded all human experience." Stephen added, however, that this fact—that no one has ever fully known what Mary's experiences were really like ("nemo ad plenum nouit")--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") 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. Indeed, Stephen reassured his reader that even among his own monks, many are busy with their various duties ("Nos autem…attendentes quorumdam occupationem"), and that the fifteen meditations has offered might, in their plenitude, make his reader averse to meditating at all. 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. 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

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123 *Ibid.*, ll. 32-34.


126 *Ibid.*, ll. 38-40: "Quidam comprehendunt ea sub quinario, quidam sub septennario, quidam usque ad uicenniarium meditationem extendunt gaudiorum."


that could not easily be put into words, ("huius spiritualia studia magis sapiunt meditata quam dicta")\textsuperscript{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").\textsuperscript{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 "spiritual bond between God and the individual soul."\textsuperscript{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 \textit{De institutione}, Stephen's treatises never apparently gained a wide readership. His \textit{De informatione}, for example, has survived in only a single manuscript, and the \textit{Triplex exercitium} in only two. Seven extant manuscripts survive of the \textit{Meditationes de gaudiis}, however, with provenances in English and French monasteries that indicate a geographically wide circulation.\textsuperscript{133} There is only one complete extant manuscript of \textit{Speculum novitii},\textsuperscript{134} although extracts from it, including the

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{130} "Le triple exercice d'Étienne de Sallai" (n. 89), 361.
\item \textsuperscript{131} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{132} Introduction, Stephen of Sawley, \textit{Treatises} (n. 88), 15.
\item \textsuperscript{133} "Les méditations d'Étienne de Sallai sur les joies de la Vierge" (n. 89), 390.
\item \textsuperscript{134} The sixteenth-century copyist of this manuscript (Bibliothèque Royale de Bruxelles 2724-39) attributed \textit{Speculum novitii} as follows: "domni S. Abbatis saviniensis." There was a Cistercian monastery at Savigny in
\end{footnotes}
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.

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\(^{135}\) Ibid., 29-33.

\(^{136}\) Ibid., 40.

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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\(^{140}\) *Ibid.*, 182.

shortly thereafter translated into Anglo-Norman as *Mirour de seinte eglyse* (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. In 1521 the printer Wynken de Worde published an English translation titled *The Myrour of the Chyrche made by Saynt Austyn of Abyndon*. 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. Wilshere has also identified a "lay," or "B," family comprising

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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 Forsshaw'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.


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. 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*, all within a single

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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 eglise*,
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 eglise* paradoxically reads. The very titles
*Speculum ecclesie* and *Mirour de seinte eglise* 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. Pontigny was
a Cistercian monastery, but Edmund did not live at Pontigny until the last year of his life. He

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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 alis
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). 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 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") 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.

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") 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. 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; amicabiliter 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

\(^{156}\) *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." Cf. *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 what 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."\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Speculum religiosorum}: 

\begin{quote}
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.\textsuperscript{160}
\end{quote}

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


\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Speculum religiosorum}, 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." \textit{Cf. Speculum ecclesie}, 35; \textit{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.\footnote{Introduction, \textit{Mirour de seinte eglyse}, v. Forshaw takes note of Edmund's debt to \textit{De arrha animae}, attributed to Hugh of St. Victor. Introduction, \textit{Speculum Religiosorum} and \textit{Speculum Ecclesie}, 18-24.}

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."\footnote{\textit{Speculum religiosorum}, 82. \textit{Speculum ecclesie}, 83; \textit{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. \textit{Speculum religiosorum}, 82, nn. 11-13.} 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 constituione").\footnote{\textit{Speculum religiosorum}, 82. \textit{Speculum ecclesie}, 83, \textit{Mirour de seinte eglyse}, 58 ("A" text), 59 ("B" text).} 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 \textit{Speculum novitii} and \textit{De informatione mentis circa psalmotam diei et noctis}.  


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 up 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"). 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's *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 that was 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 eglise*, 58 ("A" text), 59 ("B" text).
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." 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 eglise, 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 eglise, 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." 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." 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. 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 Institutione* 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

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"), 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]." 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"). Edmund did not quote this particular

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 eglise*, 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 Virgines*, 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.

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 decoravit me sol [She says in the Song of Love, 'Do not wonder that I am dark, since the sun has discolored me.']" 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." 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.]"\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Speculum religiosorum} into the Anglo-Norman \textit{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,

\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Speculum religiosorum}, 68. The scriptural passage to which Edmund alluded is Le 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."

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 recepiisti 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.
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 pinsune i flesch wið feasten, wið wecchen, wið discplines, wið heard werunge, heard leohe, wið uuel, wið muchele swinkes: þe oþer is heorte þeawes—deuociun, reowfulnesses, 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
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 perhaps 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.


5 Anchoritic Spirituality, 7.

Corpus Christi College MS 402, and British Library MS Cotton Cleopatra C.vi, contain only *Ancrene Wisse*. 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 *passio* 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). 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.

Ure Lauerd ("The Wooing of Our Lord"). 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. 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: De 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., Pe 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, Pe 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. 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 lourde* is in a slightly later hand. 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 lourde/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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12 Introduction, *Pe 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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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

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. 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. 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.

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.


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

\(^{19}\) Bella Millett, "The Genre of Ancrene Wisse," ch. 2 in A Companion to Ancrene Wisse (n. 4), 29-38.

\(^{20}\) See n. 1.

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." (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 *Pe 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."

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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). 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."

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

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
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

these texts on Mary as a model for religious women was a negative and discouraging one that emphasized the unbridgeable gap between Mary as the uniquely sinless mother of Christ and the lowly, fleshly status of ordinary women.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{AW} may betray a male fear of women's spirituality."\textsuperscript{29}

The assumptions underlying Hasenfratz's conclusions (and \textit{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

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Early English Devotional Prose and the Female Audience}, 39-40.

\textsuperscript{29} Introduction, Robert Hasenfratz, ed., \textit{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 \textit{De institutione inclusarum} and those employed by the author of \textit{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 spirituality 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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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 *Pe 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

\(^{32}\) *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." 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"), and the "master of the house" ("pater familias") is the intellect or reason ("þe monnes wit" in Sawles Warde, "animus" in the Latin).

Sawles Warde, unlike its Latin source, gives the lord of the house a "foolish wife" ("fulitohe wif") named "Will" ("wil") 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.
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*, 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": "ðe heorte warðeins beoð þe fíf wittes. Sihðe. & herunge. Smechunge. & Smeallunge. & euch límes felunge." *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 Geoffrey 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 Avenbite of Inwy* (itself a translation of *De anima*, much closer to the Latin original than *Sawles Warde*) 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. 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." 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"), but this, as Millett

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-lii. Julie Hassel argues that *Hali Meiðhad* and, indeed, all the Katherine Group works, were powerful propagandistic 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.


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]."

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, 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 þef ich easki þet, 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.

comical, it should encourage you even more strongly away from this life, maiden, for nothing of this seems comical to her who experiences it."

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…]."

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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a milde wif oðer a meoke widewe þen a prude maiden"), just as "a bright jacinth is better than a dull ruby" ("is betere a briht iacint þen a charbuckle won").

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"). 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
Meðhad* 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 *Pe 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 *Pe 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.

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 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"). 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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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 ("pat seli meidnes song singen...echliche in heouene [that they may sing the innocent maidens' song...eternally in heaven]", 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 virility" ("Contempletur beatissimam Mariam cum uirginitatis tympano choros uirginum praecedentem"), 15.482-484 (CCCM, 651).
pain and his passion and his death on the cross]," 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]." 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 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

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 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). 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. *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, including (as M. Dominica Legge pointed out, a stanzaic Life of St. Margaret that is textually unrelated to *Seinte Marherete*). 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.


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. 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 Eleusus'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.
uerbis. Dic dulcissima iuliana....[on seeing her beauty, he talked to her with the gentlest of words: 'Speak, sweetest Juliana...'].

The English version, which greatly expands this Latin passage, is, by contrast, violently colorful, heightening all the dramatic elements: the cruelty of the beating that Juliana receives from Africanus' servants (in the Latin, the single past participle "cruciata [subjected to torture]" suffices, but the English has: "[H]et...leggen se luðerliche on hire leofliche lich ðet hit liðeri o blode. Me nom hire ant dude swa ðet hit ðeat adun of þe ðeardan....[He ordered them... to lay into her lovely body so cruelly that it foamed with blood. They took her and laid into her so that the blood poured down from the rods they used....]

Erotic undertones are implicit in this gruesome violation of the tender skin of a nubile young girl (Juliana's body is pointedly "lovely" ("leofliche"). For the single infinitive "spoliari [stripped]" in the Latin, the author of the English text wrote: "het swiðe heatterliche strupen hire steortnaket [he ordered them very violently to strip her stark naked]." The author took pains to emphasize the fierce combination of love and lust that burn through Eleusius in equal measure when he sees Juliana before him at the tribunal, a passion whose intensity the author emphasized still further by reminding his audience once again of Juliana's exquisite beauty in its fleshly detail ("As he biseh ant bihelde hir lufsume leor, lilies

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65 *Iuliana*, ll. 49-50, in *Seinte Iuliene* (n. 8), 16, 18, This edition of *Seinte Iuliene* publishes a diplomatic copy of the Latin text of Bodley 285, together with diplomatic copies of both the Royal and Bodley 34 texts of *Seinte Iuliene* and an "emended" text (with modern punctuation and expansion of abbreviations) of *Seinte Iuliene* based largely on the Bodley version, which is both longer and apparently earlier in composition than the Royal version, all in an en face edition in which the Royal and the Bodley 285 texts appear on even-numbered pages and the Bodley 34 and "emended" texts on odd-numbered pages.

66 *Ibid.*, 15. All quotations herein are from the "emended text" of *Seinte Iuliene*. In this passage the Bodley 34 and Royal manuscripts generally agree with each other. This writer's translation of this and other passages of *Seinte Iuliene* is influenced by that of Savage and Watson in *Anchoritic Spirituality* (n. 1).

ilicnesse ant rudi ase rose, ant under hire nebscheft al se freoliche ischapet, weorp as sic as a wiht ṭhat sare were iwundet—his heorte feng to heaten, ant his meari mealten; ḍe rawen rahten of luue ṭthurh euch liō of his limes—ant inwiō bearnde of brune swa ant cwakede as of calde, ḍet him ṭhuhte in his ṭonc ḍet no bede he i ḍe worlt nanes cunnes blisse bute hire bodi ane, to wealden hire wiō wil eftet ṭhat he walde; ant bigon wiō 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; ḍe rawen rahten of luue ṭthurh euch liō 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

68 Ibid., 17, 19.
highly alliterative in a manner redolent of Old English prose and poetry, 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 scourings 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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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 meinen þat is of latin inturned to englische leode"). 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.

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").\textsuperscript{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").\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Seinte Marherete}), for Juliana is another female image of Christ. As with Margaret in \textit{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 biþet þe þerden al o gure-blode [and

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{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 \textit{Seinte Iuliene}. Bodley 285 has "prefectus…commotus in iracundia" (\textit{Ibid.}, 22), and it is not unreasonable to assume that the author of \textit{Seinte Iuliene} used the word "reue" in a generic sense as referring to an official.

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{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 worltpliche men. Ne nulle ich neauer mare him lihen ne leauen for weole ne for wunne, for wa ne for wontreaðe þet þe me mahen wurchen. [I am wedded to one to whom I shall faithfully hold fast and shall love without falseness, one who is unlike

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

77 Ibid., 13.

78 Ibid., 32, ll. 115-116.
bore 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].

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 þe mahte for to don hit"). 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. 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]" 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]." 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].” 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….]" The author of Seinte Katerine turned this invitation of Christ'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….]" Similarly, the author of Seinte Katerine transforms the conventional "lacteam ceruicem [milky-white neck]" in the Latin description of the saint into the vivid and alliterative English snaw[w]hite swire [snow-white neck] as Catherine's readies herself for decapitation. Her last words to her executioner, which in the Latin are declamatory ("Ecce ego uocor a domino

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],\textsuperscript{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").\textsuperscript{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]."\textsuperscript{91} The Latin states

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 202, l. 1133.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 128, ll. 900-901.

\textsuperscript{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]."

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 (Sawles Warde), the homiletic literature of virginity (Hali Meïðhad), 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 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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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 somewhat 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 nobility—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.


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. 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 þe hwet riwle þe 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.\(^9^8\) 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.]"\(^9^9\) Versions of this passage also appear in the Cleopatra, Titus, and Nero manuscripts.\(^1^0^0\)

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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*Ancrene Wisse*, Corpus text, 62.

*Ancrene Wisse*, Cleopatra text, 92; Titus text, 30; Nero text, 50.

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\(^9^8\) See, e.g., "What Is *Ancrene Wisse*?" (n. 2), 4.

\(^9^9\) *Ancrene Wisse*, Corpus text, 62.

\(^1^0^0\) *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]."\textsuperscript{101} The Nero redactor goes on to say: "Muche word is of ou hu gentile wummen þe beoð. vorgodleie & for ureoleie ȝiȝirned of monie. & sustren of one ueder & one moder. in ne blostme of ower ȝoweðe 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.]"\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{103} That in itself would not necessarily indicate that the Nero text is less faithful to

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ancrene Wisse}, Nero text, 85.

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{103} The Cleopatra manuscript of \textit{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 \textit{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, \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{Ancrene Wisse} commissioned to be made under the piecemeal \textit{pecia} system to meet growing demand for the text. See Introduction, Cleopatra text, xxiv-cvii. Dobson believed that Scribe B was the author of \textit{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—-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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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.

\(^{105}\) 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. 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 Pe kakele eue* [you my beloved sisters, follow Our Lady and not the chattering Eve]." In Titus the same line reads: "*Ye mine leo-ue frend. folhes ure lafdi. nawt te cakelinde eue* [you, my beloved friends, follow Our Lady, not the chattering Eve]." 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*. 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.

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]." 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.

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"), 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]." 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 & huseslefidi [lady of the house]": "ouh mu che to beon betweenen" (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."\textsuperscript{116} They might not have 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 \textit{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.\textsuperscript{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: "ȝe 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]."\textsuperscript{118}

This apostrophe contains a contradiction: There could be no such thing as a community of twenty anchoresses living together in thirteenth-century England.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid.}, Introduction, xv.

\textsuperscript{117} See, \textit{e.g.}, \textit{Ancrene Wisse}, Corpus text, 30.21-22 ("mine leoue sustren [you, my beloved sisters]"), but 31.3 ("leoue suster [beloved sister])."

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{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.

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 argued that a subsequent scribe, "scribe B," was likely the original author of Ancrene Wisse, whose plentiful emendations found their way shortly afterwards 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. 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. 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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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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 300-301.

\textsuperscript{124} Cate Gunn argues that *Ancrene Wisse* was essentially a work of vernacular spirituality, related to sermons and penitential literature, whose intended audience was chiefly laypeople. See n. 33 above.

\textsuperscript{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 century, 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

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.

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), 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." 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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"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. 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 inþong ut of þis fifte dal in to þe seste"). 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 þe eauer dreheð…; al þet þe eauer doð, al þet

130 The Solitary Self (n. 21).

131 Ancrene Wisse, Parts Six and Seven (n.4), 3.4-8.
ȝe þolieð, is ow martirdom i se derf ordre, for ȝe 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 seofe 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

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.) 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 anchoress'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." 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…."

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.]\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{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.]

\textsuperscript{138} The author explained:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Þes king is Iesu, Godes sune, þet al o þisse wise wohede ure sawle þe deoflen hefden biset; ant he as nobele wohere after monie messagers \& feole godden, 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 Ỉšurlet. His scheld þe wreah his Goddehead, was his leoue licome þet ispread o rode, brad as scheld buen 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—förte ofdrahen of us ure luue toward him þet costnede him se sare. I scheld beoð þre ðinges, 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 deáð, 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 förte þench ðerbi o Iesu Cristes cnihtschipe i þet he dude o rode. His leofman bihalde þron hu he bohte}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Ibid.}, 18.11-18.

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Ibid.}, 21.18-19.
her luue, lette burlin his scheld, openin his side to schawin hire his heorte, to schawin hire openliche hu inwardliche he luuede hire, & to ofdrahren hire heorte.\textsuperscript{139}

This passage, presenting Christ as king, knight, wooer, and lover, is the rhetorical tour de force of \textit{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 ("\textit{þe reade blod þet heowede hire se feire}"). The allusion to the royal lover in the Song of Songs ("\textit{dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus}") is here again.

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{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 ("ofdrahien 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 ṭus 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 æpet 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

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.]"\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 allegorical 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.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}, 27.3-5.

\textsuperscript{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 man 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—as 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" ("[bridde reisun," 22.36-37) to "another half" ("An oþer half"). \textit{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 pohed [Oh, thus Our Lord woos]." 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:

\[
\text{LOked nu hu properlich þe leafdi in canticis godes deore spuse leared op bi hire sahe: hu ge shu-len seggen. En dilectus meus loquitur michi. Surge propea amica mea. & cetera. Lop ha seið hercne ich here mi leof speken he cleopeð me imot gan. And ge gan anan rich to opre deore leof-mon. & meane op te his earen. þat luueliche cleopeð op to him ið þeos peordes. Surge propea amica mea formosa mea. & ueni & ostende michi faciem tuam. Sonet uo(x) tua in auribus meis. þat is. Aris up. hihe ieorne topard me. & cum to me mi culure. mi leofmon. mi feire & mi shene spuse. Ostende michi faciem tum. Shaþ to me þi leoue neb. & þi lufsume leor. þent þe from oþre. Sonet uox tua in auribus meis Sei hpa haueð ido þe ihurt mi deore. sing imin hearen. for þi þat þu ne pilnest bute te seon mi plite: ne seoken buten te me. þe steuene is me spete. & þi plite shene. Unde & subditur. Vox tua dulcis & facies tua decora. þis beod nu-t a þinges. þat beod iluued spîþe. Spete spe-che & shene plite. hpa se ham haued te ge-deres. Spuuche choesoð iesu crist: to leofmon & to spuse. Gef þu pulþ spuch beon: ne sha þu namon þi plite. ne ne leote bluþeliche heren þi speche. Ah turn ba te iesu crist. to þi deorepur-de spus as he bit þer uppe. As þu pulþ þat þe speche. þunche him spete. & þi plite shene. & habben him to leofmon. þat is þusent shenre þen þe sunne. 
\]

\[143\] \textit{Ibid.}, 45.98

\[144\] \textit{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 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 pohed"), 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 topard me. & cum to me mi culure. mi leofmon. mi feire & mi shene spuse; Ostende michi faciem tuam becomes Shap 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.

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 *Pe 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.\(^{147}\)

\(^{145}\) *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* (n. 9), 21.1-3.


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)\(^\text{148}\) 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

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 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 also her own response, which is not static. The entire passion narrative is suffused with the emotional presence of the speaker ("[P]u wes for mi luue wið knotti 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

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 verbal picture she has painted 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 & maiden 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

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 33.475-81.


¹⁵² Ibid., 34.332-36.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 35.546-53.
heart, you who saw his heart cleaved with the spear's point".\textsuperscript{154} There is the same emotional connection as in \textit{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 \textit{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 sweiteli kiss & cluppen").\textsuperscript{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."	extsuperscript{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 bside: þe muchele sweitnesse of þe reaues me fele of pine. Bote swete iesu hwat mai mi bodi aðaines

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid.}, ll. 554-59.
\item \textsuperscript{155} \textit{Ibid.}, ll. 572-76.
\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ibid.}, 36.590-95.
\end{itemize}
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 *Pe 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

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
Ecclesiæ/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

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 English
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. 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). 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 þe
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 swone 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.

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 *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* from the Titus manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*, make up the Wooing Group: *Pis 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 louverde* (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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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*.

The reason for that is simple: the so-called Wooing Group is essentially the creation of W. Meredith Thompson, who cobbled it together out of *Pe 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 *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd* for the Early 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" 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, *Pe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd*, xiv, n. 1 (for a full citation of this edition, see ch. 3 of this dissertation).

min healewei. min huni ter....Let me beon þi leomon. & ler me for to louien þe liuinde louverd....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?]

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 rehearse Christ's passion as contemplated in detail by the narrator: "bi þe holie rode. bihis side openunge. bi his blodi Rune þet ron inne monic 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.*" 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, 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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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 louverde* 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 louverde* had possibly been written by (as well as for) "devout women" (Introduction, xiii.). The fact that the author of *On god ureisun of ure lefdi* 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) *Pe 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 "spurred quertaste wið inne fourr 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...pet funde ðesne song bi ðe, mi loue lefdi [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, 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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composed tended to preserve pre-Conquest scribal and orthographic practices. 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 and transcribed in the formal-cursive Anglicana

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 iast" ("merry it is while summer lasts," Brown XIII, no. 7), "Wen þe tuurf 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 Sîrith*), 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*.]" 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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17 Brown XIII, no. 3, 1.67.
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 loid (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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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 responsions, 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

\(^{20}\) 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. 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. 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.

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. 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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\[\text{Ibid., 83-89.}\] 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 extrême & une
sorte de déséquilibrément 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,"

\(^{24}\) 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 *lai*
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).  

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.  

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. 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. Of the ten extant

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]

[^31]: Jeanroy, no. 29.


[^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:

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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 sechzie starken ummehalden:
vier und zweinzie 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,
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daz ir heilikeit min berndez lop bewache,  
zwart 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

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, Lieder*, 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 responsion. 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." 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]." 

Marialeich 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]."

Frauenlob's leich offers an ars poetica for the religious lai and other religious lyric poetry of

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 Marialeich 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. 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:  
-Jeme mine licame ine clenesesse  
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, "ehelle," "wille," as well as stressed "o" and "u" (ll. 39-40, "sumer," "gromer"), stressed "i" and "u" (ll. 84-85, "gretunge," "kinge") and stressed "a" and "e" (ll. 99-100, "was," "pes"). 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 uresiun*.

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 bupe & mine kneon ich beie,
And al mine heorte blod to þe 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 þe purschipe,
And singen þe lossong mid spuðe muchole 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

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 On god ureisun, 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.*

In *Royne celestre* ("Queen of Heaven") Gautier wrote:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Tant es de haut estre,} \\
\text{Pucele sacree} \\
\text{Qu'em ciel a sa destre} \\
\text{T'a Diex coronnee:} \\
\text{Car de ta mamele} \\
\text{Qui tant est mielee}
\end{align*}
\]

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Septenary—iambic septenary in contrast to trochaic septenary—is also the "ballad" poetic form, not only of
modern folk-ballads but of several 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
celestre*, no. 3 in Chailley's edition, appears at 166-68.
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 þummon iboren þet ðe beo ăliche,
ne non þer nis þin efning pið-inne heoueriche,
Heih is þi kinestol on-uppe cherubine,
Bi-uoren ðine leoue sune piðinnen 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.]

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 Old 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 hþite ciclatune,  
> And alle heo beoð ikruned mid guldene krune;  
> Heo beoð so read so rose, so hþit so þe lilie,  
> and euer-more heo beoð gled & singeð þuruhut murie.  
> Míd brihte ȝimstones hore krune is al biset,  
> And al heo doð þet ham likeð, so þet mp þing ham ne let.  
> þe leoue sune is hore king & þu ert hore kpene. 

[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.]

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 ffor ure note as i-sched o ðere rode,  
> Vor ðe muchele seorue ðet pas o ðine mode  
> þo þu er ðe deaðe him bi-uore stode,  
> þet tu me makie cleane iðuten & eke pið-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 spinke & sike pel ilome,  
> Vor þine luue ich ham ibrouht in-to þeoudome,

---

Vor þine luue ich uorsoc al þet me leo þas
And þef þe al min suluen looue life þenche þu þes.
Þet ich þe rede re de seme ðide hit me reopeð sore,
Vor cristes fif þunden þu þif me milce & ore;
Þif þu milce nauest of me þet ich þot þel þeorne.
Þet ine helle pine spelten 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.]

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," 1.97), 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.

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 striking literary resemblance to *On lofsong of ure louverde*, in which Christ is invoked through his mother by a self-proclaimed sinner:

Iesu crist godes sune soð godd & soð mon of þe eide maiden iboren maria . þet is maiden & bute make moder . ich of all sunfulle am on mest ifueld of sunne aase ich drede . ich bidde & bi seche þe wið inwarde heorte þin akennedness <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 fleđe . þuruh þe irene neiles & þe þornene crune . & þuruh þe pinnen & 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

50 *On lofsong of ure louerde*, ll. 1-17, in *Pe 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.]" 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.]" The epigram was clearly already in currency when the scribe added it to the end of a poem that

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?]

The closing lines of this passage ("caput inclinatum" to the end) is an excerpt from the tenth
Meditation attributed to Anselm of Canterbury 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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54 PL 158:761.
resurrectionem domini attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux. 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 quatrains appear 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 quatrains, 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, reads as follows:

Nou goth sonne vnder wod,--
me reweth, marie, þi faire Rode,

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.
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.]"\textsuperscript{58} According to A.D. Wilshere, Arch. Selden Supra 74 is one of the earliest exemplars of the "A" or "religious" recension of \textit{Mirour}, the version of \textit{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 \textit{Mirour} and \textit{Speculum} preserved it faithfully; they seemed to regard it, if not as Edmund's \textit{ipsissima verba}, as at the very least an irreducible component of his \textit{Mirour}. In Oxford University, St. John's College MS 190, a manuscript of \textit{Mirour} that may predate Arch.Selden Supra 74,\textsuperscript{59} the same text reads (at fol. 197r, col. 1, ll. 27-28):

\begin{quote}
E pur ço dist un Engloys en teu manere de pité:
Nu goth sonne under wode:
Me reweth, Marie, þi fayre rude:
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57} Brown XIII, no 1, at 1.

\textsuperscript{58} Arch. Selden Supra 74, fol. 155v, col. 2, ll. 12-14.

\textsuperscript{59} A.D. Wilshere uses St. John's Oxford 190 as the base manuscript for his critical edition of the "A" recension of \textit{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 \textit{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. 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. 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-twelveth century by Godric of Finchale. It consists of two four-line stanzas whose couplet rhyme scheme, four stresses per line, 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 heþilich wið the in godes riche.

Sainte marie xristes bur
maidenes clenhad moderes flur.
dilie min sinne rix in min mod.
bring me to winne witð þe selfd God.

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.]

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. 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.

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 "dicet [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, 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 attendite et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus" into Anglo-Norman rhyme: "Entendez a moy trestuz ki passez par la voye, e veez si il i a dolur semblable a moy."

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") 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. 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.
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.

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"). 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

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 passages 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, 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 fruit ki fud poi rependu."

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 anaphorically 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 eglys*, 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. 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"). 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 quelleangoissem 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 fip 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 eglise*, 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 mentionem 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

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
dolor [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) *Pe 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: "Pe 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.

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, tena 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.]

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).

"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. 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 commitit 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 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. The manuscript itself, 104 folios in all, 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. The Ezekiel text and its surrounding gloss end on the tenth line of the very last folio in the manuscript (as numbered, fol. 102v), 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 text'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 Clairvaux⁹ 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 ocurrat 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.

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, arbores 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....]"  
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), 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.

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 "Dicet 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, 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 Additional 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 fifteen stadia on his body the streams 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


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 Candeetu 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 nacked 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

\(^{18}\) 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." 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.

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 ("iii kalendas Marcii anno ab incarnacione domini mo cco xxxi").

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:

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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
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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 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."

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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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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."

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. 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):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Wyt & #39;is & #39;pi nachede brest and blodi & #39;is & #39;pi side.} \\
\text{starke veren & #39;pi armes zat strekede were & #39;en so vyde.} \\
\text{Fal & #39;u is & #39;thi faire ler and dummy & #39;es & #39;hithe} \\
\text{drie es & #39;hyn ende body on rode so ytychye.} \\
\text{Zine zedes hongen colde al so ze marbre ston.} \\
\text{& #39;hine thirlede fet; & #39;pi rede blod by ron.}
\end{align*}
\]

[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.

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 "p" 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.)

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. 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.  

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. ¶  

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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.)

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 quaeestiones (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

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 vepr
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:

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-þic3 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 hisi 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.)

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 stone
    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.]

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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 *De 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." 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 *Ancrene Wisse* 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 clausis 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 stretched 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 additional 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

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 composed 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. The 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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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-assenance 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.qungen 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

46 Ibid.

47 Brown XIII, no. 37, Index 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]." 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.

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 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,


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,
If 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

\(^52\) 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
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 leman,
An be-side him stonden
marie an Johan,
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.]\(^{55}\)

\(^{54}\) 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:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Þenc man of min harde stundes;} \\
\text{Þenc of mine harde wndes.} \\
\text{[Think, man, of my hard suffering, / think of my hard wounds.]}^{56}
\end{align*}\]

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:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Man, þu haue þine þout one me,} \\
\text{þenc hou dere i bouthe þe;}
\end{align*}\]

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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.]  

This is, of course, an English amplification 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 literally 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. 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.

sermons the scribe wrote this underlined title on line 18: de passione. 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 hiiued 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 wnedes 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.)

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

LOuerd, þu clepedest me
  an ich nagt ne ansuarde þe
  Bute wordes schloe and schlepie:
  'pole yet! þole a litel!'  
  Bute 'yiet' and 'yiet' was endeli,
  and 'pole 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 uritate convictus dicenti mihi. Surge qui dormis & exurge a mortuis & illuminabit tibi Christus [Eph 5:14]. nisi urba lenta & sompoenleta. modo ecco modo. sine paululum. sed modo & modo non habebant modum & sine paululum in longum iat. 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:

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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 surrexit,
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.]
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 

\[ \text{compassio} \], 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 \textit{De Wohunge of Ure Lauerd}.\footnote{See ch. 4 of this dissertation.}

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

\footnote{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., \textit{Analecta hymnica medii aevi}, vol. 8, 55-58. Dobson's Latin text is at 46-47 of \textit{Medieval English Songs}. The translation is this writer's.}
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. The text of the Tanner lyric, which is thorough-composed (meaning

\footnote{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., \textit{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: \textit{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.]

64 Index 52.

65 Early Bodleian Music, vol. 1, xv.
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.

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.

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, 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, your care was over-comen, / your third day your joy comen, / ded and deuel driuen doun
Þpen 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
þpen þi sone rise pes.
Leuedi, bring us out of wa,
of sinne, of sorhe, of sich al-spa,
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.)

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 þulde / 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.

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."
"Syne, 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."
"Syne, 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 worse þan mi ded." / "Sune, hu mittie teres wernen? / hy se þo blodi fodes heren / huth of þin herte to min fet." / "Moder, 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 forgon."
"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 
extcept 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 reful 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
that 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.)

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.

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. They 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. 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
blîpe moder mai þu bie
Sune hu mai blype 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 were 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; 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,

| 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 purtet 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 almost, 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 reful ded was neue[re non] [Son, I wish to go with you, / I die indeed of your wounds, / so pitifull 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 wip þe founden, / y deye ywis for þine wounden, / so sowerful 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. 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].

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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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

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), 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 tuae bone Ihesu lacrimas tollit oculos
effundit faciem humectat cor dulcorat. 
minde of thi
passiun sue thing susesus teres it tollid he heine it bolled
he 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

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. 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.

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 tolet, 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. 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): 'ðe name Ihesu honiit is in mufi, 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,
nenbes hit wetez,
and hertes hit swetes.

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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?)

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. 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.

\(^{86}\) 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 "Mund 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

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

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 ecclesiæ/Mirour de seinte eglise. 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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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 Seahill 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


\(^3\) Neil Cartlidge, "The Composition and Social Context of Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29(II) and London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix," \textit{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...."  

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 121 texts, 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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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, 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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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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