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A CRITICAL EDITION OF AND COMMENTARY ON MS DOUCE 114: THE MIDDLE ENGLISH *VITAE* OF ELIZABETH OF SPALBEEK, CHRISTINA *MIRABILIS*, AND MARIE D'OIGNIES

by

JENNIFER N. BROWN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2003

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

A CRITICAL EDITION OF AND COMMENTARY ON MS DOUCE 114:
THE MIDDLE ENGLISH *VITAE* OF ELIZABETH OF SPALBEEK,
CHRISTINA *MIRABILIS*, AND MARIE D'OIGNIES

by

Jennifer N. Brown

Co-Advisers: Michael G. Sargent and Scott D. Westrem

This dissertation is a critical edition of and critical commentary on a fifteenth-century manuscript currently housed at Oxford University. Bodleian Library, MS Douce 114 (SC# 21688) is in Middle English and contains three important narratives about Continental women mystics and beguines: Elizabeth of Spalbeek (d.1266), written by Philip of Clairvaux (1150-1224); Christina *mirabilis* (d.1224), written by Thomas of Cantimpré (1201-1270); and Marie d'Oignies (d.1215), written by Jacques de Vitry (c.1165-1224). The introduction covers the manuscript's provenance and transmission, medieval women's devotional practices in the Middle Ages, and an overview of the beguine movement. There is a chapter on each of the three women represented in the Douce manuscript, examining how they are portrayed in their respective *vitae* and what messages might have been encoded for their intended audiences. The edition is emended, footnoted, and glossed in order to be accessible to the modern reader.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Three thirteenth-century women, Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies, have been relayed to us through various layers of interpretation. First, each had a *vita* written by a male cleric who interpreted her life in the way that he saw most fitting. Second, this *vita* was copied by a long line of scribes, and in the process altered. Third, during the fifteenth-century, an English translator took up the job of rendering the Latin text of these *vitae* into the vernacular, perhaps in hopes of gaining a wider audience for these extraordinary narratives, making yet more substantive changes in them. Fourth, at least one other – and probably more than one – scribe copied this translated text, further altering it: this is the version that survives in Bodleian Library, MS Douce 114. And now I enter the picture. While editing the Douce mansuscript, I have kept in mind that I am yet another layer of interpretation in the history of this multiple palimpsest. As Alexandra Barratt has written about editing, "The hapless reader is ... pretty much at the mercy of the editor. What appears to be a coolly objective, even mechanical, activity turns out to be a real exercise, possibly arbitrary, of cultural power" ("Feminist Editing" 48). I hope I have wielded this power with consideration, not only towards my readers, but also – perhaps especially – to the three thirteenth-century women whose lives I am once again presenting, and in the process interpreting.

I am indebted to many people for the production and completion of this dissertation. In many ways this is really a group effort. First, my thanks need to go to one of my two incredible dissertation directors, Professor Michael Sargent, who introduced me to the thrill of paleography and editing (a thrill, I assure you, I would never

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have believed existed before that). Without Michael's countless hours devoted to my work in an independent study I undertook with him throughout the 2000-2001 academic year, I would never have learned the skills needed to tackle a text such as Douce 114. He also suggested that I consider extending my examination into a dissertation project, and he helped me with all the preliminary work to make that happen. I never imagined that the text would be so rich – and have not experienced a single moment of boredom examining these *vitae*. His generosity of time is unmatched.

My immense gratitude also needs to go to my other dissertation director, my mentor, and my friend throughout my career at The Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), Professor Scott Westrem. Scott's sometimes maddeningly close readings taught me *how* people would read my text and my responsibilities to them. His attention to detail ensured my consistency in both the edited and the interpretive sections of the dissertation, although I think one more dangling modifier might have sent him over the edge. Scott somehow managed to guide me through a successful job search as he simultaneously responded to my chapters, all while balancing an enormous workload of his own.

The third reader of my dissertation, Professor Pamela Sheingorn, was a godsend. Her encyclopedic knowledge of medieval culture directed me to books about art and drama in the Middle Ages that greatly enlarged my scope to contextualize the *vitae* and brought substance and to my arguments. Her generosity with her own books and the speed with which she returned my frequent emails and the draft versions of my chapters helped me to complete the process of writing a dissertation in a very timely fashion.

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The unsung heroines of anyone's dissertation process are unquestionably one's student peers. I was fortunate enough to belong to a dissertation writing group with Jennifer Lemberg and Ann Wallace, fellow doctoral students in English at the Graduate Center. They saw each chapter in its roughest form, gently guiding me to push further in my analysis and more vigorously challenging me when they felt I was lazy or contradictory (or, as Jennifer once put it, when a paragraph appeared to be "unloved"). I only hope that my contributions to their work was even marginally as helpful as theirs were for me. Our meetings each Friday during the 2002-2003 academic year encouraged me to maintain the stamina needed to continue; the first half hour was usually devoted to emotional support – and only after that did we turn to matters – and this I benefitted personally and professionally from Jennifer's and Ann's attentions.

I want to acknowledge the institutional support I received from CUNY, in general, and the Graduate Center, in particular, for this enabled me to gain significant kinds of teaching experience while also having time to do my research and writing. My position of Writing Fellow – determined by the Graduate Center – during 2001-2003 allowed me to gain unique experience in writing-across-the-curriculum programs of their administration. As a Writing Fellow at John Jay College (CUNY), I gained invaluable administrative experience from Professors Timothy Stevens and Adam McKible and was most fortunate to have faculty colleagues who were eager to promote both my teaching and my research. A Dissertation-Year Fellowship supported my research in European libraries during the summer of 2002, particularly the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford and the Albert 1er Bibliothèque Royale [Koninklijke Bibliotheek] in Brussels.

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CUNY's support was crucial in my being able to do the research and the writing of this dissertation.

Finally, but most important, I thank Jeffrey Nemanick, whom I will marry almost immediately after I deposit this dissertation and who has during the past several years learned more about the Middle Ages than he ever imagined he would know. For nearly six years he has consistently encouraged me when I was plagued by self-doubt, cheered me on when I felt at sea, and permitted – with only a few complaints – my piles of paper to litter our tiny New York apartment. I dedicate this to him.

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Introduction

This dissertation presents an edition of three medieval hagiographical narratives – the *vitae* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies in what appears to be their unique translation from Latin into Middle English. The lives of these thirteenth-century beguines, all from the diocese of Liège in the Low Countries, offer an invaluable view into medieval devotional practice and literature written for women. These are extraordinary women, whose lives deserve a recording, and, deservedly, their *vitae* extended far beyond their thirteenth-century Low Countries' home[1] to fifteenth-century England where it was translated. Each of these women seems to challenge what medieval piety *should* be, and yet the very composition of their *vitae* and then the transmission of these texts from the Continent and from Latin into the vernacular of fifteenth-century England indicates that a late medieval reader had a more nuanced understanding of women and their relationship to religious devotion.

In this introduction I explain the editorial practices and procedures that underlie this edition, as well as the transmission, provenance, and audience of Bodleian Library, MS Douce 114. I then examine the Carthusians, the order who owned and possibly translated the Douce MS, and that the beguines, the community of women to which Elizabeth, Christina, and Marie, belong. The introduction closes by describing the devotional practices of women in the Middle Ages and where the Douce MS may have fit in for women in fifteenth-century England.

---

[1]During the Middle Ages, the "Low Countries" included all of mdoern-day Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and parts of Northern France and North-Eastern Germany.

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Following the introduction, individual chapters concerning each women describes the major themes and problems that arise within their respective *vitae*. Each *vita* has a different author, a male cleric, whose specific points of view about women's piety and devotion clearly influences how he understands the subject of his hagiographical text. The chapters are meant to elucidate the tensions and ideas that each *vita* highlights and to postulate how a medieval audience – both clerical and lay, male and female – may have read and understood each narrative, as well as to situate the *vitae* in the context of medieval devotional literature and practices. The edition of MS Douce 114, emended, footnoted, and glossed, follows the chapters. My governing editorial practice are explained in the next section.

Bodleian Library, MS Douce 114

Bodleian Library, MS Douce 114 (SC# 21688) is a fifteenth-century manuscript in Middle English that contains three *vitae* of beguines of the Liège diocese, in the following order: Elizabeth of Spalbeek (d.1266), written by Philip of Clairvaux (1150-1224); Christina *mirabilis* (d. 1224), written by Thomas of Cantimpré (1201-1270); and Marie d'Oignies (d. 1215), written by Jacques de Vitry (c.1165-1224). It also contains a letter written by Stephen of Siena (1347-1424) in support of the canonization of Catherine of Siena (d.1380). Although portions of these texts, in Latin, exist in several other manuscript codices, Douce 114 alone preserves the Middle English versions of the narratives (it is also the only volume in either language to include all four mystics' lives together). The codex concludes with a Middle English translation of Henry Suso's

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Horologium Sapientiae, The Seuene Poyntes of Trewe Loue and Euerlastynge Wisdame, a text that follows the *vitae* and takes up approximately a third of the manuscript. This dissertation is a critical edition of the three beguine lives in the MS Douce 114.

The 150 folia within the codex are distributed as follows: The *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, fols. 1^{r}-12^{r}; the *vita* of Christina *mirabilis*, fols. 12^{r}-26^{v}; the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies, fols. 26^{v}-76^{r}; the letter regarding Catherine of Siena, fols. 76^{r}-89^{v}; and *The Seuene Poyntes of Trewe Loue and Euerlastynge Wisdame*, fols 89^{v}-148^{r}. Two scrives produced each, both writing in a "late Anglicana formata influenced by secretary" (Braswell 43)[2]: the first scribe is responsible for the copying of all of the texts except the first part of *The Seuene Poyntes*, fols. 89^{r}-109^{r}. The provenance of the manuscript is stated on its last page: "Beauvall. Iste liber est domus Belle Vallis ordinis Cartusiensis in comitatu Notyngham," that is: "Beauvale. This book belongs to the house of 'Beauvale,' of the Carthusian Order, in Nottingham." The Carthusians are a monastic order that had houses throughout Europe; they will be discussed in more detail later in this introduction. In *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, however, the authors note that the first scribe was from the Rutland region and the second from Oxfordshire, suggesting that either the clerics or the manuscript had moved around before settling at Beauvale, in Nottinghamshire.

The *vitae* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies in their Latin originals, exist in other manuscript codices found in England:

---

[2]The fact that the hand is Anglicana indicates that the manuscript was copied in England.

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- Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 138 (14th c.), contains the life of Elizabeth of Spalbeek
- Cambridge, Jesus College MS 24 (14th c.), contains the life of Elizabeth of Spalbeek
- Durham, Durham Cathedral Library, MS B.IV.39 (15th c.), contains the life of Elizabeth of Spalbeek
- London, British Library, MS Harley 4725 (13th or 14th c.), contains the life of Marie d'Oignies
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 240 (14th c.), contains excerpts of the life of Mary d'Oignies, and the lives of Christina *mirabilis* and Elizabeth of Spalbeek
- Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS 694 (13th or 14th c.), contains the life of Elizabeth of Spalbeek
- Oxford, St. Johns College, MS 182 (15th c.), contains the lives of Marie d'Oignies, Christina *mirabilis*, and Elizabeth of Spalbeek

Although not copied from each other, the fifteenth-century St. Johns College MS 182 is the only codex in England, other than the Douce, to contain all three lives in their entirety. In addition to the Douce MS, St. Johns MS 182 was also owned by a Carthusian house, that of Witham in Somerset. It contains 147 folios, of which the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies is written on fols.1-67, that of Elizabeth of Spalbeek on fols. 67-85, and the *vita* of Christina *mirabilis* on fols. 86-104. The remainder of the codex includes more *vitae* of various saints. St. Johns MS 182 and MS Douce 114 are closely related, taken from a common source; they both contain unique variant readings from the edited Latin

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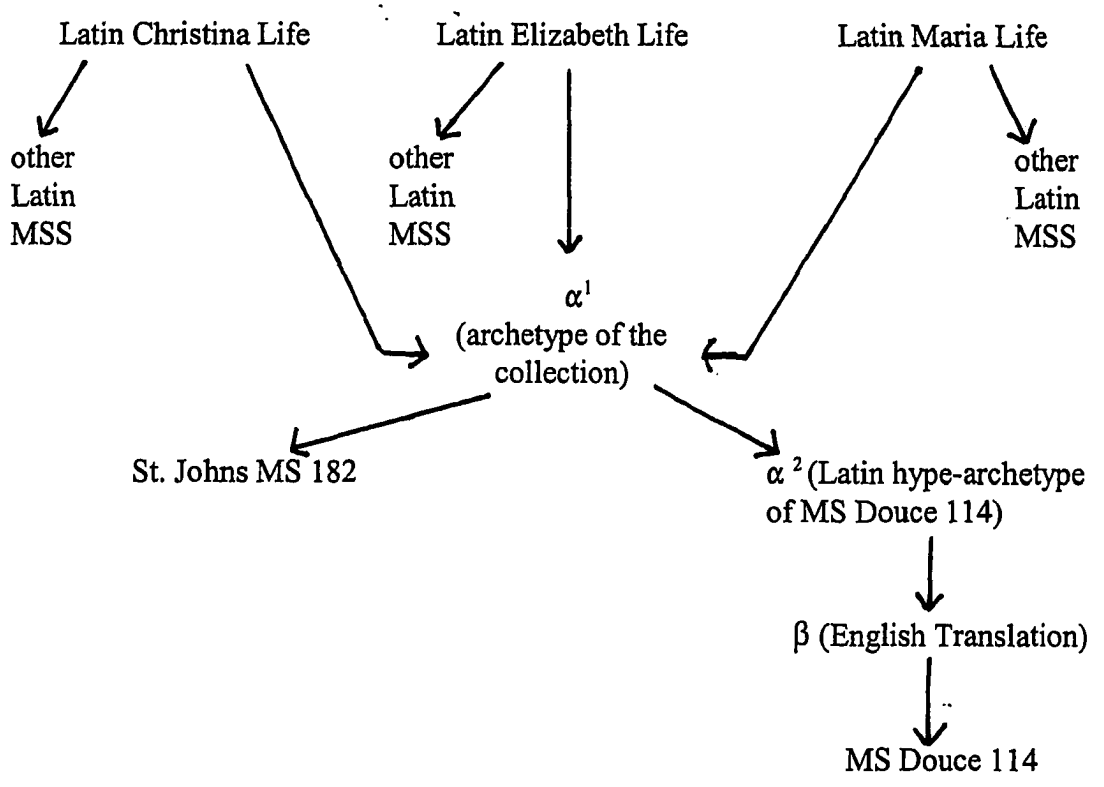
lives. Further, the text as it is recorded in St. Johns MS 182 has several lengthy passages missing from the *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, most of which are also missing from MS Douce 114. Just as significant as their common lacunae, the two MSS share several errors not found in the other surviving Latin MSS: the most telling of these is the variant in the *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek that has the words "ȝouche here"[3] for the Dutch phrase "soete here" ("sweet lord") the orthography in all other Latin MSS, probably the result of a copying error in the manuscript on which the St. Johns MS and the Douce MS are based. Another of these common errors, also in the Elizabeth *vita*, is the mistranscribing of the word "breasts" (mamillas) for the word "cheeks" (maxillas) in the original. There are similar unique errors in the *vitae* of Christina *mirabilis* and Marie d'Oignies. Both MS Douce 114 and St. Johns MS 182 contain this variant reading.

The St. Johns MS, however, cannot be the manuscript from which the Douce MS is copied: it is dated as mid-fifteenth century, whereas MS Douce 114 is date from the first quarter of the fifteenth century. In addition, there are some errors contained in the Douce MS that are not present in the St. Johns MS (noted throughout the edition), suggesting that although the texts have the same archetype, they are not copied from the same text. I suggest the following possibility:

---

[3]In the Latin edition, this line is on p. 367 line 24; in St. Johns MS 182 this is on fol. 72^{r}.

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The Latin *vitae* Philip of Clairvaux, Thomas de Cantimpré, and Jacques de Vitry underwent minor revision as they were copied in various Latin versions. For each *vita*, one version found its way into a collection where all three *vitae* were compiled together (α^{11}, the archetype of the collection). When this happened would be impossible to surmise, but it was some time before the early fifteenth century when the Douce MS was copied. That archetype (α^{1}) then was copied into two different forms (one is α^{2}, or the Latin hype-archetype of the Douce MS, the other is the Latin version represented in the St. Johns MS). This accounts for the close similarities between the Douce MS and the St. Johns MS and also explains some of their variations.

Although each *vita* translated in the Douce relates closely to its counterpart in the

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St. Johns MS, it appears that each had a separate translator. The Douce MS is not the original copy of the translation into Middle English as evidenced by scribal errors that result from copying English into English, not in translating the Latin. Each *vita* most likely had a separate translator because each text has its own idiosyncracies: the translator of Elizabeth's *vita* omits Biblical quotations; that of Christina's *vita* follows the Latin syntax almost slavishly; and that of Marie's *vita* often leaves out pronouns.

There is one prior edition of MS Douce 114, done in 1885 by Carl Horstmann. The edition is not a critical one – it has no introduction, explanatory notes, or glossary. It contains erroneous information (Marie is designated "common," but we know her parents descended from nobility). The text itself is uneven and corrupt: Horstmann, although a capable German-trained editor of the later 1800s, assigned much of his work to his students, and thus it varies in accuracy. Horstmann's supervisory role is somewhat questionable: he did not emend even obvious scribal errors. Finally, for the modern reader his edition is extremely difficult to read: he italicizes scribal abbreviations, uses the archaic Middle English letters thorn and yogh, as well as the Old English "7" to transcribe the English ampersand, and in general presents a transcribed text that is nearly impossible for anyone untrained in sophisticated paleography to negotiate. This edition differs markedly from Horstmann's.

Editorial Practice

Since the Middle English version of the *vitae* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies survives in a unique manuscript, there is only one possible

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choice for the base text, MS Douce 114. In addition to St. Johns MS 182, the Latin texts used here for purposes of comparison with the Middle English are published, edited versions of the Latin *vitae*. Only one edition of Elizabeth's life in the original language exists: that found in *Catalogus Codicum Hagiographicorum Bibliothecæ Regiæ Bruxellensis: Pars I. Codices Latinia Membranei.* (Brussels: Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, 1886: 362-78). Although there are several edited Latin versions of the *vitae* of both Marie d'Oignies and Christina *mirabilis*, I have used the Acta Sanctorum (Act. SS.) editions in both cases because they are the most complete: Marie's *vita* "De B. Maria Oigniascensi in Namurcensi Belgii Dioecesi." in Act. SS. Iun. IV (636-66) and Christina's "De S. Christina Mirabili Virg. Apud Trudonopolim in Belgio" in Act. SS. Iul. V (650-60).[4] The Latin texts have been used to clarify confusing sentences and words, and to fill in missing text. If large sections of the Latin are missing from the Middle English, it has been noted within the edition.

Middle English orthography and word division varied widely, and if the Middle English dictionary contains the word-form used, then I have left it as it stands in the MS. There is very little punctuation in the manuscript itself, and capitalization is irregular, as is common with many medieval texts. In order for the text to be as accessible as possible for the modern reader – particularly readers unacquainted with now absolute characters in the Modern English alphabet, in consistencies in the presentation of compound words, in presenting compounds as one or more words, etc. – I have adopted the following editorial

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[4]The titles of the Acta SS editions identify Marie as beatified (which she was), and Christina as a saint. Christina was never canonized, but her local cult was strong and she was popularly considered a saint after her death.

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principles: (1) Orthography has been slightly altered in that thorns and yoghs have been silently replaced by their modern equivalents; thorns have been replaced by "th," and yoghs by "y" or "gh," as appropriate. (2) Original usages of "u" and "v," as well as "i" and "j," have been maintained. (3) Compound words also been silently normalized, i.e. "hym self" has become "hymself," and "childe hode" is "childehode." (4) All abbreviations have been silently expanded throughout the text, including the symbol ampersand. (5) Modern capitalization and punctuation have been adopted in this edition in order to aid the modern reader with his or her comprehension. This includes the capitalization of cities and other proper nouns (including Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, God, and Christ).

MS Douce 114 is divided into numbered chapters, and paragraphs are delineated by paragraphus symbols (¶). These chapter divisions usually follow the Latin texts on which the Douce *vitae* are based (although there is some variation). Editorial practice governing chapter and paragraph divisions is as follows: (1) Chapter divisions have been maintained. (2) For the most part, paragraph divisions also follow the manuscript. However, there are several places in the manuscript where a sentence has been broken up over two separate paragraphs; in these cases, I have silently moved the latter part of the sentence to the previous paragraph. (3) Anything rubricated in the original manuscript has been italicized in the edition.

In all cases where the emendation alters the manuscript reading, the original reading is footnoted and preceded by "MS" to indicate what the Douce MS contained. Editorial procedures for emendations are as follows: (1) All emendations have been

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bracketed and footnoted. (2) Original grammar and syntax have been retained, emended only when it is clear additions or alterations are necessary to make sense of the text. In these cases, the Latin editions have been used as comparison, and all emendations have been footnoted. (3) Obvious scribal errors have been emended. (4) When there is a translation error, but the sentence still makes grammatical sense, the error stands and the Latin reading has been footnoted. The Latin reading is delineated by "LAT." (5) Occasionally, I have pointed out Carl Horstmann's reading, from his 1885 diplomatic edition in *Anglia*, if it is widely divergent from my own. These alternate readings are indicated by the word "Horstmann."

In addition to explaining emendations, footnotes (1) call attention to paleographical issues, (2) gloss difficult phrases (very difficult words and sentences are glossed, often including both the Latin and, if available, the English translations of the Latin to help the reader understand), (3) define uncommon words (although there is also a glossary), (4) distinguish ambiguous words' meanings (i.e., when "or" is used as "before" instead of as a conjunction), (5) give biblical and other quotes referenced in the text, (6) identify place names and people, and (7) provide some critical notes on the text not included in the chapters corresponding to each *vita*. In addition, there is a very complete glossary; it specifies the different definitions a word is given within the text. I also note variations in form and spelling as they appear within the manuscript. The footnotes and chapters presented here examine ways that women are portrayed in the text, as well as the relationship between the text and women's devotional practices in the Middle Ages.

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The Transmission of the Text

Philip of Clairvaux, Thomas de Cantimpré, and Jacques de Vitry all wrote in the Low Countries, in Latin, about extraordinary women they found in the Liège diocese. How and why, then, did the *vitae* travel to England and undergo translation into English? Although writings by and about mystics were extremely popular in Continental Europe from the twelfth through to the fifteenth century, they appear to have generated considerably less interest in England. Valerie M. Lagorio and Michael G. Sargent write that "together with the *Lives* of the '*Katherine* Group' of texts, [the *vitae* in MS Douce 114] form the only evidence in England for a genre of mystical writing that flourished among the Beguinages and Cistercian and Dominican convents of the Rhineland as chronicle-collections of the *Lives* of holy women" (3114). Because of their unique status, how and why the *vitae* were disseminated are especially important.

In the late Middle Ages, transmission of many texts between the Low Countries and England was frequent and commonplace. In *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages,* Caroline Barron writes that "a traveller in London would have found it easy, if not easier, to cross the water to Calais or Sluys or Middleburg, as to travel overland to Wales or Lancashire of the Lake District" (1). Not surprisingly, Chaucer's Merchant is described as wearing a "Flaundryssh" hat and that "he wolde the see were kept for any thyng / bitwixe Middleburgh [a Flemish town] and Orewelle [on the English coast]" (General Prologue, lines 276-7). Trade was solid and constant between the two countries and the English were influenced by Flemish art and architecture, while

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"Flemish weaving towns [were] almost completely dependent upon the supply of English wool for their prosperity" (Barron 3).

Books were certainly a major part of this flourishing trade across the English Channel. Even Flemish religious movements, Barron argues, may have influenced the English:

> Two female communities have ... been identified in mid-fifteenth century Norwich which seem to resemble the beguinages. In them, small groups of women, known as sisters and dedicated to chastity, lived together. One of the groups may have been founded by John Asgar, a merchant from Bruges, who established himself in Norwich and became mayor in 1426 (20).

The English appetite for things Flemish was huge, "and it is striking how many elements in the domestic setting, in dress and household furnishings, items of food and drink, and even objects of devotion, were common to urban communities on both sides of the Channel" (Harding 164-5). Some English interest in the Low Countries mystics, then, would not have been unusual.

In the monastic houses trade prospered in much the same manner as it did in the secular market. Eric Colledge argues that "the Carthusian order in the Low Countries ... [is] known to have maintained particularly close contact with their confrères in the English Charterhouses" (1). Colledge traces the course of a Dutch text (in a Latin translation) by Jan van Ruysbroek, *De perfectione filiorum Dei* or *De calculo*, into an English translation found in the fifteenth-century British Library, MS Additional 37790 (also known as the Amherst manuscript), a Carthusian text. *De perfectione*, for several reasons, can be closely compared to MS Douce 114. For one thing, British Library, MS

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Additional 37790 contains vernacular works associated with women's spirituality, including *Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich and, more significantly, *Le Mirour des Simples Âmes* by the beguine Marguerite Porete (who was burned at the stake under charges of heresy). The manuscript also contains an extract, in English, of Henry Suso's *Horologium Sapientiae* – the same text that, in its complete form, follows the beguine *vitae* in MS Douce 114.

Colledge argues that the translation of the Ruysbroek text is probably Carthusian, but where it was translated is unknown, given the amount of sharing English monastic houses did. Colledge writes that considerable evidence points to the fact "that the brethren of Mount Grace and the other English Charterhouses were accustomed to take mystical works from one house to another, and that such works were often sent to them by their brethren in the Low Countries" (11). A survey of popular medieval works shows mystical and spiritual writings in the vernacular as some of the most prolific among Carthusian libraries (Sargent 239); thus, the contents of MS Douce 114 are much in keeping with what one might expect to find in the Beauvale Charterhouse library.

Not only books but monks themselves moved between the two countries, as Roger Lovatt describes, drawing on Colledge's research: "When the Sheen Charterhouse was founded in 1415 it was partly filled by monks who had been sent over from the Low Countries; subsequently some of these monks, together with further foreign visitors, found their way into other English charterhouses" ("The *Imitation of Christ*" 107). Although there are thirteenth- and fourteenth-century versions of the *vitae* of Elizabeth of Spalbeck and Marie d'Oignies found in English libraries, they are not the same versions

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found in the fifteenth-century Carthusian St. Johns MS 182 and MS Douce 114, which strongly suggests that these arrived in England in the fifteenth century, perhaps initially in the bags of Dutch monks.

The Carthusians were also at the forefront of translating into the vernacular. Sargent points out that "perhaps the best known of the Middle English translations made by Carthusians is *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*, the translation of the pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi* made by Nicholas Love of Mount Grace in Yorkshire" (230). But one aspect of the English Carthusian interest in vernacular literature seems to focus on those texts for and by women. In addition to the only Middle English versions of Julian's *Revelations* and Porete's *Mirour*, a Carthusian library held the only copy of *The Book of Margery Kempe* as well as texts associated with women's spirituality like Suso's *Horologium* and several works by Richard Rolle, a male mystic and author. Given the very close relationship between St. Johns MS 182 and MS Douce 114, the Carthusians were most likely responsible for the translation of the Douce MS into English. Although different from the scribe's hand, the notation in the back describing the manuscript's provenance as Beauvale, in Nottinghamshire, is contemporaneous, according to *A Linguistic Atlas*. This indicates that the manuscript was housed at Beauvale when it was translated, or at least soon thereafter. The authors of the *Linguistic Atlas* place the dialect of the first scribe in Rutland and that of the second in Oxfordshire, making it impossible to say where the manuscript was copied, stipulating only the region where the scribe most likely learned to write. A variety of possibilities exist because of the consistent movement of both books and monks among charterhouses.

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Harder to place than the Douce MS, St. Johns MS 182 contains an *ex libris* on the first folio stating "liber Wittham," pointing to its ownership by the Witham Charterhouse in Somerset. However, the manuscript has been identified as initially belonging to John Blacman; Blacman came to Witham later in his life, during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and brought with him a vast collection of books, having had access to many when he served as a priest to the king before entering the Carthusian order. Among Blacman's books were several texts of mystical piety, including two works by Richard Rolle, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and two copies of the *Revelations* of St. Bridget (Lovatt "A Collector" 175), as well as the collection of saints' lives in St. Johns MS 182. Where the manuscripts were before Blacman brought them to Witham, or whether Blacman himself was responsible for some of them, remains unclear.

The Carthusians and Their Audience

As complex as the question of transmission and dissemination of the *vitae* may be, that of the intended audience of MS Douce 114 is an even more difficult one to answer. In the opening sentences, which begins with Elizabeth's *vita*, the anonymous translator – or "compilour" – responsible for the four Middle English works gathered here offers an explanatory note (or "Apolege") about the problems inherent in "turn[ing] a text from one language into another." Many medieval translations begin with such a formal "defense," yet its significance here is paramount. Although the English Carthusians were certainly at the forefront of producing (or at least copying) contemplative texts in the vernacular, most texts contained in medieval monastic libraries in England were in Latin.

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At the same time, more than two-thirds of the texts found in English convent libraries were in Middle English (Bell 74). Thus, the fact that Douce 114 contains four Middle English *vitae* and the translation of Henry Suso's *Horologium Sapientiae* suggests that it may have been compiled for a female – or perhaps a mixed lay – audience.

The scribe writes that the English translation is necessary so that "deuoute soulles that are not leeryd in latyn tunge" may understand the text. He continues to point out that he is not following the Latin exactly, a comment which mirrors those in the preface to the translation of Suso's *Horologium Sapientiae*. The idea of sense-for-sense translation rather than word-for-word was common in medieval translation theory, originally presented by the theologian and translator, Saint Jerome:

> Ne I *tra*nslate not þe wordes as þei bene wrytene, one for a noþer*e*, þat is to seye þe englische worde for þe latyne worde – by-cause þat þer*e* beþ manye wordes in clergiale teremes þe wheche wold seme vnsaverye so to be spokene in englische: and þer*e*-for I take þe sentence as me þinkeþ most opune to þe comine vnderstandyng in englische. And þus, considerynge alle þe p*ro*cesse of þe forseyde boke, þat is, to stirre deuowte sowles to þe trewe love of owr*e* lorde Jh*es*u, þe eu*er*lastyng wisdame of þe fader*e* of heuene: after mye simple vnderstandyng hit may be comprehendet as in effecte in to VII poyntes þat longene to þe trewe loue of owre lorde Jhesu, aftere þe VII ȝiftees of þe holye goste, þe whiche is souereyne love of þe fadere & þe sone, and welle & rote of alle trewe love (Horstmann, "Orologium," 325).

This text, intended for a noble lady and written by her chaplain, gives credence to the argument that the mystics' *vitae* may have been meant for a female audience. A female or lay audience may also be indicated in the mystics' *vitae* by the scribe's claim that he will not be translating some of the more difficult glosses on scripture, because he expects his readers would not fully understand the biblical quotes or the commentaries

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accompanying them. Indeed, several biblical references are excised from all four mystics' lives, and the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies lacks the entire, theologically subtle introduction.

The apology at the end of Stephen of Siena's letter regarding Catherine of Siena's canonization offers a convincing indication of possible audience. This passage, which follows the *vitae* presented in this edition, gives some idea about why the *vitae* may have been originally translated into English and for whom. It is unclear, however, whether the apology was written by the English "compilour" of only Stephen's letter or of the four *vitae*. Although the translator refers to "thes bokes," the explicit may refer to another collection of texts that Stephen's letter ended. Later, only the letter (and with it, the explicit) may have been copied into the Douce MS after the beguine *vitae*:

> *A shorte Apologetik of this Englisshe compyloure:*
> Seynt James the Apostil seith that whoso synneth not in tunge, hee is a parfite man. Wherfore the turner of this Englysshe that is not but symply undirstandynge as here the soth preueth, [preyeth][5] lowely and mekely alle men and wymmen that in happe redith or herith this Englyshe that they be not ouer capcyous ne curyous in ful many clauses and variauns of stile and alle so vnsuynge of Englyshe as vmwhile Sotheren, otherewhile Northen; but the cause why nedith not to be tolde. And specially he besecheth lettird men and clerkes, if they endeyne to see thes bokes, that they wol be fauorabil and, beinge reders or herers of this Englyshce, forgif hym alle defautes that he hath made in compilynge thereof rather arettynge his lewdnesse to symple ignorauns and obedyens thanne to pryde or presumpcyone. For wite alle men that he – the which drewe this Englysche so as is oute of Latyne – knowynge his owne simpilnesse and

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[5]preyeth] This sentence is missing a verb, and "preyeth" seems a likely choice. Its similarity to "preueth" suggests that the scribe mistook the two verbs together as a redundancy. The scribe may have copied one and missed the other. The fact that an error such as this exists, however, further indicates that an English translation already existed that has merely been copied into the Douce MS. This explicit was originally written in English, so any errors are due to copying, not translation.

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> vnkonynge, durst not haue presumed to take siche a labour on hand but if his souereyn hadde bidden hym whome he myghte not ageyne seye .... Whoso redith this preye[s][6] for the writer that god gif hym a good ende and if hit profit, hele of body. Amen.

This explicit offers several clues as to the text's intended audience and the reason for its translation, but does not answer all of the questions about the Douce MS. For one thing, evidence in the text points to the fact that the scribe of the Douce MS copied an already translated text, indicating that the original was possibly not a Carthusian one.

Although the author in the passage above identifies himself as the compiler of the text, the word "compyloure," could have meant many things, according to Malcolm Parkes. Among these, the word may indicate someone responsible for a rearrangement of texts, for imposing chapter divisions on a text, or for indexing a selection of texts. These may or may not have involved translation. It was a common term in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but its exact definition varied according to compiler. Here, the writer clearly names himself as translator, using the same word written in the apology at the outset of Elizabeth's *vita*.[7] He indicates that the English within the text is a mixture of both Northern and Southern dialects, a statement substantiated by the study in the *Linguistic Atlas* where the authors point out that words such as "church" are written in both Northern ("kyrke") and Southern ("chirche") dialectical forms. Although the translator chooses not to explain this combination of forms, writing "the cause why nedith

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[6]preyes] MS: 'preyers.' Perhaps the original text read 'preyes,' an imperative form of the verb used in Northern dialects. The scribe, unfamiliar with the form, may have written 'preyers' in order to make sense of the word.

[7]There is no evidence, however, that this is the same person.

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not to be tolde," the Rutland region (where the *Linguistic Atlas* suggests the translator originated) is identified as a place where the dialects collide and some of the word forms are used interchangeably.

The text is in places corrupt, lacking necessary verbs in order for some sentences to be coherent. The writer of the explicit was not translating, but the English is often incomprehensible, offering further proof that the Douce MS is not the original translated copy but one taken from pieces already translated. These errors also explain some of the syntactic difficulties that arise throughout the manuscript – the translator not only had problems translating the Latin into English, he appears to have had challenges with writing English itself.

The writer also indicates a possible audience for the Douce MS, seeking forgiveness of "alle men and wymmen that in happe redith or herith this Englyshe." Initially, it is not clear whether this is an audience of religious or lay people, but the author's next sentence seems to identify this first group as the laity when he begs that "lettird men and clerkes, if they endeyne to see thes bokes, that they wol be fauorabil." The separation of lettered men and clerks from his earlier address to all men and women shows that he sees his primary audience as lay, with a secondary one as learned. Finally, the author writes that he had undertaken the task of writing only at the behest of his superior, whom he cannot refuse. Why the superior demanded a translation is not addressed, although the passage is possibly a humility topos the scribe has employed to excuse any errors in the text.

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In the later Middle Ages several devotional texts were translated into the vernacular both in England and on the Continent. As I have demonstrated, the Carthusians were at the forefront of the translation and dissemination (among themselves) of many of these works into English. Although most translated texts explicitly indicate that their intended audience is lay, others indicate the changing education of learned men where Latin knowledge is less extensive than that of the vernacular. For example, in John Trevisa's late fourteenth-century "Dialogue between the Lord and the Clerk on Translation," a Lord tells a cleric why an English translation may be helpful to those who already know Latin, but not well, or to those who for lack of intelligence may be unable to learn Latin. The Lord concludes by arguing that sermons should be in English because the audience will not understand the Latin text. Trevisa was a translator by vocation and here he writes the first explanation of translation theory in English:

> Also, holy writ in Latyn is bothe gode and fayre, and yet for to make a sermoun of holy writ al in Latyn to men that kunneth Englisshe and no Latyn, hit were a lewde dede, for they bith never the wiser for the Latyn but it be told hem in Englisshe what the Latyn is to mene without translacioun out of Latyn into Englisshe. Than hit nedith to have an Englisshe translacioun. And for to kepe hit in mynde that hit be nought foryete, hit is better that siche a translacioun be made and iwrite, than iseide and nought iwrite. And so this foresaid lewde resoun shuld meve no man that hath eny witt to leve the making of Englisshe translacioun (Wogan-Browne, Watson, et al. 133).

Trevisa specifies a male audience, possibly monastic. Although he values vernacular translation, his driving motive is to make a Latin text available in English and not, specifically, to reach a lay or female audience.

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Educating priests in English, however, was intended by the Church hierarchy as a way for ideas, if not texts themselves, ultimately to disseminate to the laity. Nicholas Watson writes that "English was the language of catechesis, in which educated priests instructed laity in the simple truths of the faith" ("The Politics of Middle English" 340). As English was the language of the laity, it was also the main language (in addition to Anglo-Norman) of women in religious houses. Many texts, such as *Ancrene Wisse*, that were written for enclosed women (those who chose to live in lives of prayer in sealed cells attached to a church), were in the vernacular. In addition, many Latin texts that had initially been directed at women, such as *The Knowing of Women's Kind in Childing,* were translated into English: "And because whomen of oure tonge cunne bettyre rede and undyrstande thys langage than eny other, [that] every whoman lettyrde [may] rede hit to other unlettyrd and help hem and conceyle hem in here maledyes withowtyn scheuynge here dysese to man, I have thys drawyn and writtyn in Englysh" (Wogan-Browne, Watson, et al. 157). Here, the case is even more extreme than in devotional texts, because the audience of this medical document completely excludes men.

Given that the connection between vernacular translation and a female audience, what were the Carthusians so interested in? The order strictly prohibited contact between any of its members and women. Vincent Gillespie argues that pastoral care was nevertheless a part of the Carthusian way of life, however – even if prohibited. Such care included sermons to the members of the house who, in addition to lay men, would include women:

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> The presence of married servants and, it appears, of some women servants also brought the likelihood of other sacraments being in demand. In 1448, the Charterhouse of Witham which, as the original English foundation, preserved the physical separation of the churches of the monks and lay brothers, petitioned the bishop to be allowed to put a baptismal font into the chapel of the Blessed Virgin in the Friary church (that is, the church of the converses), for the convenience of the lay servants now employed on the estate (169).

Gillespie notes that belying this seeming acceptance of contact with and administering to laity, a 1448 injunction repeats "the earlier prohibitions about hearing the confessions of women" (169). If the prohibition needed to be repeated, however, chances are high that the practice continued despite the proscription. Carthusians were obviously having some contact with women despite their rules forbidding it.

Gillespie also traces book transmission from a Carthusian to a secular priest to the laity, a possible reason for the translation of so many devotional texts – a form of pastoral care without the need for the human-to-human contact that would violate the monastic rules. Gillespie's evidence is the transmission of texts that exist both inside and outside the Carthusian charterhouses, along with letters demonstrating their movement. What of texts that do *not* exist outside of the monastic houses in which they were ultimately found? What do we do with the vernacular texts dealing with female spirituality, like those of Margery Kempe, Julian of Norwich, and Marguerite Porete, as well as the *vitae* in MS Douce 114, for which there is no remaining evidence of dissemination outside of the charterhouses?

S. S. Hussey compares some of these texts to other works of vernacular spirituality, such as the mystical texts *The Cloud of Unknowing* and Hilton's *Scale of*

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Perfection, of which a large number of manuscripts remain, and remarks about the audiences: "This marked discrepancy in numbers between Julian and Margery on the one hand and Rolle, the *Cloud* and the *Scale* on the other, cannot be entirely coincidental and is relevant to what we may deduce about the original audiences" (116). But Hussey's answer argues that the messages in the more prolific texts were more appealing to members of the literate laity, focusing more on the possible reception of the writings than transmission to those audiences.

Another answer to the question of Carthusian ownership of unique vernacular texts is offered by Marleen Cré in her look at MS Additional 37790 (Amherst), the manuscript that contains works by both Julian and Porete. Of the Carthusian interest in works of female spirituality, and in particular the fact that they have the only remaining copies of such texts, Cré writes: "The Carthusians evidently had a nose for such rarities and were probably also regarded as the ideal recipients of texts such as these" (46). Cré argues that although these texts are in the vernacular, normally associated with a lay or female audience, the manuscript was intended for the Carthusian religious audience of "novices and lay-brothers [who] would have required instruction even though they were not Latinate" (49). She uses textual evidence, such as annotations made by Carthusian monks, as proof of her argument. Many of these same vernacular texts, however, were somewhat dangerous in their theology – hardly texts that monks would want in the hands of their novices. Annotations on these same texts made by monks in the charterhouses show that, regardless of literacy in Latin, prominent members of the order read vernacular works.

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Cré further argues that the gender of Julian and Porete is incidental – the Carthusians are interested in the spiritual content of the texts, not the sex of their messengers. Indeed, the annotator of Porete's *Mirour* assumed the author was male. Cré concludes:

> The evidence in Amherst [MS Additional 37790] suggests that the notion of female spirituality – or, for that matter, male spirituality – mattered little. What did matter is the author's message, which as Amherst shows, the Carthusians largely passed on in the form in which it came to them. The manuscript shows Carthusian respect for authors and texts, and their openness to spiritual writings by men and women, English and continental. It also sheds light upon their enthusiasm for the preservation of spiritual teaching, and upon their desire to transmit these teachings to readers, places and times beyond the immediate orbit of the Charterhouse (57).

The "respect" and dissemination that Cré postulates, however, is still more or less within the confines of the Carthusian community. These texts, as she sees them, demonstrated different ways of understanding one's union with God.

Something more is at work, though, than Hussey's notion of audience reception and Cré's idea of Carthusian use. These vernacular mystical texts are not so different from those that circulated widely, such as the writings of Richard Rolle. The fact that these works of female spirituality are spread over various charterhouses also brings into question the idea of audience reception. Surely the appetite for these works would have varied among different regions of England. How is it that *no* other copies of these texts survive in their complete forms?[8] If the monks were indifferent to the gender of the

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[8]Both *The Book of Margery Kempe* and Julian or Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* did circulate outside of the Carthusian monasteries in truncated versions.

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spirituality described, why is there no balance between works by and about men that are also solely owned by Carthusian libraries?

These texts evidently represented something unique to the monks who housed them. The beguines were associated with the Heresy of the Free Spirit, the heresy for which the beguine Marguerite Porete was burned at the stake. Although never accused, the Low Countries women in the *vitae* of MS Douce 114 may have represented something more dangerous than mere mystic devotion to some of their readers. Margery Kempe was examined as a heretic by Archbishop Arundel, showing that a semi-religious life (one where piety and devotion are paramount, but no official order is joined) remained suspicious in the eyes of Church hierarchy into the fifteenth century. In addition, all of the women's devotional texts that resided in Carthusian charterhouses tread a thin line between orthodox and heretical theology. Surely Marie d'Oignies' and Margery Kempe's chaste marriages were not examples that men, particularly clerics, wanted the women to whom they ministered to follow, nor would Christina *mirabilis* and Elizabeth of Spalbeek's ecstatic and violent behavior be a model of devotion for most women.

The evidence may point to a kind of sequestering of these vernacular texts on the part of their Carthusian librarians. If we assume that the Carthusians did not make a practice of breaking the rules regarding contact with women and that these vernacular texts were not meant for converses and lay brothers, then they could not possibly be meant for public dissemination. A case can certainly be made that these texts were eventually considered somehow dangerous for laity, if not when they were originally translated (accounting for "women" being included as an initial audience). Tucked inside

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monastic libraries, and particularly Carthusian ones, the *vitae* were safe from impressionable female eyes and, fortunately, preserved for modern ones.

A firm answer to the question of the audience of MS Douce 114 is impossible to give. On the one hand, there is evidence that at some point women readers were postulated as recipients of the manuscript, exemplified in the translator's apology where he mentions women as a possible audience. The original Latin texts, as well, indicated women as possible readers and "hearers" of the lessons therein. Whether these were ever meant to be put directly in women's hands or merely disseminated through the lessons of the clergy is merely speculative. The illiterate Margery Kempe, for example, hears about the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies through her confessor: the text reaches her already filtered through a clerical voice.

Scholars have recently been leaning towards viewing the Carthusians as more liberal towards their own rules (such as forbidden contact with women) than has been originally believed. Kelly Parsons suggests that the annotations in Margery Kempe's *Book* were consciously made by a cleric who "actually customized *The Book of Margery Kempe* for the devotional use of an audience of lay women" (144). Parsons' evidence, though, is only in the language of the annotation. She offers no proof that the manuscript (or the monks) ever left the charterhouse at all. More convincing, Rebecca Selman looks at linguistic changes in the *Speculum Devotiorum*, a devotional text encouraging meditation on the life of Christ. Selman points to linguistic changes in the translation from Latin to English that alter the gender of the pronoun from "he" to "she," and phrases that in the Latin read "man" are changed in the English translation to "man or woman."

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She argues that these alterations indicate "a deliberate attempt to draw attention to the female reader of the *Speculum*" (65). It is safe to argue that at some point the translation represented in the Douce (although not necessarily the specific one in the Douce MS) had women as part of its intended audience.

Medieval Women's Spirituality and Mysticism: From Bride of Christ to *Imitatio Christi*

In addition to reading or listening to vernacular devotional texts, medieval women were spiritually encouraged in varied ways. Theologically and medically, women were considered allied with the flesh, and men with the spirit. With this paradigm in mind, clerics encouraged women to use their fleshly identification to reflect on the humanity of Christ and the corporeal fact of his Passion. A genre of devotional literature resulted, almost exclusively written by men, that became part of the reading culture of medieval women. Women were also encouraged to identify with artistic images of the Passion, and for illiterate women this was the entry into understanding Christ and devotion to him. Finally, those women who decided to devote themselves fully to Christ were told, through sermons and devotional texts, to envision themselves in one of two ways, either as his spouse (the "bride of Christ") or as Christ himself (*imitatio Christi*).

David Bell's extensive study, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries*, demonstrates the proliferation of vernacular devotional texts that were catalogued in English nunneries. The most prevalent of these described a mystical union with Christ. The texts also stressed obedience to clergy and chastity. As Anne Clarke

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Bartlett points out, the texts that were most likely to circulate among women were also inherently misogynistic (*Male Authors* 1), reinforcing the notion of women as inheritors of Original Sin – encoded in their very bodies – and tied to sinful flesh. In England, although several convent libraries contained works in Latin and Anglo-Norman, English was the predominant language read and understood in the nunneries. Bell writes, "[Materials in English] account for more than two-thirds of the works recorded, and there can be no doubt that this proportion reflects a strong preference on the part of women religious for texts in the vernacular" (78). He also notes that texts such as the *The Mirror of Our Lady* explicitly state that in order to be understood by the convent members, they have been translated into English.

Although male clerics and monks were necessarily schooled in Latin and literacy, schools for women did not have this didactic purpose. Though the mystical literature that was read in monasteries remained primarily in Latin, the texts directed at women, such as the *Ancrene Wisse,* were written in the vernacular. Riehle notes that "the texts written for the female monastic public [used] the vernacular as their linguistic medium ... The reason for this is primarily that they had to adapt themselves to the level of education of their readers.... Latin was largely an incomprehensible language for the English nuns" (14-5). The interest in vernacular mystical literature also spread outside of the nunneries and it became a popular devotional medium for noblewomen and the literate members of the merchant class.

The imagery and language used in women's devotional literature, vernacular or not, adhered to certain models that were considered appropriate for women's reflection

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and relationship to the divine. These images were used repeatedly throughout devotional literature, and the themes inherent within them spanned centuries of mystical texts (written by both male and female mystics) and hagiographies. One of the most powerful and important tropes was that of the "Bride of Christ," an idea that had a controlling biblical model in the *Song of Songs,* which already held both an important and a problematic position in medieval exegesis.

The highly erotic language of the *Song of Songs* – structured as an erotic dialogue between a bridegroom and bride – was always troublesome to theologians who argued it could only be understood as religious when allegorized. All of the great commentators of the Bible – from Origen to Gregory to Bede – needed to find a chaste interpretation of the *Song* and what it *must* mean, since something of such an erotic (and secular) nature could not otherwise exist within the Bible. No medieval biblical exegete states that the poem merely represents an erotic encounter between a man and a woman. The most significant contribution to understanding the *Song of Songs* was the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux's series of sermons discussing its allegories, inspired by Bernard's "passionate concern for the union of the soul with god" (Matter 39). His sermon, in turn, inspired many other Cistercian commentaries on the *Song.*

As Anne Astell notes in her comprehensive book, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages,* medieval exegetes were confronted with two problems when studying this biblical book: "The first problem arises from what the Song leaves unstated; the second from what it actually says" (1) – namely, what the text may mean allegorically (spiritual love) and what the text means literally (carnal love). Augustine argued that the *Song* was

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to be understood as a description of baptism and the body's entry into the Church. Mary Dove contends that "Augustine is convinced that his interpretation of the book as representing Christ's love for the church, and the answering love of the church for Christ, *is* the plain meaning, not an act of allegoresis" (319). Acknowledging the blatant erotic tones in the text was not possible for this Church father. The notion that the text could be about sexual love on any level does not enter into his analysis at all. Later commentators turn from Augustine's interpretation, but his assumption that there is no erotic meaning points to the difficult nature of the text and how its Christian readers could reconcile its place in the Bible with its provocative content.

Other medieval commentators acknowledged that the *Song of Songs* had a literal meaning, one that included erotic love, but insisted that the allegory of the lovers was essential. The lovers not only became the Christ and Church pairing that Augustine proffered, but also the individual Christian and Christ. The *Glossa Ordinaria* names the bride in the *Song of Songs* to be first the Church, but, as it traces the evolution of the exegesis, states that she could and should be interpreted as the individual Christian soul as well. The mystical writers, though, soon take up this secondary interpretation and place it at the forefront of their commentaries of, and references to, the *Song of Songs.* By the thirteenth-century, the bride-as-soul imagery becomes virtually the only interpretation that commentators follow, leaving behind the allegories that Augustine espoused. Dove comments that "the continuity of ecclesiological interpretation the Gloss represents is at least as significant...as the discontinuity represented by the proliferation in the twelfth century of mystical commentaries in which the bride is first and foremost the

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individual soul" (321). Dove further suggests that the mystical approach of focusing on the individual as Bride of Christ opens the text to be read erotically in a way that Augustine's approach would not have authorized.

The Bride of Christ imagery was integral to women's devotion on all levels – from a lay woman to an abbess – and encouraged a personal relationship with Christ. Many texts promoted this identification, such as the *Ancrene Wisse* and Richard Rolle's *Ego Dormio*, and several medieval women accepted the role of Bride completely and literally (Margery Kempe even describes her "wedding" to the Godhead). For some, the bride moved beyond allegory and represented a real woman. In her book on the allegorical meanings of the *Song of Songs*, E. Ann Matter writes that although the bride had often been identified with *Ecclesia* (Church) and *Anima* (Soul), both feminine nouns in Latin, "a logical consequence of medieval fascination with the Song of Songs was an association of the Bride with a human, a woman, although a highly idealized figure, the Virgin Mary" (151). This tradition was emphasized in the twelfth century, and it heavily influenced the Marian tradition of poetry and songs in the centuries to follow (Fulton 292-3). It also opened the door for many theologians to transfer the idea of the Bride onto living women. The hagiographers of the *vitae* in the Douce manuscript elaborate on this trope in describing the women. The imagery and language used would speak to the medieval audience, placing Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies within a community of chaste women who have chosen Christ as their husband. These associations would be expected as part of a genre of devotional literature describing women's spirituality.

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In describing Elizabeth's expectation of a moment of rapture, a transcendent state where she encounters the divine, Philip of Clairvaux writes: "And so sche abidith, neither liggynge ne sittynge but as bytwix booth, haldynge hire handys togedir with fulle deuoute sighynges and goostly greydlynes, and otherwhile with teerys abidynge mekely the comynge of hire savyoure and spouse" (VIII.7). Elizabeth's sighs, moans, and tears all signal her conviction that Christ is coming to her, as both her "savior" and "spouse." Philip consciously places Elizabeth as a Bride of Chris," reflecting both the *Song of Songs* exegesis and the audience's expectation of Elizabeth's devotional role.

Thomas de Cantimpré also views Christina as a lover and bride of Christ. Although he does not name her such in so explicit a way, he describes a scene where Christina sighs longingly for her love. Christina's words are so like a woman pining for her beloved that men nearby tell an Earl that Christina must be talking about him:

> Also whan the same Erle Lowys layed hym down vpon a daye in the chircheyeerd and, many a knyghte aboute hym, she come priuely by, nere to the Erlis heed. And holdynge vp hir eyen and handys bygan to seye with wonder grace of mouthe, "O Lorde thou arte ful feyre." The knyghtys heerynge that seyde to the Eril, "Sir Eril, heerith thou not how this holy womman preysith the?" "Yee," quod the Eril, "I woot whome she preyseth. Hit am not I. She louveth hir heuenly Lorde that is feyrest of alle and maker of feirnesse" (XXIX.1-2).

Earl Louis of Looz recognizes that Christina is talking about Jesus – showing the commonplace understanding of women's views of Christ as a lover and husband. The fact that the friends of the Earl do not immediately recognize Christina's language as devotional indicates the slippage in terms between a real "lover" and Jesus, and indicates how truly erotic her language is. The same terms and emotion are applied to both.

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Of the three hagiographers, Jacques de Vitry is the most overt in describing and understanding his subject as a Bride of Christ. Marie is constantly quoted using language taken directly from the *Song of Songs* and referred to throughout the text as a "spouse." In one incident, Jacques describes Christ as a "jealous lover" who would preserve Marie's chastity at any cost: "He wolde as a gelous louer kepe the chastite of His spouse and warne hym fro perils that myghte falle" (2VI.11). Later, Jacques describes some days when Marie remains in bed with Christ, her spouse: "Also vpon a tyme – whanne she hadde liggen three dayes in hir bedde and restyd esely with hir spouse for swetnesse of houge myrthe – so mykel dayes wente priuely aweye that her semed atte she hadde liggen vnnethes a momente" (2IX.3). While not overtly sexual, the eroticism of Marie resting in bed with Christ for three days at a time is obvious. The image also reinforces how literally the term "Bride of Christ" was interpreted, encompassing all of the quotidian activities that may engage a husband and wife. Jacques intentionally constructs Marie as a Bride of Christ throughout the *vita*, reinforcing her holy status and privileged understanding of God.

In addition to viewing Christ as husband, women (and to a lesser extent, men) were encouraged to dwell on his physicality and Passion so that they themselves become Christ-like. This practice, called *imitatio Christi*, manifests itself in different, and often disturbing, ways. *Imitatio Christi* is much harder to define than the Bride of Christ imagery; its origins are not so clearly delineated and its interpretation is often individual. Karma Lochrie points out that a central problem in understanding *imitatio Christi* and its relation to the female body is the difficulty of comprehending medieval conceptions of

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the body, where "flesh" and "female" are closely aligned and flesh is inherently sinful because we cannot separate them from our own modern understanding of flesh and spirit. Lochrie argues:

> The central problem...of the study of female mysticism is determining the place from which it speaks, whether from within or without the patriarchal construction of woman, or whether it positions itself somewhere in the borderlands. The focus for this determination is the *imitatio Christi* and its attendant assumptions about the body, in particular the female body ("The Language of Transgression" 119).

This is the primary question that arises in studying the *vitae* of these three women mystics, one that only Jacques de Vitry seems to engage as a hagiographer. Each woman uses her body as a medium of devotion, and each hagiographer attempts to gloss what that devotion means in some theological sense, such as a woman's privileged understanding of Christ's Passion.

For many medieval women, and mystics in particular, *imitatio Christi* becomes a primary form of devotion, albeit a problematic one for their hagiographers. As Lochrie explains, an imitation of Christ manifested itself in a variety of interpretations from administering to the sick to receiving the stigmata:

> For both the male and female religious, imitation of Christ's suffering could take many forms, including fasting, self-flagellation, and self-defilement. In addition to these seemingly self-generated forms of *imitatio Christi*, others were involuntary, such as bodily effusions and elongations, stigmata, tears, and seizures. While the degree of the individual's control over and manipulation of these somatic enactments of Christ's sufferings were often questioned, the distinction between this kind of imitation and the practice of deliberate mortification of the flesh was often not ("The Language of Transgression" 117).

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For all three women in the *vitae* of MS Douce 114, *imitatio Christi* becomes a central element and devotional tool. I will explore the specific ways in which the *imitatio* develops and how the hagiographers understand it later in this introduction.

Women's devotion and spirituality had diverse manifestations in the Middle Ages. A more common practice than the often extreme devotional practice of Bride of Christ and *imitatio Christi* was the veneration of the saints, particularly that of the virgin martyrs (evidenced by groups of saints' lives such as the *Katherine Group*). Virginity was often highlighted as essential to holiness, and meditation on the virgin-martyr saints encouraged identification with both their faith and their chastity. This reverence, while present in the thirteenth century (during the lives of Elizabeth, Christina, and Marie) reached impassioned heights during the later Middle Ages. Naoë Kukita Yoshikawa explains this proliferation:

> The virgin martyrs enjoyed fervent veneration for the entirety of the late Middle Ages, and suffrages addressed to them are included in almost all Books of Hours. St. Katherine, St. Margaret and St. Barbara all share an identity as early Roman virgin martyrs, and they also assume mystical identities as Brides of Christ. All three have vivid and spectacular legends where emphasis is placed on the sufferings and tortures endured to preserve virginity at crises of sexual bribery and threat (181).

The virgin status of both Elizabeth and Christina is constantly highlighted throughout their *vitae*, and although Marie is not a virgin (having been married in her youth), her chastity is emphasized. MS Douce 114 would have been, on some levels, an appropriate devotional text because it enters into a long discourse on virgin saint narratives. Although not martyred, all three women reflect and to some extent imitate the *vitae* of the

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late-Latin virgin martyrs whose lives would have been well known to a medieval audience.

The early thirteenth-century text written in English "Hali Meiðhad" ("A Letter on Virginity") further exemplifies the value given to virginity during the Middle Ages. The treatise warns women against the very real perils and pains of childbirth and the glories that await a virgin in heaven. It postulates a hierarchy of women and the respective rewards they would receive in the after-life:

> Yet of these three states – virginity and widowhood, and marriage is the third – you can tell by the degrees of their bliss which one is superior to the others, and by how much. For marriage has its reward thirtyfold in heaven; widowhood, sixtyfold; virginity, with a hundredfold, surpasses both. See then from this, whoever descends from her virginity into marriage, by how many degrees she falls downwards. She is raised a hundred degrees towards heaven while she keeps her virginity, as the reward proves; and leaps into marriage – that is, right down to the thirtieth – over three score and yet more by ten. Is this not a great leap downwards at one time? (Millet and Wogan-Browne 21).

The *vitae* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Christina *mirabilis* are important in that they offered contemporary models of chastity for medieval women, a choice of virginity outside the strictures of a religious order. Elizabeth and Christina will reap the rewards of their virginity in heaven. The *vita* of Marie d'Oignies is more problematic in that the chastity she embodies is that of a chaste marriage, a concept that most members of the Church hierarchy would not have wanted disseminated to lay women since it violates the marriage contract and the "debt" of sexual intercourse owed to their husbands. For this reason, Jacques de Vitry devotes considerable attention to Marie's husband's role in the choice that the couple should live chastely.

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The privileged place of chaste woman persisted throughout the Middle Ages. Christine de Pizan puts the virgin martyrs in the most important position in her fictional *City of Ladies*, and addresses her contemporary virgins at the end of her book: "And you, virgin maidens, be pure, simple, and serene, without vagueness, for the snares of evil men are set for you .... Be armed with the strength of virtue against the tricks of the deceptive and avoid their company" (256). Chastity was inherently linked to religious piety, and the virgin continued to be a model for women in both popular and theological literature.

An average woman in the Middle Ages could not engage in the extremes of devotion such as becoming Brides of Christ and *imitatio Christi*. These were models meant to be read about and revered but not necessarily followed. Many women had no choice other than marriage, and entering a convent usually required the woman's family to provide the equivalent of a dowry. Moreover, convents were often full to capacity. Even those who chose a religious life could not be expected to enact and understand completely these ideals of spirituality. Some women who embraced these models and incorporated them into their lives and very bodies were considered "mystics."

Almost all religions have some mystics and practices of mysticism. Although mysticism has been defined in various ways, at its base mysticism is an affective and ineffable understanding of God. Mystical literature is always an attempt to put into words a visceral encounter with the divine. Elizabeth Petroff writes that the late Middle Ages was a period when Christian mysticism flourished throughout Europe: "We think of the Middle Ages as the age of faith, and so it was, but it was also an age of crisis. In such a context, mysticism was not a retreat from the negative aspects of reality but a creative

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marshaling of energy in order to transform reality and the perception of it" (6). Although many mystics, like St. Bernard of Clairvaux, were male, most of the Christian mystics that emerged in the Middle Ages were female, including Hildegarde of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, and the three Low Countries women whose *vitae* are in MS Douce 114.

Male mysticism has mainly been associated with writings that attempt to put the unspeakable into written words. For this reason, Richard Rolle's writing extolled the physical qualities of fire, sweetness, and song. To him, these are the elements inherent in a mystical encounter with God, engaging all of the senses. Women's mysticism has been harder to define, because most of the mystical records that remain were written by men. Only a few women, like Hildegarde of Bingen, Marguerite Porete, and Julian of Norwich, had both the knowledge and the resources to write their own texts. Most of the others, like Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, Marie d'Oignies, and Margery Kempe, relied on male clerics to disseminate that which was already impossible to describe and explain: the mystical encounter with Jesus.

The history of women's mysticism further complicates the female mystic's role within the church. Clay Kisner writes that academic inquiry into female mysticism initially "sought to understand the theology of the mystics by weighing female mystical theology against that of the male-driven Church. As a result, female mystics were compared to their male counterparts and were rarely separately appreciated" (165). Only in the past thirty years have medievalists in all disciplines begun to look at female mysticism in its own right and examine how the feminine understanding of and encounter with Christ is unique.

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The three women described in the *vitae* edited in the present volume have been considered mystics because of their physical and personal comprehension of the divine. Elizabeth of Spalbeek's understanding of the Passion manifests itself in the recreation of that event, with Elizabeth in the role of all participants. Physically and emotionally, she gives herself completely to the event, which culminates in that clearest form of *imitatio Christi*, the reception of the stigmata. Christina *mirabilis*, too, has a physical reaction to her understanding of the divine. She suffers extraordinary pains on earth in order to free those trapped in Purgatory, knowing that she herself will ultimately be exempt from purgatorial tortures. Finally, Marie d'Oignies becomes emotionally filled with Christ, constantly overflowing in compassion and tears at the thought of his suffering. She gives most of her life over to the counsel and care of the members of her communities in Willambroux and Oignies.

The Beguines[9]

For most of the Middle Ages, leading a life of daily and constant devotion meant being a member of a religious order. For women who were of the aristocracy or – in the later Middle Ages – the wealthy merchant class, joining an order was a respectable (and often preferable) alternative to marriage. Indeed, this choice was a popular one for many women, especially when the other option was a life of marriage that was probably

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[9]It would be impossible to cover all of the aspects of the beguine movement in the Low Countries in this space. For more information, see Walter Simons' comprehensive study of the beguines, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1505*.

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arranged and promised a dangerous life of constant childbirth. The virtues of joining an order were extolled in the devotional literature of the time, emphasizing chastity and heavenly rewards, further prompting women to view life in an order as preferable to life in the secular world.

The option of marriage, usually intended to join families' fortunes together, was also not a very practical one by the thirteenth century. Constant wars and crusades had effectively wiped out a significant percentage of young men suitable for marriage, leaving many young women without any options. Guido Latré writes: "In some areas at certain stages of medieval history, like Brabant in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, the number of young women may have been twenty or thirty percent higher than that of young men" (221). Women who saw they had no marriage prospects might choose to join convents as a reasonable alternative and a relatively comfortable life. The convent would provide safety, shelter, and a respectable existence outside of marriage.

Women's religious houses, always linked to monasteries, began to open up with amazing speed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to keep up with the demand. Nearly as soon as they were opened, they were filled. The monasteries were responsible for the spiritual and financial lives of the women in the adjoining houses. Because of the increasingly large number of women attempting to enter religious orders, the men's houses were soon overwhelmed by the burdens that care of a women's house put on the monastery. It became increasingly difficult for an order to be recognized and for women to find a place within a house. Herbert Grundmann explains:

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> Despite their astonishing number and their being filled to overflowing, women's houses of the Cistercians, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans, were in no position to include all the women swept up by the religious movement and to find them a place in the life of their orders .... Only special circumstance made it possible for religious women's communities to win recognition as autonomous convents and win access to an order. The orders only accepted houses of communities wealthy enough to support all its members in strict enclosure with secure incomes, without relying on alms. Only when religious women's communities found a donor to place enough land at their disposal, or when wealthy women joined, bringing extensive property with them into the house, could they win recognition as convents and achieve membership in an order (139).

Women who did not have the connections or the means to join an order were effectively barred from choosing a religious way of life.

Rather than choose marriage or enter an order, a very few women (predominantly in England) became recluses and anchoresses – a choice that required a willing parish and, as always, money.[10] Latré points out that "this formula of life-long poverty was accessible only to those who were rich enough to pay for it; the chapter or the bishop granting the boon demanded very substantial donations before they allowed the elaborate ritual of the *inclusorium* to take place" (222). Women without money and connections were barred from choosing any form of religious life. This phenomenon of many more marriageable women than men came to be known by modern scholars as the *Frauenfrage*, the problem of surplus women. One result of the *Frauenfrage* was the admission of more women into convents than their parent monasteries could handle. The excess of women

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[10]Anchoresses lived in small rooms, or cells, attached to churches. Once they entered the room, they never left it again. Their only contact with the outside world was through openings in the building walls. Although they did not take religious vows particular to any order, there were religious rites, ceremonies, and rules specific to each anchoress. Perhaps the most famous English anchoresses is Julian of Norwich.

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seeking convent life became known as "the *cura mulierum* (the care of women), the clergyman's burden" (Conn 5). Many in the Church hierarchy felt that they were overburdened with women who desired to live a life in religious orders.

The onus of the *cura mulierum* was also related to the *cura monialium*, or the pastoral care of nuns. The increase in convents demanded an increased number of priests to serve mass and act as confessors. Although this task fell to members of the monastic houses, Jeffrey Hamburger argues that the women themselves took an active role in the production of literature and art directed at these women and the care of their souls:

> To insist on the *cura monialium* as one, if not the exclusive, context in which to examine the art of female monasticism is not inevitable to assign women a passive role in the creation and control of images. The *cura monialium* itself represents a response to movements initiated, in part, by women. Even if not always as artists, then often as patrons and recipients, nuns played active, resourceful roles in determining how images were employed in the rituals that dominated their lives. The *cura monialium* had a formative impact on the production of pastoral literature both by and for women: sermons, treatises, chronicles, poetry, and accounts of visionary experience (*The Visual and The Visionary* 18).

This influence of nuns within their communities undoubtedly had some effect on the start of the beguine movement. Hamburger has noted in *The Rothschild Canticles* that the artistic production within at least one beguine community was particularly strong.

In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, beginning in the Low Countries, but soon spreading throughout continental Europe, women started to take their life choices into their own hands.[11] At first, a few women began living what appeared to be a

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[11]Although the Low Countries remained the primary location for beguines, Jennifer Ward notes that this is due to the powerful patrons in the Low Countries who were willing to fund the beguinages (180).

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religious life but without taking any orders. Although some of them lived in church cells like recluses, they were not properly enclosed, either. Indeed, they were living a mixture of the secular and religious life in a seemingly individual brand of piety. Chastity and devotion to Christ and Church were central to their lives, but they often worked and had no proper monastic authority.

The Low Countries were a natural place for this movement to begin. As Brenda Bolton describes, "in the diocese of Liège alone there were three times more women than there were cistercian houses able to receive them" ("Some Thirteenth Century Women" 11). This was coupled with a particularly affective religious piety that was spreading among the monastic orders. The women who had chosen to live in these informal religious groups came to be known as "beguines," and the communities they constructed were known as "beguinages." There was no formal way to "join" the beguines, and money was less of an issue, as they supported themselves by a combination of their own manual labor and begging. Monks in local monasteries, often in the Dominican order, took on the jobs of serving as confessors and saying mass for the communities of women, but were not overseers of other aspects of the beguines' lives. Because there were no official vows to take, women who were beguines could later choose to leave – to marry or to join an official order.

At first, the women were identified in various ways. The most common of them, *mulieres religiosae,* simply meant 'religious women,' identifying their practice as well as their lack of monastic affiliation. The term "beguine," which appears to date from 1219 and then persisted, was initially derisive. Walter Simons points out that although the

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term "eventually prevailed in written and spoken discourse and took on a more respectable meaning ... it never entirely lost its pejorative connotations" (*Cities of Ladies* 36). Although "beguine" was a derisive term in the Low Countries, the way of life had spread to other European countries and with it other terms of contempt such as "humiliata" in Lombardy. Although manuscripts (such as MS Douce 114) and sermons point to an awareness of and interest in the beguines, England never had an analogous movement.

Scholars have never satisfactorily answered the question of the etymology of the word "beguine." One popular notion that persists, although it has been seriously refuted by most linguists, is that the term is connected to the English word "to beg." As early as 1928, H. Logeman explains "As the place of origin of the Béguines ... must certainly be somewhere in the present Belgium most likely in the French speaking part, ... this hypothesis falls to the ground by the simple fact that English is not known to have exercised any such influence at that time on the languages spoken in Belgium" (114). In addition, the complete lack of the beguine movement in England seems to indicate that the word would not have an English origin. Another commonly held (but mistaken) notion about the origins of the béguines links them to the dissident Liège cleric, Lambert le Bègue. Simons argues that the link between the béguines and le Bègue are "the product of a legend construed in local ecclesiastical milieus around 1250 and revived by local historians at the end of the nineteenth century" (*Cities of Ladies* 24). Another misidentification of the etymology has led historians to link the term "beguine" with the Latin *Albigensis*, "an adjective or noun referring to the southern French town of Albi, the

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noted center of the Cathar heresy" (Simons *Cities of Ladies* 121). Simons suggests that if this were true "beguine" would be synonymous with "heretic," but the term did not always hold that identification. Indeed, many of the various suggestions over the centuries relating to the term "beguine" have been disproved, pointing to many of the inconsistencies that surround scholarship about the beguine movement itself.

Simons ultimately argues that the term actually comes from an old-French word "béguar" meaning "to stammer," relating to the practice of saying prayers. He strengthens his case by pointing to the terms used for béguines in other countries that have similar etymological roots:

> All of these terms, *beguina, papelard,* and *lollaert*, originally stood for a person in private prayer, so private in fact that his or her speech cannot be understood. Its pejorative connotations were clear from the start: the individual claimed to be devout, but was she really praying? She gave the impression of chanting devoutly, but we have only her word for it, because we do not actually recognize the sounds; hence the notion that she may be a hypocrite .... To call someone a beguine or *papelard* or *lollard* was more than to question her sincerity: she spoke another language that defied comprehension (122-3).

When Jacques de Vitry wrote the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies – the first that dealt with the life of a beguine, he clearly avoids the term "beguine," and instead calls her a *mulier religiosa.* When Jacques was writing, the connotation of the word "beguine" was not something with which he wanted to identify the subject of his *vita*. By calling Marie a *mulier religiosa*, or religious woman, he indicated her piety but also called attention to her lack of monastic affiliation.

This ambiguity of terms also leads to another kind of ambiguity of classification – who is a beguine and who is not? It is more or less clear that Marie d'Oignies should be

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called a beguine. At the end of her life she lived in a community of women in a beguinage in Oignies. Many of Jacques de Vitry's sermons concerned this group of women, and his *vita* of Marie is a conscious attempt to justify the beguine movement and way of life in the eyes of the church hierarchy. For this reason, Marie has often been named "the first beguine," and she is credited with the start of the popular movement.

But what of Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Christina *mirabilis*? May they be called beguines? They certainly led religious lives outside of the strictures of official orders, and although both have been associated with convents and orders after their deaths, whether or not they ever joined these while living is not at all clear. Part of the problem of the ambiguity of the term "beguine" and who exactly that encompasses is that any woman who lived a seemingly religious life is often classified that way, regardless of whether or not she would have identified herself with the movement. In Philip's descriptions of Elizabeth, evidence points more to a life as an anchoress than as a beguine; although she was not enclosed, she lived in a cell attached to the church at Spalbeek. However, she has been consistently identified as a beguine – including in contemporary court documents where her testimony is recorded. Christina, too, did not seem to belong to any community of religious women, although there was a beguinage at Sint-Truiden, where she lived. Jacques de Vitry refers to Christina in his introduction to the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies, referring to her as one of the *mulieres sanctae*. The fact that both of these women lived semi-religious lives in the Low Countries has placed them under the umbrella term of "beguine," even though they were not formally associated with the movement as Marie d'Oignies was.

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The beguine communities were spread out over the Low Countries, and particularly concentrated in the Liège diocese, but they had considerable contact with each other and were aware that these communities were growing. Simons writes:

> A network of roads, part Roman, part medieval, had long facilitated communications between the towns of the Sambre-and-Meuse valley (Oignies, Namur, Huy, Liège) and urban centers of Brabant and Loon to its north (Nivelles, Louvain, Zoutleeuw, Sint-Truiden, Borgloon, Tongeren). Some of these women traveled those roads regularly .... Mary of Oignies shuttled between Willambroux and Oignies, and ... Christina Mirabilis walked from Sint-Truiden to Borgloon and other towns of the area; she visited Liège at least once (*Cities of Ladies* 45).

Although no formal "rule" was ever written and followed that governed all of the beguine communities, each beguinage was somewhat influenced by others and the communities were loosely interconnected. This indeterminate quality of the beguines and the beguinages is precisely what allowed for such diverse interpretations of devotion, leading to the varied examples of piety represented in the three beguine women of MS Douce 114.

All of the beguines were still subject to monastic rule in one sense: they had male priests and confessors who were somewhat responsible for their care. "The beguinages ... still used the services of priests and spiritual directors, and were still subject to the ordinary regulatory rights of the bishops of their dioceses, but were not affiliated to monastic orders" (Wogan-Browne and Henneau 5). This is how the hagiographers translated in the Douce MS have such close contact with the beguines. This relationship between priest and beguinage is best exemplified, however, in Jacques de Vitry. He

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functioned as a confessor to Marie and a general spiritual counselor to the beguines of Oignies.

From their inception, the beguines were constantly under attack. They were never entirely free of accusations of heresy: Catharism and the Heresy of the Free Spirit were the most prevalent. In addition, the fact that their mixture of the active and contemplative life called for secular transactions like selling their goods and begging for alms angered local communities. Finally, the beguines were suspect in that they had no binding vows. Women who entered beguinages could leave later in life, opening the beguines to criticism that they did not take their chastity seriously. Simons writes that the rules of the beguinages allowed for movement between the secular life and the religious, and that the rules regarding virginity were much more lax than other rules governing the beguinages, clearly opening the beguine life up to extreme criticism from the Church and the community:

> It is perhaps because beguines strove for continence rather than virginity, and acknowledged what strong pressures could be brought to bear on individual beguines to get married, that some medieval rules for beguine communities showed great tolerance for beguines who strayed from the right path .... The statutes for St. Catherine's of Tongeren of 1453 ... allow the return of a fallen beguine after a year, except if her sexual partner was a cleric or married man. The remarkably mild punishment – recalcitrant beguines, for instance, who questioned the authority of the grand mistress were usually removed for life – made it possible for the women to raise the child in the beguinage rather than to be forced into an unwanted marriage or lead a life of prostitution. It may have increased suspicion of the beguines' "loose" lifestyle, however, and the provision to reallow such women was dropped from later rules (*Cities of Ladies* 73-4).

The lives of these everyday beguines, while fascinating, never made it into any *vitae*. Scholars are left to community documents and records from the beguinages to ascertain

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what was "average." Of the several hundred Low Country beguines who lived in the Middle Ages, we have only a handful of *vitae* and these are of the unusual ones.

In addition to supporting and defending the beguine life, Jacques encouraged it among Low Country women, defying the popular opinion about who the beguines were and what they represented. Brenda M. Bolton points to some of Jacques' sermons that "spoke to beguines who were clearly not completely institutionalized" ("Some Thirteenth Century Women" 17). She argues that Jacques directs these sermons to young women who would like to preserve their chastity, but were under parental pressure to marry:

> He urges young girls to avoid any occasion which will allow their detractors to criticize them. They must avoid suspect persons, suspect places and suspect secret meetings. Since it was difficult for discreet and devout maidens to remain in their parents' homes without great danger from secular minded and shameless persons they should take refuge in monasteries which the Lord had multiplied throughout the world. Those who were unable to find monasteries to receive them should live together in a single house. They should place themselves under the discipline of one who excels the others in integrity and foresight ("Some Thirteenth Century Women" 18).

Jacques knew that the beguines were under attack by both the Church and members of the laity who did not think women could live without male authority (either that of a husband of the Church). He understood that the women who lived an in-between existence – not exactly beguines but not completely secular either – damaged the reputation of those who faithfully lived in formal beguinages. The beguines who had not yet been institutionalized were still too much in the world and were open to criticism (and as a result, marred the beguine name), whereas women in already formed communities were not.

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Looking at the lives presented here, of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies, does not give one a complete picture of what it meant to be a thirteenth-century Liège beguine. As Penny Galloway observes:

> Beguines who are known to us as individuals, whether through their own writings, as in the cases of Hadewijch of Brabant, Beatrijs of Nazareth and Mechthild of Magdeburg, or whose lives are preserved in hagiographical writings, such as Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Margaret of Ieper and Marie d'Oignies, are women who stood apart from ordinary beguines. The vast majority of works concerning the devotional life of beguines have been concerned with these "extraordinary women" (107).

This is important to keep in mind when examining the *vitae* in the present volume. These women are beguines: among the first but not representative of all. Richard Kieckhefer writes that of the several mystics who displayed "feverish spirituality" in the thirteenth century, Marie d'Oignies and Christina *mirabilis* are "textbook examples" (17). Elizabeth of Spalbeek is as well. Their *vitae* have been written because they were exemplary, their piety unusual, and their gifts exceptional.

Men Writing Women

While some beguines and other women wrote their own mystical treatises, giving us a rare access into the hearts and minds of medieval women mystics, most are known to us through their *vitae*, with the vast majority written by men (as is the case with all three women in MS Douce 114). There is no record of their own writings, and they must necessarily be approached and understood through the texts that three male clerics have left behind. When these women speak in the *vitae*, their words have already been filtered through the pens of Philip of Clairvaux, Thomas de Cantimpré, or Jacques de Vitry.

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Amy Hollywood has pointed out that there is a discrepancy between what women mystics have written about themselves and what men have written in the *vitae*. With this in mind, she argues, one cannot take the discourse of the *vita* at face value but must always remember who is speaking and who is silent:

> Hagiographical and mystical texts differ structurally, thematically, and stylistically. Yet despite repeated warnings against conflating the two, and against taking predominantly male-authored descriptions of women's lives and experiences at face value, the practice continually reemerges. In part this is because the nature of the differences between the genres and the gender implications of their authorship have not been adequately addressed. Through a demonstration of these distinctions, I believe, the dangers of unproblematically assimilating the evidence concerning "saints" and "mystics," and of taking the word of hagiographers at face value can be elucidated. I am not arguing for a simple relationship between experience and discourse, rather, given the complex interplay between them, I am suggesting that it is crucial to ask who is speaking, from what position, and with what relationship to institutions and power (*Soul as Virgin Wife* 28).

For some women mystics we have access to both texts – the mystical and the hagiographical. When this is the case, mediation between the two is possible; one can separate the women's voice from the male hagiographer's because both exist (Catherine of Siena, for example). For the beguines of MS Douce 114, however, this is not the case. The only substantial records of these women's lives are their *vitae*, and this necessitates keeping in mind the constructs of power (and gender) within which these *vitae* were written.

Hollywood suggests one way in which these male-authored texts about women's lives may be read, in which she also argues that scholars should compare mystical texts written by women and their *vitae* written by men:

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> The hagiographical sources from the Low Countries offer highly mediated access to the lives of the early beguines and of those Cistercian nuns who had contact with them. As long as we recognize that such mediation exists, that men like the canon Jacques of Vitry and the Dominican Thomas of Cantimpré were attempting to offer a picture of female sanctity acceptable to the ecclesiastical hierarchy (of which these two hagiographers were themselves a part, a position which no doubt shaped *what* they saw) and of use to that hierarchy and to the Christian church as they conceived it, these sources can offer us important information on the *climate* in which the beguine movement arose .... Read against themselves and other sources, furthermore, they may also elicit information about medieval women's experience (*Soul as Virgin Wife* 38-9).

Hollywood's approach is useful even when no women-authored texts exist, as in the cases of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies. In other words, the reader of these *vitae* can still look for the fissures in the hagiography, the moments when the authors are not engaging in tropes or standard hagiographical constructs. Moments of diversion from paradigmatic hagiographies may be the sites of resistance and difference in the women's lives. The chapters preceding the edited *vitae* in this edition point out which hagiographical tropes are being employed, so that those moments that are "not-trope" can also be identified. Each of the three hagiographers unambiguously tries to understand inexplicable (and often unorthodox) behavior on the part of his subject.

These *vitae*, and other similar ones, are essential to the study of medieval women because they "constitute the single most available and important genre about male and female saints" (Mooney 3). Ultimately, the way that hagiographers see their subjects and how their subjects see themselves may not be too different. Catherine Mooney reminds us that, after all, of the common heritage between the saint and her interpreter:

> They typically occupied the same geographical space and chronological time; they were devout Christians; most were members of religious orders,

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> many evincing similar rules and spiritualities; they heard much the same by way of biblical interpretations, liturgical celebrations, sermons, and pious literature; they imbibed together the same cultural messages regarding masculinity, femininity, and the proper roles for each sex regarding leadership, oral and written expression, and the pursuit of holiness (9).

Although all the women in the Douce MS clearly reject cultural views of women in some way, their self-understanding has been shaped by cultural views of both gender and holiness. As Mooney points out, these same beliefs have likewise influenced the hagiographers.

Not all hagiographers are the same. Philip of Clairvaux, Thomas de Cantrimpré, and Jacques de Vitry all have very different approaches to describing the women in their respective *vitae*. Each hagiographer attempts to understand the exact nature of his subject's devotion, particularly in relation to each woman's body. Although the authors understand the tradition of *imitatio Christi*, each woman has interpreted it in a different way. Each writer, in turn, responds to and explains that interpretation in a unique manner. Each woman uses her body as a medium of devotion and each hagiographer attempts to gloss what that devotion means theologically, but only Jacques de Vitry asks what that means for Marie. Looking at each hagiographers' relationship to his subject elucidates why Jacques may have understood her differently.

Philip of Clairvaux writes his *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek as if it is an official hagiographical document, carefully naming witnesses – including himself – and often insisting that his claims are true and his sources are reliable. He views himself as an observer of Elizabeth and sees his job almost as a journalist reporting the facts. The facts,

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however, are violent. Elizabeth's enactment of the Passion is *imitatio Christi* in the extreme. Elizabeth plays all the roles in the Passion – the tormentors and the tormented – and, as a result, the extreme physical violence that follows is self-inflicted:

> Sche makith a bigynnynge of oure lordys Passyone, how [he] was taken and with a feerful cruelte drawen. Than it is to se, how sche takith her owne clothes byfore her breste with her right hande and drawith hirselfe to the righte syde, and thanne with her lefte hande to the lefte syde. And otherewhile sche berith ouer hirselfe euen forwarde dyuers tymes, as sche were drawen with vyolens as men do with thefes and mensleers that are pullyd and luggyd ful vyolently with othere mennes handes, representynge oure Lorde Jhesu wordes that hee seyde to hym, "yee come to take me as a thefe with swerdes and battys" .... And after that, anoon sche smitith herselfe vpon the cheke so strongly that alle hir body bowith to that party ageyns the ground for heuynesse of the stroke. Than sche smytes hirselfe in the nodel of the hede byhynde, now bitwix the schuldirs, now in the necke. And thanne sche noseles downe forwarde and wonderly crokes her body and dasches her heed to the erthe (EIII.6-7).

Representing the soldiers taking Jesus to the Crucifixion, Elizabeth literally drags herself across a room and hits herself in the face so hard that she is thrown to the ground. She grabs her own head and hits it repeatedly against the floor. Later, Philip describes how she tries to gouge out her own eyes.

Philip does not try to explain the violence here other than that Elizabeth is simply acting out the Passion and all its parts. Philip views himself and his role as hagiographer as an objective observer – a reporter demonstrating the range of Elizabeth's behavior and the reality of her stigmata. His descriptions are seemingly devoid of glossing or judgment, but his neutral nouns and verbs are modified by adjectives and adverbs, such as "wonderly," that reveal his opinion. Of course, Philip consistently imposes meaning on Elizabeth's actions, linking them to the biblical moment he believes she is representing,

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as he does in this passage quoting the Gospel passage where Jesus is taken and states "'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?'" (Matthew 26:55). To Philip, the violence he is witnessing and describing is not Elizabeth's, but the more familiar one of Jesus' Passion, expounded in numerous devotional texts and treatises.

Although horrific violence against women fills traditional hagiographies, it most often comes in the form of suffering for Christian faith and is normally perpetrated by others, not self-inflicted. In her article "The Virgin's Tale," Jocelyn Wogan-Browne describes the archetypal virgin/martyr account arguing something like this:

> When the virgin refuses marriage and/or seduction and conversion back to the pagan law of her father, she is argued with and punished by her father/judge and/or suitor/prosecutor. She is delivered over to some kind of public process in which she is threatened, incarcerated, publicly stripped, flogged, lacerated, burned or boiled, and dismembered in some way (173).

Philip is certainly aware of this tradition and tries to imitate the tropes of the virgin/martyr narrative wherever he can. However, a scribal error during the transmission of the Douce MS shows how strongly these classical images held in the popular imagination: that of the mastectomy as choice of dismemberment for the virgin/martyr.

> Also y and my felawes, booth abbotes and monkes, atte mydnyghte and sum othere oures also, sawe blode comynge oute at hir eyen and dropped doune and dyed the linnyn garment that sche was cladde with ouerest .... And wee sawe not alloonly the vttir clothe that toucheth the maydens flesche, that is to saye handes, feet and syde, sprenkelyd and dyed with blood, but also hir pappys were all defuyled with blode rennynge fro hir eyen. And also otherewhile blode ranne oute at hir fynger endys bytwix the nayles and the flesche (EVII.7-8).

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Reflecting classical virgin/martyr descriptions like that of Agatha who had lost her breasts for her faith, the scribe writes that Elizabeth's breasts are soaked with blood in this passage. The original Latin text does not include this image, however, but rather states that Elizabeth's *cheeks* were soaked with the blood running from her eyes. The word for cheeks "maxillas" was changed to breasts "mamillas" in some later Latin texts, including (presumably) the one that the Middle English translator has used. The extreme bloodiness of the text is justified by its precedents; the virgin/martyrs' tales are just as violent, so this one – although there is no persecution against Elizabeth, no "reason" for this violence – can be too.

Unlike Philip of Clairvaux's observations of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, those of Thomas de Cantimpré, Christina's hagiographer, are not direct, for they were written eight years after her death in 1224. Thomas based much of his information about Christina on the observations of his mentor, Jacques de Vitry, who was Marie d'Oignies' hagiographer and who knew Christina. While some of her miracles include prophecies, visions, and even the more unusual sustenance on her own breast milk, almost all exhibit her ability to withstand terrific pain in order to ease that of souls suffering in purgatory. Thomas reads Christina as making a trade of her pain for that of purgatorial souls. Like Philip, Thomas leaves nothing out in describing the pain and tortures that Christina inflicts on herself. Here, she throws herself into a cauldrons of boiling water:[12]

> Also othewhile she wente into cauderons fulle of hoot, boylynge watir to the breste or ellis to the lendys aftir the heighte of the cauderouns. And

[12]I will discuss these passages in more detail in the Chapter III, on Christina *mirabilis*.

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> she poured scalde hoot watir on thos membrys that were harmles withouten and cryed as a womman that trauelles with childe. Yit netheles whan sche come oute sche hadde no harme (CVII.1-4).

Thomas is comfortable describing Christina's extreme self-inflicted violence because it follows a pattern of hagiography with which he is familiar. Christina is imitating classical tortures – throwing herself in vats of boiling liquid, onto wheels – but she is enacting these upon herself. Thomas is also writing the *vita* years after her death and never knew Christina. The detailed and gruesome stories are already hearsay; he is merely recounting what he has been told. But for the last *vita* in the collection, that of Marie d'Oignies, it is clear her hagiographer is more conflicted about the events he needs to narrate.

Marie's self-inflicted violence is of a more familiar type than either Elizabeth's or Christina's; it is almost always mortification of the flesh. Jacques is clearly unhappy with the extremity of Marie's piety, and interjects throughout the text that in this instance Marie's example is not to be followed. Jacques is perhaps reacting to his personal relationship with Marie. Unlike Philip, an observer in Elizabeth's life, or Thomas, writing after Christina's death and never knowing her, Jacques is a major participant in Marie's life. He is her friend and confessor. This different relationship between hagiographer and subject leads to a different response to the activities he describes.

Jacques' descriptions of the violence are less detailed and gruesome. He chooses to dwell on the meaning of the pain rather than its enactment. After commenting in one sentence that Marie wore a hair shirt to bed, he says that he is not praising her excessive behavior, but the virtue itself:

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> I seye not this preisynge the exces, but tellynge the feruoure. In this, and many other that she wroghte by priuelege of grace, lat the discrete reder take hede that priuilege of a fewe makith not a commun lawe. Folowe wee hir vertues; withouten specyal priuelege, folowe maye wee not [the works of hir vertues] (MIII.2).

Jacques is writing the *vita* only a year after Marie's death, and part of his audience is the beguine community that rose around Marie and followed her devoutly. His warning to his readers – to follow the example of her virtues but not the excess – reflects his discomfort with Marie's self-mortification and the example it might set. Later in the *vita*, he describes a scene in which, as Marie's confessor, he scolds her for her austere activities.

One of the passages in which the mortification is actually described involves Marie kneeling hundreds of times while reciting the psalter, punctuated by self-flagellation:[13]

> Also, otherewhile, whan hir soule was replete and purifyed as sumtyme more than othere, she myghte [not] cese fro prayere. Wherfore she salutid Oure Lady in the nyghte and in the daye, knelynge a thowsande sythes and an hundirde, contynuynge this meruelos and vnharde offys of salutacyone fourty dayes togedir. The firste tyme, in an houge spirite, she knelyd withoute stynte sex hundreth sythes; the secunde tyme, standynge on hir feet, she redde all the sauter, and atte ilke salme knelynge seyde the salutacyone of Oure Lady *Aue Maria,* but the thridde tyme, th[r]e hundredth sythes at euery knelynge, with schappe yeerd smytynge hire, sacrifyed and offerde hirselfe with a longe martirdome to God and to the blessed mayden Mary. Soothly, with the laste strokes to sauer with the tothere, she broghte aboundauntly blode oute of hir body, and than she but knelyd fyfty sythes and endyd soo that seruyse. This didde she not with bodily strengthe, but with aungels helpe that sustenyd hire and socoured (X.10).

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[13]This passage will also be discussed in Chapter IV, on Marie, but there I look more at the role of her reading rather than her self-mortification.

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Unlike other moments in the narrative, Jacques does not reprimand Marie's actions or caution his readers about following them. Although Marie kneels and strikes herself until blood flows "abundantly," he may feel that any opinion is encompassed in his confidence that Marie did not do this with her own "bodily strength," but with the help and care of angels.

Jacques frowns on self-mortification, but he holds up one incident of Marie's as an example of the extent of her piety. Here she does not enact the mortification she would like to, but Jacques' narration indicates that Marie's mere desire of it is worthy of admiration. After passing through a part of town where Marie knows great sins have taken place, she attempts to cut her feet up as a kind of demonstrated rejection for the town's wrongdoings:

> And she concyued and toke in herte so grete endeyn and lothinge that sche bygan to crye for sorowe and, askynge a knyfe of hir mayden whan she was withoute the towne, wolde haue kitte the skynne fro hir feet, for that she hadde passed by places in the whiche wrecchyd men prouoken her creature with so many wronges and wraththen Hym with so many mysdedys and synnes. And sythen she sorowed not oonly in soule but also – that more meruelous is! – felte sore in hir feet with the whiche she trode, neuertheles atte laste vnnethes myghte she haue reste after she hadde often tymes smyten hir fete togedir (2V.16).

Amy Hollywood points out the strange construction of this incident: "There is an odd lacuna in the text here; it is not clear if God allows Marie to disfigure her body or whether he causes her to feel the *pain* of the cuts without lacerations themselves being made" (*Soul as Virgin Wife* 47). Even though his ambiguous narration leaves it unclear what, exactly, Marie does to herself, Jacques makes it clear that God has a hand in her mortification (or attempt at it). His discomfort with Marie's mortification remains.

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All three of these *vitae* demand that violence be narrated – for each woman it is central to her life and her holy status – but each author approaches this from a different position. The familiar precedent of classical hagiography has given both Philip of Clairvaux and Thomas de Cantimpré the paradigm they need in order to write the startlingly detailed, voyeuristic, and gruesome depictions of Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Christina *mirabilis*, but it also permits them to ignore the implications of what they write, to ignore the fact that they are talking about real bodies. By imposing their own theological gloss on the women, they read them like a text, allegorizing their bodies and their self-inflicted violence into a narrative that is didactic rather than repellant. Jacques de Vitry, because of his more personal relationship with Marie d'Oignies, is more conflicted. He shies away from the detailed descriptions of violence and glosses them with warnings to his audience – the beguine women he would have known personally. Marie's body, if not her life, is not a text to be employed for another end, and the violence narrated is given a second place to her words in the *vita*.

Beyond gender and structures of power, both in religious and secular realms, it is crucial to keep in mind the actual relationships that these narratives are representing. Each hagiographer writes from a different perspective and aims for a separate agenda. It becomes possible to uncover the women's bodies and voices that lie encoded within the *vitae*, but, as Hollywood and Mooney have pointed out, the hagiographic genre in general – and especially when men write about women – demands a conscious "reading against" at the same time as one is reading with the narrative. The lives of Elizabeth of Spalbeek,

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Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies are represented in the *vitae* presented here, but none of the narratives should be understood to "tell" the full story.

Pain, Devotion, and Examples

For all three women in MS Douce 114, pain is central to their devotional practice and personal piety. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, this concentration is largely due to the late medieval understanding of *imitatio Christi*, according to which an individual's devotion is meant to mirror Christ's Passion. Ute Stargardt suggests that part of this devotion is also an imitation of the Virgin Mary: "The virtues the early Church Fathers had associated with Mary – her humility, the total surrender of her own will to God's will, her inner peace, her union with God, and her strength in suffering – became the virtues all mystics emulated" (291). But Mary's role as mediatrix, as suffering along with her son, generally pointed to her inner (as opposed to Jesus' external) agony – although some incidents, like her fainting at the foot of the cross, addressed a physical pain. Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Christina *mirabilis*, especially, but Marie d'Oignies as well, are decidedly suffering physically. Although there are moments in all three *vitae* that clearly point to an identification with Mary, the places where their pain is described are aligned with the suffering of Christ and not his mother.

Amy Hollywood postulates that suffering is central to mystics' devotion because it signals the presence of God. She writes "the wounded body is capable of signaling God's presence because it marks human immanence, limitation, and hence createdness" (*Soul as Virgin Wife* 13). The body without pain can be ignored. For the mystics, being

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in pain demonstrates the higher power, reminding them that they are a created entity (but created in the image of God, who has suffered for all people); it becomes inherent to the mystics' own devotional theology, affirming their love for God and the love of God for them. Suffering also, through *imitatio Christi*, brings them closer to Christ than their piety can alone. By introducing their pained bodies into their devotional practice they become closer to understanding Christ's humanity.

The women's physical agony also becomes part of the devotion for those around them. Laurie Finke examines another aspect of the mystics' pain, its role in society as opposed to the individual:

> The mystic's pain – her inflicting of wounds upon herself – grants her the authority to speak and be heard, to have followers, to act as a spiritual advisor, to heal the sick, and to found convents and hospitals. Her body bears the marks, the "signs," of her own spiritual power. The mystic's progress, then, is discursively organized by the disciplines authorized by religious tradition and performed on her body .... It is important to recognize that the church at no time advised or condoned such severe fasting and self-flagellation. It advised moderation in all penance. In fact, the mystics themselves did not urge such extremes on others. The mystics were never seen as models to be imitated. They were always special instances of God's grace because they chose their own suffering and thus were free to define what it meant (42).

In this way, the pain becomes a central aspect of who the mystics are and why they are considered unique. All three hagiographers discuss the pain the women feel. Philip of Clairvaux, Thomas de Cantimpré, and Jacques de Virty each repeatedly turn to the metaphor of childbirth to describe the acuteness of the distress women's bodies undergo. To the hagiographers, and presumably for their readers, both the intensity and endurance of the suffering are markers of sainthood.

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Although Finke argues that the *vitae* are not meant to be emulated, it is clear that parts of their lives are. All three hagiographers point out behavior to their readers that they find admirable and worthy of imitation. This is often gendered, but not always. For example, Marie's plain manner of dressing is held up as a model for women who would rather dress in finery. The male writers have set out which lessons should be taken from the *vitae* and which should not be, sometimes literally addressing the audience and reiterating the moral that should be taken from the women's examples. By modifying their descriptions with adjectives like "wondrous" and "unheard" the writers subtly point to the unique status of these women.

The *vitae* also function as *exempla*, which Margot King defines as showing "how the entire material universe mirrored the workings of God within society" ("The Sacramental Witness" 148). The example is sometimes literal, showing what should and should not be followed by the readers of the *vitae*, but other times the women themselves are the example. They demonstrate God's wondrous capabilities as he works in and around their bodies. Elizabeth performs, Christina flies, and Marie counsels, but each woman reflects only an aspect of the divine complexity.

What the *vitae* have to offer to modern readers is somewhat different from the models and lessons they may have offered to their medieval audeinces. Wogan-Browne states that the time has come to shift focus away from the individual uses of hagiography (such as how Margery Kempe incorporates it into her *Book*) and to "look at the genre's value in making visible what seems particularly elided from history's grand narratives – female communities" (71). The women represented in the Douce MS are all considered

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very early beguines (with Marie being the first), and their *vitae* are integral to understanding both the spirituality and the clerical support of the beguine movement.

That the beguine movement never really established itself in England is significant, although the very existence of MS Douce 114 – as a Middle English translation of several Latin *vitae* – attests to some interest in the Low Country mystics, but the same kind of semi-religious groups never formed. The edition presented here will open the doors up to further scholarship that will examine the links between the Continental mystics and English mysticism like that of anchorites represented in the *Ancrene Wisse*. Brenda Bolton has begun to explore some of these connections in "Some Thirteenth Century Women in the Low Countries: *A Special Case?*" and "Thirteenth-Century Religious Women, Further Reflections on the Low Countries 'Special Case'," but much work still needs to be done. I hope that this edition of the Middle English *vitae* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina *mirabilis*, and Marie d'Oignies will encourage this to happen.

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Chapter One
Elizabeth of Spalbeek: *Performatio Christi*

The original Latin *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek's[1] life is found today in two versions in England: in excerpted form in Oxford, MS Bodley 694, and in fairly complete versions in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 138, Jesus College MS 24, Oxford St. Johns College, MS 182 and Oxford MS Bodley 240 from the Carthusian house at Witham, which also contains the Latin versions of the lives of Marie d'Oignies and Christina *mirabilis*. The distinguished historian of the beguine movement, Walter Simons, a scholar of beguine history, notes that there are ten known surviving manuscripts of Elizabeth's Latin *vita* ("Reading a saint's body" 10). Half of these were found in England.

Elizabeth's *vita* was written by Philip, abbot of Clairvaux, in 1267, as a report on the veracity of her miracles and her stigmata (five wounds imitating those of Christ). Elizabeth is the first known documented case of the stigmata after St. Francis (Simons and Ziegler 118). Philip was visiting the nearby Cistercian monastery at Herkenrode when he heard of Elizabeth, then twenty years old, and he went to Liège[2] to verify these reports. Elizabeth's main devotion took the form of re-enacting Christ's Passion on a daily basis. As Philip describes it, Elizabeth lived in a cell attached to a chapel in the center of Spalbeek, and acted out the various characters and parts of the Passion for an

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[1]Spalbeek is a town in modern Belgium, only a few miles away from the city of Liège.

[2]Liège is a town and diocese in what is today Belgium. It was one of the major urban centers of the Middle Ages.

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audience of her family and local priests. She received the stigmata on Fridays. Little is known of Elizabeth outside of the *vita*; it is suspected that she finished her life at the Cistercian convent in Herkenrode, but there is no conclusive proof of this (Bussels 14-15). Simons comments on her legacy: "A remarkable series of wall paintings (c.1350-1500) in Spalbeek's chapel of Our Lady commemorated her eucharistic piety for local devotees over the centuries, but no one recorded stories of miraculous events at her tomb, and there is very little extant evidence of sustained liturgical remembrance of her life and death" ("Reading a saint's body" 13).

In his book *Cities of Ladies*, Simons also points out that in 1276, the French court sought out Elizabeth for her prophetic gifts following the death of the dauphin (218). There are two court documents that include interviews with Elizabeth, one recorded at Spalbeek and the other at St. Trond, in which Elizabeth discloses her vision that "the prince had been poisoned by one the of the queen's household" (Kay 468). This fact is particularly notable because Elizabeth's prophetic gifts and visions are barely touched upon in her *vita* and are certainly not what Philip finds most interesting about Elizabeth's life and holiness. Other than this scant reference, there is no other record of Elizabeth outside of the *vita*.[3]

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[3]In Richard Kay's 1965 article about the death of the dauphin and Elizabeth's role in the trials, it is clear he is not aware of Elizabeth's *vita* or any external information regarding her.

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Time

Elizabeth's *vita* is divided according to the hours of the liturgical office – matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers and compline – a division of the day adapted by the Church. In the Middle Ages, the canonical division of hours was utilized far more than the 24- hour division (Rossum 29). Indeed, Philip has structured the *vita* as if he were following Elizabeth closely through a single day, even though the book itself is the product of his observation over several weeks. Moreover, Elizabeth's liturgical arrangement of her day has a specific connection to the Passion of Jesus (a connection of which Elizabeth would have been fully aware through the contemporary Books of Hours). Ellen Ross describes the activities of Elizabeth's miracles and its connection to the hours of prayer in her book *The Grief of God:*

> Elizabeth performs an elaborate, ritualized enactment of the liturgical hours associated with Christ's suffering. Her performance roughly correlates with the common association in Books of Hours between the Hours and the stages of Jesus Christ's Passion, death, and Resurrection. Recited at daybreak (or at midnight, as in this text), matins are often associated with the Agony in the Garden, and lauds with the Betrayal; prime (at 6:00 a.m.) with Christ's appearance before Pilate; terce (at 9:00 a.m.) with the Flagellation; sext (at noon) with the Carrying of the Cross; none (at 3:00 p.m.) with the Crucifixion; vespers (at sunset) with the Deposition; and compline (in the evening) with the Entombment. (Ross 110)

The times varied according to the hours of daylight. For each section, Philip describes in scrupulous detail what he sees Elizabeth doing. She acts out Christ's Passion, from beginning to end, and takes on the personae of Christ and his tormentors. These multiple roles are what Philip finds unique, but they also lead to a self-inflicted violence as Elizabeth performs the bitter treatment of Jesus before and during the Crucifxion.

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Simons has suggested that in some respects Philip's account of Elizabeth is not a real *vita*: it is not, he points out, "a more or less comprehensive account of the saint's life and miracles composed after his or her death by the saint's confessor or another clerical admirer, on the basis of personal experience of information gathered from individuals close to the saint" ("Reading" 10). Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that Philip carefully follows certain tropes of a *vita* and intends his text to be read as one. The structure according to the liturgical hours, although highly unusual, is an appropriate way to organize Elizabeth's *vita*: Philip emphasizes that this *is* Elizabeth's life: she enacts the Passion every day. The codicological evidence also indicates that this account of Elizabeth's day was indeed read as a *vita*, for Philip's text is almost always included among more typical hagiographical works in manuscript codices.

Philip's organization of his *vita* would have been somewhat familiar to medieval readers: it is the structure used in Books of Hours. This method of organizing Passion meditation according to the canonical hours was established and popularized by Edmund of Abingdon's thirteenth-century *Speculum ecclesie*, as well as Stephen of Sawley's treatise on psalmody (Bestul 42), however it does not become the norm until well into the 14th century, making Elizabeth's interpretation early for this kind of devotional structure (Bestul 54). Each of Philip of Clairvaux's chapter is entitled after a different canonical hour of prayer and follows Elizabeth's activities during those times.

At the end of the *vita*, after descriptions of what Elizabeth does for each of the hours and the Mass, as well as a separate section on the appearance of Elizabeth's stigmata, Philip adds a section for some anecdotes from Elizabeth's life that do not

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regularly take place during the course of the usual day. This section follows a more traditional kind of hagiography, but in Elizabeth's *vita* it seems to be an afterthought. Philip admits that he is relying on eye-witness accounts of other abbots and priests, rather than his own eye (which is the primary witness for the first three-quarters of the *vita*). These miracle stories include Elizabeth's conversion of a man from a sinful life to a religious one, her inspired knowledge that a religious feast day should have been celebrated but had been forgotten by the priest saying mass, and her conversations with another mystic who lived far away in another Low Countries town, Lille (in modern France on the French/Belgian border). The "appendix" of Elizabeth's miracles reminds the audience that Elizabeth's life extended beyond her quotidian Passion performances.

It is startling to reach the end of the *vita* and read these stories that so firmly place Elizabeth's life and activities in time. For the most part, the *vita* seems to take place almost outside of chronological time. This effect may be intentional on the part of Philip because it mirrors and reinforces how medieval Christians are meant to view and understand the Crucifxion of Christ – as if it happens both outside and inside of history. Mircea Eliade calls this phenomenon "sacred time" and writes that recognizing its existence is in fact of primary importance to religious belief:

> Religious man lives in two kinds of time, of which the more important, sacred time, appears under the paradoxical aspect of circular time, reversible and recoverable, a sort of eternal mythical present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rites. This attitude in regard to time suffices to distinguish religious from nonreligious man; the former refuses to live solely in what, in modern terms, is called the historical present; he attempts to regain a sacred time that, from one point of view, can be homologized to eternity (70).

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Elizabeth enters into this sacred time and reinforces the Christian re-enactment of Jesus' Crucifxion (through art, performance, and liturgy). By condensing Elizabeth's *vita* into the actions of a single day, Philip has created another kind of sacred time out of Elizabeth's life.

This perception of time is particularly appropriate for the *vita* of a woman. Feminist critics have shown that throughout history the male/female dichotomy has been encoded in many other oppositional terms: rational/irrational, spirit/body, and chronological/achronological. In each set of oppositions, the former term is the one automatically associated with male privilege, the latter with female inferiority. In exploring the male/female structure of these dichotomies, Naomi Schor claims that these binaries have been reinforced throughout history because men "have regulated the discourse of sexuality throughout the history of Western civilization" (47). This is compounded by a firm belief in the Middle Ages that men occupied the realm of the mind and rationality and women that of the body and sexuality. Elizabeth already operates outside of a masculine paradigm by being seen through her body and not her words, but Philip further reinforces this by placing her *vita* outside of the construct of chronological time.

A physical and corporeal interpretation of meditation on Christ was largely embraced by the female and anchoritic community from the thirteenth century through the later Middle Ages. It was enhanced by the notion of *imitatio Christi,* in which religious devotees were not only meant to meditate about Christ, they were truly meant to imitate him. However, because women were inside human bodies, at least according to medieval

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thought about gender, the devotional meditation had to be predominantly on Christ's humanity – namely, his suffering and the Passion. Karma Lochrie further describes both the complicated notion of *imitatio Christi* and the different ways it manifested itself throughout the religious communities:

> Medieval notions about the body intersect the theological function of the *imitatio Christi.* Conformity to Christ's life and suffering is perhaps the broadest definition of this practice. Yet, like the medieval notion of the body, the concept of imitating Christ is not quite so simple. For both the male and female religious, imitation of Christ's suffering could take many forms, including fasting, self-flagellation, and self-defilement. In addition to these seemingly self-generated forms of *imitatio Christi*, others were involuntary, such as bodily effusions and elongations, stigmata, tears, and seizures. Finally, a third kind of imitation ... was subsumed by those interior models of devotion associated with Christ's Passion during the late Middle Ages (Lochrie 15).

In Elizabeth's case this is further complicated by the notion of sacred time; Christ's Passion is outside of time, and so is she. In this sense, she is not merely imitating Christ through her daily life, but actually performing him.

This is a tricky boundary that is not clearly delineated today, much less in the Middle Ages. What are the borders of imitation and how far can the devotee go? As R.N. Swanson writes, "The imitation of Christ was a potent and long-established model. However, imitation of Christ is one thing, imitation of the Passion is another. To imitate the Passion directly would be something which very few could attain. It might be achieved through acquisition – or self-imposition – of the stigmata" (15). With no prescribed way to imitate the Passion, the various ways in which Passion imitation manifested itself – most visibly, stigmata – were unique to the devotee.

Philip sees Elizabeth's form of *imitatio* as something entirely different from other

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forms of devotion. He indicates that Elizabeth has discovered a new way of expressing devotion, stating: "it semith that in a newe and unherde manere sche schewith in herselfe both the persone of Criste sufferynge and the persone of the enmye turmentynge" (III.9). Elizabeth, though, imagines herself as Christ's tormentors, and not just Christ or Mary. She appears to be taking the various ways in which *imitatio Christi* can be experienced (as outlined by Lochrie) and combining them in her own form of devotion. Although for many devotees the *imitatio Christi* may manifest itself through one element (self-defilement, stigmata), Elizabeth incorporates all of these into the story of the Passion as she understands it.

Imitating Hagiography

Because the *vita* is not a typical one, Philip intentionally utilizes tropes common in women's hagiography (particularly virgin-martyr narratives) to emphasize his view of Elizabeth as worthy of canonization and of his text as a *vita*. The first topos he employs is the emphasis on his validity as an eye-witness. The Middle English translator writes: "Whan I, Dan Philippe of Clareualle, herde what tyme that I visityd howses of myn ordre in that cuntrey I gaf no credens to hem that tolde me, til tyme that I come myselfe and sawe and proued that I had not herde the halfe" (I.1). Philip begins his *vita* stating it was not until he saw Elizabeth with his own eyes that he believed what he had heard about her. Philip claims initial skepticism in order to prove that he is a reliable witness – one who had to be convinced just as his audience will need to be. Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn point out that this identical strategy was employed in Bernard of

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Angers' writings about the miracles attributed to Saint Foy:

> Virtually all that we know of Bernard comes from the internal evidence of his own writing, in which he says that he was trained at Chartres, where he first heard of the martyr Foy and her amazing miracles. Bernard claimed that he was skeptical at first, but grew curious about the miracle-working saint and made a vow to visit her shrine at Conques, for him a remote and unknown place (6).

In case Philip's self-presentation as a convert from skepticism cannot convince his audience of his account's validity, he further invokes the support of "many othere trewe men" who can endorse his opinions.

Philip also writes a brief humility topos, very common in devotional texts. He claims he will do his best "after [his] sympul consyte" to convey the importance of Elizabeth's *vita*. This modest statement, however, pales in comparison to some forms of *captatio benevolentiae* that pervades medieval religious texts. Bishop Hartvic's *Life of King St. Stephen* (of Hungary), written for and at the request of King Coloman (1095-1116) is representative of the more common hyperbolic humility:

> I beg the sublimity of your triumphal magnificence on bended knees, that you take this little work under the protection of your royal hands, lest the use of ill-sounding sentences or the irregularities of the confused arrangement offend your eyes when you read it. Because, if perchance any unworthy blunder occurred [in it], I would rather have the flame of fire destroy the codex, than that it should come before the envious eyes of a third person (Berend 379).

Philip's humility seems almost pompous in comparison, but nevertheless he is consciously engaging in a topos expected of the author of a *vita*.

But Philip does need to be creative in establishing Elizabeth's *vita* as part of a tradition of hagiography because he has chosen the unusual liturgical structure of the

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hours to convey her miraculous activities. One trope that exists, almost without exception, in virgin-martyr *vitae* is the emergence of intense devotion and religious fervor during childhood. Philip states that at five years old, Elizabeth was already engaging in the "mortifiynge of here owne flesche" (III.3).[4] Thus, Philip establishes that she had been born with holy status and did not develop it later in life (a trope also employed in the other *vitae* in the manuscript).

Philip also uses this example to stress Elizabeth's chastity by stating that she has continued to mortify her own flesh "vnto the age that sche is nowe of, that is twenty yeer ... ful stronge and unfaylabil proof of hool and clene virginite" (III.3). Philip needs to emphasize Elizabeth's virginity because it is an important and central point in most women's hagiography; female saints almost invariably have maintained their virginity for the perfect bridegroom, Jesus. As Jocelyn Wogan-Browne explains, the state of chastity represents far more than being physically intact:

> Virginity is a disciplined and demanding mode of life in which a moment's pride – even pride in one's virginity – can plunge the practitioner down in a recapitulated Fall and render technical intactness meaningless. [Medieval] treatises are eloquent on virginity's value as humanity's best image of the *vita angelica* lost to it in the Fall and on virginity as a counter to the alienation inevitably felt by humanity in this world ("Virgin's Tale" 167).

Elizabeth's virginity needs to be clearly established before Philip describes that she takes on the role of Christ in her Passion presentation. A virgin woman, in early Christian doctrine, was considered more like a man, divorcing herself from the bodily desires

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[4] Although this clearly points to Elizabeth's childhood piety, it is an odd example to use – generally the saint's childhood holiness is demonstrated through prayer, not physical pain.

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associated with female weakness (both the desires and the weakness were considered inherent parts of femaleness in the Middle Ages).

Although equating a virgin woman with a man was predominantly reinforced by the early Church fathers through their writings and glosses, the idea of the *virago* continued into the later Middle Ages. Barbara Newman explains:

> The emergence of a few "virile women" in no way undermined the entrenched belief in female inferiority. At best, it only lifted that stigma from an elite group of consecrated, usually wealthy, virgins and widows .... If equality was a tenuous hope for even celibate women, the monastic construction of gender did offer a second option: a fragile, limited, paradoxical, yet real superiority. The consecrated woman was potentially *virago* [virile] but ideally, and often factually, *virgo* [virgin] as well. Although didactic writers liked to pun on these labels as if they were functionally equivalent, their affective connotations diverged widely. The virago was an honorary male, aspiring to the unisex ideal, while the virgin aspired to a highly gendered ideal embodied in the Virgin Mary. (Newman 5)

Because the idea of a virile woman already existed in medieval mystical and monastic writings, the image of Elizabeth-as-male or as Christ was not extraordinary. The performance of the Passion inspires Philip; Elizabeth's gender, although always present, is not the focus of Philip's *vita*, and he presents it as secondary to the fact of her Passion performance.

Another theme that Philip returns to throughout his *vita* is the physical pain that Elizabeth incurs in order to demonstrate the strength of her faith. This, too, is a major trope of the female saint/martyr's life. Although Elizabeth is not a martyr (she is neither killed nor tortured for her faith), she suffers the pain that seems to be so strongly linked to devotion in medieval hagiography. In her comprehensive study *Visualizing Women in the*

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Middle Ages, Madeline Caviness points out that in actuality, men were much more likely to be publicly tortured in the Middle Ages, whereas women's deaths were swifter, by burning, squashing, or stoning. She also notes that, at the same time, female saints' tortures were described far more frequently and graphically than male ones in traditional literary representations, and these accounts most likely appealed to a subconscious appetite to see female destruction. Although these texts were not written in the Middle Ages, they were frequently copied and disseminated:

> I propose that the modern analogues for the subjection of female martyrs to such bodily abuse as was frequently verbally and pictorially narrated in the Middle Ages are the slasher film and the snuff movie. A deconstructive viewing of these kinds of works frees images of tortured female bodies from the "intention" to show the tortures as evil acts and allows us to recognize the ways in which these representations both reinforce fear of female sexuality in their audience and provide erotic stimulation (Caviness 87).

Among this proliferation of martyr narratives, Philip's text would not be shocking, despite the graphic detail with which he describes Elizabeth's activities. However, Elizabeth seems to deny categorization because the pain she suffers is not from a male-inflicted violence, but a female-inflicted one, and even more disturbingly, self-inflicted.

In one area, however, Elizabeth's *vita* is different from that of the common woman saint's life: her relationship with her family. Philip states that when Elizabeth needs aid she "striketh forthe hire armes to her moder and to her sostres yonger thanne sche that serue her....And she schewith to hem cleerness of cheere, charite of herte, gladnesse of mynde, and swetnesse of goostly woordes" (III.24). Although Elizabeth may have died at a Cistercian convent in Herkenrode, at this stage in her life the mother and

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sisters mentioned are not religious ones, but her biological family. While some female saints remain with their families, many are expelled for their religious beliefs (common), because they refuse to marry (more common), or because they join an established religious order.

This phenomenon of family/daughter strife is prevalent in the beguine narratives. Alexandra Barratt examines the mother/daughter relationship of beguines and concludes that Elizabeth is surely an exception:

> The only one of the holy women of Liège whose family relationships seem to have been unproblematic is Elizabeth of Spalbeek....The family configuration elsewhere [outside of one reference to her 'virtuous' father] in the life consists of her mother and younger sisters (no brothers, apparently) who, literally and metaphorically support the visionary....After the fraught family dynamics of some of the other beguines, the apparent simplicity and naturalness of Elizabeth's family are refreshing (97-8).

Indeed, the passage shows a loving relationship between Elizabeth and her (predominantly female) family. They recognize that her holiness is unique and treat it as such, helping her recover from her activities. She, in turn, gives them "cleerness of cheere, charite of herte, gladness of mynde, and swetnesse of goostly woordes" (III.24). This hour in Elizabeth's day is portrayed as the most relaxed, since she is interacting with her family and not participating in her exhausting representation of the Passion.

In describing Elizabeth's confessions, Philip has another occasion to emphasize her extraordinary goodness and holiness – an element, of course, in nearly every saint's life:

> Also hit is to witte that she is neuere housilde or she haue shreuene hir byfore masse, the whiche schrifte semith rathere of louvynge than of blamynge, as the forseyde abbot hir confessour tolde me. Soothly she

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> blamith hirselfe mykel for she is not so perfitely in louvynge and thankynge of oure lorde as she aghte to be. And also that she othere while dredith and is sory more thanne she aghte for vnkyndenes and dampnacyone of mankynde, for bycause that men knowe not the beenfetys of oure lordys passyone and of here saluacyon (VIII.14-15).

Philip makes several observations that defend Elizabeth's credibility and orthodoxy. For example, she would never accept the Eucharistic Host unless she had first gone through confession (as was demanded of good Christians). Of the many purposes of a *vita*, *exemplum* seems to be the message Philip is striving for at this moment – an example of a life that others can strive to imitate.

If Philip composed his Latin text expecting it to be seen as an example, Elizabeth is setting one that priests would want their female charges to follow. Indeed, Elizabeth is so good that she blames herself in confession for not being perfect in her praising and thanking of God. Even more important, she confesses that her sins are such that she fears more than she ought to for the unnaturalness of humans, and that some do not fully understand Christ's Passion and humanity's salvation. Even Elizabeth's "sins" are saintly, further emphasizing her natural state of holiness and her likeness to other, already canonized, saints.

At the end of the *vita*, where Philip adds miracle stories from Elizabeth's life that he himself has *not* witnessed, he narrates the conversion of a man from Brabant:

> Oure seruauntes foot men that kepe oure hors stood onys besyde hir to aske helpe of hir prayers. Thanne oon of hem that was a Braban, and knewe hir langage, knelyd doune and bysoghte hir that sche wolde praye for hym and for his felawes .... And when sche hadde byholden hem bisely, sche callid specially to hir oon of hem that was yongest, a feyre yonge man, sympel and wel witted, and made oon that knewe booth [their] langage seye vnto hym that as sone as hee myghte he shulde make hym a

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> lewde frere of Clareualle or of anothere hous of oure ordir where hee myghte fynde a place of his conuersyone. And that she counseyled hym on allwise. And this same yonge man byhighte gladly to do after hir counseyle, and so it was done .... Afterwarde it was knowen of the same yonge man that often and bysely hee wolde be schreuen and as many tymes as hee myghte hee wolde be atte masse ful deuoute. And in sympilnesse of obedyens and innocens as men myghte see, he passed his felawes (VIII. 16-21).

This story is structured like many similar ones in medieval hagiography and ends with the saving of a soul, the ultimate Christian goal. It also highlights both Elizabeth's almost prophetic insight and the power that she holds over those around her. Like Julian of Norwich, she was a woman to whom local pilgrims came for advice. Elizabeth's perspicacity leads her to focus on a young man who not only had potential for the clergy, but who would eventually surpass other men at the monastery in his devotion and piety.

Shortly after, the same young man falls behind his Christian duties and eschews confession, and Elizabeth's "secret knowledge" is even more clearly defined as she immediately recognizes his sins, demanding to know the reason for his pretense and thus demonstrating her ability to "see" into a person's heart:

> And many folke beynge there presente anoon as she bygan to loke on hym she brest oute in to siche woordys, "yit arte thou not schreuene. Thou has don folily for thou abidith to schryue thee. Why taryes thou? Why feynes thou? The deuyl is ful slye and thou knowith not the poynte of thy deth." And hee was alle aschamed and wente aweye. And on the morne hee was schreuen in the cite of Leody to a frere that hadde Pope's powere, as it was seyde, and hee assoyled hym, as the same yonge man sayde afterwarde (VIII.22-23).

Elizabeth discerns what others cannot see, facts completely beyond her own experience. Her understanding of the young man leads him to confess himself to a pardoner immediately following his encounter with Elizabeth. She has saved the young man not

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just once, by leading him to his true calling as a religious man, but twice, by leading him back to confession when he had gone astray.

Gazing and Looking

Elizabeth's *vita* is premised on watching. A voyeurism pervades Philip of Clairvaux's text from the moment he begins to write her story. Philip is drawn to the city of Liège when he hears of Elizabeth "*in whom* oure mercyful lorde hath *schewed* merueilous miracles of his blissed passyone that maye stir alle Cristen pepil to deuocyone, the whilke merueilous werkes of oure lorde" (emphasis mine, II.1). Already we understand that the religious miracles connected to Elizabeth manifest themselves *inside* her – not around or through her (as in the case of visions), and thus something corporeal is taking place. Philip then stresses that he has seen things "undoutably with [his] eyen" (II.2). In this narrative, seeing is believing, and it is the seeing that Philip attempts to convey in his *vita* so that we too may be astonished by the miracles taking place in Liège.

But Philip is not the only one watching Elizabeth. By the time the *vita* found its way into MS Douce 114, it had been translated from Latin and formed into a vernacular text that, as I have already pointed out, could have had an audience of women. With this in mind, the possibly female audience is drawn into watching Elizabeth through Philip's gaze. He has seen these things through his own eyes and now invites the readers to see what he does, making them complicit in the way he looks at her.

Closely following the Latin, the scribe translates Philip of Clairvaux's emphasis

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on the eye and on his own claim to write what he has seen and not simply heard, carefully pointing out when he is relying on other men's observations. The importance of looking and being looked at in the Middle Ages cannot be underestimated. Caviness points out that there was a lot of anxiety surrounding how and what to watch. Within the economies of looking, hierarchies are formed: "Staring and being stared at are not primarily erotic or sexual, but political in the sense that they establish, maintain, or acknowledge hierarchies of power" (22). These power relations manifest themselves throughout Elizabeth's *vita* in the question of who is looking at whom (Philip at Elizabeth? Elizabeth at figures in devotional art?) What is the nature of the gaze (erotic? improper?) What kinds of gazing are valid? The latter question is especially vexed since seeing with one's "own eyes" is essential in validating Elizabeth's miraculous activities.

Although the *vita* shows that much of Elizabeth's life takes place at the Cistercian convent in Herkenrode, women's eyes or testimony do not count much in Philip's testimony. Caviness points out that there were several proscriptions against women *looking*, particularly if the object of sight was somehow dangerous. She links this to the biblical story of Lot's wife who (with her entire family) was forbidden by God to look back upon the destruction of Sodom but did so anyway and so was turned into a pillar of salt as punishment[5] (52).

There are, however, no restrictions on looking *at* art, and Elizabeth is looked at as a work of art throughout her *vita* – by Philip and by other monks and abbots who come to see her. Philip uses the comparison to a statue to describe Elizabeth's moments of

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[5]Genesis 19:24-29

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catatonia and stasis that separate her periods of religious ravishment, but the metaphor also indicates her status as a work of art that is to be regarded. The first time we are introduced to her alternate moments of activity and stasis, Philip explains that the ravishment happens while she is still in bed:

> It is to witte that booth this oure and othere oures she is rauesched or sche ryse fro hir bedde, and sche abydeth in the same staat that sche is rauisched in a good while, alle starke as an ymage of tree or stoon withouten felynge or mouynge and brethe that nothinge maye be touchyd or stiryd of hir not as mykel as hir litil fynger but if all the body be moued with alle (III.3).

After her "ravishment," Elizabeth remains as still as a statue and struck numb; it is as if she were dead with no feeling, movement, reaction to touch, or even breath as Philip describes it – invoking many statues of saints present in medieval churches.

This alternation between stillness and action is described by Susan Rodgers and Joanna Ziegler as "trance" and "dance." They see Elizabeth's moments of stillness, or trance, as necessary recovery periods after the strenuous and exhausting nature of her performances:

> In restored behavior, the performer has a social arena for constituting an essentially ritual self: one that can readily draw on a culture's vocabulary of divine beings. Elisabeth in trance probably engaged in much this sort of self-reconstitution, every time she held a major performance for her audiences of abbot and monks" (323).

Indeed, Philip uses almost these very words to describe Elizabeth after the ravishment and stillness are over: she "turnyd agayne to hirselfe" (III.2).

Although Elizabeth's performance seems more like theater than dance, she had more likely witnessed the latter than the former. Passion plays, although in existence in

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the thirteenth century, only gained widespread popularity in the later Middle Ages. Intriguingly, the fifteenth-century audience of MS Douce 114 would have understood her behavior in much more dramatic terms than Philip may have intended some 200 years earlier. Significant evidence shows, however, that dancing in churches and on church grounds not only existed but was widely practiced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

J.G. Davies points out in *Liturgical Dance* that during these two centuries, on the continent and in England, there were no fewer than twenty different bans against dancing in churches, indicating that the practice was indeed common, if not orthodox (49-51). Only a century later was Liège specifically cited as a place of dance: "1374. Aachen, Maestricht and Liège. This year saw the outbreak of a dance epidemic, i.e. people danced without ceasing until they collapsed through sheer exhaustion. In these three towns, they danced in front of the altar in the main church" (Davies 52). These dances were manic and mystical, in which participants claimed they "saw the Heavens open to reveal the Saviour enthroned with the Virgin Mary" (Rust 19). The dancing that swept the Low Countries was seen by the Church more as an epidemic than an expression of religious fervor.

Other evidence points to more a performative kind of dance, such as the direction to dance included in some medieval plays. John Marshall writes that although many medieval plays call for dancing, they specified "dancers in groups, rather than ... individual characters" (112). The most interesting references to dance, though, are those found in early fourteenth century devotional texts from the houses of cloistered Domincan nuns. These "sister-books," as they are referred to by Gertrud Jaron Lewis, suggest both

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singing and dancing as accompaniments to liturgical music. Dancing is encouraged, and Lewis points out that this indicates a different attitude towards dancing as religious expression: "While these spontaneous eruptions into song and dance are technically still within a religious context ... they are yet quite different from the measured liturgical movements or chanting in its proper setting" (168). Although Elizabeth lived before these texts were written, perhaps this sanctioned liturgical dancing existed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as well.

Women were also consistently pointed out as the main suspects in prohibitions against dance, and "late-medieval preachers and moralists continued to reject dance, not only as a manifestation of praise for God but even as secular rituals of socialisation and recreation" (Simons, "Reading" 13). The use of dance for all of these reasons probably made it particularly abhorrent to some when used within a church. Elizabeth seems to incorporate a kind of choreography into her performance as Rodgers and Ziegler argue, but she also makes it explicitly not-dance, by clearly dramatizing the Passion story.

Using performance theory to elucidate Elizabeth's *vita,* Rodgers and Ziegler posit that Elizabeth enters a liminal state through repetitive dance steps, movements, and rhythmic slapping of her body:

> In her holy performances, Elisabeth was a woman dancing a male life, a human dancing divinity, a thirteenth-century follower of Christ becoming Christ at the time of his crucifixion. We speculate that Elisabeth left behind her normal apprehension of her regular social identity as she entered her trance using her body as a percussive medium. Then, while in the midst of her dance, her selfhood was probably in transition towards its climactic union with her vision of Christ (312).

Although there seems to be no precedent for "dancing" the Passion, Elizabeth does meld

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all the different elements of performance. Philip also seems to see something inherently musical within Elizabeth's actions, literally likening her body parts and the way she uses them to instruments. He interprets her bodily movements as taking the place of psalms and singing – she has no voice, to Philip, other than her body. It is meant to be both watched and listened to:

> And in steed of salmes, this new tymbrer settith her flesche for an harpe, and hir chekys for a tymber, and ioy for a sawtry, and hir handys and fyngers for a wrast that is an instrument of organ songe. And so with a newe maner of syngynge, sche folowith forth wakynges of the secounde noctourne doynge efte sones the figure maners and tokens of the biginnynge of oure lorde's passyone, as hit seyde byfore (III.13).

The analogy also seems to underscore Philip's awareness that Elizabeth's actions *are* performance, combining music, dance, and of course, her audience. Philip's reference to a harp is also a reference to the Crucifxion, an image used in artistic depictions of the Passion. F. P. Pickering says the harp "was the most influential of all the many medieval symbols of the Crucifxion. ... Its authority was also unassailable, for according to the Easter Psalm God had addressed Christ Crucified as 'my harp'" (301). Philip's metaphor further links Elizabeth's body to that of Jesus.

Philip recites a litany of self-enacted harm that Elizabeth enacts, narrating the events of Elizabeth's day, and her Passion performance, with a sense of immediacy. In several passages, Philip takes great care to draw his audience into the action as it is taking place, and he uses present tense verbs and the words indicating sequence – "and anoon," "and after that," and "than," etc. – that give a step-by-step process and enhance the feeling of being there, of watching Elizabeth together with him.

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So what Ziegler and Rogers read as "dance" may in fact be one way that Elizabeth presents the Passion. It is at least a model with which she would have been familiar. Drama, however, is the primary medium that Elizabeth utilizes. In effect, she gives a one-woman show, although the women in her family have literally "supporting" roles, as Philip and his male companions look on. By playing the part of Jesus and his tormentors, Elizabeth assumes an agency utterly denied her in "normal" life as a woman. This manifests itself in one way through her use of the gaze. Although, as Caviness explains, women were not supposed to look, Elizabeth can do so in the guise of her characters.

Elizabeth's self-inflicted violence is extensively described, and Philip does not leave out brutal details. The intensity of her anger is startling, and it points to the noticeable lack of angry, violent women in medieval literature. She is described with praise and awe because she "makith a fiste of her hand and lokth grymly, brannishynge hir fiste, and makes feerful tokens and bekenynges with eyen and handys as a body that were wrooth and angry" (III.7). Elizabeth is playing the role of Christ's tormentors here, but in doing so she is given a space to be angry and to "lok[e] grymly" in a society where, as Caviness explains, women were not to put on any face at all: "In several medieval courtesy books, or manuals of good behavior for women, wives were instructed not to return the gaze of men in the street – not to *look back* one might say, the same proscription made to Lot's wife" (52). But Elizabeth is doing much more than looking back, she is looking angry and brandishing her fist. In her dual role as tormentor and tormented, she is allowed to do this within the confines of her daily enactment of the Passion. Elizabeth has effectively created a space where she can act violently angry, and

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in fact is praised for doing so.

Elizabeth's anger is complicated because she enacts this anger upon herself. She throws her own body to the ground, hitting her head against the floor. Is the scene acceptable, despite Elizabeth's agency and power, because the violence is violence against women? Philip consistently admits that his linguistic abilities fail him in his attempt to convey Elizabeth's actions; her performance is so incredible that it is something that "may neither be herde ne tolde" (III.8). Apparently, one has to see it to believe it, and yet the audience must rely on Philip's depictions.

Nevertheless, Philip does attempt to tell what he claims cannot be conveyed in words. In one of the more graphic descriptions of Elizabeth's self-inflicted harm, she tries to dig out her own eyes (or push them in) while imitating both a tormentor and Christ himself: "Sche bowith her arme and strekith oute hir fynger nexte the thumbe, drawynge the tothere fyngers togedir into hir hande and puttith to hir eyen ofte sythes: now to that oon, now to that other, as sche wolde graue hem oute or bore hem in" (III.9). It is significant that the violence Elizabeth inflicts is to her eyes – as if she is punishing herself for the angry gaze she enacted just before.

Elizabeth as Viewer of Devotional Art

Elizabeth may be looked at throughout her *vita*, but her performance demonstrates that she herself has also been an active viewer of devotional art. In a particularly striking scene, Philip describes Elizabeth's interaction with a "tabil" depicting Christ's Crucifxion. This may have been a diptych of wood or possibly alabaster, a very popular

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devotional object of a type made in England and exported in large numbers to the Low Countries and elsewhere on the continent, although the majority of these exports was in the later Middle Ages (Prigent 19).

At matins, the first liturgical hours of the day in Philip's organizational plan, Elizabeth interacts with the tabil. Indeed, she starts off her long day of devotion and performance at this time, grounding it in the image that she can hold with both her hands and her gaze:

> And then anon is taken to hir a tabil ful wele depeynte with an ymage of oure lorde crucifyed. And holdyng that open and vncouerd with booth handys, ful deuoutly she lokith on oure lorde. And often and thikke sche seith these woordys: "zouche here. zouche heere." That is to sey in Englysche, "Swete loord, swete lord." And with hire clene virgyn lippys she kysseth often sweetly the feet of oure lordis ymage (III.17).

The description of her holding the object "open," suggests a diptych of some sort, but the only sense of what the image depicted represents is that she is looking at Christ. The picture acts as a talisman for Elizabeth, and she returns to it often between the periods of "ravishing," in whish she imitates the scenes represented there.

The strength with which she holds onto the devotional object is in stark contrast to her weak body, as described by Philip: she allows no one to take it from her:

> And in the spaces of thos rauischynge[s], the same tabil is holden so strongly with her fyngers that when the tabil is shaken, moued or drawen of anybody, as with enfors to haue it aweye, hit departith neuer, but alle hir body is stiryd after the sterynge of the tabel....And soo she durith a good space with incres of swetnesse, as semes to hem that se right as she didde in biholdynge of the ymage, with othere hygh tokens of deuocyone as hit is seyde byfore. Amonge these ioyes soothly the same virgyne chaunges no chere, but her countenaunce is stedfastly sette in consideracyone of the ymage, so that she byholdith nobody nor noon othere thinge but the tabil allonly, nor sche spekith to nobody, ne gyues noon answere to hem that

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speke to hir, but hir thought holly vpon oure lorde. (III.22-23).

Elizabeth's meditation on the object is so intense that she is seemingly unaware of those around her – neither speaking nor answering those who speak to her. The "tabil" becomes the starting point for the rest of Elizabeth's activities – precisely what such an image was intended to do in the Middle Ages. Her repeated return to the image speaks to its power as a catalyst for the performance that follows the remainder of the day.

Elizabeth further demonstrates her familiarity with devotional art by becoming, herself, a living tableau of Christ's Passion. Books of Hours, illustrated prayer books, and, especially, the religious decorations in churches (paintings, sculpture, stained glass) were omnipresent in medieval Europe, and clerics and lay people were encouraged to concentrate on the depicted scenes. Claire Sponslor writes that after meditating on the individual images,

> the next step is to visualize all the stages of the action, moving from episode to episode through the entire event, meditating on each action .... Medieval viewers, following Augustine's theory of vision as a ray projected onto the object that then passed into the viewer and bonded with the soul, understood themselves to be active agents in the visual experience (Sponslor, *Drama*, 121-2).

Elizabeth takes this idea of visualization and transforms it into the drama she presents, inserting herself into the Passion story and playing all the roles required. Elizabeth follows the stages that Sponslor has outlined by first viewing the art, then inserting herself into the images depicted, and finally becoming herself an active agent within the Passion story.

The artist intentionally invited this kind of identification with the images. Indeed,

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by the late Middle Ages, Passion iconography was specifically designed to blur temporal lines between the viewer and the action depicted, making "the Passion ever-present as a fact without actually representing it as a historical event" (Camille 194). Elizabeth diverges from her imitation of Christ in several places to enact other holy images that would be familiar to her and to the text's audience. On the Friday when she receives the stigmata, Elizabeth poses as the Virgin Mary. Women were often encouraged through devotional texts and artistic images to envision themselves at the Passion in the role of Mary, so although Elizabeth's physical interpretation would have been unusual, meditating on the Virgin's pain would not have been:

> Ferthermore, the same Frydaye sche figured vnto vs how oure blessyd lady Cryste's moder stood besyde the crosse, puttynge hir left hande vndir hir lefte cheek and bowynge hire heed and hir nekke to the same syde and holdynge hir righte hande vndir hir righte [cheek] (VII.9).

Elizabeth places herself in a typical iconography of the Virgin – with her head tilted to one side and her right hand supporting her right cheek. This image, however, must have seemed slightly altered as Elizabeth's clothes are covered with blood running from her eyes (a detail that will be described later in this chapter). To the viewer, it would seem that the Virgin and her son are fused into one person, a phenomenon called the co-Passion, where both suffer together. After representing Mary, Elizabeth positions herself as John the Evangelist. She then emulates representations of Jesus on the road to Calvary, the Crucifixion, and the Deposition from the cross as they would exist in the Middle Ages.

At another point, Elizabeth demonstrates her familiarity with devotional art by

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taking an image that is in fact *not* in the Passion narrative, but had been so interpreted through devotional art:

> Ferthermore, after many maneres of representacyouns of oure lorde's crosse and many passyouns of the virgyn turmentyd, there folowe vnspekabil maners of ful deuoute prayers the whiche, not as I wolde but as I myght, I haue discriued byfore; but I woot wel that my power nor my cunnynge myghte not fulfille my wille. After that sche hath bytokenyd in her laste standynge in the liknesse of a crosse the ende of oure lorde Jhesu, than she is alle pale and bloodles and bowith hir heed now byfore hir, now to the righte syde, now to the lefte, as if sche expounyd that at is writen in the gospel: "*Filius hominis non habet vbi caput suum reclinet.*" That is to mene, "Cryste hath not wher to lene his heed vppon" (VI.8).

These words are taken from the Gospel of Matthew 8:20 "And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (it is similarly phrased in Luke 9:58). The scene is not part of the Passion narrative, but occurs while Jesus and his disciples are underway to Jerusalem.

This phrase was often incorporated into Passion narratives and devotional art, particularly because Christ had referred to himself in the remark (Marrow 167). James Marrow argues that many of the depictions of Christ on the cross seem to consciously draw on this imagery: "Although the influence of this imagery upon art cannot be proven, it seems reasonable to suggest that it might underlie some depictions of the Crucifixion in which Christ is represented with His head pitched harshly and helplessly forward" (168). Elizabeth uses the image so clearly that Philip is immediately reminded of the Gospel passage and its use in Passion narrative.

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Elizabeth's Body: Pain, Ravishment, and the Stigmata

Elizabeth's moments of rapture and union with God are described in a way that earn her classification as a mystic. At the heart of mysticism is the idea that the experience of God "cannot be adequately expressed in language and must therefore ultimately remain an *ineffable*" (Riehle 1). However, the mystics find a new language in which the unspeakable can be expressed. For some (like Richard Rolle), rhetorical flourish conveys the divine experience, particularly in eroticized language that covers a broad emotional range. Elizabeth claims the language considered most appropriate for a woman in the Middle Ages – the language of the body.

Most mystical writings used physical metaphors to describe the feeling of rapture, or *raptus*, in itself an ambiguous word that has various nuances. In his book on Middle English mysticism, Wolfgang Riehle posits that the use of *raptus* instead of *extasis* (ecstasy) is a conscious one on the part of the mystical writers that implies an important distinction:

> The mystics often speak of *raptus* or *rapi* instead of *extasis* to imply that mystical ecstasy is a divine happening which man experiences as a being carried off .... It is interesting that the English authors should use the verb *ravishen* so often, for it certainly contains this element of violence, as it can mean 'to carry off', 'to be passionately in love' and 'to assault sexually' (Riehle 94-95).

Philip's choice of the word *rapio* and the appearance of *ravishen* in Middle English are thus important decisions by author and translator. These words signify that pain and violation are encoded within Elizabeth's ecstasy. To both authors, a mystical union with God combines these elements.

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In his article discussing Chaucer and several documents accusing him of *raptus*, Christopher Cannon looks closely at the words and both its social and legal connotations in the Middle Ages. He points out that the word was always ambiguous – in some cases clearly meaning abduction, in others, specifically a sexual assault, and sometimes could mean both things simultaneously. In his study, Cannon found that in some legal documents *raptus* was sometimes specified to mean "rape," but was never specified to mean only abduction ("*Raptus*" 88). The readers of Elizabeth's *vita*, at least in fifteenth-century England, would have associated the word with this dual meaning and understood Elizabeth's "ravishment" as both physical and sexual.

Philip depicts Elizabeth's day as alternating between ravishment and exhaustion. In the heightened state of ravishment, Elizabeth is transported and Philip describes her as unaware of her surroundings and audience, focusing only on the pain and ecstasy that seem to commingle. Several of the passages demonstrate this alternation between exhilarating energy and pain with sheer exhaustion that lapses into catatonia:

> Neuertheles, it is to witte that booth this oure and othere oures she is rauesched [before] sche ryse fro hir bedde, and sche abydeth in the same staat that sche is rausiched in a good while alle starke as an ymage of tree or stoon withouten felynge or mouynge and brethe that nothinge maye be touchyd or stiryd of hir not as mykel as hir litil fynger but if all the body be moued with alle. After the whiche raueschynge as turnyd agayne to hirselfe, sche ryseth vp and goth oute swiftly of hir bedde and walkith in here chaumbyr with a merueylous and a manerly goynge as hit is trowed with aungels ledynge (III.2).

In this passage, Philip narrates Elizabeth's mornings as ones that begin with rapture before she even rises from her bed, blending both her activity and passivity. Although lying in bed, she is so overwhelmed with the ravishing that she becomes paralyzed before

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she can again "return to herself," a trope used in all three mystics' lives of MS Douce 114 to describe their "normal" moments between divine ones.

Elizabeth's physical feebleness is a sign of both her femininity and her holiness. While acting as Christ may give her the status of *virago*, Philip's frequent referral to Elizabeth's passivity is a consistent reminder that she is a woman, with all the weakness expected of her. Indeed, part of what is so miraculous about Elizabeth's activities is that they are enacted despite her frailty:

> And so, as it is seyde, atte mydnyghte after hir raueschynge, sche ryseth merueylously stronge to suffre labour and peyne that was byfore in body weyke and vnmyghty. And whanne sche is vp, cladde as sche is allewey with a wollen coot next her flesch and with a whyte lynnen garnemente sumwhatly trailynge on the erthe, than sche walketh ful honestly in hir chaumbyr and withoute blynnynge. As sche goth and commith ageyn, sche swappeth hirselfe vpon the chekys with booth handys (III.5)

Despite the pain in her exhausted body, Elizabeth overcomes this obstacle to rise up and perform the next part of the Passion by slapping herself on the cheeks.

The English word "vnmighty" is used at the end of the first sentence in this passage as the translation for the Latin word "imbecellis." In her major study on medieval women and food *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, Caroline Walker Bynum interprets the Latin word (used several times as adjective and noun by Philip) as probably meaning "insane." She argues that the visions of Christ which Elizabeth has, along with other women mystics, leads to this belief:

> The central theme in women's visions, increasing from the thirteenth to the early fifteenth century, was fusion with the crucified body of Christ. These visions stream with blood. And in the frenzy of trance or ecstasy, pious women sometimes mutilated themselves with knives, as Mary of Oignies did, or, like Beatrice of Nazareth and Elizabeth of Spalbeek, drove themselves to what they

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and their companions saw as "insanity" (Bynum, *Holy Feast,* 209).

Bynum cites the *vita* (section III.5, quoted above) in a footnote and points out the term *imbecillitas* as used by Philip.

Bynum has not placed the word *imbecillitas* in the whole context of the passage, however, and thus does not fully recognize that Philip is clearly referring to Elizabeth's body and not her mind. If Philip sees Elizabeth's activities as "insane," he does not say so in his *vita*. Although *imbecillitas*, as well as the English translation of "vnmighty," could refer to either body or mind, Philip makes it particularly clear that he is using the phrase "in body weyke and vnmighty" (III.5) to indicate lacking physical strength.

Rebecca Clouse writes a rebuttal of Bynum's interpretation of Elizabeth and Philip's perception of her. Clouse sees the weakness as integral to the constant ravishment Elizabeth experiences. She notes that the rhetorical structure and the pattern that emerges (repeated rapture followed by exhaustion) indicates that Elizabeth's frailty merits divine compensation, and that by association Philip hopes to receive the same divine favor (he uses the same words of weakness to describe his rhetorical skills): "The writer describes himself and his text as weak and unmighty, and by intruding such self-descriptions into the narrative, he opens a window for an infusion of divine strength, for a personal *rauischynge* or a *rauischynge* of the text" (Clouse 96).

As Clouse indicates, Elizabeth's weakness is central to the narrative. Her passivity is categorized as something separate from the pain that she experiences during the moments of rapture or the self-inflicted pain at the end of the passage in which Elizabeth begins to slap herself (III.5). Philip presents Elizabeth's holiness in three ways:

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she suffers general weakness; internally generated but externally inflicted pain (stigmata, rapture); and external, self-inflicted discomfort (the hairshirt she wears, her beatings).

In one passage, Philip describes the state of exhaustion Elizabeth returns to after a moment of rapture, as a place where she is "near death:"

> After that, whan the ende of turmente cometh in as mykel as in hir is, sche restith hir froo that vnsuffrabil trauelle euen as she were alle ouercomen and anentized. And a litil while after, now and now, sche makith sobbyngs and sighes as a body schulde dye. Then forsooth as sche schulde yeeld the gost, sche is rauesched and restith alle her body froo tourmente and laboure. And tille that while she is comunly longe rauyshed, and noon other thinge is seen in hir but starkenes of membrys, palnes of visage withoute blood, and alle maner lackynge of felynge, mouynge, and breth, as hit were a deed body (III.14-15).

Elizabeth recovers by sobbing and sighing as if "a body schulde dye." Like the association between pain and devotion, intimacy with death and God is also linked. The mystic Julian of Norwich received her visions only after an extended illness that brought her close to death. Julian prayed that she could be as near to death as possible (without actually dying) in order to bring herself closer to understanding God:

> In this sikenesse I desired to have all manier peynes bodily and ghostly that I should have if I should dye, with all the dreds and tempests of the fends, except the outpassing of the soule. And this I ment for I would be purged be the mercy of God and after lyven more to the worshippe of God because of that sekenesse; and that for the more speede in my deth, for I desired to be soone with my God (*Revelation* 3).

Julian gets what she prays for and credits her insightful and complex theological writings to the visions that ensue while she is in a near-death state.

Michael Camille notes an almost identical trajectory from a state of rapture into one of near unconsciousness in discussing the life of the Dominican nun Margaret Ebner

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(1291-1351), around half a century after Elizabeth. He writes that in meditation on the Passion of Christ:

> Margaret ... went through so many paroxysms of pain and somatic transformations that she lost all bodily control and had to be supported by others. This almost grotesque malleability of the mystic's body, its collapse into total passivity, is paralleled in some late-medieval pictorial representations of the object of the mystic's desire – Christ himself (183).

This example suggests that Elizabeth is not entirely unique in her vacillations and, indeed, may be following a model already available to women mystics, or may be establishing it for the first time. Camille's reference to the iconography of the dead Christ also demonstrates how Elizabeth imitates devotional art and its representation of Jesus. Elizabeth's exhaustion, while in many ways typically feminine, is also linked to Christ – further demonstrating her *imitatio Christi*.

Most of the women surrounding Elizabeth are not spectators in the way that Philip and his fellow priests are; they are there to assist her. During the Mass she enters a state of catatonia, freezing in the shape of the cross and, after the Eucharist, remaining with her hands in prayer. Her sisters and mother are charged with supporting Elizabeth in the state of rapture after she receives the sacrament and making her comfortable during its process:

> Forsooth if sche schal than receyue the sacrament, she turnith hir anoon ageyns the auter. And hir sistres and hir moder lifte vp and vndir sette hir with clothes or with two piloues. And so sche abidith, neither liggynge ne sittynge but as bytwix booth, haldynge hire handys togedir with fulle deuoute sighynges and goostly greydlynes, and other while with teerys abidynge mekely the comynge of hire savyoure and spouse (VIII.6).

Philip rarely mentions the women as witnesses of Elizabeth's marvels; they function as the supporting cast in and around her performance, as silent participants in her activities.

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Like Margaret Ebner, she needs to be supported by others because her physical exhaustion is so severe.

During her rapture, Elizabeth establishes her own community of women, albeit a community of two, that does not include the watchful eye of her abbot and protectors. In the final section of the *vita,* Philip describes inexplicable miracles and happenings that surround Elizabeth outside of her daily enactment of the Crucifixion:

> Also vpon a daye the Abbot asked hir howe and by what strengthe she myghte suffre so many and so greuous peynes. And sche answeryd, "I suffre but litil to regarde of a mayden that is callyd Mary, the whiche dwellith in a towne of Flaundirs that is callid Insula. Soothly sche is turmentyd fer sharper and longer than I." And thanne sche bygan to discryue the passyone of that same Marye as thof sche hadde seen hir many tymes in angwysche of peynes, neuertheles sche neuere sawe hir .... Ferthermore sche seyde that the same Marie and sche sawe ilke othere often, whanne they were rauyshed, and that sche knewe hir ful wele and seyde that she was a ful wyse mayden and that sche hadde the spirite of wisdome and cownseyle. And she tolde myche of hir pacyens and wysdome that wee knowe wele is sothe (IX.6-9).

This anecdote is perhaps the most significant of all the miracle stories that Philip relates. It is the only time we understand what happens to Elizabeth during her "ravishings," which up to this point were only what Philip had seen happen to her body. Elizabeth appears to meet and communicate with a woman, Mary, in another town (almost certainly Lille), while both are in a state of rapture. Elizabeth says that Mary's pain is greater than hers and that she "hadde seen hir many tymes in angwysche of peynes, neuertheles sche neuere sawe hir."

Elizabeth never saw Mary in the flesh, but she had seen her many times in her state of ravishment. This ethereal relationship between Mary and Elizabeth is one rooted

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in mutual pain and passion for Jesus; while both are in a state of rapture brought on by religious devotion, they meet each other. The mysterious relationship is further complicated by the abbot's later declaration that he had never heard of Mary nor anything about Insula. Indeed, he reports that there is no way (other than her raptures) that Elizabeth could know of Mary since she has not traveled and stories of Mary had never reached Spalbeek; her account must be accurate.

Philip's own knowledge is essential to the story and understanding Elizabeth's "secret knowledge" as miraculous. For he, and the men he apparently travels with (his usage of "we" is ambiguous), *has* seen Mary and can vouch for her existence and her reputation as a holy, wise maiden. Philip claims that even the king of France has visited Mary and built her a chapel (again bolstering his own words and observation with that of other male authority). Philip cannot use his own witness to validate Elizabeth's vision of Mary, but he can testify as to the existence of this other mystic, and in so doing validate the miraculous nature of Elizabeth's actions.

Elizabeth meets Mary in a state of rapture about Jesus; although she is imitating and experiencing the longing and mystical transportation normally associated with the bride of Christ, she is in contact with another woman. Mary, on the other hand, encounters Elizabeth enacting Christ: a female body performing the very male person she would hope to see when transported. Although nothing appears explicitly erotic in Elizabeth's description of her encounters with Mary, a sexual tension is encoded in the language of mystical devotion and rapture. Indeed, the measure of the devotion to Elizabeth (and to Philip, as well) is exemplified in the pain inherent in the state of

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ravishment. Elizabeth claims that Mary suffers even more than she does during this transcendence, and they meet together in states of "painful anguish." The quality of their mutual pain equals the quality of their devotion: suffering these moments together – in the name of Christ – they reach moments of pure mystical ecstasy.

Philip does not gloss what it may mean that Mary and Elizabeth meet each other and not Jesus (whom other mystics, like Julian of Norwich, do claim to meet in their states of ecstasy or rapture). In fact, the emphasis he places on male authority and the male eye throughout his text would be somewhat lessened if he dwelled on this community of two that Elizabeth has created despite her geographic isolation and constantly watched state. Instead, he comments on the miraculousness of the fact that Elizabeth knows anything about Mary, who lives so far away. What that knowledge is predicated upon is not of interest to him. He cannot see and report on this facet of Elizabeth's rapture, and thus he allows it to remain unexplained within the *vita*.

The stigmata, of course, are Elizabeth's clearest visual examples of *imitatio*, and the primary reason Philip came to investigate her in the first place. Significantly, the first direct reference to the wounds on her feet is in passing while Philip describes another moment of Elizabeth's catatonia in the shape of a cross:

> Therfore in ilke of these three oures, anoon after the rauesshynge that goth alweye of custome byfore the oures, sche goth swiftly oute of here bedde and puttith the to foot vndir the tothere and the to wounde vndir the tother, and soo standith vprighte and – strecchynge oute her armes and her handys in the forme of a cros, with open eyen, soo abidynge a good space stille as stoon – neither seeth ne feelith. And if otherwhile the litil fynger of the righte hande bee touchyd, the fyngers of the tothere hande are moued with alle the bulke of the body in the same manere of mouynge (VI.2).

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The miracle of Elizabeth's performance is not the stigmata but again her stillness and ability to maintain the shape of the cross throughout her ravishings and other manipulations, almost as if Elizabeth has solidified her flesh into something else. Suzannah Biernoff argues that "flesh" and "body" were inherently sinful, its very mutability proof of humanity's fallen state, but paradoxically symbolic of what society could be:

> The postlapsarian *body* – especially the female body – existed in a state of carnal entropy, to the extent that the terms 'flesh' and 'body' are often used interchangeably. Unlike the bodies enjoyed by Adam and Eve before the fall, or the 'restored' bodies of the resurrection, the fleshly body was mutable and vulnerable, subject to ageing, death and decay. Nevertheless, as an ideal or a metaphor distanced from the realities of the flesh, the human *corpus* signified the potential for a stable and harmonious hierarchy in which each part was defined in relation to a whole. While the flesh was by definition amorphous and illegible, in its 'pure' state the body was coherent, both anatomically and semantically. The body was also distinguished from the flesh by its passivity and instrumental status in relation to the sovereign mind or will. If the flesh was its own master (or own mistress), the body was both a dutiful handmaiden and fluent expression of the soul (Biernoff 149-50).

In representing both Christ's flesh and the cross, Elizabeth is achieving the pure state of the body – a coherent, immutable matter. In doing so, however, Elizabeth also denies her own flesh and its needs, as well as its pain. In essence, Elizabeth refuses her own corporeality in order to represent Christ's.

Although Philip refers directly and indirectly to the stigmata throughout the *vita*, he does describe the phenomenon until nearly the end of his text. This is partly because on Elizabeth the stigmata do not appear as part of her quotidian devotion, Philip also chooses to address the stigmata in a separate section because its appearance is what

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initially drew him to investigate her. Philip's description of Elizabeth's stigmata is only the second record of one after Saint Francis, although later they would be considered the highest form of Christ's favor to certain holy people. Miri Rubin explains its eventual significance:

> The suffering of the human Christ was the image most amenable to personal identifications, one of the most interesting was through its association with the eucharist. Let us consider the wounds: Christ revealed his wounds to chosen holy people just as he provided them with private communion....Particularly privileged in its eucharistic and sacrificial overtones was the side wound, the gash made by the lance, from which flowed water and blood (Rubin 303).

Elizabeth's wounds are new and barely heard of, and Philip emphasizes the validity of his story by saying very early in the *vita* that the stigmata were "withouten any dowte, similacyone or fraud" (II.3).

Only after seven chapters of the *vita* does Philip directly addresses the stigmata and gauge the validity of the wounds:

> Also y and my felawes, booth abbotes and monkes, atte mydnyghte and sum othere oures also, sawe blode comynge oute at hir eyen and dropped doune and dyed the linnyn garment that sche was cladde with ouerest. Also wee sawe blood sprynge oute often atte the woundes of hir handys and of hir feet and oute of hir syde on a Fridaye atte noon. Wee sawe blode, not allynges rede but as it were mengyd with water, rennynge oute thorowe an hool of hir coot made aboute the pappe. And the wollen cloth that satte next hir flesche was defuyled with the same blode, and also a party of hir syde aboute the wounde. And wee sawe not alloonly the vttir clothe that toucheth the maydens flesche, that is to saye handes, feet and syde, sprenkelyd and dyed with blood, but also hir pappys were all defuyled with blode rennynge fro hir eyen. And also othere while blode ranne oute at hir fynger endys bytwix the nayles and the flesche (VII.7-8).

Philip is careful to delineate the important clerical witnesses who, along with him, saw the miracle. Eyewitness is crucial to Philip's narrative, but his eyes alone are not

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sufficient to validate such an amazing occurrence. Philip writes they appear at midnight and "sum othere oures also," but whether this means a single day in her life, regularly on Fridays, or only on Good Friday is not stated. In the passage above, blood also runs out of her eyes to such an extent that it soaks her clothes with blood.

Philip describes the blood that runs out of Elizabeth's hands, feet, and side, exactly as that which came from Jesus' side was described – a mixture of both blood and water. In the Middle Ages, blood piety – devotion surrounding the blood of Jesus – would have made the audience of this text very familiar with these tropes concerning Christ. Elizabeth's *imitatio Christi* is taken to another level – not only does she receive the stigmata, but even her very blood is Christlike.

Elizabeth sustains another kind of wound – not one of the stigmata, or markers of the Crucifixion – in the appearance of pinpricks of blood around her forehead, a recollection of the crown of thorns placed in scorn on Jesus' head during the night before his death. The day of these wounds is specified – Good Friday. Philip is not the eyewitness in this passage; it is the only time the women surrounding Elizabeth give any type of testimony, albeit filtered through the more authoritative voice of the abbot:

> The forsayde abbot tolde me and my felawes that vpon a good Frydaye in the yeere of oure lorde a thowsande two hundred sexty and sex, the same virgyne heed bygan to ake in a tyme bytwix two ouris whan she hadde reste fro peynes, as she was wonte to haue. And sche myghte not holde hir heed vpon a pilow no while in o manere, but now and now trollid it hyderwarde and thyderwarde. And whanne hir moder and hir sustirs perceyued that they lighted candelle and loked nere and bisily byhelde the mayden's heed. And they sawe and schewed to othere bisyde prickynges as of thornes alle reed with blody dropes rounde about the hede of the virgyne in the maner of a gerlonde, figurynge the corowne of thornes of oure lord (IX.1).

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Although Philip is taking the abbot's word of this account, significantly the story originate with Elizabeth's mother and sisters; they find Elizabeth unable to rest her head and they notice the band of bloody droplets around it. This scene demonstrates more than the other passages the pain Elizabeth undergoes in experiencing the wounds; in addition, the display on her head gives her an even more complete identified with Christ's passion than the stigmata.

Although Philip returns to Elizabeth's profusion of blood (from her wounds, head, and eyes), he is also impressed by the lack of moisture in her mouth and nostrils. While the former indicates Elizabeth's holy status, the latter points to her non-physicality, and in a sense her non-femaleness:

> Moreouere be hit knowen to hem that wole witte that the vtward clennes of the same virgyn Elizabeth beerith witnesse and open euydens of hir inwarde clennes. For aftir commun witnessynge of hem that dwelle with hire she forbedith her tunge fro yuel and hir lippys that they speke no gyle. Soo that fro hir mouthe cometh neither spotel, ne spittynge, nor no maner of moisture or mater of vnclennes fro hir nese thirles (IX.11).

Linking this lack of saliva, mucous and other moisture to a lack of evil, Philip declares this dryness to proof of her "inwards clennes." However, the subtle subtext references Elizabeth's femaleness and the ways in which she avoids being marked as such.

Medieval medicine was founded on the idea developed by Roman physicians of the "humors" and their balance within the body; these were "cholera (mostly dry), phlegm (mostly cold), black bile (mostly dry), and blood (mostly moist)" (Cadden 17). The humors were believed to calibrate both physical and emotional constitution of all people, but they were divided differently among the genders. Most women in the Middle Ages

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were categorized as phlegmatics, but Elizabeth – we are told – has *no* phlegm or moisture, except blood, the most "balanced" of the humors (Cadden 184). By avoiding even the anatomical basis for women's flaws (too much moisture), Elizabeth is balanced both physically and mentally according to Philip.

One aspect of Elizabeth's devotion that is decidedly gendered manifests itself in what and how she eats. Bynum reports that extreme fasting was a "theme in every female *vita* from the Low Countries," and names all three *vitae* in Douce 114 as prime examples (*Holy Feast* 119). Bynum argues that women were eschewing earthly food in order to fill themselves with heavenly sustenance, and that fasting was a way to achieve that. Philip observes Elizabeth's sparse meals as further proof of her sanctity:

> Soothly of hir meet and drynke, I write that at I am syker of. Onees atte a dewe oure and, as me menith, bytwix sexte and noon hir moder broghte hir a litil mylke in a litil dyshe and then oure felawe the Abbot of Clareualle putte a spoonful thereof to hir mouthe and that she suppyd atte three suppyngis as hir semyd with difficulte. And than sche bygan to fille with alle, as she hadde lothed meet that was gyuen hir. And anoon was taken hir drynke, wyne medelid with watir, and whanne sche hadde tastyd thereof she wolde not drynke. And I dare saye with good consciens that a doufe wolde haue dronken more atte oonys of the welle watir than the mayden didde of the cuppe. And this is verrely leeuyd: that she etith and drynketh rathere after othere mennes wille, than for any luste or nede of hirselfe. Also othere while, if there be putte to hir mouth fruytes of trees or flesche or fysche, then she soukys sumwhat of the sotil substauns, nothinge receyuynge of the gros mater (IX.12-14).

Even when food is given to Elizabeth, she prefers to suck on it – giving herself the essence but not the thing itself. Part of her holiness is her lack of want; Philip claims she is only eating because of others' desire that she do, and not out of personal or bodily need. This ability to survive on almost no substance is linked to the pain she endures as

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part of her everyday devotion.

The more hardship Elizabeth suffers, the closer to God and to holy devotion she comes – at least in the eyes of her biographer. Many other contemporary hagiographers also made the same connection between pain and piety. Bynum explains:

> The hagiographers and the women themselves saw self-starvation and illness as extensions both of Christ's suffering on the cross and of the pains of purgatory. Purgatory was not primarily, to these women, a physical place somewhere, a logical complement to heaven and hell; it simply *was* suffering – redemptive suffering – which was simultaneously Christ's and the sinner's. The suffering on earth could replace suffering later, and by suffering one could redeem others as well as oneself (*Holy Feast* 120).

Although this link is more clearly made in the other two *vitae* in the codex, as we will see, Elizabeth's near-starvation is another aspect of her performance of Christ's Passion; she is engaging in yet another form of *imitatio Christi.* By suffering extreme physical pain, Elizabeth willingly mirrors Christ's own pain during the Crucifixion. To Philip, this does not represent the redemptive value that Bynum indicates (although this will be the central idea in Thomas de Cantimpré's *vita* of Christina *mirabilis*), but rather her extreme *imitatio Christi.*

Philip himself makes this link between Elizabeth's suffering (although not necessarily her eating) and its greater significance when he sums up her life and its meaning at the end of the *vita*:

> Wherfore this virgyne, whos lyfe is alle mirakil, ye moorouer alle hirselfe is but mirakil as hit schewith by the abouen writynge figures and expounes, not allonly Cryste, but Cryste crucified in hir body....In woundes and peynes she affermith the feith of the passyone. In ioye and myrthe after peyne, gladnes of the resurrexyone. In rauisshynge, the Ascencyone. In rodynes of hire reuelacyouns and spiritual lyfe she figurith

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> the sendynge of the Holy Goost. And of the sacramente of the auter, and of confessyon and then of desyres of alle mennes saluacyone and of sorowe of vnkyndenes and dampnacyone of mankynde that atte is writen aboue declarith openly inowgh, that thou man arte vnexcusabil if so quik arguments and open reproues stir the not to strengthe of feith, to desyre of charyte and deuocyone (IX.17-19).

Philip's conclusions describe his own understanding of Elizabeth's devotion and what it may mean in a larger Christian sense. To him, Elizabeth represents Christ, Christ crucified, and the church. All of these are housed within her body.

In addition to these already hugely important symbols, Philip continues to say that Elizabeth's pain affirms the Passion, the joy after the pain affirms the Resurrection, and her ravishings the Ascension. This part is curious, however, because the moments after Elizabeth's pain and ravishing (which often coincide rather than follow the chronological pattern Philip has imposed on them), Elizabeth does not automatically fall into a joyful state, but lapses into exhaustion. Philip's glossing seems to deny the facts of the *vita* as he has recounted them.

But this part of his narrative is essential. If Philip intends this to be read by laity, he needs to end with a gloss as to how to interpret Elizabeth's life and body, as well as how to understand the miracles that he has recounted. He ends with an appeal to the reader to be stirred by the facts of the story, and if they are not it is "inexcusable." The *vita* is much more than simply an account of Elizabeth's miracles, with evidence of their veracity, although it originate as Philip's aim to document the authenticity of the claim that she bore the stigmata. This ending indicates that he hopes it will be taken as a kind of *exemplum* and as a means to religious devotion and "desyre of charyte."

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Translating Elizabeth

A complexity runs throughout Elizabeth's *vita* in MS Douce 114 that does not exist in the Latin version. The Middle English text is the product of as few as four scribes and their interpretations: the thirteenth-century Philip, the scribe whose Latin copy was used as the base text, his later Middle English translator, and the fifteenth-century scribe of this particular codex. Some of the scribal errors are clarified by comparing MS Douce 114 to the Latin St Johns MS 182, which clearly comes from the same base text as the Douce. When these two manuscripts contain the same errors – as they do with the variant Dutch phrase "ȝouche heere" (III.17), for example – we can at least ascertain that it is not the scribe of Douce 114 who makes the fault, but merely copies it.

The divergent readings from the Latin are significant because *these* characterize what would have been read by the Middle English audience, not the original Latin text, and there are a few places where the errors significantly alter the meaning of the underlying narrative. Several passages are missing from both Douce 114 and St Johns MS 182, suggesting that the Latin source from which these two manuscripts were taken was already missing portions of Elizabeth's *vita,* for whatever reason. However, several passages existing in the St Johns MS are lacking in the Douce MS. The translator probably left these out intentionally. Most of these are Biblical quotations, which the translator had already stated he would leave out because they required more gloss than he felt capable of providing. One significant passage, though, contains no Biblical lines and its absence is startling:

In the male sex, namely in the person of St. Francis, God has revealed

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> himself already. So that both sexes not only by the testimony of the Scriptures, but also by living examples of the human condition, may perceive on Christ's cross what should be honoured, venerated, adored, imitated, and loved, and so that no human, whom that Child of the Immaculate Virgin redeemed, can prevaricate, however illiterate and simple he or she may be, and say: 'I cannot understand such profound mysteries, because I am not lettered,' or 'because this is a closed book for me'. For now this illiterate man or woman can read, not in parchments or documents, but in the members and the body of this girl [i.e. Elizabeth], as a vivid and unmistakable Veronica, a living image and an animated history of redemption, as if he or she were literate (Simons, "Reading," 11).

In addition to commenting on Elizabeth's status as a living "Veronica" and a readable image for an illiterate population, Philip compares her extraordinary activities to those of St. Francis.

Philip provides his own interpretation of what Elizabeth's life means. Philip sees her significance as two-fold; on the one hand, she is a female counterpart to St. Francis and is his counterpart in more profound ways – the stigmata, for example – than his biographical and institutional companion St. Clare was. On the other, she is a living account of the Passion, functioning much as art works would for an illiterate laity. As a "Veronica," Elizabeth has literally imprinted the Passion story onto her body in order that it be conveyed to those around her. Simons writes:

> Philip's defence of Elisabeth's behaviour frequently reverts to the analogy between her bodily enactment of the Passion story and a priest's exposition of the Gospel. Rather than reading the Gospel to the faithful she enacts it. Conversely, as a learned cleric writing for an audience immersed in a written culture, Philip's account provides a running commentary on her behaviour, citing the appropriate verses of the Passion story" ("Reading" 12).

When Philip explains Elizabeth's role, he also sees his own significance within the *vita*.

It is not clear why the Middle English translator chose to omit such an important

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passage linking Elizabeth to St. Francis. Perhaps such as statement was too bold to exist in the vernacular in the fifteenth century where it was all to easy to be charged with heresy. Or perhaps the significance of the claim that Elizabeth was in someways equaled to St. Francis or Veronica had seemed untrue two centuries after her death. Regardless of the translator's reasons, the omission is the most glaring one, denying its audience a key piece of Philip's exegesis.

By the time MS Douce 114 reached its readers – perhaps limited to the Carthusian monks, perhaps not – it presented a version of Philip's Latin *vita* that had been clipped and otherwise altered. However, the extraordinary activities of Elizabeth and her Passion meditation were for the most part intact. In her representation of the Passion through some combination of dance, drama, and art, Elizabeth introduces a new form of mystical meditation and religious narrative that is uniwuely hers and is not found in the other surviving *vitae*.

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Chapter Two
Christina Mirabilis: Astonishing Piety

Only two manuscripts of the life of Christina *mirabilis*[1] are known to exist in libraries in Great Britain. One of these is Oxford, St. John's College MS 182 (in Latin) and the other is the Middle English version of Christina's life in the Bodleian Library MS Douce 114. In her home area of the Low Countries, however, Christina's *vita* appeared to flourish in its Latin form. No fewer than four manuscripts containing the Latin *vita*, ranging from the early fourteenth through to the seventeenth centuries, can be found at the Biblithèque Royale in Brussels.[2] In total, 23 manuscripts are known to contain the *vita* of Christina *mirabilis.*[3] Several editions of her *vita* exist as well, including the one in Latin in the *Acta Sanctorum* (Jul. V. 650-60), and its Modern English translation by Margot King (Peregrina Publishing, 1986).

Christina's *vita* written by Thomas de Cantimpré was written eight years after her death in 1224; he never knew Christina. Thomas based much of his information about Christina on information from his mentor, Jacques de Vitry, who was Marie d'Oignies' hagiographer and spiritual advisor and who knew Christina. Thomas, originally an Augustinian Canon who later became a Dominican, was deeply impressed with Jacques

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[1]Christina is also known in other sources, variously, as Christina of Saint Trond or Sint-Truiden, Christina the Miraculous or Marvelous, Christina *admirabilis*, and Christina the Astonishing.

[2]Bibl. Royale MSS 3161 (4459-70), 3189 (7917), 3206 (8609-20), and 3316 (II. 2328).

[3]"Twelve Latin, three Dutch, and one English, along with seven others available to the seventeenth-century Bollandists, but now lost" (Newman, "Devout Women," p. 55 n. 63).

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and modeled his *vita* on the ones that Jacques had written. The Benedictine scholar Hugh Feiss writes that "while he was a young student, Thomas heard Jacques de Vitry preach and was struck with such admiration for him that he remained attached to him all his life" (de Cantimpré, *Supplement,* 175). After writing Christina's *vita*, Thomas also wrote the *vita* of the beguine Lutgard of Aywières (whom he did know personally), the *vita* of another beguine, Margaret of Ypres, and a supplement to Jacques de Vitry's *vita* of Marie d'Oignies. Thomas was, by the end of his life, a prominent writer. His reputation placed the *vita* of Christina *mirabilis* in a more visible category than Elizabeth's, which was written by a man well known as an abbot but apparently unknown as an author.[4] Thomas, a native of Liège, saw the writing of beguine *vitae,* and defending the way of life of these woman, as part of his vocation.

Another substantial reason that Christina's *vita* is well known and extensively studied – both today and in the Middle Ages – is the extreme and singular nature of both her piety and miracles: rising twice from the dead, throwing herself into burning ovens, and subsisting on her own breast milk, for example. To a medieval audience, Christina's *vita* was in itself an astonishing display of miracles, proof of God's power in his devout followers. Steven Fanning, a historian of the mystical tradition, notes that the actions described in Thomas' *vitae* were not meant to be copied, but "rather to inspire ordinary

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[4]There are no other known *vitae* written by Philip of Clairvaux, and the *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek continues to receive only slight attention. For example, Christina's and Marie d'Oignies' *vitae* are both included in the scholar Steven Fanning's overview of Christian mysticism, *Mystics of the Christian Tradition*, which covers the foundations of Christianity to the twentieth century. This is mainly due to the prominence of their hagiographers, while Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Philip of Clairvaux are not even mentioned.

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people to devote more effort into living up to the common standards of morality" (99). In many ways, Christina's life was the ultimate *exemplum* (a form for which Thomas was praised in his sermons), an example to all of how devout one person can be, no matter what trials she faces.

Christina intrigues scholars today for reasons entirely different from those that attracted medieval audiences. Christina's life and her miracles are fantastic and have certainly earned her the title of "astonishing," among others. King writes in the introduction to her edition of the *vita* that, because of the remarkable claims in the *vita*, Christina's life (and Thomas's version of it) are often not taken seriously: "What in previous centuries had been accepted as a straightforward historical account of an other-wordly vision, simply another example of God's intervention in human affairs, is today either ridiculed or, more charitably, classified as a literary genre" (de Cantimpré, *Life of Christina* 7). But this common dismissal of Christina's *vita* as non-historical and probably a fictional construct overlooks why a fiction would have been introduced, and also ignores both what Thomas and his audience believed to be true. Parts of the account are most likely fictional (Christina probably did not stand in vats of boiling water without a mark on her body, for example), but that does not mean the *real* Christina should be erased as well. With this in mind, we need to approach Christina's *vita* on a variety of levels: as a believed hagiography for its initial readers; as *exemplum*; as fiction; and as the only record of the existence of an actual thirteenth-century woman.

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Writing Christina

Christina's life refuses to be categorized. The fact that her *vita* was written by Thomas de Cantimpré and her miracles mentioned by Jacques de Vitry, both hagiographers who championed the lifestyle and piety of the beguines, contextualizes her somewhat. But, unlike some beguines, she did not live in any formal community, and indeed did not seem to follow any sort of officially structured piety other than her own. Brenda Bolton observes that Christina was "claimed by Benedictines, Cistercians and Premonstratensians alike but ... in reality was not attached to any religious order nor to a beguine group" (Bolton, "Vitae Matrum," 260). All of these religious orders were closely attached to the beguines throughout the Low Countries, but none have been able to substantially establish a link to Christina.

Not simply Christina of "Sint-Truiden," the place-surname used in identifying nearly all of her beguine sisters,[5] Christina has survived as Christina the Astonishing, the Miraculous, *mirabilis*. Her name alone indicates the amazing nature of her life; it is no wonder so many orders would like to claim her as their own. Clearly, by the time her *vita* was written (very soon after her death), Christina had already attained some fame for the extent of her miracles. Indeed, in his prologue to the life of Marie d'Oignies, Jacques de Vitry mentions Christina in a list of beguines and the activities that marked them as especially holy.[6] Jacques gives a brief summary of Christina's life (marking the most

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[5]Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Marie d'Oignies, Margaret of Ypres, and Lutgard of Aywières are all identified by the towns in which they were associated.

[6]Although Jacques de Vitry's *vita* of Marie d'Oignies is in MS Douce 114, the prologue is not. The translator notes that he has intentionally left it out because of its

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spectacular of her miracles) in a passage that was later to be expanded by Thomas and shaped into a *vita*.

Unlike Philip of Clairvaux, who relies on his own witness as the basis of his *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Thomas uses outside authority – beginning with Jacques' reference to Christina. He cites the passage verbatim, except that Thomas has included Christina's name where Jacques' reference is vague (to a "holy woman"):

> We purposynge to write the lyfe of the memorabil Crystes virgyne Crystyne, that put wee firste in the bigynnynge of oure sermone at worshepful James, byshope of A[cc]one[7] – after cardinalle of the courte of Rome – seith of this Cristyne in the lyfe of Seinte Marie of Oegines in these wordes: "I sawe anothere womman," seith hee, "that is to sey this Cristyn Meruelous aboute whan oure Lorde wroughte so merueilously that whan sche hadde liggen longe deed, she lyued ageyne or she were beryed. And sche hadde graunte of God that sche, liuynge in body, shulde suffre Purgatorye in this worlde. After that longe tyme she was wondirful turmontid of oure Lorde, that otherwhile she walowed in fire. Sumtyme in wynter she abode longe in frosen water and yce. Also, otherewhile, she lete as she wolde goo into deed mens graues. "Atte the last, after hir penauns, she lyued in so mykel pees and deserued so mykel grace of God, that sche was rauished in spirite and ledde soulles of the deed vnto Purgatorye and thurgh Purgatory to heuene withouten any sore of hirselfe." These are wordes of the worshypful byshope byfore-seyde. (I.1-4).

Thomas also uses this citation from Jacques as the driving narrative behind his *vita*, and he virtually follows the order of things as Jacques has laid them out. Thomas relies on Jacques' solid reputation as a hagiographer and spiritual advisor to the beguines to validate his own narrative.

Before beginning the narrative of Christina's life, however, Thomas establishes

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heavy theological content.

[7]MS - Attone; LAT: Achonensis, in Modern English, Acre. King notes Jacques de Vitry was elected to the see of Acre in Palestine in 1215 (Cantimpré 42).

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that the *vita* can be trusted. Not having witnessed any of these events himself, he starts by explaining the *vita*'s validity and his sources. Since his *vita* was not used as an official corroboration of miracles, as it appears Philip of Clairvaux's had been, Thomas is not quite so scrupulous in documenting sources. He states that he has many witnesses of "witte and resone," but does not mention them by name. The audience is simply expected to place its trust in Thomas' authority, and to that end he begins with a brief humility topos to remind his readers that this is indeed hagiography and that he is following required conventions:

> I, soothly vnworthy frere of the ordir of prechours, for edifiynge of the reders and specially to the lovynge of God, haue writen with symple worde. And I am certayne and syker of that at was me told. Nor I sey not "certeyne" and "syker" withoute cause, sen I haue so many witnessys and mykel that I haue writen as were than in the towne of Seint Trudous that hadde witte and resone. Nor these thinges were not done in corners and hyrnes but openly amonge the pepil. Nor it is not so longe goon that they are forgoten, for hit is no moor but eight yere sythen sche dyed whan I wrote hir lyfe. Certeynly othere thinges that no man myghte knowe but sche, I herde allonly of hem, the whiche affermyd that hireselfe tolde to hem with hir owne mouthe. And wite hee wel that redith this that I leued to siche witnesse that wolde not goo fro the sothe thof they schulde lose her heedes (I.5-7).

Although Thomas claims his witnesses would rather "lose her heedes" than deny their testimony regarding Christina's wondrous deeds, he spends little time clarifying the validity of the text or the honor of the witnesses on whom he relies. Thomas stresses that all the miracles he is about to recount were done "openly amonge the pepil," and not "in corners and hyrnes," signifying that nothing is hidden about the validity of what he is reporting or of his witnesses' accounts, reminding the audience that only eight years has passed since Christina's death.

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Thomas also points out that it will seem as if some of the information would have to have come from Christina herself, but this he has also heard from reliable witnesses who heard the information from Christina. Testifying to his narrative skill, Thomas weaves details that only Christina herself could have known into the *vita* in such a way that it seems as if he has heard these things directly from her. However, Thomas' sources are often vague – in these moments he never states where or from whom the information came (unlike Philip of Clairvaux who states quite clearly from whom he has gained his knowledge).

Finally, Thomas acknowledges that much of the *vita* will pass " alle mannes vndirstondynge and witte as siche thinges that maye not be done by commun cours of nature or kynde" (I.8). He understands the faith he is demanding of his readers, while not attempting to explain. He remarks that although the *vita* is hard to believe, "it is possibil to hym that alle maad of noghte" (I.8). But he does not leave it there. Before Thomas begins the *vita* he again invokes the authority of Jacques de Vitry, the only "source" he mentions by name: "I wolde no weyes haue taken vpon me to write, but if worschepful James byshope hadde boren witnesse byfore of this same virgynes lyfe" (I.9). Thomas knows the authority that Jacques' name conveys and reminds his readers that only with this authority behind him does he write.

Miraculous Christina

Christina's first miracle is her most sensational: she rises from the dead. Although Christina died in her 74th year (1150-1224) – a long time by medieval standards

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– her first (of three) deaths happened when she was young, after her parents had died, leaving Christina and her two sisters orphaned. Three crucial aspects define this miracle as Thomas describes it: first, the body flies to the top of the church during her funeral service; second, the dead Christina is allowed a vision of Purgatory, Hell, and Heaven and given (by God) the option of returning to earth or remaining in heaven; and third, Christina is raised from the dead.

During the funeral mass, Christina's body rises to the ceiling and all of her family and friends flee the church except her oldest sister, who is paralyzed by fear. Like many of Christina's miracles, this one is met with suspicion and fear by those around her; they do not automatically assume that God's hand is guiding Christina:

> Then the deed body was leyde forthe and the lyche doon of hir sistres and frendes, and on the morne was borne to kirke. And while the Masse was in doynge for hir soule, sodey[n]ly the body sterid and roos vp in the bere and anoon lifte vp as a bridde, steigh into the beemes of the kyrke. Then alle that were [there] fledde and hir eldist sister a[l]one bode stille with drede, and she abode in the kyrke roufe vnmoued tille the messe was doon. Then sche was conioured of the preste of the chirche and constreyned to come doun.(III.2-3).

Ultimately the priest implores that Christina come down from the rafters. Barbara Newman points out that this indicates a question that runs throughout Christina's life: is she possessed by the Devil or blessed by God? Newman interprets the use of the word "conioure" as describing the priest's attempt to exorcize the demons he believes are at work within Christina (Newman "Devout Women" 49). The use of the word, however, is ambiguous. The Middle English Dictionary has among its definitions for the verb "conjuren," two very different meanings – both which would work in the passage: one

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definition is "to beseech or beg, or implore" the other, which fits Newman's hypothesis is "to exorcize (an evil spirit)." The dual meanings for the word leads to very different understandings about what is happening in this passage. In the former interpretation, the priest is begging Christina to come down from the church rafters. In the latter, the word "conioure" would constitute an exorcism and would indicate the priest's belief that God is not at work within Christina.

Newman also posits that we cannot view Christina's life merely as a work of fiction or as an *exemplum,* and that we need to understand what "real" basis there may possibly be for the hagiography. She argues that we cannot "seek a fuller understanding if we continue to bracket the question [of what really happened] and interpret her life as if Thomas had created it from thin air" (Newman, "Devout Women," 52). Her point is a valid one and allows the reader to be conscious that there *is* a life being somehow represented in the *vita*. Newman offers one way in which Christina's life might have unfolded:

> Orphaned at an early age, the young Christina fell sick with an unknown illness and lay comatose for so long that her sisters believed she was dead and arranged for her burial. But her unexpected return to life at the funeral was dramatic enough to make her an instant celebrity, a female Lazarus whose resurrection could be explained only in supernatural terms, whether demonic or divine. Unfortunately, however, the coma had masked considerable brain damage, and Christina never fully recovered but began to show signs of severe mental disturbance – antisocial behavior, violent self-mutilation, peculiar and repellant choices in food and dress ("Devout Women" 52).

Newman suggests that her mendicancy began with her status as a social outcast. Only when her life was recast by clerics was Christina named "saintly" and "pious." Her

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activities and her torments were then interpreted as sacrifice for souls in Purgatory, and both Christina and those around her were able to view her afflictions as miraculous and leading to a pious end.

Since her *vita* is virtually the only source for Christina's life, and our terms for mental illness are so anachronistic (it would be meaningless to categorize Christina as schizophrenic, for example), we will never know what "really happened." Newman's account is helpful, however, because it allows for *something* actual instead of merely discounting the *vita* as a fictional construct. Although miracles will be examined within the context of the *vita* and its medieval audience in this chapter, the likelihood that Christina had an existence that may bear some resemblance to the fantastic accounts that have led to her being named *mirabilis* should not be discounted.

Only when she is questioned by her "specyal" (a mistranscription of "spiritual") friends after her resurrection, does Christina recount what she saw while dead. She describes a visit to Purgatory, led by "mynistris of light, Godde's aungels" (IV.1), where she saw several people undergoing severe torment that she had known when living. She describes:

> And soothly there sawe I many deed, the whiche I knewe byfore alyue. I forsooth, hauynge compassyone and grete pite of thoos wrecched soulles, asked what maner place that was. Y thoghte that hit was Helle. And my leders answeryd to me at that place was Purgatorye, in the whiche they that hadde ben synners in her lyfe suffred worthy peynes for her mysdedis. Fro thennes they ladde me to the peynes of Helle, and also there I knewe summe that I knewe liuynge. (IV.2).

While giving no physical description of Purgatory, Christina relies on emotion to convey its horrors – she is moved by compassion for the "wrecched soulles," and their pain is so

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great that she thinks it is Hell that she is witnessing. Already the sense of *exemplum* in Thomas' narrative is clear when Christina points out that many of those she saw in both Purgatory and Hell were people she had known. The message to the medieval audience is clear: Purgatory or Hell are fates that await many of you.

God then gives Christina the choice between living in Heaven and returning to earth where she can suffer purgatorial pains herself in order to free some souls from Purgatory. As a result of choosing the latter, Christina is revived from the dead at her funeral mass:

> Thanne oure Lorde anoon answerid to my desyre: 'For certeyne, my swetynge,' quod he, 'thou haste be with me heer, but now I putte to the choys of two thinges: that is to seye, whether thou has[t] leuer dwelle stille with me now or turne ageyne to thy body, there to suffre peynes of an vndeedly soule by a deedly body withouten harme of hitselfe and to delyuere with thy peynes alle thos soulles of the whiche thou haddest pite in the place of Purgatorye. And also with ensaumple of thy peyne and lyfe, [to] stire men to repentauns and penauns, and to forsake her synnes and be trewly turnyd to me. And after alle this is doon, then thou schalte come ageyne to me with many medys.' And I answeryd withouten doutynge that I wolde turne ageyne to body vndir that condicyone that was put vnto me. Forthwith oure Lorde was wele payed with myne answere and commaundid my soule to be resteryd to my body (IV.4-6).

The conversational relationship depicted between Christina and God is uncommon (although not exactly rare) in mystical texts, which generally rely on more bodily and affective metaphors to describe an encounter with the divine than an actual dialogue. In *The Book of Margery Kempe*, however, Kempe also depicts her mystical relationship with Christ as based on literal conversation. Christina's *vita* is possibly one of the models to which Margery had access, especially considering that she specifically mentions the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies – which is linked to Christina's *vita* in all surviving English codices –

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as an influence.

Patricia Deery Kurtz, who argues that the *vitae* of Christina and Marie d'Oignies were used to oppose the Cathar heresy, writes that Christina's description of Purgatory is "blatantly orthodox ... death-bed salvations were popular among the Cathars; those not saved could return after death to another body or form. They did not believe in a place for purgation of sins" (Kurtz 191). Purgatory was an important concept in both the hagiographic literature and sermons of the thirteenth century. Many of the beguines, including Lutgard of Aywières (whose *vita* was also written by Thomas de Cantimpré) were associated with saving the souls in Purgatory. Jacques LeGoff writes that Lutgard was considered "nothing less than the saint of Purgatory" (324). Saints were also considered as powerful intercessors for these suffering souls.

At the end of her life, while living with the nuns at Saint Catherine's, Christina rises from the dead for a second time. She is called back to life by the nun Beatrice (possibly the abbess) who is not ready to let Christina go; Beatrice appeals to Christina's capacity for miracles and close relationship to God, saying to the recently dead body:

> O Cristyn, thou has ben in thy lyfe euere obedyente to me! I adiure the now and byhote the, by oure Lorde Jhesu Criste whom thou louedist in thy lyfe with brennynge desyre, that thou obey to me, also now, for thou arte myghty and mayste doo what thou wolte thurgh hym to whome thou arte now ioyned. Therefore, turne now ageyne to lyfe and telle me that I haue asked with grete desyre to be openyd of the in thy lyfe (XXXVII.3-4).

Christina awakes at Beatrice's urging, but she is furious to be called away from what she has desired for such a long time – to be with God. She answers Beatrice's questions, and finally dies for the third and final time when, Thomas writes, she "was experte of dethe"

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(XXXVII.6).

These two miraculous events, Christina's resurrections and death, highlight the exemplary qualities of the *vita*. For those who live pious and devout lives, death is a welcome and blessed reward; for those who do not live such lives, pain awaits. Within Christina's miracles, the full range of human fate is displayed; in the first death she describes the horrors and pain of Hell and Purgatory, whereas in her final death Christina explains that she has "coueytid" Heaven for a long time. Christina may be "experte of dethe," but, Thomas implies, only because she was expert in how she lived her life, completely devoted to Christ.

Although most of Christina's other miracles are enduring the pain she trades for Purgatory (which I will examine in the next section), a few stand alone. One of these marks Christina both as miraculous and as female: she survives on milk secreted from her own breasts. This miracle story begins with Christina locked in iron chains by her friends to prevent her from escaping to the "high places" for which she longs, like towers and trees. Because Christina's behavior could be attributed to either demons or God, as Newman has pointed out, her friends' act is not surprising:

> Therfore after this whan Cristyn fledde the presens of folke with a wonder lothinge into wildernesse and into trees, into the coppys of tourys of chirches, or of othere hye thinges. And hir frendys, supposynge hir wode and ful of fendes, atte laste with grete laboure toke hir and bonde hir with chaynes of yren. And whan sche so bounden hadde soffred many pennuryes and peynes, but moost in sauour of men, vpon a nyghte sche was holpen of oure Lorde (V.1).

Thomas is careful to point out the Christina's friends' motivations: that they worry Christina is "wode and full of fendes." Binding Christina in iron chains and leaving her

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in the woods are acts of violence against Christina, but her friends have good intentions at their roots.

Christina struggles in the chains for a while, all for the good of those in Purgatory (her pain, whether self-inflicted or otherwise, always benefits others). But then, through God's intercession, Christina manages to escape and then survive:

> And hir bondys and fettirs vndone, she skaped aweye and fledde ferre into deserte to wodes. And there she lyued as bryddes doon in trees. And whanne sche nedid mete and was pyned with a ful grete hungyr – for hir body, thof it were ful sotil and ful lighte, myghte not bee withouten food – netheles she wolde on no maner go home ageyne but allone abyde in wildernesse priuely with oure Lorde, mekely [praying] that he wolde mercyfully see to hir angwyshe. And euene forthewith she loked on the drye pappys of hir virgyne brest and sawe hit drepe swete milke agaynes alle righte of kynde and nature. This is a merueylous thinge, and neuere herde after the imcomparabil and singler virgyne, Cristes moder. And so the virgyne Cristyn was norysched nyne wokes with the mylke of hir owne pappe. The mene tyme she was soghte, founden, and taken of hir freendys and tyed with yren chaynes as she was byfore, but in vayne (V.2-5).

The miracle here is not her escape from the iron fetters with which she is bound, but surviving for nine weeks on her own body's milk. The orphaned Christina miraculously finds a mother within herself in order that she may survive. Thomas compares her to the Virgin Mary because Christina, like Mary, is a virgin whose body takes on the physical attributes of a mother.

It is interesting that Christina needed food at all. Certainly we have already seen in Elizabeth's *vita* that not needing food is one of the marks of holiness in women. Bynum writes that fasting was a trope that hagiographers of beguines repeatedly turned to because it indicated "renunciation of the world" (120). And although fasting becomes a central part of Christina's later life, when she begs for food, here she is not at all blamed

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for the human failing of having "a ful grete hungyr," apparently in defiance of fasting as a common mark of sanctity. At another point in the *vita*, one of Christina's marks of piety is her inability to eat food that was "wrangsely goten;" when she begs, this food, Thomas writes, tastes to Christina like "the bowellis of paddokes or of todes or the guttis of neddirs" (XVIII.1), filling her with pain at each bite.

In another episode of the *vita*, Christina's breasts perform another miracle of nourishment. Christina's friends, trying to isolate her from harm, tie her to a tree giving her only bread and water to eat. Christina suffers a long time to benefit the souls in Purgatory. The hunger and the chaffing from the tree both contribute to her suffering, to the point that she is too weak to eat the bread that has been left for her:

> Wherfore hire buttokes were alto froten with the hardnes of the tree and hir shuldris festird, and she was with this waxen febil and feynte and myghte not ete hire brede. And noon was there that hadde compassyone of hire disese, but oure Lorde hadde mercy on hire merueilosly and wroghte in hir that nobil miracul atte was neuer harde heer byfore. For hire maydenly pappes bigan to sprynge licoure of ful swete oyle. And that toke she and sauerd hir brede with alle and hadde hit for potage and oynemente. And sche enoynted therewith the woundes of hir festirde membrys. Then hire sustres and frendes, seynge that, bigan to wepe and fro then forth they sturglid nor enforced nothinge ageyne Goddes wille in Cristyns miracles but lowsed hire of bondys and knelyd doun preiynge forgifnes of the wronge that they hadde done to hire and so leet hire go (XIII.2-5).

The oil secreted from Christina's breasts performs several functions: as a condiment for her bread, as a soup, as an ointment for her wounds, and ultimately as the only proof to her sisters and friends that her activities are divinely, not demonically, inspired.

Bynum explains that in secretion miracles women's bodies become food for themselves and others, but Christina's appear to be both unique and specifically feminine,

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as she is the only person who secretes from the breasts. Bynum points out a related incident in another of Thomas' *vitae*, that of Lutgard of Aywières: "Lutgard...also exuded oil, although in her case it came from the fingertips. The incident is presented as her response to the vision...in which John the Evangelist drank from Christ's breast and then breathed into her mouth. Lutgard repeatedly nursed from Christ and saw others do so" (*Holy Feast* 123). Although Christina's miracle at first may seem "selfish," as its ultimate purpose is nourishing, perhaps Christina is given this power to produce her own food because her body is continually used to benefit others. The health of her body is essential in that she must continue to withstand tortures and pains that benefit the souls in Purgatory.

But despite this emphasis on breasts and their secretions, Thomas is not sexualizing Christina so much as he is positioning her as a miraculous mother. Although by the sixteenth century breasts were defined in erotic terms,[8] in the Middle Ages breasts were not nearly so eroticized and were not even considered as a major category of sexual differentiation (Cadden 180). The link Thomas makes between Christina and Mary, however, is an important one. Dyan Elliott writes that in Marian devotion Mary's breasts and the maternal body were sometimes compared to the eucharist and its role in human redemption (*Fallen Bodies* 110). In making such a parallel, Thomas is elevating the meaning of Christina's miracles beyond mere *exempla*, and comparing Christina to the

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[8]For more on early modern attitudes about "breasts," see Katheryn Schwarz's article, "Missing the Breast: Desire, Disease, and the Singular Effect of the Amazons." *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe.* Eds. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio. (New York: Routledge, 1997) 147-170.

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ultimate of female saints, the Virgin Mary.

Christina's miracles include the gift of prophecy. Her predictions in the *vita* fall into two categories – major events such as a famine, and smaller ones such as the death of a nobleman. The first of Christina's visions that Thomas describes is the most dramatic: a battle between the Duke of Brabant and his enemies at the town Steppes in the Liège diocese. This battle, which took place on October 13, 1213, was a massive slaughter on both sides. The battle established Liège as its own principality, and its victory was heralded for centuries as one of the French over the Flemish (Gaier 88-9). Prophesying the battle, Christina cries out to the nuns of Saint Catherine's, presumably daughters and sisters of the men in danger, and urges them to run and pray:

> Whan that miserabil and wrecchyd company was gaderid bitwix the Duke of Braban and his aduersaryes, where in a place that is callid Steps so many hundreth of men were slayne, this blessyd woman that same daye cryed as a womman trauelynge of childe and seyde, "Allas! Allas! I see the eyre ful of swordes and blode! Renne sistres! Rinne! Praye oure Lorde! Heelde oute teres leste hee holde his mercyes in wrath." And she seyde to a nunne in the same abbey of Seynte Kateryn, "Renne doghter! Renne swiftly to prayer and praye oure Lorde for thy fader, for hee is now bestadde in fulle grete perille!" (XXI.1-2).

This is a dramatic scene, highlighting the powerful nature of Christina's prophecies. She herself, while exhorting the nuns to run, cry, and pray, screams like a woman in childbirth. What she sees in her vision is also described – the air is full of swords and blood. Christina's prophecy is notable not only because she of her visions, but for the very manner in which they are relayed.

A similarly dramatic scene is played out when Christina predicts the fall of Jerusalem. Instead of mourning, Christina is overcome with great joy that the city has

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been taken, arguing that the bloodshed that would follow insures that men will die for Christ's sake:

> Wyt yee," quod she, "that the Holy Londe is taken this daye into wicked mennys handys and by this gyuene is grete occasyone of saluacyone. "Soothly, Cryste voucheth saufe his scorne in this atte that lande be taken into despyte and schame, alle thof hyt be halowed with the peyne of his Passyone. Neuertheles hit schalle perisshe with the worlde in the worldes ende, sithen by recouerynge of the same londe, soulles that shalle euere abyde and [be] boghte with his blode shal be turnyd fro the waye of wickednesse to the weye of rightwisnesse, and men shalle shed her blode for the holy londe and in grete deuocyone deye for Cristys sake." Then alle that there were meruelyd of [it]. Somme of hem notyd the tyme, and soo it was after knowen that Cristyn seyde byfore. (XXIV.3-4).

Thomas ends this passage by noting that Christina's prophecy was later validated. The fall of Jerusalem, which took place on October 2, 1187, was met with mixed reactions in the West. Although the Holy Land was out of Christian hands, as Christina points out this could be an opportunity for salvation and redemption. For many, the failure of the crusades was a reflection on the moral failure of the Christians to deserve the Holy Land. Christina reflects Pope Gregory VIII's letter urging Christians to "accept with an act of thanksgiving the opportunity for repentance and doing good" (Riley-Smith 109). Christina sees the loss of Jerusalem as God's punishment to morally deficient Christians, but then rejoices in the crusades and battles that are to come. She views suffering both in this world and that in Purgatory as part of the same reckoning.

The "local" prophesies show a subtler side of Christina's abilities. In the first, she predicts that a nun's apostasy will bring shame onto the convent. Christina speaks to the nun directly, saying, "O thou empty vessel, ful mykel sclaunder shalte thou be to this abbey" (XXII.1). This proves to be true when the nun, as predicted, leaves the order.

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More surprising is Christina's reaction when the nun requests to come back to Saint Catherine's:

> And whanne the couente of the abbey was aboue mesure harde to receyue the same nunne to penauns whan she come agayne, Cristyn blamed the couente seiynge: "Thof yee rekke but litil of hir losse, neuertheles hir soule cost not Criste so litil that wolde dye and shedde his blode for hire." And Cristyn stintid not, seiynge often these wordes tille the repentaunte nunne were recyued (XII.2-3).

Although Christina had blamed the nun for the shame she would bring on the abbey, when the nun wishes to return she is fully accepting. Christina sees that the woman's penance is sincere, which the other nuns cannot or will not see. She refocuses the blame onto the convent members, causing them to note the hypocrisy inherent in not allowing the nun to return. This example of Christina's prophetic powers reminds the audience that penance is ultimately the central focus of the *vita*.

Pain for Purgatory

The vast majority of Christina's miracles are her ability to withstand tremendous pain – caused by others or self-inflicted. Underlying these miracles is the fact that everything Christina withstands would otherwise be felt by those in Purgatory; and by undergoing such torture Christina is relieving some souls of their pains. Thomas sees Christina as trading her pain for purgatorial souls. Jo Ann McNamara explains that Christina's idea of pain-as-merit actually predates the same theological idea later proffered by Alexander of Hales (c.1216-1238). Thomas, however, would have had access to these ideas and may have incorporated them into the *vita* (McNamara 215).

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Christina's self-inflicted tortures include throwing herself into icy waters and hot fires. At one point, she throws herself into an oven: "And she wente into hoot brennynge ouenes, redy to bake brede in, and she was turmentyd with brennynges and heet as oon of vs, so that sche cryed hidously for angwysche. Netheles, whan she come oute, there was no soor nor hurt seen outwarde in hire body" (VII.1). In her article "Mystical Bodies and the Dialogics of Vision," Laura Finke argues that part of the trope of the classical saintly woman is that her body remains whole and untouched despite the obvious pain she suffers (38). Usually such tortures are not self-inflicted, making this *vita* different from the classic virgin-martyr's *vita*. Thomas most likely knows this tradition and stresses that although Christina cries out in anguish, there is no sign on her body that she has suffered.

Christina, after suffering the pains from the ovens, also throws herself into fires and pots of boiling water. Thomas again emphasizes the paradox of Christina's intense pain and untouched body. He underscores that Christina has divine aid:

> And whan she hadde no fourneys nor ouenes, thanne she keste hirselfe into houge fyres and grete in mennes houses or allonly putte in hir feet and handys and helde hem there so longe vnto, but if hit hadde [not] be myrakelle of God they myghte be brente to askes. Also othewhile she wente into cauderons fulle of hoot, boylynge watir to the breste or ellis to the lendys aftir the heighte of the cauderouns. And she poured scalde hoot watir on thos membrys that were harmles withouten and cryed as a womman that trauelles with childe. Yit netheles whan sche come oute sche hadde no harme (VII.2-4).

Christina's self-inflicted pain involves an active agency. She seeks out these places of pain (looking first for furnaces and ovens, then finding large fires and cauldrons). Christina also increases the pain by pouring hot water on the members that are not submerged in the cauldron (presumably her arms and face). This is not the virgin-martyr

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image in which pain is externally inflicted so that the martyr may confess or denounce Christianity; Christina's pain (every bit as gruesome as the classical saint's) is brought on by her own active decisions.

Finke notes that the passage cited above, coupled with the earlier one about the bread ovens, highlights Christina as specifically female, calling attention to her breasts and genitalia, but at the same time also compares her to and contrasts her with Jesus and his sufferings, leading to a new form of *imitatio Christi*:

> The reference to the "pangs of childbirth" calls attention to the sexual function which Christina, as a virgin, has specifically renounced, as well as to the "opening up" of the body that both sexual activity and childbirth entail .... The immersion of her breasts and genitalia (up to the breast or waist) – the signs of her sexuality – into boiling water reminds the reader that Christina's body is a female one, subject to all weaknesses of femininity .... Indeed, the saint's voluntary endurance of pain in imitation of Christ's bodily suffering invokes the Eucharistic miracle. The ovens into which Christina casts herself are ovens for baking bread, suggesting, without explicitly stating it, a Eucharistic connection, but the symbolism is reversed. In the Eucharist, the bread is transformed into the body of Christ. The central act of Christianity is Christ's assumption of a body that can be – and is – wounded, opened up by torture. Christina is transformed in the oven from body to "bread," she escapes her body in the monumentality of a cultural symbol. She cannot be wounded (39).

Rather than highlighting Christina's sexuality and femininity, the passage instead speaks to the possibility of their erasure. Never in the *vita* does Christina fall prey to any weakness associated with femininity, and unlike Elizabeth of Spalbeek, Christina is not relegated merely to a language of the body. She speaks, counsels, predicts, and advises – all male traits, associated with reason and not corporeality. In addition, the extreme torments that Christina undergoes are ones where she attempts to destroy her body, erasing its sexuality along with its very existence. That she yells "like a woman in

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childbirth" is also an image employed by Philip of Clairvaux and Jacques de Vitry in their respective *vitae* of Elizabeth and Marie d'Oignies; it is the sound of ultimate feminine pain and anguish, and they use it to describe these virgins' torment. It is, certainly, a marker of the women's sex but not of sexuality; the metaphor points to her status as virgin. She is *not* a mother, but knows the pain of childbirth. She takes on the role of mother several time, but these are not sexual images – they are imitations of the Virgin Mary, the chaste mother of God.

Finke's emphasis on the eucharistic connection between Christina's body and the ovens is similarly misguided. The emphasis is on the extremes of heat and cold, not on the eucharist. If the heat is symbolic, as Finke suggests, than what are the symbols encoded in the cold? These images are instead meant to emphasize both the range and extremity of purgatorial pains, reminding the readers of what awaits them after death and encouraging them to live an honest life.

While the traditional female saints' body is often marked by its completeness despite pain and wounding, Christina's contemporaries are noted for the opposite effect, "in which the holy woman's body is externally marked by her internal experiences" (Hollywood, *The Soul as Virgin Wife* 45). This dichotomy is clearly evident in Elizabeth of Spalbeek's stigmata, for example. Amy Hollywood points out that Christina has a whole body because she "occupies a resurrected body, one still subject to death yet of a spiritual nature unknown to those who have not died before .... Christina has died. Herein lies the explanation for her amazing asceticism and paramystical feats" (*The Soul as Virgin Wife* 45). In this sense, Christina is one of the most literal example of *imitatio*

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Christi represented in hagiographical *vitae*; she, too, rises from the dead.

Christina's tortures are not limited to extreme heat and cold. She throws herself into the Meuse river during the winter (when, exactly, is unspecified) and stays there "sex dayes or more" (VIII.1). Later, she throws herself into water-wheels, allowing her limbs to get tangled (echoing St. Katherine's torture on a wheel). At one point she hangs herself "amonge honged theues," where she remains "a daye or too" (IX.2), and also crawls into dead men's graves to pray for their sins. It is difficult to dwell on or analyze these miracles of pain because they are so quickly described in Thomas' narrative; they are merely listed, each one taking no more than a sentence to describe. The individual pains matter little: Thomas's interests instead lie in the cumulative effect of so many self-inflicted tortures; he implies there are simply too many to describe or explain.

In one episode of the *vita*, Christina , again seeking out pain herself, incites the town's dogs to chase her through a thorny path:

> And otherewhile, aboute mydnyghte, she ros and prouoked and callid forthe alle the dogges of the cite of Seinte Trudous to barke, and ranne faste byfore hem as a beste, and they folowd after hir and droof and chacyd hir thurgh buskes and brerys and thikke thornes, soo that there lafte no party of hire body vnwoundyd. Yit nethles, whanne she hadde washen awey the blood, there apperyd no token of hurte no soor. In this same manere didde she alle hirselfe with thornes and brerys, soo that alle hire body on ilke a syde semyd bedowen in blood. Wherfore many folke that sawe that often merueilid that there was so mykel blood in o body. Yit soothly withouten alle thees bledynges, she lete her blode ful often of mykel veyne blode (X.1-2).

As if the dog-chasing was not enough, Christina then forces herself back through the thorns and briars so that she is even more lacerated and torn. In a seemingly clear example of *imitatio Christi*, the wounds covering Christina's body are like those

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produced by the lash and crown of thorns that Christ endured.

The pain is also exemplified in the amount of blood the wounds produce: so much that the people who see her are amazed a human body holds so much of it. Although ultimately having an unwounded body, Christina still bleeds and suffers in her pain; it then appears to heal miraculously. On the one hand there "lafte no party of hire body vnwoundyd," yet on the other, "there apperyd no token of hurte no soor." A duality is inherent in Christina's miracles, she can suffer enormous pain and then she can erase that suffering.

Christina's pain also serves two major functions. She reflects the pain that awaits her onlookers (and the readers of her *vita*) after death, conveying the agonies that Purgatory will provide and she also imitates the Passion of Christ, mirroring him in her suffering. Christina quite literally takes on the purgatorial pains of her friend Louis II, the earl of the neighboring province of Looz, after he appears to her in a vision, asking for help in Purgatory:

> Sothely, whanne hee apperyd to hir after his deth for helpe, Cristyn seyde to him, "Haue done now and goo hennes and thole peynes for thy synnes after Goddes dome. I sothely take vpon me halfe parte of thy Purgatory and do penauns to my body." Whan this was done men myght see Cristyn longe tyme after in the nyghtetyme be turmentyd with brennynge smokes and othere while with brynnynges of colys, and certeyne after that atte the soule of the Erle was peyned with o turmente and othere. Also, she wepte wonderfully in places in the whiche the same Erle was wonte to synne, and where hee hadde be mery in vayne she made sorowe (XXXII.2-3).

Christina takes on half of the earl's purgation. The pains seem to come directly to her instead of being sought out because during the night she is visited by "brennynge smokes" and "brynnynges of colys." Christina saw the earl as a "spiritual son" and he, in

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return, called her "mother."[9] Thomas emphasizes the qualities of the Virgin Mary that Christina so clearly embodies – she is the chaste mother.

Some of Christina's pains were not sought out, as were the burning ovens and the chasing dogs. In a telling passage describing how medieval society may have dealt with mental illness (which they interpreted as demonic possession), Christina is locked up and her leg broken by a man hired by her sisters and friends:

> For suche maner doynge hire sistres and frendes were greetly ashamyd that men trowyd hir ful of fendes. And they made couenaunte with a ful wicked and ful strange man and gaf hym mede that hee shulde pursue and take hir and bynde hir with iren cheynes. And whanne that shrewed man hadde pursued hir in wildernes and myghte not take hir with his handes, onys atte laste hee leyde hande vpon hir and brak hir legge with a reerward (XII.1).

Christina's sisters then hire a doctor to tend to her wounds, and he also locks her up. But Christina, aided by God, chooses Jesus as her only doctor; her wounds heal and her fetters miraculously fall off. It is not until the aforementioned miracle of oil springing from her breasts that her family and friends concede that Christina is indeed divinely inspired and stop their attempts to lock her away.

This extreme violence against Christina (self-inflicted and otherwise) possibly provokes two reactions from its audience: pleasure and horror. The pleasure is rooted in the medieval urging to dwell "upon its tortured dead...[and] to identify with the sufferings of the martyrs as if they were their own" (Caviness 35). Pleasure exists in watching the horrific pain, while also knowing that it is for a general good: to free souls from

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[9]Thomas writes that Christina "reprehendid [the earl] with a moderly triste" (XXVIII.2).

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Purgatory, to remove that pain from others. The fact that Christina's body is repeatedly erased of its wounds increases that pleasure; it becomes a question of how much she can possibly endure. The horror is a more socially acceptable response. The audience sickens at the pain that Christina must endure, and is terrified that their bodies might also be subjected to the same torture.

At one point Christina is also torn between loving and hating her body and the pain that it undergoes. Thomas describes this moment of self-reflection, where Christina examines her own attitudes toward her corporeality itself. A priest, the abbot of Saint Trudous, witnesses the scene and recounts the incident to Thomas. He says it takes place after Christina throws herself in front of the altar "as a sekke ful of drye boonys" (XXXIV.2). At first Christina curses her body for living and keeping her from ultimately being with Christ:

> Then she made weymentacyone greuously and bygan often to knokke hire breste and hir body with hire fistes. "O," quod sche, "thou wrecchyd and miserabil body! How longe shalte thou tourmente me, careful catyfe? How longe schalte thou tarye me fro the sighte of Criste? Whan shalt thou forsake me that the soule maye turne ageyne frely to hir creature? Woo to the mykel wrecche, and woo to me that am ioyned to the." And, thus seiynge, she knokkyd hir breste eftsones, then takynge persone of the body seyde as vnto the spirite, "O thou wrecchyd soule! Why peynes thou me thus? What holdeth thee in me or what delites thee of me. Why lettys thou me not go ageyne to the erthe that I am of taken and reste tille I be restoryd to the in the laste daye of grete dome? Why goth thou not to thy reste where thou mayste haue bettir abouen?" And seiynge this, she sighed and blewe and wepte (XXXIV 3-4).

Christina's body is not the unwounded body that allows her to suffer the purgatorial pains without external consequence. Instead, it is her prison. Having died once, she knows what joys awaits her in Heaven. To Christina, this life on earth is her own kind of

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Purgatory, keeping her in wait from her "bridegroom," Jesus.

Christina realizes, however, her body's function (particularly in its help with the purgatorial penalties of others) and quickly apologizes. She addresses her body as if it is indeed a separate part of her, merely the encasement for her soul. This conversation is also reflected in medieval debate poems, a popular genre of literature that "grew in popularity among the Latin writings of European churchmen between the ninth and twelfth centuries [and] flourished subsequently between 1200 and 1500 in most of the European vernaculars" (Conlee xii). The debate between the body and soul was one of the most common forms of the genre, although normally the conversation was structured as if it took place after the death of the body. For the Douce's Middle English audience, Christina's conversation here would echo several of these poems, such as "Als I lay in a winteris nyt."

By dividing her body from her soul, Christina is again desexualizing herself, bringing her away from the "body" side of women towards the "reason" side of men, as the gender differences are construed in the Middle Ages:

> Then, forthwith, restynge ful litil with holy meditacyone in God, she breste into a ful swete laghter and, takynge her feet with hir handes, kyssed hir soles with grete desyre and seyde thus: "O ful swete and ful blessyd body, why haue I beten the? Why haue I do wronge to the? Haste thou not obeyed to me in ilke good dede that I thurgh Goddes helpe haue done? Thou hast suffred ful goodly and ful pacyently peyne and trauelles that the spirite putte vnto the"(XXXIV.5).

Christina recognizes her body's role in helping with purgatorial pains, but still stresses a divide between herself and her body by asking it "haste thou not obeyed to me...?" She sees her body as an object that can obey her, follow her orders, not as if it is intrinsically

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attached to her soul and mind, highlighting the medieval view that divides the body from the soul. In this regard, Christina also is remarkably different than Elizabeth of Spalbeek, who beats herself constantly. She apologizes to her body, recognizing that she has caused it pain.

In her article "Spirituality and Self-Representation in *The Life of Christina Mirabilis,*" Katheryn Giglio argues that Christina's self-inflicted violence brings her family around her and helps heal Christina from her torments:

> Christina's home town of St. Trond comes to a new understanding of her radical physicality. This re-negotiation of what difference means enables the townsfolk to join Christina in a transformation from physicality to spirituality, from separation to wholeness. The text is more than a record of a historically fascinating body. It illustrates how reactions to difference, even those of fascination are dependent upon definitions of what the body finally means (116).

Giglio argues that Christina needs to keep punishing and re-defining her body until her sisters and the townspeople view it as miraculous not demonic (which ultimately takes place when the oil issues from her breasts). During this process, the members of Christina's community also develop a radically different view of their own bodies in order to accept her miraculous one. "The communal body [of the town] operates not as a completed and closed system with no room for difference, but as something revitalized, open, and fluid" (Giglio 117). In this way, Christina's body has an additional transformative power; it leads to a doctrine of acceptance within Liège.

Christina becomes a powerful example to her readers. She overcomes not only physical torment, but being marked as demonically possessed, to arrive, finally, at being defined as mystic and saint. Along the way, those around her are transformed as well,

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which includes the medieval audience of her *vita*. By radically reinterpreting "corporeality" and what it means, Christina has also offered a new interpretation of spirituality and a new form of devotion. She has made an inextricable link between depth of pain and depth of devotion, strengthening the doctrine of *imitatio Christi.*

Christina's body is so malleable that in one instance it is described with erased features looking, simply, like a blur of flesh:

> Ferthermor, sithen she was famylier and homely with the nunnys of Seint Kateryns withouten the toun of Seinte Trudous. And otherewhile sittynge with hem [she] spake of Cryste, sodeynly and vnsupposid alle hir body was taken of spirite and turnyd into a whirlynge about, as a scoprelle or a toppe that childer pleye with, soo that for houge swiftnesse of whirlynge, there myghte be perceyued no forme ne schape of membrys in hire body (XXV.3).

Simons notes that moments like these often got Christina into trouble and accused of demonic possession – the same type of "whirling" in other cases was interpreted in this way ("Reading" 18-9). The correct interpretation of these episodes in the *vita* is the hagiographer's job. The readers should know that these are divinely inspired moments because Thomas de Cantimpré writes them as such, and he is the expert. Still, the question of Christina's motives is always there in the *vita*. She was constantly suspected by friends and family of demonic possession until, finally, Christina's miracles convince them otherwise. And although Thomas attempts to explain all of Christina's activities as divinely directed, there are clearly points in the text where he does not know how to explain her actions.

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Insane Christina

Answering the questions surrrounding Christina's sanity is difficult. Today, Christina would have some psychological or medical label such as possibly schizophrenic, psychotic, or bipolar that may help the modern reader understand her condition and bizarre anti-social behavior. But these words are meaningless when applied to medieval people, and the concept of mental illness is foreign in the Middle Ages. What today may fall under a general category of insanity was to the medieval reader or hearer of this *vita* a case of demonic or divine inspiration. Certainly, as we have seen, both Thomas and Christina have read her actions as rational – pain in exchange for souls in Purgatory, for example – and the townspeople of Sint Truiden were for a long time unconvinced of Christina's motivations. But transcendent moments still exist where the medieval reader might have read "demons" and the modern one "insanity." Thomas cannot really explain them, and for the most part relies on his initial warning that much of the *vita* is beyond "alle manne's vndirstondynge" (I.8).

Barbara Newman writes that a thin line is placed between the holy mystic and the demoniac, or demonically possessed:

> [They both were] liminal members of their communities who experienced an unusual degree of illness; endured periods of "alienation" during which they spoke with voices not their own; displayed a superhuman physical strength ... met with intense scrutiny from clerics; and commonly became public spectacles surrounded by rapt and curious crowds ("Devout Women" 48).

She argues that "[m]uch of [Christina's] behavior described by Thomas, stripped of his theological rationale, fully supports a diagnosis of possession" ("Devout Women" 49).

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But Thomas – and, as Giglio argues, the townspeople of Sint Truiden – has consciously decided to read Christina as "saint," and to write her as such as well. The question arises, then: what does Thomas do with the moments when Christina's behavior cannot so readily be attributed to saintliness?

One of these places involves Christina's begging for food and clothes. Many in the Church hierarchy already looked down upon public begging. A lot of public hostility was directed at the mendicant orders (such as the Franciscans and the Dominicans),[10] which sanctioned begging as part of their devotional practices. Groups that were not members of these orders – the beghards, the beguines' male counterparts, sometimes included – would still ask for alms in the name of Christ, but were derided for it (Lerner 47). But begging by women was scandalous and absolutely forbidden until Innocent III "finally permitted apostolic poverty as long as its practitioners recognized the validity of the hierarchy [of the Church] and the Sacraments" (King in de Cantimpré 45). Christina's behavior, then, is questionable at best, and its dubious nature is reflected in the Middle English translation, as well as the slightly later Latin codex of St. Johns MS 182.

In the original Latin, Thomas entitles his chapter "How she was driven by the Spirit to Live by begging" (de Cantimpré 22).[11] However, MS Douce 114 change this

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[10]Thomas de Cantimpré was a Dominican, and therefore would have held a rather sympathetic view of male mendicancy.

[11]"Sacra communione juvatur in corpore et spiritu: victum mendicat" (Acta SS Jul.V. 22).

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rubric to read: "How she was constreyned of spirite to lyue with almes *and as a man*"[12] (XVI) (emphasis mine). This reading, in Latin, is also that of the St. Johns MS 182. To these later scribes (or, at least, to the first one who added this phrase), Christina's behavior as a woman is completely unacceptable. It is better to say that she lived "as a man" and therefore begged, than that she simply engaged in mendicant behavior. Amy Hollywood ties this disapproval to the fact that "behind the denigration of female mendicancy, absolute poverty, and pursuit of active life lies the desire to maintain enclosure as the norm for religious women" (Hollywood, *The Soul as Virgin Wife* 43). Perhaps because Christina is already so uncontrollable, this otherwise aberrant behavior is permitted. In the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies, however, we will see how Marie would like to beg but is forbidden by her spiritual advisors to do so (M2III.8).

Thomas manages to explain Christina's begging by tying it into a purgatorial bargain that Christina has made with God. Here, she eats the "almes of wicked men" which Thomas explains as Christina sharing their sins and helping with penance:

> Therfore she that hadde forsaken – for Crystes loue – hir owne Godis myghte nothinge vse in mete or drynke of thoos thinges that felle to hir bi righte eritage, but she vsyd comun meetis of men and beggid daye be daye fro dore to dore that she myghte beer the synnes of hem with whos almes she was compellid of Goddes sprite to begge, almes of wicked men, that thereby they shulde be callyd to loothnes of synnes and to penauns of hire lyfe (XVI.2).

Christina is unable to eat things "bi righte eritage," but can only receive food that she has begged, and that only from "wicked men." Thomas simply slides over the fact of

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[12]"et quasi homo" in St. Johns MS 182. I am using the translation of homo as "man," since this is apparently the way the translator of the text represented in the Douce manuscript understood it.

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Christina's begging and highlights the "saintly" result, even though the Church so discourages the practice.

As with most aspects of Christina's life, pain is essential to her begging. Thomas describes the torturous time Christina has eating the wicked men's alms, and asks Christ why she must suffer such pain:

> And this was the cause, as wee haue seide, that she was constreyned to ete wicked mennes almes, but yit whan she yeet anythinge gifen hir for almes that was wrangesly goten, hit semyd to hir that she yeet the bowellis of paddokes or of todes or the guttis of neddirs. For in etynge of siche almes, she cryed as a womman trauelynge of childe and seyde, "O Cryste, what dost thou with me? Why turmentis thou me thus?" And knokkynge hir body and breste seyde, "O thou wrecchyd soule, what desyres thou? What coueites thou these foule thinges? Why etis thou these filthe?" For that was a peyne to hir whan she eet any raveyne (XVIII.1-2).

Christina intuits that the goods are ill-gotten, and to her partaking in that food seems as if she is eating the bowels and guts of animals. Christina quickly extends her questions to Christ, "what dost thou with me?," onto herself, hating her body for eating "these filthe." She accuses her soul of impure physical cravings. Again, Thomas uses the childbirth metaphor to describe the extent of Christina's agony.

Bynum argues that "Christina begged in order to share her food" (Bynum *Holy Feast* 121), but this is not mentioned in the *vita*. Although Christina's motive, as Thomas explains it, is to help others, this help is provided through the same exchange of pain for time in Purgatory that Christina makes with her other miraculous activities. Christina begs for the food, however, for herself alone, since the passage stresses the pain she suffers when she finally eats it. Again, Thomas is contradicting the paradigm that Bynum has pointed out in the *vitae* of other holy women – that fasting is one of the holiest

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relationships with food women were expected to have. Christina *does* fast, but Thomas prefers to explain and dwell on Christina's pain, referring to her fasting in brief sentences: "And this was hir mete after she hadde fasten two dayes or three togedyr" (XVIII.6).

Food is not the only thing for which Christina begs. Her mendicancy extends to clothes and, in an exchange that seems almost comical, she steals the clothes denied to her when she asks for them:

> And whanne she wantid a sleue in hir cote or an hode in hir scapulary, if she mette anybody – of whome she knewe by spyrite that shulde take hit of, she preyed hym [if he wolde gif hit]. And if he wolde gif hit, sche thanked hym; and if he denyed, she toke hit ageyne his wille and sewyd it to hir owne clothes. Nor she shamed not, thogh the sleues in o coot were party and of dyuerse colours. Hir clothes was a white coote and a white scap[ula]ry alle hire body to the feet, and often sewyd togedir with noon othere threde but with the barke of a tree that is callid *Tilia* or with wykers of salow or with prickes of wode. Hoses or shoes hadde she noon, goynge barefot alwey (XVIII.4-5).

Thomas does not further explore the apparently criminal practice, in which Christina – informed by the spirit – takes clothes and sews them on to her own whether or not the owner has given them to her. Nor does he attempt to explain these activities other than that Christina is divinely informed about what to do. Even the description of Christina's clothing suggests some sort of madness: they are all white and sewed together with tree bark. In addition, Christina is shoeless. Certainly, Christina's saintly reputation keeps her from being marked as a common thief in these instances, but the fact that Thomas includes it in her *vita* without further explanation is surprising. If *exemplum*, how is the audience to read this? What lesson could possibly be gleaned from Christina's behavior?

Another instance of Christina's liminal behavior between sainthood and madness

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is her attraction to high places (spurred on, we are told, by her disgust for the smell of people's bodies). Her friends initially tie her up when she keeps fleeing "into wildernesse and into trees, into the coppys of tourys or chirches, or of other hye thinges" (V.1). Christina attempts to flee society repeatedly, both in seeking height and isolation (such as the woods and the desert). Margot King locates her in a tradition of "holy folly," in which the desert fathers would engage in similar ascetic behavior:

> Another method used by [beguines] to distance themselves from society was by becoming one of Christ's fools. The tradition of holy folly stretched back to the desert and to the Irish hermits, not to mention the example of St. Francis himself and his followers. Although Christina is obviously the best example of such an apparently mad person, Ida of Louvain can surely also lay claim to the title and the words foolish, stupid, mad, demented, deranged, and insane are applied to each one of these mystic women to describe them after (or during ecstasy) ("Desert Mothers" 7).

But Christina's behavior is not merely isolated to moments during or after rapture, as King suggests, but are constant. Even more important, as Barbara Newman points out, "if Thomas of Cantimpré was acquainted with these parallels, he failed to cite them or any others that might have made Christina's acts more intelligible. It was the novelty, rather than the saintly precedents, of her life that he wished to stress" ("Devout Women" 51).

But neither scholar has it exactly right. Thomas tries to explain Christina's behavior as holy whenever he can; surely he would have drawn on the notion of "holy folly" if he had considered Christina's behavior to be an example of it. Instead, Thomas acknowledges the topos that some of God's doings are unintelligible to mankind, even to an experienced hagiographer. He tells his audience early on that the miracles "maye not

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be done by commun cours of nature or kynde. Neitheles, they be possibil to hym that alle maad of noghte" (I.9), and that seems to be the crux of his argument in including in these questionable activities in Christina's life. He may not understand them, his audience may not either, but Thomas believes that they are ultimately God's works and worth telling for that reason.

Heresy

Christina often treads a thin line between heresy and orthodoxy. For most of the miracles that seem precariously balanced on the edge, Thomas quickly assures his readers that Christina is not doing anything wrong; in all of these cases, however, the assurance comes only from Thomas and not Christina herself. This may show that Christina was in fact often on the wrong side of Church law, but is saved only because Thomas glosses her actions. Less than fifty years later, after all, Marguerite Porete – a French beguine – would be executed for her book, considered heretical.

For the laity, and for women in particular, the gravest of sins was to perform activities reserved for the clergy such as preaching and confession. Throughout the *vita*, it appears that Christina does both quite openly, although Thomas argues differently. While tending to the townspeople of Sint Truiden on their death beds, Thomas writes, Christina would incite the dying to confess their sins: "Ful gladdely and ful goodly she wolde be aboute hem that dyed, sterynge hem to schrifte of synnes and to fruyte of penauns, to hope of euerlastynge ioye, and to feer of perilous brennynge" (XIX.5). While Thomas does not in any way suggest that Christina attempted to absolve the sick after

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their confessions, he also does not indicate that a priest is with Christina in these times.

Later, Christina actually does hear the confession of her friend Louis, the Earl of Looz, moving Thomas to fully explain what has taken place:

> This same Eril Lowys, whanne he laye in his deed bed, garte calle Cristyne to hym and preyed hir mekely that she wolde abyde with hym, and she grauntid. Then hee goodly commaunded alle that were with hym to go oute of the chaumbyr and withhelde Cristyn in the chaumbyr. Then forthwith the erille dressed hym vp with the strengthe, knelynge byfore Cristyns feet, rehercyd to hir with ful many terys alle his synnes that hee hadde doon fro the eleuenthe yeere of his age vnto that daye. And that not for indulgens – the whiche sche hadde no powere to gyf – but atte she shulde be the more stired thereby to praye for hym (XXXI.1).

Thus, Christina actually hears Louis' confession here before he dies. Although Thomas points out that Christina "hadde no powere" to give any kind of absolution, and that Louis only confessed to her so that she would be moved pray for him, it seems that both Christina and Louis believe a full confession is taking place. Indeed, this is no small confession on the part of Louis. The earl kneels at Christina's feet and recites nearly all of his life's sins. Margot King sees the earl's confession, and Christina's reaction to it, as proof of Christina's spiritual development from the beginning of the *vita*. She writes, "this act of compassion shows how far she had progressed in spiritual perfection since the time when she had first simply manifested the purgatorial pains without comment or explanation" ("The Sacramental Witness" 155). Thomas' interpretation of the event stresses to the audience that this confession is not valid as a sacrament – Christina cannot absolve the earl of his sins.

Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker writes that this confession "obviously distressed her hagiographer...for he explains apologetically that she did these things in great secrecy, not

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claiming powers she did not have. Thomas here resists Christina's 'priestly' role" (219). But Thomas' assertions may have been reflective of more than his discomfort at Christina's actions. It is clear that Christina was always straddling a line between insanity and sanctity, but possibly also between heresy and orthodoxy. By assuring his audience, both lay and clerical, that Christina is not doing anything wrong, he attempts to thwart any accusation of heresy.

Robert Sweetman argues that much of Thomas' *vita* of Christina reads like "an extended *captatio benevolentiæ* made necessary by Thomas's admittedly conventional profession of unworthiness both as witness and as a writer" and that "he could have chosen this particular [rhetorical model] because it allowed him to express a real and justifiable sense of unease" (69). Sweetman believes that central to Christina and her *vita* is her role as preacher – as unorthodox as this role may be – through her prophetic exposure of sin, consistent appeals to repentance, and exposition of scripture. Thomas recasts her preaching in different forms to make orthodox sense of her life, however, for there was no way her preaching would be permitted:

> That Thomas did not and indeed could not conceive Christine's preaching in ordinary terms is not difficult to understand. Throughout her life she lacked the ecclesiastical status which would have granted licence to preach in the ordinary sense. She is, of course, a woman. *Ipso facto*, she lacks that pastoral authority inherent in sacred orders, an authority increasingly characterized in the thirteenth century as a condition *sine qua non* for licence to carry on a preaching ministry. She even lacks the authority invested in office holders within communities of female religious and the limited licence to preach to their spiritual charges which their authority gave them (73).

One of the clearest examples of this ambivalence on Thomas' part is that

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Christina fully understood Latin (although she was illiterate) and would expound on the meaning of holy scripture:

> She vndirstood soothly alle Latyn and knewe plenirly alle the menynge in scripture, thof sche neuer knewe lettir sythen she was borne. And whan she was asked moost dyuyne questyons of holy wrytte, she wolde declare hem moost openly to summe of hir spritual freendes, but ful gretely ageyns hir wille and ful selden. She wolde so do seyynge that hit byfelle to clerkys to expoune holy writte and that siche mater felle not to hir (XXVII.4).

Although Thomas claims Christina is reluctant to answer questions regarding holy writ, and claims that "hit byfelle to clerkys to expoune" on such things, she does not absolutely refuse to do so.

Considering the *vita* as a whole, we recognize that Thomas chooses not to dwell on these troubling moments in Christina's life and focus mainly on her life as example. Sweetman says that Thomas finally sees Christina as a legitimate preacher, one who preaches through her deeds and through her words. "Her deeds address companions and observers, while her biography addresses readers and hearers with an appeal to repent and do penance" (79). By explaining away the troublesome moments Thomas avoids the charge of heresy, even though Christina was always in danger of the accusation.

Hagiography/Exemplum/Orthodoxy

Perhaps to counterbalance Christina's peculiar piety, Thomas de Cantimpré uses several hagiographical tropes and explanations in order to emphasize her orthodoxy. This tendency in many hagiographers has the unfortunate consequence of molding the subject's actual life to fit a saintly paradigm. Margot King writes that "a strict adherence

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to factual history was often less important than the higher goal of edification" and that the *vitae* "do not shed much light on the women themselves; rather, they show us how these women were viewed by their male contemporaries" ("Desert Mothers" 1-2). This analysis is not entirely accurate, however, as we have seen with the puzzling episodes in Christina's life that Thomas cannot fit into a pattern or explain away. That being said, Thomas draws on several models and ideals for the structure of the *vita*.

Like hagiographers of other saints' lives, Thomas begins by explaining Christina's unusual piety as a child. Having lost their parents when young, Christina and her two sisters divide their adopt separate but complementary domestic functions, with the oldest sister devoted to praying, the middle one to managing the household and the youngest, Christina, to taking care of the animals, following the division of labor in place at most monastic houses. Christina, although charged with watching the livestock, is the one chosen by God to receive inner "priuetis" of Heaven:

> Cristyn the worschepful virgyne of Criste was goten and borne of honest fadir and moder in the toune of Seinte Trudous in Hasban. And whan hir fader and moder were deed, sche was lefte with hir two sustris. Coueitynge to dispose hir state after religyous manere of lyfe, [the sustris] ordeyned amonge hem that the eldist sister schulde gyf hir to prayers, the myddel sister schulde take hede to houshold, and the yongest – Cristyn – to kepe hir bestes on the felde that wente to pasture. And forthewith Cristes comforte was not for Cristyn, that was putte to the lower and fouller offys, but oure Lorde gaf hir grace of inwarde swetnes and visityd hir ful often with priuetis of heuene (II.2).

Despite the sisters' decision that the older sister should be the one devoted to prayer (self-consciously following a "religyous" manner of life), Christina prays with such intensity and fervor that she ultimately falls ill and dies – to be followed by her first resurrection

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miracle. This trope of childhood piety is found in all three *vitae* in MS Douce 114 and is modeled on traditional hagiographies.

These images are repeated throughout the *vitae* in general and Christina's in particular for very specific reasons, particularly for experienced hagiographers like Thomas de Cantimpré and his mentor Jacques de Vitry. These clerics were intentionally trying to make the beguine life accepted and palatable to church authority, an authority, Amy Hollywood points out, "of which these two hagiographers were themselves a part, a position which no doubt shaped *what* they saw" (*The Soul* 38). But one of the models that Thomas de Cantimpré chooses is not entirely orthodox for a woman's *vita*: the lives of the desert fathers.[13]

By drawing on the parallel of the desert fathers and their desire to escape society into lives of solitude, Thomas is able to impose some meaning on Christina's desire to flee towns and people to escape to woods, deserts, and "high places." Simply using the term 'desert' in his *vita,* as he does after her fetters are miraculously dissolved by God, is an intentional reminder of the desert fathers. The Latin word "deserta" means "uninhabited," and although the desert fathers did indeed inhabit barren terroritory, Thomas uses the word here to convey the isolation Christina finds in the wooded areas of the Low Countries. There are no real deserts in the Low Countries to which Christina could flee, but Thomas has deliberately used that term to convey the isolation of parts of

[13]The desert fathers were some of the earliest mystics and saints (c. 300-500), who lived hermetic lives in the Egyptian and Syrian deserts.

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her geography.[14] Although Christina does not choose an entirely solitary life, her frequent desire to be on the edges of society allows Thomas to draw on and use this image, and by making such a comparison he is giving a context of extreme piety to Christina's eccentricities.

Among the clearest markers of hagiography are the ways in which the subject leads others to convert to Christianity or to a religious way of life. Thomas spends a good deal of time on Christina's ability to inspire those around her to leave their sinful lives and turn to lives full of holy contemplation before they died:

> Ful gladdely and ful goodly she wolde be aboute hem that dyed, sterynge hem to schrifte of synnes and to fruyte of penauns, to hope of euerlastynge ioye, and to feer of perilous brennynge. And not oonly she didde thus to Cristen folke that dyed, but bisely also with a merueilous compassyone to Jewys, of the whiche was a fule grete congregacyone in the cite. She seyde certeynly that Criste was ful mercyful to hem that wolde be turned to hym. And, neuertheles, that he wolde take ful harde vengeauns of mennes synnes, and that hee was sory as often as he was constreyned there to, by rightwisnesse as the synne of man asked; also that hee soghte bisely occasyons by the whiche hee myghte gyue hele to synners and wrecches. And whan she tolde this of oure Lorde Cryste, she hadde a wonder grace of cheer and speche (XIX.5-6).

Christina, having first-hand knowledge of the pains of Purgatory and Hell as well as the joy of Heaven, urges those dying either to confess their sins (if Christian) or to convert (if Jewish). The ability to turn men from sinful death to a repentant one is an image we have already seen in the *vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek (when she urges a young man from Brabant to become a lay brother at the monastery in Clairvaux) and is an even more prominent theme in the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies. To "save" others is part of the job

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[14]"And hir bondys and fettirs vndone, she skaped aweye and fledde ferre into deserte [of] wodes" (V.2).

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description of a saint.

Brenda M. Bolton writes that this type of "charitable work" in their respective towns became a characteristic of beguines that was constantly emphasized in their *vitae*; she uses the above passage from Christina's *vita* to illustrate her point:

> Mary [of Oignies] performed every kind of charitable work, not merely tending the sick but being present at the last moments of the dying and at the burial of the dead....Christina showed wonderful compassion to the Jews whose congregation was large in St. Trond, offering them the mercy of Christ if they should be converted. Ivetta [of Huy] showed such compassion towards her lepers, washing their bodies, ironing their clothes and providing charity for them that many people imitated her example or prayed for her well-being (*Vitae Matrum* 265-6).

While Christina's compassion towards the large Jewish community in Sint-Truiden is certainly notable within the *vita*, modern scholars have continued to look at this passage in the same way – without addressing the fact that Christina is steering the Jewish community towards conversion.

But Christina was also in a unique position to usher ill and aging townsfolk into death. Not only had she "died" herself, and undoubtedly provided some comfort to her charges in what was awaiting them (if they repented), but her role as one who suffers purgatorial pains for others must have made her seem an invaluable advocate for one's afterlife. Walter Simons points out other social reasons the beguines were called to peoples' deathbeds:

> In medieval Europe...mourning and the laying out of the dead were predominantly female functions. Beguines played a special role in the transition from this life to the next because of their unique position: as adult virgins or chaste widows well known for their work in hospitals and for their care of lepers...and as laywomen vowed to religious pursuits, who took part in secular life during the day but withdrew to their convents or

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> courts at night, they were liminal figures, ideally suited to mediate during those first hours after death....The beguine's capacity to straddle the border between life and death is nowhere more graphically illustrated than in the *vita* of Christina Mirabilis (*Cities of Ladies* 79).

Because of this, Christine's *vita* would have been useful in sermons and as a counseling tool. She models a religious life, but also understands and explains the reality of Purgatory. By showing Christina and her ability to convert and save those around her, Thomas can save and inspire the reader through Christina's example.

Often, the readers of *exempla* is meant to place themselves in the position of the saint, but here the reader is placed as one of Christina's charges, as one of the townspeople. Christina's own behavior is far too unorthodox to be espoused as a model religious life for the readers of the *vita*. Instead, Simons argues, "Christina's Life and the *vitae* of the other *mulieres religiosae* can be read as long *exempla* concerning the doctrine of Purgatory and the holy women's power to intercede on behalf of the dead" (*Cities* 79). The *exemplum* here is not Christina's life, but the understanding she had of God and Purgatory; the audience is meant to hear Christina's words in the same way the townspeople of Sint Truiden did.

In one respect, however, it is clear that Thomas hopes his audience will model themselves upon Christina – in honoring the clergy. Thomas counters a possible objection to Christina's activities by stating that although she had the ability to do things such as preach or give advice, she rarely did; instead, she deferred to the wisdom of the clergy:

> She worschepyd the clergye – and namely prestis – with a wonder manere for the houge loue of Cryste, thagh neuertheles she on contrary wyse

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> suffred many wronges of hem. She monyshed esely and priuely with a wonder reuerens prestys and clerkys that synned as hire owne faders, leste by hire excesses they schulde scorn the good name of Cryste amonge the pepil (XXVII.5).

Thomas goes beyond saying that Christina respected the clergy, he writes that she "worschepyd" them, turning to them when she needed advice.

As *exemplum*, the *vita*, according to Patricia Kurtz, would have been an effective counter to heresy arising from "a loss of trust in the goodness and efficacy of the ministers of the church" (194). Christina, even though she has sometimes suffered at the hands of priests and clerics, still defers to their authority and the importance of the church hierarchy. This section of the *vita* is suspicious, though. Thomas arrives at Christina's veneration of the clergy only after describing her open defiance of it (her expounding of holy writ), and we are only given his analysis of her thoughts; this is a moment in the *vita* when Christina's own words are not quoted.

Barbara Newman sees Christina's entire life re-cast as *exemplum*, with a structure and understanding that was not necessarily Christina's imposed on her life:

> The stroke of pastoral genius in the *vita,* transforming an otherwise motley collection of *mirabilia* into a complex and coherent *exemplum*, is of course the other-world vision. It is not impossible that this vision narrative stylizes a self-understanding Christina eventually reached, although Thomas casts the explanation of her sufferings in the conventional literary form of a visit to purgatory and paradise. But the terms of the divine mandate are his, not hers, and it is by foregrounding this carefully constructed vision at the beginning of the narrative that Thomas makes sense out of all that follows (*Devout Women* 54).

Thomas interprets Christina's understanding of the clergy, anticipating the questions that Christina's life may elicit from his readers.

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The concluding chapters of Christina's *vita* provide Thomas some more opportunities to strengthen its hagiographic tone. In her article "The Prime of their Lives," Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker observes that Christina follows another model similar to that used for other beguines and later mystics such as Julian of Norwich: that her abilities are most recognized in her later years. She writes that a "striking element in Christina's life story is that she started disseminating her ideas and entering the public sphere in her thirties, and that she was only successful in her sixties" (219). Christina's acceptance and her public image as spiritual mother that develop in her later years do much to overturn the earlier activities and the unease that accompanied them. As Mulder-Bakker points out, it took nearly thirty years for that acceptance to take place.

Thomas closes Christina's *vita* with clear references to traditional hagiography. Another common image of the female saint, in addition to the classic virgin-martyr, is that of the woman dying, aged and wise, in her chosen convent. Although Christina's death follows the miraculous content of her life (she dies and lives again before dying for the third and final time), she does die in the convent surrounded by her holy sisters. The same model had been applied to Marie d'Oignies' death at the convent in Oignies and may have been imposed upon Elizabeth of Spalbeek with speculations of her death at the convent in Herkenrode. Through the use of this trope, Thomas ultimately gives and orthodox and organized ending to an unpredictable and eccentric life.

At the very end of the *vita*, Thomas makes clear that he intends Christina's life to resonate as an example for its readers:

Wakith, therfore, for yee knowith neithere the oure ne the daye whan youre

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> lorde shalle come. And what ellis cryed Cristyn in alle hir lyfe but do penauns and men to be redy ilkan oure? That taughte she with many woordes, with weymentynges, with weepynges, and moor with ensaumpil of lyfe thanne wee haue witen bi writynge or tellynge of any othere heere byfore or comynge after vnto the worshyp and louvynge of Cryste, that with the fadir and the holy goost, lyueth and reignith god withouten ende (XXXIX.3).

Thomas cites the gospel parable of the wise virgins who have enough oil to keep their lamps lit while awaiting the coming of the bridegroom (Matthew 25:12-13), and argues that this is not only the example of Christina's life that he sees, but one that she saw as well. In the end, Christina's miracles and words are less important than her "ensaumpil of lyfe," an example, no doubt, he hopes his hagiographic account may inspire others to emulate.

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Chapter Three
Marie d'Oignies: The *Vita* of Jacques de Vitry

In many ways the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies is not about Marie at all. Her confessor, promoter, and hagiographer, Jacques de Vitry (c.1160-1240) is omnipresent throughout the text, inserting himself both overtly and surreptitiously into nearly every aspect of Marie's life. We are told that Jacques came to Liège to learn from Marie, but in the end he took it upon himself to be the champion of the beguine way of living.[1] He made it part of his life's work to make church officials aware of – and less concerned about – the beguine movement, which was spreading rapidly in the early thirteenth century. Jacques had good reason to believe that Marie and the beguines needed defense: the church was already suspicious of any form of religious life that did not follow officially sanctioned orders, and accusations of the Cathar heresy were fast spreading through France and the Low Countries. The *vita*, however, is much more than an apology for the beguines. Jacques' work, more than the other two included in MS Douce 114, is clearly part of a campaign for Marie's canonization.[2]

Although some scholars disagree, most believe that Jacques de Vitry was initially drawn to Liège by the reputation of Marie d'Oignies. There is no disagreement, however, that once there, Jacques becomes so inextricably tied to Marie that his protegé, Thomas

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[1]Jacques never calls Marie a beguine, a term that was used in a pejorative sense when Jacques was writing; he refers to her – and women like her – as *mulieres religiosae,* or religious women. See the section entitled "The Beguines" in the Introduction for more information on the movement.

[2]Although never canonized, Marie is the only beguine of the three in MS Douce 114 who was beatified.

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de Cantimpré, would later recount much of Jacques' life and his motivations in his own supplement to the *vita* of Marie. A historian who has done a great deal of work on the beguines, Michel Lauwers, notes that Jacques was a canon regular at the Augustinian house of St. Nicholas at Oignies, in the diocese of Liège, from 1211 to 1216, during which time he was both confessor and friend to Marie ("Expérience" 79). Soon after Marie's death in 1213, Jacques began her *vita*, and not long after its completion he was named bishop of Acre in the Crusading Kingdom of Palestine, not returning to Liège until 1226. Lauwers points out that one of the goals of Jacques' *vita* of Marie was ultimately realized during his tenure at Acre – the pope officially recognized and sanctioned the beguines ("Expérience" 79).

Marie's *vita* was a popular work in the Middle Ages. It appeared in several collections of saints' lives. More manuscript copies of Marie's Latin *vita* exist than of the other two beguine *vitae* in MS Douce 114. Lauwers counts 17 manuscripts currently in Belgian libraries ("Expérience" 83). There are 26 known Latin manuscripts in total, as well as one in French and the Middle English Douce MS (Dor 55). The life of Marie d'Oignies is best known to scholars as one of the few *vitae* with which Margery Kempe (c.1373-1438) was familiar. Indeed, as will be shown later in this chapter, Margery was heavily influenced by Jacques' interpretation of Marie's unique piety. Jacques' *vita* of Marie is also one of the earliest medieval biographies of a woman, and in many ways he is writing the paradigm for a genre that would flourish later.

Much of this popularity is due to Jacques' sophisticated rhetorical style. Unlike Philip of Clairvaux or even Thomas de Cantimpré, Jacques was an acclaimed and

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accomplished writer of sermons and devotional texts. Much more than a redaction of Marie's miracles or holy behavior, his *vita* is a showcase for heavy allegory, biblical allusions, and rhetorical flourish. The Middle English translator of the *vita* represented in the Douce manuscript painstakingly attempts to imitate and recreate the mastery of the Latin original.

Some rhetorical skill is essential to accomplish the manifold goals and to reach the audiences Jacques apparently had for the *vita.* Jacques first appeals to the papacy, intent that the Roman *curia* would come to sanction the beguines and clear them from any accusations of heresy. Second, he encourages the estbalishment of a cult of Marie d'Oignies among the people and beguines of Liège, presenting a text that will contribute to her canonization. Finally, he writes for a broad audience, proffering Marie as an example of piety and orthodoxy. André Vauchez argues that Jacques has his work cut out for him: among the clerical hierarchy and powerful laity there was a growing opposition to the beguines of Liège and accusations of the Cathar heresy abounded (95). Writing the *vita* immediately after Marie's death was necessary in order to establish and achieve some of these goals before any opposition could take firm hold.

Jacques dedicates his *vita* to Bishop Fulk of Toulouse, whose diocese included much of southwest France. Fulk had visited Marie in 1211-1212 and 1213 (Simons *Cities* 168 n.1) and was impressed with what he had seen. He had been bishop of Toulouse since 1206, despite an unusual path: he was married, but in 1195 he entered a Cistercian abbey with his two sons, while his wife entered a convent. His ensuing chaste marriage mirrors Marie's own to her husband John (and perhaps why Jacques stresses

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John's role in deciding upon chastity). A mere six years after entering the monastery, Fulk had been elected abbot, and in 1205 was promoted by Pope Innocent III to the position bishop. He dedicated much of his tenure to fighting the Cathar heresy and establishing the first Dominican house in France. In 1212, Fulk was expelled from his diocese by the Cathars and moved to Liège, where – after Marie's death – he asked Jacques de Vitry to write her *vita*.[3] Jacques spends most of his prologue addressing Fulk directly, this is omitted from the Middle English version.

Jacques declares himself a direct witness to Marie's life and miracles, just as Philip of Clairvaux attested to Elizabeth's. This gives veracity to the account missing from Thomas de Cantimpré's *vita* of Christina – written after her death and from second-hand witnesses. However, Jacques' agenda is ever-present and colors the way that we can read the *vita*. Michel Lauwers writes that because of this, we are never given a completely accurate account of the semi-religious life that Marie represents:

> La *Vie de Marie d'Oignies* atteste donc que le travail et les œuvres de miséricorde constituaient des idéaux pour la béguine. Mais, sinon Marie d'Oignies, en tout cas Jacques de Vitry – c'est lui qui écrit, qui interprète: telles sont les limites de l'hagiographie – n'en partage pas mouns la vieille conception du travail comme pénitance. Et finalement, il consacre la supériorité de la contemplation sur les œuvres. C'est là toute l'ambiguité du discours hagiographique: il nous informe sur les expériences semi-religieuses du XIIIe siècle; mais en même temps, il leur donne une forme et un sens 'ecclésiastiques.' Plus que les bonne œuvres des béguines, Jacques de Vitry privilégie la piété ascétique et mystique de la sainte d'Oignies (50).

The *Life of Marie d'Oignies* therefore attests to the fact that labor and

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[3]Details about Fulk are taken from André Vauchez's article, "Proselytisme et Action Antihéretique en Milieu Feminin au XIIIe Siècle" (97-8), and from the *Catholic Encyclopedia* entry on Jacques de Vitry.

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> charitable works form the ideals of the beguine. But, even if one assumes that it is not true of Marie d'Oignies, it is in any event true of Jacques de Vitry – and it is he who writes and who interprets after all (such are the limits of hagiography) – who nevertheless shares the traditional concept of work as an act of penitance. And, ultimately, he endorses the supremacy of contemplation over charitable work. Such is the ambivalence of the hagiographic discourse: it informs us of the semi-religious experiences of the 13th century, but at the same time, he gives to them an "ecclesiastical" meaning and form. More than the charitable works of the beguines, Jacques de Vitry privileges the ascetic and mystical piety of the saint of Oignies. (Translation mine).

Marie's *vita* will always be colored by Jacques' interpretation of her life and the meaning that he imposes upon it. As Lauwers points out, this problem faces any critic when examining hagiographical works – especially those of semi-religious figures who are not part of the church hierarchy. But this problem is magnified in the case of Marie's *vita* precisely because of Jacques impressive rhetorical skill and allegorical writing. It is impossible to know the *real* Marie; she is buried under layers of Jacques' imposed meaning.

Jacques' presence in Marie's *vita* is not just rhetorical. He writes himself into the text in various ways, making himself one of the main characters in the life. Sometimes the references are ambiguous – to "a frende" or "sum preist" – but Jacques' relationship to Marie as confessor indicates these may be references to himself. Although the following passage, in which Marie asks advice about what to do with a demonic spirit who has placed himself at her mercy, is ostensibly about Marie, the "famylier frende" described is clearly an integral part to the story:

> And than she, that neuere presumed of hireselfe nor anythynge wolde do withouten conseille, called a famylier frende and maister on whome she trustid. Than whan he counceylid hir that she shulde sende hym into a

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> deserte place where he myghte noye no man vnto the Daye of Dome, another man ful homely and priuey to hem booth come to. And whan hee knewe the cownseile, as more feruente thurgh fersnesse of an houge spirite, "Nay," quod hee, "that traytour shal not scape so! Bydde hym that hee go doune anoon into the depe of Helle." And she badde so, than he f[e]lle downe with yellynge, and she herde in spirite a grete crye of fendys whan they sawe so grete and so myghty prynce come to hem. Then Cristes mayden meruailed that mykel and thanked God of His grete grace and goodnesse (X.27).

Although the advice of the "famylier frende" is overridden by another priest, Jacques' self-praise is clear here. Marie – who, Jacques tells us, never does anything without advice – calls on the "maister" whom she trusts for advice. Jacques is described as being a student and follower of Marie, but his position as confessor and advisor gives him authority over her. When Marie has been given ultimate control over the fate of the demon, she chooses only to exercise it on the advice of her more learned counsel.

Another anecdote about a certain (but unnamed) priest also points to Jacques as its protagonist. Again, this story, where an evil pain torments Marie, points to both the miracle associated with Marie as well as the piety it implies in the priest involved:

> Then anoone in a newe manere of myracul, she callyd sum preste that shulde make a crosse with his fynger on the sore place of seeknesse, and the yuel fledde to an nother place as dredynge the vertue of the holy crosse. And so efte and efte he made a crosse and the wauerynge yuel and fleynge durst no lenger abyde the birthen of the crosse, butte atte laste wente alle awey fro the body of Cristys mayden with a mervelous and vnherde manere of worshepynge of the crucifixe (XIV.10-1).

This "preste" (probably Jacques) follows the pain throughout Marie's body, making the sign of the cross until it is eventually chased out. Although the miracle stressed here is that whatever causes the pain cannot tolerate the sign of the cross, the source of the miracle is less clear. Is it because the pain is in Marie's body (and her faith is so great)

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that this miracle can be performed, or is it the virtue of the priest's cross which accomplishes the task? Several of Jacques' accounts present this dichotomy, and they raise another question: is this *vita* only a description of Marie's sanctity, or is it also a narrative of his own?

As the "certain man" described in the following passage, Jacques possibly implies that his relationship and counsel to Marie was divinely ordained. Although Marie – like Christina *mirabilis* – often fled society and people in order to meditate privately, God sent her to confer with "sum man" on occasion:

> Sumtyme she fledde to feldes nerhand and buskys that sche, eschewynge mennes eyen, myght kepe hir pryuey councelle to hirselfe and to God in a coffer of clene conscyens. Neuertheless, sumtyme she was compelled with preyers of frendes or sende specially fro oure Lorde to sum man, or ellis with wille of compassyone stired to comforte febil folke in the feith and then of many thinges that she knewe (2III.15).

If the described man here is Jacques, then he also indicates knowledge about Marie's "hiding" places during her periods of withdrawal, which would further point to the close and confidential relationship between Marie and Jacques. Sometimes, Jacques is clearly the "sum man" to which he refers, such as when he describes his own ordination, "whanne a ful dere frende of hirs was ordeyned preste atte Parys" (2XIII.17), but at other points the reference is intentionally ambiguous.

Of course, the priests mentioned here could be other members of the monastery at Oignies, who are all characterized by Jacques as having a close relationship with Marie. He, along with others, refers to her as the "modir of the brethere of Oegines" (2IV.19), and in several places writes very conscious passages, referring to himself in the first

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person or as part of a collective "we." But the nature of the confidences does indicate that it is an intimate knowledge that Jacques is privy to, and most likely, the knowledge of a confessor.

While recounting Marie's various miracles and effects on those around her, Jacques uses his own "miracle" story as one of the examples.[4] "And soothly, atte I telle the grete dedes of the holy womman withoute accepcyone of persones, I shalle not spare myselfe, but I shalle sey a story of myne owne infelicite" (2VII.11). In not "sparing" himself, Jacques continues to tell a story about his own pride in the skill of his sermons and how this led him astray, but how Marie (through visions) shows him his error. In telling the episode, however, Jacques still points to his exceptional rhetorical skill. He begins with a *mea culpa* focused entirely on himself, complete with the humility topos:

> Whan I, thof vnworthy, bygan to preche Goddes worde to lewde symple folke and hadde neither exercise nor custom to make a sermone to the puple, euere dredynge of myselfe leste in happe I shulde haue wantid wordes and not endid my sermon, I gaderid togedir here and there many auctorites, and so, whanne I heped mykel mater togedir, whatsoeuer I hadde in mynde that wolde I sey forthe: for a fool tellith forthe alle his spirite, but a wise man kepith sum to afterwarde. And whan I shent myselfe with so grete delauynesse, turnynge to myselfe after the sermon, I felle into an heuynesse of herte for bycause me semyd that I hadde seyde mykelle vnordynatly and vnmanerly (2VII.12-13).

Jacques eventually gains a reputation as a preacher, and this description of his early efforts indicates that it was an accomplishment he had to work at. Many of his sermons were addressed to the beguines at Oignies (Lauwers 61), laity like the "symple folke" mentioned here who would need something less academic than citation of authority.

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[4]This is rare, but not completely unknown in works of hagiography. For example, Bernard of Angers is a major character in his miracles of Sainte Foy.

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Although one of his self-indictments here is that he relied too much on allusion and other authority, even here he alludes to a biblical passage: "In everything a prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly" (Proverbs 13:16).

Jacques continues with his self-chastisement. Too ashamed to tell Marie what was wrong, he takes little comfort in the empty praising of his sermon by his audience – prompted, Jacques writes, by "custom." He confesses that he is encouraged by the false praise, even while knowing it is undeserved. Marie confronts Jacques with a vision that she has had:

> I am schamed to shewe my foulnesse, but I dare not councelle the preisynge of the holy woman, the whiche vpon a tyme whan she, biholdynge me as confused and couerde with a clowde of the forsayde sorowe, callid me to hir and openyd to me the thre folde wounde of temptacyons with the whiche I was wrecchidly woundyd within. "I sawe," quod she, "the liknesse of a man ful of clowdes, couerde with superfluyte of heeres, and a strumpet arrayed as with summe brighte bemes byholdynge hym, wente rownde aboute hym with a shinynge laumpe. And whanne she hadde often compassed aboute, she caste oon of hir brighte beemes towarde hym and drofe awey a party of the derknesse" (2VII.14).

The vision that Jacques describes is like many others that Marie has throughout the *vita*. In all of these, though, Marie herself is not the interpreter of her visions; she is merely the vessel, the narrator of what she has seen, and then the object of the visions decides for himself what Marie's prophecy might mean. She consistently acts as the vehicle for these divine messages, but she never deciphers their meaning.

Jacques understands the meaning of the vision, and offers his reader his own interpretation of Marie's words. He then directly speaks to Marie, a clear call for her recognition as a saint and intercessor:

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> Therefore, at this ensaumple of hir I perceyued ful certeynly anoon that I was sieke of the soores, for the superfluyte of heres genderid to me sorowe. The strumpet arayed (that is pryde) gaf me comforte wrecchedly with brighte beemes of glauerynge. I woot not with what lowuynges, thou holy womman, I shalle preyse the that knewe the priuetis of God, to whome oure Lorde openyd thoghtes of men, not withouten cause, and gaf vertue to thy werkes to make medecyne for many mannes malady (2VII.15).

This apostrophic form is not used in any of the other *vitae* in MS Douce 114. Jacques sees the excessive hairs as sorrow, the strumpet is the pride he takes in his heavily scholarly rhetoric, and the bright beams are the false praise he receives after his sermon. He addresses Marie directly about her ability to understand God and the private thoughts of men.

The learning and authority that led to this excessive pride and ultimate shame in Jacques' own "miracle story" involving Marie is ever-present in the *vita*. It is a heavily allegorical text that reflects both his extensive knowledge and his rhetorical skills. Jacques often combines biblical allusions and verses into a new form, as he does in the following passage – combining various Old and New Testament images: "Therfore the doghter of Jerusalem, onowryd with these broches, beshyned with thees forseide giftys of the Holy Goste as with lanternes of lightes; hir lyfe was in heuenly thinges with purifyed herte thurgh the spirit of vndirstondynge" (2VIII.1). Although Jacques frequently uses only single words or images from different passages, he expects that his clerical audience (and much of the lay audience, as well) will be familiar with the whole biblical verse to which he is referring. He expects his audience to make the connection to what is unsaid, what deeper meanings may be connected to the biblical passages to which he alludes.

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First, Jacques echoes the Old Testament by calling Marie the "daughter of Jerusalem." The prophet Zechariah describes this figure as joyously waiting, while her king comes riding towards her in victory: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass" (Zechariah 9:9). By bringing this image into his readers' minds, Jacques is emphasizing Marie's position as a bride of Christ (her "king"), who personally shares in his victories and joys.

In medieval biblical exegesis, each Old Testament passage was understood to prefigure an addition to theological truth recorded in the New Testament. Keeping to this tradition, Jacques connects the passage in Matthew, that of the wise and foolish maidens, to that in Zechariah. This image, used by all three hagiographers in Douce 114, also emphasizes Marie'a role as a bride of Christ, awaiting him on their wedding night:

> Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, "Give us your oil, for our lamps are going out." But the wise replied, "Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves." And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, "Lord, lord, open to us." But he replied, "Truly, I say to you, I do not know you." Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour (Matthew 25:1-13).

By using the metaphor comparing Marie's "spiritual gifts" (itself a reference to 1 Corinthians 12:4) to "lanterns of light," Jacques is alluding to this parable. He is

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emphasizing Marie's wisdom and her readiness to receive her bridegroom, Christ. The parable was used in medieval religious culture to highlight the importance of penance because no one knew "the day nor the hour" of one's death, and must always therefore be prepared for that moment. Jacques returns to this image and refers to the parable frequently throughout the *vita*.

The text is so richly allusive that, without extensive knowledge of the Bible, it may remain opaque. In the following passage, for example, Jacques draws on three different biblical references and clearly expects his readers to understand and apply them:

> So mykel loue, soothly, she conceyued of pouerte thurgh the spirite of drede, that vnnethes she wolde haue hir necessaryes. Wherfore vpon a daye she proposid to flee, that vnknowen and dispised amonge straungers, myghte begge fro dore to dore that she naked myghte folowe Cryste, leuynge the mantelle of alle worldly goodes as Joseph, the pycher as the Samarytan, the sendel as Seint John Euangelist. She toke hede often and thoghte on Cristes pouerte that, whan He was borne, hadde not a place in the comun market stede, that had not where He myghte leue His hede, that also hadde no mony wherof to pay His tribute, and that wolde be fedde of almes and be receyued in othere mennes herburgh (2III.6).

Jacques is describing Marie's decision to live a modest life of poverty rather than one of wealth and comforts (the life to which she was born). Like Christina *mirabilis*, Marie would like to incorporate begging into her spiritual practice, choosing to live entirely off of peoples' charity. Guy, her spiritual advisor, tells her that she cannot beg (reflecting generally held prohibitions against women and begging),[5] but in this passage Jacques describes why it was an admirable idea of Marie's.

Jacques uses three different biblical stories to demonstrate Marie's decision to

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[5]This is dealt with more completely in the chapter on Christina *mirabilis*.

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embrace poverty. The first allusion, "leuynge the mantelle of alle worldly goodes as Joseph," is to the Old Testament Joseph: "And when [his master's wife] saw that [Joseph] had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, 'See, he has brought among is a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me to lie with me and I cried out with loud voice; and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled and got out of the house'" (Genesis 39:13-15). Although not explicitly about leaving worldly goods behind, this passage had been allegorized as such in the Middle Ages.

Immediately following the Joseph example, Jacques again reaches to the Bible to elaborate on his description of Marie's casting off material things, "the pycher as the Samarytan." Here, the allusion is to a new testament story where a Samaritan woman leaves her water pitcher at a well, astonished that Jesus knew intimate details about her life: "So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?'" (John 4:28-29). Again, Jacques has chosen a passage that does not overtly espouse poverty but has used the idea of abandonment to highlight Marie's choice.

Jacques closes the comparison with another New Testament allusion, an encounter between a man and John the Evangelist: "the sendel as Seint John Euangelist." The reference to a passage in Mark again emphasizes leaving clothing behind: "And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body; and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked" (Mark 14:51-52). Clearly, Jacques' passage would be completely incomprehensible without the background knowledge

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necessary to understand the allusions.

At the end of the passage, Jacques refers to a more common allusion regarding Christ: "that had not where He myghte leue His hede." This reference, one that was often associated with Christ's Passion and used in painted images, is phrased identically in Matthew 8:20 and Luke 9:58: "And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.'" Again, Jacques is emphasizing the Christ-like nature of Marie's desire to live in poverty. It is an *imitatio Christi* that had been embraced by the mendicant orders and that had been reluctantly accepted by the Church hierarchy. Later, Jacques will extensively praise Marie for her manual labor and that living a life funded purely by that (the ideal that ultimately becomes integrated into the beguines lifestyles), but here he insists that her desire to beg is acceptable, and even more significantly, holy.

Jacques' extensive allegorical style may have been prompted by the primary intended audience for his *vita* – the pope. Finishing the *vita* between Marie's death in 1213 and his departure for Acre in 1216, Jacques presented it to the pope before he left for Palestine (Lauwers "Expérience" 72). Later, in Thomas de Cantimpré's *Supplement to the Life of Marie d'Oignies*, we learn that Jacques included a relic of Marie, her finger, with the *vita* when he delivered it to the pope. Jacques' *vita* achieved its goal; the beguines of Liège were recognized as legitimate religious communities, and the papal recognition was then extended to beguines throughout France and the Holy Roman Empire.

Brian Patrick McGuire briefly explores the paradoxical nature of the relationship

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between Jacques and Marie, where the confessor is the follower and the lay woman the holy one. He writes:

> In this biography we find what I would call a spiritual power struggle. James [Jacques de Vitry] needed Marie for his own completeness, but Marie inevitably needed James as a male and a cleric to interpret and defend her in a society grown wary of any expression in which heresy might be latent .... Marie could at times amaze him and act in opposition to his expectations. James could admire Marie and patronise her. In the very suggestiveness of such a biography we catch the shadow of what had been a potent relationship in a sharing of interior lives" (365).

Jacques sees himself as an inextricable actor in Marie's *vita*, but at the same time understands that she is the one worthy of canonization. Marie's words, and her life, would be unknown today without Jacques' pen and the dissemination of the manuscript throughout Europe. The challenge in reading the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies is separating these two powerful personalities that have intertwined in Jacques' writing, and attempting to find what truth may lie in the "shadow" that McGuire describes.

The First Beguine

Marie d'Oignies, as was mentioned earlier, was called the "mater fratum de Oignies" or the "mother of the brothers of Oignies" (Fichefet 57). She was considered a part of the monastic system in place there, and then later was named the first of the group of semi-religious women, the beguines, who established themselves in the Liège diocese. Starting her religious way of life in Willambroux (outside of Nivelles), Marie was called by God to start the beguine community in 1207 at Oignies, where she remained until her death. Joined there by her husband John (with whom she had a chaste marriage), her

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brother-in-law and spiritual advisor Guy, and a recluse named Helvide, she spent those years administering to a leper colony outside of Oignies. In addition to her acts of charity, Marie was a mystic known for her visions and prophecies. These are initially what drew other women to her community and what ultimately led Jacques de Vitry to her side.

Although all the mystics in Douce 114 are associated with *imitatio Christi* in some respect, Marie interprets the concept in a unique way. Her individual kind of piety is still based on chastity, but within marriage; it is still founded on imitating Christ, but focuses on healing rather than pain. Marie's chaste marriage was the primary reason she was suspected of being a Cathar heretic. Rumors of Catharism were sweeping Flanders in the early thirteenth century, and the religious practices of the lay women who were just beginning the beguine movement left them open to suspicion and accusation:

> The suspicion stemmed from the Cathar condemnation of marriage and sexuality, which obliged the perfect [someone who has reached a state of enlightenment] to either shun members of the other sex completely or observe a form of chaste cohabitation with them. But it coincided with a growing belief on the part of clergymen that female chastity could be assured solely within the confines of the nunnery, and that any manifestation of it outside the monastic life was fraudulent or inspired by dishonest motives (Simons *Cities* 23-24).

The suspicion was not without a certain authority: St. Paul wrote that near the end of time some people would be misled into believing that marriage should be forbidden (1 Timothy 4:1-3). Marie was certainly open to this criticism, since she had chosen to live chastely with her husband early on in their marriage, even though she was a mere fourteen years old (unlike Margery Kempe who two hundred years later also chose a chaste

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marriage, but only after having several children).

Chaste or "spiritual" marriages were not completely unheard of in the Middle Ages. They had existed in various forms since the earliest days of Christianity, and although they were generally discouraged in the Church, they were still practiced through the later Middle Ages. Jacques takes great pains to describe the circumstances for Marie's decision of a chaste marriage, indicating that both God and Marie's husband were integral to it. In his description of how this chastity came about, however, Jacques focuses more on John than he does on Marie, indicating that the decision to enter into a sexless union was ultimately the man's:

> And whan she so a good while had lyued with John, hir spouse, in matrymoyne, oure Lorde byhelde the meeknes of His mayden and gracyously herde hir prayers. For John was enspyred to haue Mary as taken to kepe, whom he hadde firste as wife. Hee made the chast man tutour of His mayden that she shulde haue solas of hir keper and lafte to hir a trewe puruyour, that she myghte more frely serue oure Lorde. And also byfore of a naturel goodnes, the same John ageyne seyde not the holy purpos of his wife (as a custum is of othere men) but ful goodly suffred and compassyone hadde of hir laboures; and visityd was of oure Lorde, that hee deserued not allonly [a] verre aungels lyfe by contynens and chastite, but also to gyue alle that hee hadde for Crystes loue to pore men and to folowe his felowe in holy purpos and holy religyone. For euere the ferre hee was departyd fro hir by carnelle affeccyone, the nerre was hee knytte to hir by loue of sprituel spousehode. Wherfore oure Lorde apperyd after in visyone to His mayden and bihighte that as reparelde matrymoyne, He wolde gyue ageyne to hir in heuene hir felowe, the whiche for loue of chastyte, withdrow hym fro fleshely luste in erthe (IV.1-2).

God asks John to be Marie's "tutor," educating her in spirituality. Their relationship thus resembles the complicated one between Jacques and Marie, where the former has more authority because of his gender but the latter is spiritually superior. John is the one named as deserving a "verre aungels life" for not opposing Marie's holy destiny. The

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couple's reward for their decision to live chastely is to have each other perfectly in Heaven.

Dyan Elliott, in *Spiritual Marriage*, argues that John's agreement to the circumstances of a chastity so early in the marriage was somewhat unusual. It was more common for a couple to have a few children (and therefore fulfill the marriage contract) before deciding to live chastely:

> It is worth emphasizing that John is something of an exception among husbands since he readily agreed to chastity early on in the marriage, graciously bypassing the usual prerequisite of children. Jacques's rhetoric of the enhanced spiritual bond is corroborated by a vision in which the wife psychically honors her husband's generosity (254).

Elliott sees this vision of her marriage in Heaven as Marie's "honoring" of her husband. She also emphasizes that any mention of the spiritual bond after a couple's decision to live chastely is generally ignored in most records. However, this is not the case in Jacques' description of Marie and John, in which he consciously outlines the heavenly and spiritual rewards the chaste life will bring for both husband and wife; they have in a sense redefined what marriage can be.

Jacques' recounting of this episode in Marie's *vita* leaves no doubt that the God orchestrates this chaste marriage. Even though it answers Marie's prayers, Jacques stresses that the decision is made only after John agrees to it and – in the process – becomes Marie's spiritual "tutor," indicating that his holiness equals or exceeds hers in the first place. Whether this is an inherent belief in male superiority on Jacques' part or a carefully constructed response to accusations of heresy is unclear. Either way, he takes the opportunity to construct the chaste marriage as an example to all Christians of how

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marriages should be:

> Therfore, wrecchyd lecchours, fulynge hem owne selfe oute of wedloke with vnleueful commixtions, maye be schamed and ferde sythen booth these blissed yongelynges, absteinynge fro leeueful halsynges for Goddes loue, ouerecome the harde heet of brennynge youthe thurgh feruour of religyone. For they deserued corons for the pryse, to whome oure Lorde gaf in His hous and in His wallis place and name better than sones and doghters of a blessed kynde of martirdome: in fyre not brennynge, where luste aboundid her owne luste sleynge, nere the flude, thristynge and amonge [a banquet] hungerynge. They stikked her fleshes with nayles of Goddes drede, yee noghte settynge by hemselfe for oure Lordes loue (IV.3).

Jacques warns against extra-marital sex and points to Marie and John – who could have had licit sexual relations but chose to remain chaste – as an example that "wrecchyd lecchours" should look to. Rather than portraying Marie and John as without lust and only full of religious fervor, he states that "where luste aboundid" in their youth, they vanquished that passion. These asides are abundant throughout the *vita*, pointing to the more popular and less academic *exempla* that Jacques was known for. Although he does not insist on chaste marriage for others, he still uses it as a comparison against behavior he considers abhorrent.

Interestingly, but not, in medieval terms, ironically, Marie becomes the local saint for safe childbirth after her death. A reliquary in Aiseau dedicated to Marie reads "Les mères Chretiennes invoquent specialement cette grande sainte pour obtenir une heureuse délivrance" ("Christian mothers particularly invoke this great saint to have a successful delivery"[Fichefet 53].) Marie's healing and work at the leprosy hospital probably did not associate her with a safe delivery, especially because she remained childless. Indeed, Marie and John's work at the leprosarium is their most lasting legacy. Nearly all

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references to Marie in modern criticism mention her work with lepers, although Jacques mentions it only twice in his *vita*.

One reason a connection may have been made between Marie and safe delivery is Jacques' repetitive use of the metaphor of childbirth and the image of Marie as mother: of the brothers at Oignies, of the other beguine women, and of Christ himself. Each hagiographer in MS Douce 114 draws on the childbirth image, but Jacques does so in a markedly unusual way. While Philip of Clairvaux and Thomas of Cantimpré use it to describe physical pain, Jacques employs the metaphor to describe emotional pain. For example, Jacques writes that when Marie confesses:

> ... if happely hit semyd to hir that she hadde trespassed any litil venial synne, she shewyd hir to a preste with so grete sorow of herte, with so mykel schame, and with so longe contricyone that othere while for grete angwyshe of herte she was const[r]eyned to crye loude in maner of a woman trauelynge of childe. Ye, thof she so eshewed fro smal and veniels, that otherewhile she myghte not fynde in hir herte, in fiftene dayes, vnordynate thoghte (VII.2).

The anguish of confession causes her to cry out like a woman in labor. Alexandra Barratt hypothesizes that this choice of simile "is probably purely literary or biblical in origin as it is unlikely that Jacques ever attended a birth, through he might have been present at a maternal deathbed" ("Daughters" 92). But one does not have to be present at a childbirth to hear the screams of pain – a sound with which Jacques must have been familiar (especially since priests were called upon to be present for quick baptisms if it seemed likely that a child would die soon after birth). Marie, then, although not a mother herself, becomes associated with motherhood and delivery through Jacques' use of metaphor.

Even during her lifetime, Marie's reputation as a kind of spiritual mother

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extended far beyond the limits of the diocese of Liège, as is clear from the fact that Bishop Fulk of Toulouse and Jacques de Vitry are interested enough to see her. Jacques recounts another story about a priest, Guy of Cambrai,[6] who is drawn by Marie's reputation. While visiting her, he converts a friend to her wisdom as well. Initially, the friend mocks Guy, calling him a child chasing butterflies for his interest in Marie:

> And so hit felle on a daye that a goodly man, famylyer and frende of relygious persones, Guy, sumtyme chauntour of the chirche Cameraceuse,[7] turnyd oute of his wey to viset hir. Then on of his felawes – the whiche happely vnto then knew not by experiens how mikel visitacyone and homblynes of gode folke maye do to meke myndes – as in scornynge the goodly labour of the forsayde deuoute man, seyde: "For Goddes loue, sir chauntour, what seke yee? Why leue yee youre weye? Whethere wil [ye] folowe and take flyes and flyand botirflyes with childer?" Hee, soothly, that was meke, mylde, and suffrynge, lefte not his weye that hee purposed for siche wordes but deuoutly wente to Cristes mayden, of whos presens anothere tyme hee hadde not a litil comforte (XIV.4).

While impatiently waiting for Guy to finish his conversation with Marie, the friend – simply by staring in her face – understands God's work inside the beguine. In reaction, he is overcome with emotion and weeps violently, an effect Marie seems to have on a number of people throughout the *vita*:

> And while hee spake to hir, his felow, as seculer manere is, sette litil by siche wordes and on another syde was occupyed with dyuerse and ydel wordes. Than, whan hee was ful and irke of abidynge, hee come to the chauntour to bidde hym that hee shulde hye in haste. And happely, as he loked rudely in the visage of Cristes mayden, sodeynly and meruelously he felle into so grete wepynge of terrys that vnnethes hee myghte be broghte a longe tyme after fro that place and presens of hire. Than the chauntour, thogh he wolde for shame haue holden counseile, takynge hede and

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[6]Guy of Cambrai] This is not the same Guy who is her confessor and brother-in-law.

[7]Cambrai, a town in the extreme north of modern France, near the Belgian border.

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> knowynge the chauns, was gladde and scornyd his felowe ageyne and seyde, "Goo wee hennes. What stande wee? In happe yee wole dyne and chace boterflyes?" And hee, after many sighynges and terys, vnnethes atte laste hee myghte be pullyd thennes seiynge, "Forgif me fadir, for I wiste not what I seyde byfore. Now, soothly, I haue perceyued by experyens Goddes vertue in this womman" (XIV.5-6).

This story illustrates both the astonishing affective power Marie had over those who visited her and how her reputation grew and spread beyond Oignies. In describing Margery Kempe's tears which function similarly to Marie's, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen writes that Margery's tears "infect" and "implant themselves in the listening scribe," who is moved to tears at her narrative (*Medieval Identity Machines* 184). Here, too, Marie's tears are like a contagion, moving from her body onto and into those of her visitors in both an empathic and a religious reaction.

Through other examples of visitors coming to seek Marie's advice, Jacques portrays her as preferring to spend her time meditating on Christ. The monks choose not to bother her, leaving her to her meditations: "Also otherewhile, whan she swetly and esely was ioyned to oure Lorde with glowe of loue as o spirite made with Hym, wee tolde hir that somme men were comen fro fer contrees to see hir and hasted faste homwarde ageyne" (2V.7).

Later, visitors would so trouble her that she had terrible physical reactions (such as vomiting blood) or social ones (including hiding in the woods):

> She, sothly herynge that straungers were comen – leste in happe she schulde sclaunder any man – compellid hir spirite with so grete sorowe fro hir ioye of contemplacyone and clippynge of hir spouse that sumtyme sche euomyte pure blode in grete quantite as hir bowelles hadde brusten. Hauynge leuer to be tourmentyd with that martirdome than to turbil or disese hir euene Cristen – and principally pees of pilgrimes – neuertheles

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> otherewhile, whan by reuelacyone of the Holy Gooste, she knewe byfore the comynge of sum that were ferre fro hir, she fledde to feldes or to woddes nere and hidde hir that vnnethes wee myghte fynde hir of alle a daye. Yit vmwhile for profit of summe that nedyd helpe, she was compellid to brest oute by no mannes stirrynge but thurgh the Holy Goste: "Goo thou spirite," quod she, "for not curiusly, but for cause of necessite, summebody abyde the" (2V.8).

Reflecting on the visiting pilgrims, rather than God, provokes this violent reaction in Marie, but she continues to counsel, and visitors continue to come. It is perhaps this remarkable scope of reputation, coupled with Jacques' extensive *vita*, that places Marie in history as the first beguine, because chronologically she coexists with many other semi-religious women throughout the Low Countries.

At the end of Marie's life, Jacques writes, visitors came from several countries to see her, which indicates that she had widespread fame during her life:

> Also hir frendes and of hir knowleche come faste to hir fro dyuers cuntreys to visite hir, and whan wee spake of summe that were absente and hadde not comene to hir, of summe she seyde, "Yit shalle I see hem," and of summe she seyde, "I shal neuer see hem in this worlde." And that haue witen falle (2XIII.13).

Although Jacques uses this passage to describe Marie's prophetic knowledge about whom she would and would not see before her death, it also emphasizes the effect that she had on so many "frendes" of "dyuers cuntreys." Marie's reputation had preceded her in her own life, and Jacques' biography ensured that it would continue after her death.

Reading Marie/Marie's Reading

Whether or not Marie was literate cannot be determined from the information in the *vita*. Throughout the text Jacques makes reference to what Marie does and does not

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know. Occasionally his text makes her appear illiterate, while elsewhere he describes her as reading her psalter or performing another act of literacy. Many beguines were literate, and some like Marguerite Porete wrote their own books, rather than dictating or otherwise communicating their lives for a male writer (by no means guaranteed to be an amanuensis). One way to explain the contradictory evidence throughout the *vita* may be that Marie was functionally literate (meaning that she could either recognize certain letters, words, or phrases) in the vernacular, but could not read or understand Latin.

Jacques frequently acknowledges Marie's understanding of biblical images and texts, beginning, perhaps, with her exceptional childhood where she had already acquired intelligence about the Bible:

> Also whan hir fader and modir, as maner is of seculers, wolde haue rayed hire with delycate garmentis and gaye, she was sory and forsoke hem as if she hadde redde impressed naturally in hir mynde that Seinte Petir seith of wymmen thus: "Whas araye of clothynge be not withoute for the tressynge and tiftynge of hire or tire of golde or gownes" (II.4).

When he describes Marie's disapproval of the rich attire her parents press upon her, Jacques does not assume that Marie had read or even *heard* the biblical quote: "Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of fine clothing" (I Peter 3:3). Instead, Jacques marvels that it seems Marie had this information "impressed naturally" on her mind, as if it were a divine influence and not something Marie may have herself have learned and chosen to incorporate in her life. Jacques never questions whether Marie may have actually read the passage.

Two clear examples indicate Marie was not literate, at least in Latin. The first is an extraordinary moment where a male friend of Marie's is suddenly sexually attracted to

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her, and Marie, aided by God, is able to unwittingly repel any advances. Jacques prefaces the story by telling his readers that Marie had no sexual feelings of her own and expects others feel the same way that she does, especially since she did not know much about men:

> For in so mykel she, that yonge tymberer, hadde strecchyd hir body and dyed hit as bytwix two trees of the crosse that many yeeris togadir she neuere felte ryse ageyne hir the firste sterynges of lecchery. Wherof sche hadde so grete triste amonge men, that of aboundauns of innocens and pure sympilnesse, she supposed alle othere like hirself (2VI.9).

Jacques' view on women and their sexuality is unusual. Most medieval devotional writers warned women of the dangers of tempting men, placing the blame squarely on the shoulders of the woman. For example, in the *Ancrene Wisse*, a guide written for a small group of anchoresses living in England, the anonymous author compares a woman showing her "fair face and her white neck and light eyes" to the uncovering of a pit in which an animal may fall:

> She is guilty of that animal's death before our Lord, and must answer for his soul on Doomsday, and pay for the loss of the animal, and have no other coin but herself .... You who uncover this pit, you who do anything by which a man is carnally tempted through you, even if you do not know it, fear this judgment greatly. And if he is tempted so that he sins morally in any way, even if it is not with you but with desire toward you, or if he tries to fulfill with someone else the temptation which has been awakened through you, because of your deed, be quite sure of the judgment (Savage and Watson 69).

This philosophy begins to change in the later Middle Ages, when several vernacular texts attest to close relationships between male and female religious.

Anne Clark Bartlett writes that "the conventional assumption that women are inherently more vulnerable to sexual transgression than men are is [a] stereotype rejected

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by Middle English devotional treatises employing a discourse of familiarity" ("a reasonable affection" 141). Thus, the audience for MS Douce 114 would not have been surprised by divine intervention, preventing Marie from being victimized by a male friend. Jacques' original audience would have been more familiar with the beliefs outlined in *Ancrene Wisse* than those that develop later, however; they would necessarily understand the woman (even a holy one) as the sexually aggressive partner. Jacques cannot simply avoid the issue. He argues that Marie was naive about men and sexuality, despite her marriage, in the preface to his story.

Jacques writes that one of Marie's male friends became sexually attracted to her after they had held hands. Although he intends no harm, his flesh soon betrays him. Jacques is not focusing on the man's erotic intentions, but rather God's protection of Marie. It becomes a crucial moment in understanding her literacy:

> Wherfore, whan a famylier frende of hirs of ful grete excesse of gostly affeccyone helde faste hir hande on a tyme – thof with a chaste welle he thoghte noon ille – yit he felte as man of that ouer nere, neyghynge the firste felynges of freel fleshe. And sythen she wyste nothinge therof, she herde a voys fro aboue that was, "*Noli me tangere*" (that is to seye, "wille thou not touche me"). Neuertheles she vnderstode not what hit bytokenyd. Soothly, good God and compacyent to oure infirmite wolde not haue hym shamed byfore the holy womman, yit He wolde as a gelous louer kepe the chastite of His spouse and warne hym fro perils that myghte falle. Wherfore, whan she seyde to hym, "I harde now a voys, but what hit betokenith, in sooth, I wote nere – that is *'Noli me tangere*'" – hee, vndirstandynge what this was, fro thenne forthe was the bettir ware, and, thankeynge God that wolde not discuuer his febilnesse, toke his leue and wente his weye (2VI.10).

Marie hears the phrase "noli me tangere," words associated with Jesus and Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection taken from the Gospels: "Jesus said to [Mary

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Magdalene], 'Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father'" (John 20:17). Marie repeats the words, claiming that she does not know their meaning but only repeats the voice she has heard. The offending friend, understanding the Latin phrase, leaves Marie alone.

Several troubling aspects exist in this passage. According to Jacques, Marie is clearly illiterate in Latin – she cannot decipher a grammatically simple phrase – and he also depicts her as unfamiliar with a famous biblical passage depicted in art and certainly repeated in sermons. Considering Marie's familiarity with the Mass and her close relationship to Jacques and the other brethren of Oignies, these words surprisingly mean nothing to Marie.

In a similar incident, letters form in Marie's mind. Although she recognizes the individual letters, an a, i, o, and l, she cannot put them together to form a word and needs to ask a clerk for assistance. Marie's words ultimately need male interpretation; merely a vessel for God's messages, Marie sees a saint around his relics but does not know which one:

> Then the holy woman asked, "Who arte thou?" But hee named not hymselfe but discreued foure lettirs byfore hir mynde. And whan she helde the lettirs in hir thoghte but wist not what they mente, she cleped a clerke and tolde hym the lettirs that were *a, i, o, l* and asked what they betokenyd. Than hee, spellynge hem togedir, answeryd that they signifyed *Aiol*. And thenne she knewe openly that this relikes were of *Seint Aiol,* the whiche atte prime in Chaumpayn is hadde in grete reuerens (2IX.24).

When the man states that the letters spell "Aiol," Marie understands that the relics belong to Saint Aiol (Aiol was probably Aigulph, a ninth-century solitary who lived in the forests near Bourges).

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Jacques describes Marie's understanding and comprehension of scripture as the incorporation of things that she has heard and not read. He implies that God's words are naturally held in Marie's heart and have not entered through study or reading:

> Soothly, the wise and discrete womman was suffyciently byshyned with holy writte, for often she herde Goddes wordes and kepte and bare in herte wordes of holy writte. And hauntynge holy chirche, she hidde holy hestes wysely in hir herte. And for vndirstandynge is to alle that do hit that atte she herde deuoutly, she bisyed hir to fulfille hit more deuoutly in dede (2V.17-8).

Jacques sees Marie's heart and not her head as her vehicle to understanding. Reading is unnecessary because Marie naturally incorporates all that she hears regarding holy writ into her life.

Elsewhere in the *vita*, however, Jacques explicitly states that Marie is reading. In all cases, "reading" could mean either reciting or an act of literacy. The word "read" can mean both in the Middle Ages, as can its Latin counterpart "legere." In this passage, the only place where Jacques describes Marie's mortification of the flesh without simultaneously condemning it, Marie "reads" the entire psalter coupled with repetitive kneeling and punctuated by self-flagellation:

> Also, otherewhile, whan hir soule was replete and purifyed as sumtyme more than othere, she myghte [not] cese fro prayere. Wherfore she salutid Oure Lady in the nyghte and in the daye, knelynge a thowsande sythes and an hundirde, contynuynge this meruelos and vnharde offys of salutacyone fourty dayes togedir. The firste tyme, in an houge spirite, she knelyd withoute stynte sex hundreth sythes; the secunde tyme, standynge on hir feet, she redde all the sauter, and atte ilke salme knelynge seyde the salutacyone of Oure Lady *Aue Maria,* but the thridde tyme, th[r]e hundredth sythes at euery knelynge, with schappe yeerd smytynge hire, sacrifyed and offerde hirselfe with a longe martirdome to God and to the blessed mayden Mary. Soothly, with the laste strokes to sauer with the tothere, she broghte aboundauntly blode oute of hir body, and than she but

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> knelyd fyfty sythes and endyd soo that seruyse. This didde she not with bodily strengthe, but with aungels helpe that sustenyd hire and socoured (X.10).

Mary, described as having "redde all the sauter," kneels at each psalm. To recite the 150 psalms by memory would not be impossible. Marie could merely be reciting the psalms, holding the psalter for its accompanying illustrations. She could also have another kind of "functional" literacy, where she can recognize the *incipits* of some prayers and would then know the rest by memory. If Marie said the Office every day, she would have recited all of the Psalms in the course of a week, and so may have known the Psalter by heart.

Later, when Marie is on her death bed, Jacques describes her as holding a book. It could be an illustrated book of hours, but these were not as popular in the thirteenth century as they would become later. But Jacques' mention of the book draws attention to the possibility of her reading it:

> Then, the three dayes of ioiynge paste, she garte make hir bedde in the chirche byfore an auter and comen ageyne to hirselfe. She callid men to hir and seyde: "Lamentacyons are passed byfore while I sorowed for synnes. Songe is gon byfore while I was iocounde and ioyful for euerlastynge godes. Loo, now foloweth wee of syeknesse and deeth; I schalle neuere ete after now. I schal neuere herafter rede in this boke." And takyng to brether a litil boke that sche hadde in the whiche she vsed to seye orysouns and somme dytees and rymes of Oure Lady, she putte hirselfe pacyently vndir disciplyne of oure Lorde and abode with ioye a blessyd ende in silens and in hape (2XII.19).

Marie, now lying on a bed in front of the church altar, is described as holding a book that she used to "seye orysouns and somme dytees and rymes of Oure Lady." The book certainly appears to be one that she could read, particularly in its reference to "somme

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dytees and rymes;" unlike a psalter, this book would not have a set order or standard contents. In her book *Gothic Manuscript Illumination in the Diocese of Liège (c. 1250 - c. 1330)*, Judith Oliver gives some possibilities as to what Marie's book might have been. Although the books Oliver studies are dated slightly later than Marie's, she shows a wide-ranging devotional manuscript culture that includes several miscellanies for personal use. Many of these include songs dedicated to Mary, descriptions of Jesus' Passion, and hagiographies. If Marie is holding this type of book – and not an illustrated one – she appears to be able to read its contents.

Also at the end of her life, Marie's seeming incomprehension of Latin evaporates, at least according to the Middle English translator who chose to keep Marie's words in Latin:

> Then she for ioye ful longe, as smylynge, bygan to synge with a lowe voys I woot not what, for then myghte she not synge hyghe. And whan I neghed more nere and herkenyd bisily, I myghte not vndirstonde but a litil of hir songe and that was this: *Quam pulcher rex noster Domine.* That is to sey in Englysche, "ful feyre kynge oure Lorde" (2XIV.3).

Although not indicated in the Latin, Marie's deathbed words are presented as Latin ones and not vernacular speech in the Douce MS. This underscores Jacques' previous notion of Marie as being naturally impressed with holy writ and inspired by God's words. Like when speaking the words "noli me tangere," Marie is divinely inspired with holy speech.

The question of Marie's literacy hovers in the background of her entire *vita*. Jacques does not firmly answer the question of whether or not she could read, and the malleable nature of literacy in the Middle Ages only complicates matters. "Illiteracy" in itself could mean a Latin illiteracy and have nothing to do with vernacular

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comprehension, or it could mean absolutely no ability to read. Marie is never described as writing, which several beguines were known to do, but her reading remains in question.

Prophecy, Vision, and Miracles

Marie d'Oignies' miracles were frequent and varied from the subtle (being shielded from a rain fall) to the fantastic (disemboweling a demon). Jacques places the miracle stories throughout the *vita*. In sharp contrast to the miracles described in the other two beguine *vitae* of MS Douce 114 – those of Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Christina *mirabilis* – withstanding pain is not integral to any of Marie's miracles. All of her miracles, however, point to Marie's special relationship with God and how this manifests itself on earth.

One of the earliest moments that Jacques describes involves nature's obedience to Marie; angelic light shows her the way in a wooded area and the stars literally conspire to shield her from the rain:

> And whil she hadde but o mayden with hir and knewe not the wey that is ful vnredy and ful of wode, a lighte but wente byfore hir shewynge the weye, that she yede neuere wronge. Also, sythen that daye she hadde nothinge eten and alle nyght waked in the chirche. On the morne whanne she shulde go home and not ete til euene, neuertheles withouten any difficulte she wente home ageyne, holy aungels ledynge hir on booth sydes. Soothly, sumtyme in the same weye, whan there semyd an houge rayne in the cloudys and she hadde no clothes to chare hir fro the rayne, she, lokynge vp, sawe sum sterris, obeysaunte to hir, withholdynge the rayne, and so in the rayne tyme come home ageyne vntouched (X.8-9).

Marie's holiness is reflected in her power over nature itself, directing the stars to be

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"obeysaunte to hir." Her abilities extend beyond her small community to the world around her.

Marie also defies her own human frailty when she miraculously survives without sleep. Angels help her get through the night, and Jacques characterizes this time as Marie's intimate moments with the Lord, where she is not distracted by the "hustlynge or bustlynge" of the day:

> Wherfore as mykel as she myghte, abstemynge fro slepe, she serued oure Lorde in the nyghtes watchys, and so mykel more deuoutely that she was not letted with outewarde noyse of any hustlynge or bustlynge. The vertue of abstynens driynge and lenynge hir body, and the fire of Goddes loue within brennynge, esely putte fro hir alle slomerynge of slepe. And swete aungel songes – with whome she woke often alle nyghte – didde awey fro hir eyen alle slepe withouten any bodily disese. And so, solitary fro company of men in the nyghtes tyme, she hadde felawshyp of ostes of blessed spirites whos meruelous noyse – as of a multitute of pepil – delyted hir eres with a doucet and mery melody. Hit shoke awey slouthe; hit refreshyd the hede, hit comfortyd the mynde with a wondir swetnesse, hit sterid deuocyone, hit enflaumed desyre and to the louvynge and thankynge (XI.3).

Angels' songs keep her awake and refreshed all night, but Marie also benefits spiritually from this abstention from sleep. Like the miracle of the stars and the rain, Marie is complying with the miracles of nature that God sends her.

More than either Elizabeth or Christina, who imitate Christ, Marie is described as taking on Christ-like abilities and seemingly divine powers, obvious in her ability to heal the sick and wounded simply by her touch:

> Also oure Lorde not oonly gaf to many seke, comforte and pacyens of hir presense, but also often bodily hele thurgh hir meritis, for summe burstyne childer were broght to hir, and after she hadde handelyd hem they were alle hool. There was a childe bisyde Oegines that hadde a perlyous sieknes, for contynuelly atte his eere blode ranne fro his heed. And

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> whanne hee myght not be cured by no leche crafte, be medecyne of hir prayers and handelynge, hee hadde perfitely hele, then the childes moder bare hym to the chirche and thanked God and His mayden for hir sone. Also, a womman was heled atte hir touchynge of a ful perlyous yuel that is a posteme of the throt that is callid the "squynnacy" (2IV.21-23).

Marie's healing ability extends far beyond the care of the sick implicit in the idea of the beguines and Marie's own hospital work with lepers. Here, she heals people simply by her touch. Marie's healing acts very clearly reflects Jesus' own in the gospels, where his touch alone cures the sick.[8] Her healing powers are also varied – in this short description, she has healed broken bones, a child with blood running from his ear, and quinsy (a painful inflammation of the tonsils). These are not described as moments where Marie cared for the ill; rather, like Christ, Marie needs only to touch the sick to heal them.

Several of Marie's miracles deal with expelling demons and evil spirits. Marie's ability to conquer these personifications of evil also reflects the healing power of Jesus (in Luke 9:42, Jesus expels a demon from a boy while healing the sick). This is a common trope of classical hagiography, where the miracles of the saints usually fall into the same types as Christ's miracles. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne notes that in the virgin-martyr tale, the saint must often battle "heavenly and hellish manifestations in her cell" ("Virgin's Tale" 173). The power of Marie's faith and goodness is so strong that she can conquer even the most demonic opponents. Marie's encounters include saving both a monk and a nun from demonic possession, as well as her own direct encounter with the devil himself. Dyan Elliot points out that by the end of the twelfth century demons were

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[8]Jesus' healing miracles are particularly emphasized in the Gospel of Luke (8 and 9), who was himself a doctor.

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no longer described as possessing bodies, but this had always been a matter of great theological debate,[9] so Jacques is also putting in his side of this controversy by writing Marie's story with physically bodied demons. The readers of the Middle English Douce manuscript would have been convinced by the fifteenth century that demons had no material corporeality.

When one of the brethren at Oignies is under the spell of a demon, Marie confronts it directly, praying that it will come to her and demanding to know who it is:

> Thenne she gaf hir to prayers and wepynges and restyd not til that spirite, with grete weymentynge and shame, stode byfore hir vpon a nyghte in hir celle while she prayed. Then she, byholdynge hym with a fals shynynge, "What arte thou?" quod she, "or what is thy name?" And hee, as he was of a proude loke, byhelde hir alle astoyle. "I am he," quod hee, "whome you corsed womman hath garte come to the thurgh thy prayers and has byraste me my frende. Slepe is my name, for I appere as Lucifere in slepe to many, and most to religyous. And they obey to me and falle in to pryde thurgh my comfortes, lattynge hemselfe worthy to be visytid of God and of aungellis." And after the ende proued openly atte that man was deceyued of the feend (X.15-6).

The demon, Sleep, admits that he appears to religious men and women in an angelic guise, playing on their sin of pride that they are worthy to be visited by such a divine messenger. Some medieval people believed in the existence of the incubi and succubi, demons that visited at night and had sex with sleeping people (usually women). This tale feeds into several fears of the medieval reader. Elliot writes that the myths of incubi and succubi played on earlier monastic fears of "the bed as a zone of danger" (*Fallen Bodies* 31). This episode shows Marie's immunity to the demon who had seduced a cleric, but

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[9]For more on the debate over the embodiment or disembodiment of angels and demons, see Elliot, *Fallen Bodies*, chapter 6.

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also shows the deceptive nature of the demon himself who appears in the guise of an angel. In addition, it reminds the reader of Marie's seeming lack of a need to sleep. Jacques has described her as foregoing sleep in favor of prayer, and that God makes sure she remains both awake and refreshed. Sleep cannot conquer Marie in any form.

During the Middle Ages, many theological writers portrayed women as being particularly susceptible to demonic possession. Marie encounters both men and women – most of them religious – who become prey to the devil's lures. Barbara Newman writes that "instead of performing dramatic exorcisms as priests did, [Marie] prayed and fasted" ("Devout Women" 39). Perhaps Jacques' references to Marie's confrontation with demons indicate his own convictions that Marie's more passive devotion was itself a counterweight for exorcism, which only a male could perform. As *exempla*, these episodes point to the possibility of possession as even more likely among the laity because, in Marie's *vita*, even those who have devoted their lives to God cannot escape the devil's power. In one of the miracles a nun is possessed by a demon, and although all the sisters had been praying for her only Marie had the power to cast the evil out:

> And whan hir meke sistirs hadde mykel prayed for hir to oure mercyful Lorde, they myghte not byreue his douue fro the deueles chaules, nor this maner of deuilry myghte not anoon be custen oute in fastynge and prayer, not for the mercyfulle spouse dispysed the prayers of so many holy virgyns, but for He reserved that most cruel kynde of deuelry to be ouercomen by His mayden, that she shulde thirle thurgh the chekys of the fende with the spedfulnesse of hir prayers, and myghtely drawe the praye fro his mouthe. (X.21).

The image of piercing through a demon with the force of prayer is drawn from traditional hagiography. In the legend of Saint Margaret of Antioch, she is swallowed by a dragon,

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whose stomach opens up by the strength of her faith: "The dragon lifts her up by the feet. She falls down on the ground, and he swallows her up in one gulp. But the sign of the cross that she had made has imprinted her, in such a way that the serpent is pierced in the middle" (Stouck 585). Jacques describes the imperiled nun as being in the mouth of a fiend, using the same imagery of St. Margaret's legend, which in the later Middle Ages was widely known in several versions.

When, after fasting and praying for forty days, Marie finally succeeds in delivering the nun from the demon, Jacques again draws on the St. Margaret story to describe how the fiend is disemboweled:

> Soothly in the ende of fastynge, hee – that most hidous spririte – lafte the virgyne and was constrayned to come to Crystes mayden with senshyp, sorowe, and shame, wonderly bounden and peyned of Cristes aungelle, soo that hit semyd as hee hadde casten oute alle his bowellis berynge wrecchidly on his nekke alle that was within hym, for that at oure Lorde wirkith invisibily in spirite, otherewhile Hee shewith hit visibily by vtwarde signes (X.25).

Not only does Marie conquer the demons, she shames them into recognizing their own wickedness.

Newman also sees a more psychological reason for the nun's recovery that cannot be overlooked: "Psychologically, the crucial factor in this cure may have been Marie's insistence on fasting in the nun's own presence, allowing the despondent woman to watch with her own eyes during the forty days that Marie starved for her love" ("Devout Women" 40). Newman shifts the focus from Marie's antagonism toward the demon to her care for the possessed. Like Marie's healing and ministry to lepers, she is ultimately concerned for the people around her.

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If the first part of this account stresses Marie's concern for an afflicted woman and active confrontation with an evil spirit, however, its conclusion underscores her willing subjection to the authority of clerics, tacitly emphasizing her submission to male protection (this passage has been cited earlier in this chapter, but is being examined in a different context here):

> And than she, that neuere presumed of hireselfe nor anythynge wolde do withouten conseille, called a famylier frende and maister on whome she trustid. Than whan he counceylid hir that she shulde sende hym into a deserte place where he myghte noye no man vnto the Daye of Dome, another man ful homely and priuey to hem booth come to. And whan hee knewe the counseile, as more feruente thurgh fersnesse of an houge spirite, "Nay," quod hee, "that traytour shal not scape so! Bydde hym that hee go doune anoon into the depe of Helle." And she badde so, than he f[e]lle downe with yellynge, and she herde in spirite a grete crye of fendys whan they sawe so grete and so myghty prynce come to hem. Then Cristes mayden meruailed that mykel and thanked God of His grete grace and goodnesse. And that forsaide virgyne was delyuered that same oure, and shroue hire, and receyued the sacramente, and, thankynge God, went home ageyne saufe and sounde (X.27).

Marie seeks the advice of a trusted male friend regarding how she should punish the demon, and, in Jacques' words, Marie "neuere presumed of hireselfe nor anythynge wolde do withouten conseille." As *exemplum* the message could not be clearer to a female audience of the *vita* – regardless of one's holy or special status, the final word is still the prerogative of male clerics. The passage also reflects the internal politics of the priests surrounding Marie (whether or not Jacques is one of these clerics is unclear). Here, the first man's opinion is overridden by a second one who insists that the demon should be cast into Hell, a directive of no small significance, since it assumes that Marie not only has miraculous healing powers – nothing unusual for a saintly female – but

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exercises control over supernatural beings, and, in effect, even the gates of Hell, a capability generally reserved for men.

Later in the *vita*, Jacques describes a less violent encounter with demons. Here, instead of disembowling a fiend and driving him off to Hell, Marie confronts a "multitude" of fiends merely with the hem of her garment:

> Soo hit felle vpon a daye that a sister of the brether of Oegines laye on diynge. While she was in hir celle, sche perceyued a multitude of fendes rorynge ageyns the bedde of the siek sister. Then she, as forgoten hir custummabil sadnesse and naturel shamfastnesse, turnyd hir to the bedde and putte hirselfe ageyns the wicked spirites, not oonly faght with hir prayers but also with hir mantil drofe hem aweye as flyes (2IV.2).

Her physical exertion is minimal; the power of Marie's prayer is her primary weapon.

Marie even meets Satan himself, disguised as an apparently innocuous "herdman," recalling the trope of the shape-shifting demon in medieval hagiography and lore. A trusting disguise gives the fiend the best way to seduce its prey (Elliot *Fallen Bodies* 131):

> Vpon a daye, whil she was in an arber of a man of Willambroc, the deuyl apperyd to hir in the liknesse of an hirdeman .... And whanne that wicked and proude fende bosted hym to be an hirdeman: "Nay," quod she, "thou arte not a hirdeman. But our maistirs that preche Goddes wordes and feden trewly oure soulles, they are verrey herdemen." "I," quod he, that shrewde and proude enmye, "haue [more] flokkes and more obeiynge to me than thoos maisters. For I knowe hem and they me and they here my voys and folowen me atte my wille" (2V.23).

Marie immediately recognizes the disguised devil and accuses him of fakery, maintaining that the clerics who preach God's word are the true shepherds of men. Unlike the previous demons, characterized as monstrous or supernatural, this one is calmly conversing with Marie despite her holy status and history of defeating demonic beings.

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Marie is unable to defeat the devil, and the exchange between them is the whole of their encounter. However, she later reflects on the meeting:

> Than she myghte no lenger forbere that hee wrangusly toke to hym the name of an hirdeman that ledith his gote by pastures of vanyte to pastures of dampnacyone, where deth shalle wrecchedly deuoure hem. But she, hauynge compassyone of wrecchys, lafte the fende and fledde to chirche. And longe tyme after whan she reduced to mynde hym that warste herdman, she myghte not absetyne fro terys (2V.24).

Jacques draws on his rhetorical skills to point out that this shepherd herds *goats* (the sign of the devil) rather than *sheep* (a symbol of Jesus). The herdsman metaphor is also extended as the devil is described as leading his goats from allegorical pastures of vanity to those of damnation. The anecdote reflects the Gospel description of the Last Judgment and the separation of the sheep and the goats: "Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left" (Matthew 25:32-3). Finally, Marie is overcome by compassion for those trapped in the demonic snares, crying profusely whenever she recalls the encounter.

On her deathbed, Marie herself is tormented by a fiend. Jacques claims that this demon "vexed" Marie greatly, but he does not reveal the cause of her anxiety. The incident again strongly reflects the St. Margaret legend when Marie "break[s] the dragon's head:"

> Soothly, the fende apperyd on the Sondaye and vexed hir gretly. For she bygan sumwhat to drede and also to aske helpe of hem that stode aboute. But then she, takynge ageyne triste of oure Lorde, and strongly brekynge the dragons hede, and sheldynge hirselfe with the signe of the crosse, "Go abacke," quod she, "thou filth and foulnesse!" For she called hym not "foule," but "foulnesse." Than, the fende fleyng aweye, she bygan to

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synge and thonked God of His grete grace (2XIV.6-7).

Jacques stresses the nature of the demon by commenting that Marie called him "foulness" itself. This is no mere grammatical happenstance. Marie requires a noun rather than an adjective to identify the fiend because he is for her the very embodiment of all things foul. The sign of the cross also functions as a kind of weapon for Marie, causing the demon to flee from her before he leads her to any wrongdoing.

Although many of Marie's miracles have her functioning as a weapon against evil, several of them are divinely inspired. Throughout the *vita* she has divine visions and prophecies that establish her status as a holy woman and chosen messenger of God. Some of these, such as visions concerning the Eucharist, reflect hagiographical tropes. At one point, Marie is present for a baptism and sees the literal effect it has on the child:

> She sawe a wicked spirite with grete confusyone in senshype departe fro the childe. And whan she hirselfe heef the childe of the holy founte, her eyen were openyd and sawe the Holy Goste comynge doune into the childes soule, and a multitude of holy aungels aboute the cristenyd childe (2V.29).

The baptism results in the fleeing of a demon from the child's body as the Holy Ghost enters it. Again, Jacques' couples Marie's miracles with a lesson for his readers; the importance of baptism is illustrated here.

Marie's vision during Mass also reinforces the magical powers of the Eucharist. In the same passage as the child's baptism, Marie witnesses the effect of the host on the priest:

> Also often, whan the preste lifte vp the sacramente, she sawe bytwix the prestys handes the lyknes of a feyre childe and an oost of heue[n]ely spirites doune-commynge with mykel lighte. And whanne the preste

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> receyued the sacramente after the fraccyon, she sawe in spirite oure Lorde abidynge in the prestys soule and abeshynynge the soule with a meruelous cleerte. And if hee toke hit vnworthily, she sawe that oure Lorde wente aweye with grete indignacyone and the soule of the wrecchid preste was laft tome and voyde and ful of derknesse (2V.29-30).

The host's reflection of the Christ-child image reinforces the notion of transubstantiation (an important point of theological debate in the high Middle Ages), demonstrating (again) the holiness and authority of the clergy. The good priest is infused with the same light Marie sees on the host. Marie's vision of the child within the host is one of the earliest examples of what would become a common Eucharistic miracle. Miri Rubin writes that "two types of [eucharistic] experience were associated particularly with women: seeing a child in the host, and living on the host alone" (120). This passage also serves as *exemplum* pointing out the Lord's displeasure at those who unworthily receive the host. The undeserving priest is empty and dark as opposed to the light-filled worthy one.

Later, when Marie is mortally ill, Jacques writes that he and other clerics (the omnipresent "wee") attempt to give her an unconsecrated host, only to be met with a violent and physical reaction from Marie. Indeed, when she takes the blessed bread she shines with beams of light, further pointing to the overwhelming power of the Eucharist. This, too, is an image that repeats in later beguine *vitae*. Rubin writes, "Religious women, Cistercian nuns, and especially the beguines were particularly susceptible to eucharistic visions .... Special sensations accompanied their communions, as well as an ability to distinguish consecrated from unconsecrated hosts" (120). For Jacques, the fact that Marie can tell which hosts are blessed and which are not is yet another proof of her holiness, and an example of his own role as an impartial hagiographer:

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> Sothly hit felle in hir infirmyte, while she receyued Cristes body, that hir semblaunde shyned, as with sunne, brighte bemes of lighte. And whanne wee assayed vmwhil whether she myghte take an obley vnconsecrate, anoon she lothed the sauoure of brede. For whanne a litil party touched hir teeth she bygan to crye, to spitte, and to pante as hir brest shulde haue bristene. And whanne she hadde longe cryed for ache and often tymes hadde washen her mouthe with watir, after mykel parte of the nyghte was passed, vnnethes myghte she ryste (2XIII.9-10).

The description reminds the reader of Marie's vision of the "good" priest who shines during the consecration of the host. The holy light that only Marie could see before has now become visible to others through her own piety.

Once, when a priest silently offers a mass in honor of Marie to repay her for kindnesses she had done to him), Marie sees a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, descend onto his head during the service. Marie's vision again literalizes the power of holy words and actions when done by righteous clergy:

> And whanne the preste hadde endyd Masse she seyde to hym, "this Masse was myne. Soothly this daye yee haue offerd for me the sone to the fadir." Whanne hee meruelde and asked how she knewe that, for God allone knoweth mennes thoghtes. "I," quod she, "sawe a ful fayre douve comynge downe aboue youre hede in the auter that as flikerynge stryked hir wenges to me, and I knewe in spiryte that the Holy Gost transferid that Masse to me." And what tyme prestes sange Masses worthily and deuoutly, she sawe holy aungellys ioynge and helpynge the prestes with grete gladnesse, and byhelde thos same prestes with goodly chere and worshepyd hem ful deuoutly (2VIII.14-5).

When worthy priests say the Mass, as when they receive the host, Marie witnesses a physical transformation, reflecting her spiritual understanding of the event. Jacques uses this anecdote as an opportunity for a direct message to priests who may be reading the *vita*:

> Woo to yow wrecchyd prestes, felawes of Judas, the traytour that crucifye

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> Cryste, efte sones as myche as in hem and defuyle the blode of the testamente that with handes polluted, with leccherous eyen, with venemous mouthe, with vnclene herte, while they go vnreuerently to the worshipful sacramente, offenden holy aungellis there presente for of an heelful medecyn they wrecchedly geten deth (2VIII.16).

Jacques scolds them in the strongest possible terms, calling them fellows of Judas, traitors and crucifiers of Christ. He claims that their hands are polluted and that they "defuyle" the eucharist with their blood. By "unreuerently" attending to the sacrament, they are offending the angels who would normally assist them. Jacques' scorn is unequivocal and clearly shows how the *vita* was intended as *exemplum* not only for a beguine audience, but an audience of clerics as well.

The men and women around Marie seek her out in hopes that she will have a vision and give advice. In the following passage, a man seeks counsel from Marie when he is offered, among other things, a horse from a noble potential employer:

> Wherfore, whane a frende of hirs – content with goodes that God gaf hym, the more sikirly that hee was oute of mennes eyen and fro seculer boste serued oure Lorde in lownesse – was required of a nobil man to be his mayster that purveyed hym plentivously hors and clothes and many othere goodes. Hee asked councelle of the holy womman what hym was to do. She soothly – that neuer presumed of hirselfe, after she hadde preyed and was comen fro pryue chaumbyrs of Goddes councels – answeryd. "I sawe," quod she, "in this deed, a blakke hors be ordeyned to yow that neyde towarde Helle, and an oste of fendes thereof were fayne. Therfore, after my councelle, dwellith in this callynge in the whiche yee are called of oure Lorde, leste yee gif occasyone to the fende by couetyse of worshyp and pompe of the worlde" (2VII.5-6).

After consulting God, Marie returns with a vision she has of the man riding a black horse "towarde Helle." Not surprisingly, Marie advises the man to remain in religious service rather than turning toward a secular life.

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In one of the more bizarre episodes of Marie's life, she encounters a Cistercian monk who is determined to live "like Adam" before the fall – without any sin whatsoever. He commits himself to extreme fasting and desperately tries to suppress any carnal feelings. Frustrated by his failed attempts, the monk falls into despair and refuses to accept the eucharist:

> Atte laste for sorowe, hee slode into the dyche of dispair in so myche that hee hapyd to gete saluacyone no wyse in the state of corrupcyone that hee was in, as he that comitid deedly synnes, thoos that are venyalle, the whiche wee maye not wante in this lyfe. Wherefore hee wolde not receyue Crystes body any maner, not thoos dayes that were ordayned thereto in the ordyr. Lo, to how grete vnhappe and to how mikel and how myserabil ful vndir the coloure of gode! That olde enmye drowe a symple soule that was sieke and fledde salue and that – onys hadde forsaken his owne wille – putte aweye fro hym the yok of obedyens (2IV.56).

The abbot seeks out Marie to rescue the monk before he falls into a state from which he cannot be saved. While the monk prays, Marie has another vision:

> And whanne she bysoghte oure Lorde for the monke with terful sighes in a meruelos maner while the monke seyde Confitior byfore the offys of the Masse, and she prayed enterly for hym as litil blake stonys were seen falle oute of the monkes mouthe atte ilke a worde of Confiteor. Than she, perceuiynge in that sighte that obstynacyone of despayre and blaknesse of sorowe and woo hadde lafte the monke, thanked oure Lorde that wole not the dethe of a synner but rathir that hee be conuertid and lyue. The monke soothly after Masse, as fro a ferre contre, tornyd to hymselfe ageyne, receyuynge Cristes body, and, after he hadde taken heelful medecyne, perfitily recuueryd (2IV.60-1).

Marie witnesses black stones (representing his despair) falling out of the monk's mouth. The Lord grants Marie's prayers and returns the wayward man to a religious life, represented in his receiving the host. Newman characterizes the monk as possessed in a sense, pointing out that sloth – the sin of which he is accused after falling into despair – is

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described in the Middle Ages as a demon, as are the other six deadly sins. With this in mind, Marie's vision is also a kind of casting out the demons as she did more literally in other parts of the *vita*.

Marie also has a more traditional spirit of prophecy. In one instance, she prophesies the safe return of one of the Oignies brethren who had gone to Rome even though reports had reached the monastery that he was dead.

> And whan the forsayde maister was gone in pilgrimage to Rome forto visite the apostils, vntrewe tithinges were tolde that he shulde be deed, and his frendes leuyd so and grete dule made for his deeth. And whanne som wolde haue songen Masse for hym, "hee is not deed," quod she, "but hee lyueth!" And siche a daye hee wente fro Rome saufe and sounde to come home agein. Then alle men merueled and lafte of to synge for hym. And as she seyde, so the ende proued (2VII.19-20).

While the above example is a straightforward instance of Marie's prophetic abilities, often Jacques uses her visions as a point of departure to address a specific subset of the *vita*'s audience.

One time, he writes, a man sought help for his greedy wife, and Marie's prayer eventually turns her toward God and away from a damned afterlife:

> A frende of oures – nobil of kynde but more nobil of feith, deuoutly seruynge God and as myche as in hym leuynge alle worldly thinges for Crystes loue – hadde a wyfe ful worldly and ageyn seiynge his purpos. And whanne hee mykel dredde leste his wicked wyfe shulde dryue hym oute of his hous – for as Salamon seith, "there are three thinges that dryue a man fro home: smeke, droppynge rofe, and a wicked wyfe" – the holy woman, hauyng compassyone of the yonge man, preyed mykel for his wyfe to oure Lorde and, esely comfortynge that nobil man, seyde that his wife shulde sone after be conuerted to oure Lorde; and that we knewe done and thanked God thereof (VIII.9).

Jacques seems completely oblivious to the misogyny inherent in his narration, particularly

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in combining two biblical passages: "A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain" (Proverbs 19:13) and "A continual dripping on a rainy day and a contentious woman are alike" (Proverbs 27:15). Jacques writes that Marie is driven to compassion for the "yonge man" rather than the wife, but he does not appear to recognize the paradox that the awful wife is saved through Marie's intercession, not a man's.

Marie's final prophecy (Jacques lists several of Marie's predictions that he expects will be fulfilled later, long after he has written the *vita*) is that of her own death. Marie recognizes where and when it will take place when she arrives at Oignies after living in Willambroux most of her life.

> And whan she come to that place, she knewe in a wondir maner disposicyone of the place and brether of the same hous as God shewed to hir byfore, and perceyued that hit was Seint Nicholas daye. And prophecyed that she shulde make hir ende in the same place. Also she shewed to me afterwarde a place in the chirche where hir biryels shulde be whan she dyed. As the ende after proued: for in the same place of Oegines she dyed, thof many after that enforced to lede hir ageyne, and in that party of the chirche whiche she seyde to me byfore was she biryed, thof othere men wolde haue done otherewyse after hir obyt (2X.8-9).

Jacques inserts the words that become the *coda* after each of Marie's miracles: "as the ende after proued." He believes there is no doubt as to the power and accuracy of the visions and miraculous moments that he describes throughout his narrative. Jacques again demonstrates his familiarity with Marie, as she leads him to her burial place.

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Exemplum and Hagiography

While Marie's miracles, visions, and prophecies provide ample opportunity for Jacques to reflect hagiographical traditions, there are other moments in the narrative where he fashions Marie's life as a series of *exempla* for his different audiences. Among these are Marie's dedication to a life consisting of both manual labor and prayer, as well as her devotion to the clergy and Church doctrine. These are important points for Jacques to emphasize as Marie's semi-religious status makes her suspect to many members of his audience.

Jacques structures Marie's *vita* by dividing it into two books. The first book describes Marie's "external gifts," discussing her childhood, her tears, her compassion, her labor, and her prayer. Jacques closes the first book with a summary of what he has written: "But now, putte wee an ende to this firste libelle, in the whiche we haue seyde of thoos thinges that pertene to the outewarde man, that is to seye the body, and sensibly are vsed withoute forthe" (XIV.14). The second part focuses primarily on Marie's spiritual gifts and is focused on the "seven gifts of the Holy Ghost," an idea drawn from St. Paul:

> To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individual as he wills (1 Corinthians 12:10-1).

Marie's gifts, according to the chapters that follow, are fearing God, pity, knowledge, strength, counsel, understanding, and wisdom. Folded within these are the gifts that Paul

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describes, including healing and prophecy.

The *vita*'s structure would seem to derive from Jacques' determination to portray Marie as a woman who displayed remarkable devotion through labors both manual and spiritual, although in her last years she had largely ceased the former in order to perform the latter. In his article "Proselytisme et action antihérétique en milieu feminin au XIII[e] siècle," André Vauchez argues that Jacques' long and admiring description of Marie's physical labor is part of his attempt to prove that the beguines are an orthodox religious group, while at the same time helping define what feminine piety should be in a way that is different from male devotion (101-2). This is one of the main "external" gifts of Marie that Jacques proffers in the first book, but he also conflates manual labor with mortification of the flesh, treating what might seem to be quite distinct physical actions in the same chapter as book one: "Wherfore as longe as she myghte, she laboured with hir owne handys at she shulde pyne hir body with penauns, at she shulde mynister necessa[r]yes to the nedy, and also at she myghte gete lyuelode and clothinge to hirselfe, as she that hadde forsaken alle thinges for Crystes sake" (XIII.2). The manual labor permits Marie's devotional activities, Jacques writes, including her self-mortification. The one is dependent on the other.

Jacques sees Marie's manual labor – including sewing, weaving, and her ministering to lepers – as facilitating three things in her life: mortification of the flesh, charity to the needy, and provision for herself as she had abandoned all of her goods and wealth for Christ. Jacques writes that Marie's work continues even under extraordinary physical stress, such as extreme fasting. Despite Marie's weakness due to lack of food,

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he marvels, she maintained her normal work schedule with some heavenly help:

> Also, Seinte John Euangelist, whom she loued with entier affecyone, come otherewhile to hir borde while she eet. And in his presens, hir sensibil appetite was so voyded for deuoute desire that she myghte vnnethes take any mete; and certaynly oure Lorde rewardid hir bodily desertes in soule that she hadde forsaken for the loue of Criste, as hit is writen, "man lyueth not in brede allon." Otherewhile, thurgh comforte of this mete, she fastid, neither etynge ne drynkynge, eyghte dayes – sumtyme elleuene (that is, for the Ascencyone of oure Lorde vnto Witsondaye[10]). And wondirly, hir hede akyd no tyme, ne she lafte not for that laboure of hir handes, as stronge the laste daye of hir fastynge as the firste (IX.6).

Marie literally embodies Jesus' that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).[11] Marie only needs spiritual food to sustain herself and the "laboure of hir handes." This kind of working piety is different from that of Elizabeth of Spalbeek or Christina *mirabilis* whose devotion was entirely based in the realm of the mystical. Marie has one foot firmly in a social order where she is meant to support herself and live her life of devotion. This is one of the reasons that Marie's *vita* would be held up as an example of what a beguine should do. Indeed, well into the nineteenth-century beguine communities stressed the importance of manual labor as part of devotional exercise. This idea is also present in English works like the *Ancrene Wisse* that encourage the anchoress to develop skills such as sewing.

Part of Jacques' admiration for Marie is that she can "be rapt in contemplation while still engaged in manual labor" (Hollywood *The Soul* 41). In the chapter detailing Marie's labor, Jacques points out that she also treasures silence and time away from the

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[10]Pentecost

[11]His words are also in the gospel of Luke: "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Luke 4:4).

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"company of men":

> For hir strengthe was in silens and hope. In so mykel, soothly, she fledde noyse and company of men and loued stilnesse and reste, that on a tyme, fro holy rode daye to Paske, she kepte silens, vnnethes spekynge any worde. And siche maner silens oure Lorde acceptyd so mykel that by reuelacyone of the Holy Goste she gat graunt of God therefore, aboue alle othere thinges, at she shulde passe to paradys withouten Purgatory peyne. Hereby shewith how grete is the vice of eloquacite and iangelynge, sythen that silens and stilnesse is so plesaunde to oure Lorde (XIII.4).

God tells Marie that she will not spend time in Purgatory, and the placement of this revelation in the *vita* indicates a direct correlation between Marie's work and her freedom from purgatorial pains. Jacques advises his audience that stillness and silence are pleasing to God (unlike "iangelynge," defined by the Middle English Dictionary as "distracting babbling of idle thoughts").[12] Women were often accused of idleness in language and gossip, so Jacques' words were particularly directed at his female audience. The lesson inherent in this *exemplum* is that prayer and labor, along with the absence of "iangelynge," together lead to a perfect salvation. Jacques also demonstrates his conviction that Marie's soul went directly to Heaven after her death.

Jacques closes the chapter by explaining how Marie is ultimately freed from manual labor:

> And thenne atte laste, she multipliynge euery daye with a besy labour the besaunte that was taken to hir, and ilke a daye steighynge vppe by the laddyr of Jacob fro vertue to vertue, sithen she was sette in the hyest and as putte in there ouerest stage and lafte alle sensible thinges. So mykelle with

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[12]See the introduction (in the section entitled "The Beguines") about the etymology of the word "beguine," which Walter Simons speculates is related to the old-French word "béguar" meaning "to stammer," relating to the practice of saying prayers. Jacques may have been very consciously countering the pejorative term and its association with the Marie.

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> abundaunt spirite hir sensualite was absorpt, that she than myghte not wirke but [for] mete that perissh not, as the gospel seith. For she was alle occupyed and fulfilled with Cryste. Wherfore as an ermyte and free for alle wirchynge of handes, fro thenforthe she restyd allonly in oure Lorde with the whiche fredome Cryste endowyd His mayden (XIII.5-6).

Jacques makes significant use of the image of the "laddyr of Jacob," recalling a visionary passage from the Book of Genesis: "And [Jacob] dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!" (Genesis 28:12). To Jacques, the ladder is a scale of virtue, and Marie ultimately ascends to the top through her work and prayer. Jacques also refers to the gospels, reinforcing that one's ultimate Christian goal lies beyond the physical realm: "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you" (John 6:27). Jacques sees Marie's journey from the physical to the spiritual as a necessary and natural one.

Michel Lauwers writes "Pourtant ... arrivée au sommet de la perfection, Marie abandonna tout travail: libérée, elle ne s'appliqua plus qu'au Christ." ("Arriving at the summit of perfection, Marie leaves behind all work: freed, she applies herself only to Christ") ("Entre béguinisme et mysticisme" 50). Marie's manual labor thus requires no mention in Book Two, which emphasizes Marie's spiritual gifts and internal devotion. She has progressed beyond the need for physical work and entered a realm where only spiritual work remains. Jacques does not, however, write that this is natural for everyone. Jacques does not write that everyone should – or even could – emulate her, however, attributing her abandonment of physical labor to her exceptional spiritual gifts.

Jacques narrates reports that Marie's devotion existed from childhood, a common

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feature of *vitae*, marking her as always having been saintly and having chosen a life dedicated to Christ. She was fascinated by the garb of local Cistercian monks and tried to literally follow in their footsteps:

> In so mykel, soothly froo a childe litil grewe with hir mercy and pite and, as with a naturel pite, loued religyone. Than whan there come brethere of Cistens ordyr otherewhile by hire fader hous, she, lokynge vp, folowed after priuely and hadde wondir of hire abyte. And whan she hadde no more that she myghte do, for desire she sette hir fete in the steppes of the conuerses or monkes (II.2-3).

Marie's love of God is "natural" and her life one of religious fervor, even though she does not enter a religious order but rather marries at fourteen. Many scholars suspect that the other women whose *vitae* are collected in MS Douce 114 eventually became nuns. In Jacques' defense of the beguine life, he postulates it as a reasonable option. After all, Marie's first stirrings of devotion are described as inherently linked to the Cistercians who lived near her.

Although Jacques' primary audience is the pope, he is aware of the other audiences – both inside and outside the Church hierarchy – that will be reading or hearing the *vita.* Often, he interrupts his narrative with "asides," most directed to women, about why Marie should be held as an example for the spiritually good life. After Marie desires to wear undergarments made from rough cloth rather than linen, Jacques remarks that her apparel was always clean and emitted an odor of incense while she prayed. A sweet smell is often attributed to saints after their death; their goodness allows them to overcome the decay and stench of the corpse. Marie has acquired such a fragrance while still alive. Jacques turns his discussion towards the women who may be in his audience, warning

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them against frivolity:

> What seye yee to this, yee superflue wymmen, ful of pompe and pryde, that chargith youre caryones with many folde of clothes and shewith youreselfe like bestiss oute of kynde, with youre longe tayles shyndynge youre semblaunte with hornys and hokes tifted as a temple? Youre clothes ar[e] gnawen with moughtis and stinken. The clothes of this holy womman are kepte for relikes and sauoureful swete. Thees are precyous clothes, ouercomen with no colde, were they neuere soo thinne, and therforse halowed bycause of colde. And sothely, for the halowynge they are kepte ful bisily and worshepyd with affeccyone of pite of deuoute pupil after hir obyte (XII.7).

Jacques delivers a scathing indictment of women's vanity, calling their bodies "caryones" and likening them to beasts that have lost their natural character. He refers to Marie's clothes that, although thin, protect her from the cold and were later kept as relics after her death. This is the second time Jacques has referred to women and their clothes (he previously remarked that Marie's mind appears to have been "impressed" with Paul's doctrine about women's dress that encouraged modesty). These words are most likely not only meant for an audience of beguines, but also for the more affluent communities within the Liège diocese. Both religious and lay women were guilty of vain attire, as is demonstrated in Chaucer's descriptions of the Prioress and the Wife of Bath. Whether directly or through paraphrase, Jacques sees his *vita* as having larger audiences than its dedicatory one and envisions that Marie's life will serve as *exemplum* for women.

Women, however, are not the only target of Jacques' preaching. After Marie suffers through an illness, lasting forty days, she prayed to be sick again in order to suffer for God. Jacques again takes this as an opportunity to lecture:

> Woo to yow that berith oure Lordes crosse vnwillynge, that castith awey disciplyne of oure Lorde, that as a wodde hounde bytith the yerde of oure

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> Lorde while yee grucche ageyne His scourge. Sothly, this precyous Crystes perle with gladnesse of a taghte and curteys herte was seke as not felynge and swetly suffred hir sores, for the inwarde esines softenyd outewarde sorowe and sumtyme lokkenyd and cecyd the burthen of sieknesse (2VI.5).

The shifting audience certainly appears to be the laity here, and Jacques scolds them for not willingly accepting the burdens that come with life. The paradox of the *exempla* is clear in that the subject of the *vita* is exceptional, but those who read about her should aspire to the same heights of devotion and spirituality (if not exactly how they manifest themselves in Marie's practice).

Jacques does not limit his audience to the laity, but also holds Marie up as an example to priests in his audience. As as mentioned before, he uses Marie's vision to illustrate the sin of distributing the sacrament with an unclean heart. Not merely scolding his readers, Jacques calls them "felawes of Judas" that "defuyle the blode of the testamente" (2VIII.16). Most likely, Jacques knew some of the priests through whose hands this *vita* would pass and these are direct indictments of these men. Even so, the strong language must have sent a shudder through each scribe and translator as they took on Jacques' powerful words.

In another indirect message to the clergy, Marie has a vision about the priest, mentioned earlier in this chapter, who is struggling with a decision to take on an extra prebend and a more comfortable clerical position. When he seeks Marie's advice, she tells him a vision that has the man riding a black horse to Hell; unsurprisingly, he chooses not to accept the offer. Jacques breaks into the first person here as he addresses his clerical brothers: "Forgyueth me brethere, yee that coupil dignite to dignyte and ioyne

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provendyr to provender! Hyt is not myne that I haue tolde but Crystes owne schewynge" (2VII.8). He uses Marie's words and visions to emphasize his own position on an issue, reinforcing both the political nature of the *vita* and the uses he imagines for it beyond promoting the canonization of a saint.

Jacques emphasizes Marie's holiness with a summary of her eating habits. Her example was followed by many later beguines; fasting becomes a central trope in many of their *vitae* as Caroline Walker Bynum describes in *Holy Feast, Holy Fast.* As Marie approaches death – what Jacques calls her "bridal day" – she fasts even more aggressively in preparation. Jacques marvels at the fact that in the last year of her life, she ate only eleven times between the feast of the Annunciation (March 25) and Midsummer Day (June 21):

> And euere the nere that hir tyme come, the more she bisyed hir to serue and plese oure Lorde withouten any stynte nyghte and daye. Wherfore fro the annuncyacyone of Oure Lady vnto myssomer daye, no but elleuene tymes and in a litil quantite she toke bodily mete, euer ioiynge, abidynge the brydalle daye with myrthe (2XI.12).

As Bynum has pointed out, both fasting and consuming the Eucharist were ways in which women's bodies and eating brought them closer to Jesus in different ways. Marie's *vita* is one of the earliest, and Jacques' constant descriptions of Marie's fasting and her Eucharistic miracles became a template for later behaviors and *vitae.*

Although Marie's behaviors have been characterized by scholars as *imitatio Christi*, it is evident that she also engages in *imitatio Mariae*, or the imitation of Mary. This mode of worship was encouraged for women in the Middle Ages; Mary was meant to be the counterpart to Eve, the sinful woman, and was held up as a redemptive female

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figure. Elizabeth Robertson describes why Mary was upheld by clerics as an attractive model for women:

> Mary is not defined by her body. As a model for women, therefore, she cannot help women overcome the problems of their femininity; rather, she offers a model for behavior that can only mitigate rather than alter that essential nature .... Where Eve was garrulous, Mary was silent; where Eve was disobedient, Mary was obedient and submissive; where Eve suffered in childbirth, Mary did not. Thus, a woman can never rise about her body as did Mary, who gave birth "without breach" and conceived without sin, but she can at least imitate Mary's silence and obedience. She can follow Mary in humility, obedience, silence, modesty, prudence, and mortification as well as in compassion and endurance of suffering (39).

Already associated with the flesh and its sins, women could emulate Mary's humility and submission, and they were encouraged to do so in many devotional texts. In her study of Mary in the Middle Ages, Rachel Fulton points out that, in the early Middle Ages, prayers to the Virgin, often authored by women, emphasized Mary's life and her "joys" (including the crucifixion). "All of the joys focus on Mary's response to the events in Christ's life, likewise the most significant events in her own life, capped by her own elevation to the throne of heaven" (230). Thus, Mary had positive connotations for the devotee, as a counterpart to the pain inherent in *imitatio Christi*. Fulton argues that it is only in the later Middle Ages that "the Cruxifixion would more typically be counted among Mary's Sorrows" (232).

While Marie seems to encompass all of the Marian qualities outlined by Robertson, she takes her *imitatio Mariae* to another level. She imagines herself holding the baby Jesus between her breasts and playing with the imagined infant child: "Sumtyme thre dayes togadir or more as hir semyd, she clypped oure Lorde as a litil babbe

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dwellynge bitwix hir pappys and hidde Hymselfe that othere shulde not se Hym. Sumtyme she, kyssynge, played with Hym as with a childe" (2IX.4). Rather than merely embodying qualities associated with the Virgin Mary, Marie d'Oignies acts out Mary's role as mother and shifts her perception of Jesus from a body on the cross to an infant in her arms.

In her article on the spirituality of the beguines, Dominican nuns, and Margery Kempe, Ute Stargardt argues that the image of Mary-as-mother would be particularly attractive to nuns and beguines who were childless themselves, fulfilling a maternal need while maintaining their chaste and religious status. However, she argues, this maternal enactment led to an unusual understanding of *imitatio Mariae* that bordered on heresy:

> In contrast to devout men for whom the imitation of the Virgin Mary always remained the spiritual exercise it was meant to be, the women mystics, perhaps because of their sex, frequently lost sight of the spiritual nature of their *imitatio*, translating spiritual concept into purely physical sensations and experiences. Their visions of Christ's infancy are generally accompanied by their own efforts to provide motherly care to the Christ child. At times they court blasphemy in their apparent usurpation of the Virgin's position as the child's mother (292-3).

Marie's adoration of the Christ child and its manifestation apparently impresses Jacques, who does not see any theological danger in describing her actions, but he does gloss further on Marie's vision to explain its unusual manifestation: "For righte as oure Lorde shewed Hym to His disciples, doutynge vndir the liknesse of a pilgryme, and as Hee toke the forme of a merchaunte whan He sende Seinte Thomas into Inde, so His wille is to shewe Hymselfe to His frendes for comforte vndir amyabil likkenesse" (2IX.6). Jacques believes that it is Jesus who appears to Marie as a child, not Marie who envisions this

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manifestation of Christ. Referring to the tradition that Saint Thomas was sent by a disguised Christ to minister in India, Jacques points to more accepted versions of Christ in different forms to validate Marie's vision of Christ as a baby in her arms.

Jacques works hard to validate and explain all of Marie's forms of piety, especially those that may have been unusual to the readers of her *vita*. He recognizes that some audiences, such as the beguines to whom he ministered, may take Marie as an example to imitate in their own lives. Indeed, many of them did, earning Marie's *vita* the distinction of being a prototypical mystical *vita*, the first of many women who had similar forms of piety and miracles that would follow Marie's death. Jacques needs to be particularly deft, however, in explaining Marie's devotion in hopes that the audience of the *vita* will not completely follow her example.

An Example not to Follow

Although he offers much of Marie's *vita* as an example to its readers and uses her miracles and actions to illustrate many different aspects of his religious philosophies, in several places Jacques specifically points out that Marie's behavior should not be imitated. Most of these moments have to do with mortification of the flesh; Jacques does not want to endorse this kind of total *imitatio Christi* to his audience (especially the beguines to whom he ministers).

Immediately after Marie and John wed, but before they agree to live chastely, Marie turns to self-mortification; as Jacques puts it, by marrying, she lost power "over her own body." Her mortification becomes, in some ways, a claiming of her own body:

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> So thanne she, remeued fro fadir and modir, was kyndelyd into soo passynge feruour and with so grete fightynge chastysed hir body and broghte hit vndirneth that often whan she hadde trauailed with hir owne handes, mykel parte of the nyghte after labour she was ful longe in hir prayers. And that othere dele of the nyghte, as often as hit was leeueful to hir, she slepte but litil (and that vpon a fewe lattys, the whiche she hadde priuely hidde atte hir beddes feet). And for she hadde not openly power of hir owne body, she bare priuely vndir hir smok a fulle sharpe corde, with the whiche she was girdid ful harde (III.1).

Marie wears a rough rope wound tightly against her skin and sleeps on boards rather than on a soft mattress, but she does so secretly, recalling the lives of Saints Hedwig and Radegund. Unlike Christina *mirabilis* and Elizabeth of Spalbeek, who openly engaged in self-mortification, Marie's body is subject to a man.

Jacques follows this passage with a warning that the mortification should not be imitated and that he does not endorse this particular expression of piety. He appeals to the "discreet reader" of his text, aware of the power of the hagiography and the desire to imitate the saint's life:

> I seye not this preisynge the exces, but tellynge the feruoure. In this, and many other that she wroghte by priuelege of grace, lat the discrete reder take hede that priuilege of a fewe makith not a commun lawe. Folowe wee hir vertues; withouten specyal priuelege, folowe maye wee not [the works of hir vertues]. Soothly, thof the body be constreyned to serue the Spirite, thof we ow to bere in oure body the woundys of oure Lorde Jhesu Cryste, neuertheles wee woot that the kynges worshyp loueth lawe and righhte, ne sacrifice of raueyne plesith not oure Lorde. Certeynly, necessaryes are not to be withdrawen fro the pore fleshe, but vices are to be refreyned. And therfore that atte wee rede sum seyntes haue done by famylyer and homly counseyle of the Holy Gost, wee shalle rathere meruaile thanne folowe (III.2-3).

He stresses that Marie has been specially privileged by God to bear the pain that she does, and that we should rather "meruaile" at her than "folowe" the example she sets.

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Jacques writes Marie's life as *exemplum*, stressing how she should (and should not) be followed and to whom her example is relevant. Later in the *vita*, Jacques describes her extreme fasting practices and comments that she seemed to be "turmentynge aboue mesure as hit semyd to vs sumtyme" (M2V.9). Jacques uses the word "us" in the phrase, referring to the community of monks surrounding Marie, to further support his own opinion that physical pain and mortification are excessive in Marie's devotion.

One of the moments when Marie clearly does engage in excessive self-mortification – she cuts pieces of flesh out of her foot – Jacques shows through Marie's own reaction to her deed that he does not condone the self-inflicted wound. Marie, after hating her bodily needs when she gives into eating during a fast, takes her anger out on her own flesh:

> And of abomynacyone of that delectacyone byfore, she punyshed hirselfe and hadde no reste in spirite vnto she hadde made aseth, wonderly turmentynge hir fleshe for thos delytes byfore siche as was. For with feruour of spirite she, lothinge hir fleshe, cutte awey grete gobettis and for shame hidde hem in the erthe (VIII.4-5).

In a simple sentence Jacques describes both the mortification and that Marie was overcome with "shame" and hid the flesh immediately in the earth. Jacques explains that Marie was carried away by "feruour of spirite" but does not condone the action, noting instead that the thought of what she has done causes her "shame."

Amy Hollywood writes about this incident and the problems it raises within Jacques' narration. While Jacques does not sanction Marie's violent acts of self-abuse, he also recognizes a tradition of asceticism, where outward pain reflects inner piety, that has practiced from the earliest days of Christianity:

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> The inclusion of this account within the hagiography suggests approbation of a morbid asceticism that demands the punishment, if not the destruction, of the body. Jacques's depiction of Marie's continual tears and fasting to the point where she can no longer eat reinforce this image. Yet he is adamant that this self-laceration is different from the other actions and is not acceptable from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. As he describes it, Marie immediately feels shame for her deed and attempts to hide it from all around her, with the exception of her confessor .... While hagiography demands external signs of sanctity, the conditions under which they can be brought about are strictly delimited. Only God can or should mark the female body as holy (*The Soul as Virgin Wife* 47).

Hollywood's last point, that ultimately only God marks women's bodies as holy, is clear throughout the *vita* and those of Marie's textual sisters, Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Christina *mirabilis*. Stigmata are miraculous. Throwing oneself into vats of boiling water without incurring a burn is a holy occurrence. Cutting the flesh from one's feet is not. Marie's miracles are those that are internally generated – her tears, her ability to withstand sleep, her visions. However, self-mortification is an excessive manifestation of devotion.

At other moments, Jacques' opinions of Marie's actions are unclear. Sometimes the manifestations of her piety are so unique and extreme that he simply lets his narration be the lesson. Marie's excessive tears and sorrow are attributes that Jacques does not fully comprehend. Her empathic response to Christ's crucifixion is so strong that she turns her reflection away from Jesus' suffering, finding it overwhelming:

> And therfore, otherewhile to tempir hire sorowe and to withholde aboundauns of teerys, she lafte the manhede of Criste and helde vp hire mynde to the godhede and mageste that she myghte fynde comforte in His vnsufferabilite. But whereas she enforced hir to restreyne hir wepynge, there encresed meruelously teerys moor and moor. For whan she toke hede how grete He was that suffred for vs so mykel, dispite hire sorowe was efte renewyd and hire soule with newe teerys was refresshed by a

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swete compunxione (VI.5-6).

Even with her thoughts directed elsewhere, Marie's excessive weeping takes over.

When Marie attempts to attend Mass on Good Friday while overpowered by tears, a priest asks her to leave because she is so disruptive. This is the only time Marie is described as suffering the kind of ostracization that was so prevalent in the *vita* of Christina *mirabilis*. Marie cannot stop sobbing, and even when God intercedes, he does not aid her physically but rather afflicts the priest who had criticized her with the same uncontrollable urge:

> Hit was vpon a daye byfore Good Fridaye, nere Cristes Passyone, whanne she hadde offred hirselfe to oure Lorde with mykelle watir of teerys, sobbynges, and sighynges. A preste of the kirke, as with plesauns[13] blamynge hir, badde that she shulde praye softely and latte be hir wepynge. She soothly, as she euer was shamfaste and in alle thinges sympil as a doufe, didde hir bisynesse to obey. Thenne she, knowynge hir vnmyghte, wente priuely oute of the chirche and hidde hir in a priue place fer fro alle folke. And gate graunte of oure Lorde with terys that He wolde shewe to the same preste that hit is not in mannes powere to withholde the stronge streme of teerys whanne a grete blaste blowth and the watir flowith. Wherfore that preste, the while hee sange Masse that same daye, was so ouercomen with abundauns of terys that his spirite was wel nyghe strangelyd (VI.7-8).

Marie's prayers are answered. Indeed, Jacques writes that the priest finishes the mass having drenched his clothes and the altar with his tears.

Jacques indicts the priest for his insensitivity and the shame he inflicts on Marie. Referring to the priest as the "blamer of Crystes mayden," Jacques scolds him for lacking compassion and the understanding that Marie had no control over her tears. Jacques does not, however, espouse Marie's affective reaction to Christ's Passion as a viable form of

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[13]as if he were being pleasant

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devotion for his readers. He ends the chapter with a quotation from Marie about her tears, a comment that stresses her tears are given to her by God and are not her own chosen reaction:

> "Thes teeris," quod she, "are my refresshynge. Thes are my sustynauns nyghte and daye that dissese not the hede, but feden the mynde. They angwyshe with noon akynge, but they lightsum the soule with a shynnynge. They avoyde not the brayne, but they fille the wille of the soule with a fulnes, and soft[en]s hit with an esy enoyntynge whan they are not oute wrongen with laboure and vyolens, but helde oute gracyously and gyfen of oure Lorde" (VI.13).

Marie's tears do not have the physical effect on her that one would expect after hours of crying. For Marie, they are a form of spiritual and physical renewal. Jacques conveys to his readers what he had so firmly stated before: not all of Marie's devotional practices should be imitated. She is specially chosen by God to be a vessel for such miracles.

Several times throughout the *vita*, Jacques calls attention to the form and content of Marie's confessions. As her primary confessor, this also points to Jacques' "secret" knowledge about Marie – knowledge that he can share only after her death. However, he folds himself into the ambiguous pronoun "we," indicating that the other brothers responsible for Marie's confession – like Guy, her brother-in-law – share his feelings. Here, he discusses the triviality of some of the things to which Marie confessed and how the confessors would reprimand her for such behavior:

> And whanne she comen to hirselfe ageyne as after a moystnesse of mynde, [she] rekenyd and comitid streitly atte euene alle hir deedys. If she myghte perceyue that she hadde excedid neuer so litil, she shroue hir and a wondirful contricyone of herte. She, punyshynge hirselfe often, dredyd there where was nouther drede ne doute. And in this allone wee, sekynge solas to oure slouth, otherewhile reprehendid hir that she shrof hir of siche smale thinges oftener thanne wee wolde (VII.5).

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Ultimately, Jacques argues, the confessors' scolding only reflects their inadequacy and "sloth": they knew their piety did not match Marie's. Their anger at Marie's constant confession of "siche smale thinges" emphasizes their own unwillingness to confess to much more grievous sins.

At another point Jacques again writes about the venial sins that Marie fixates upon (suggesting that there are no greater sins than these for her to confess). Marie ends up confessing childhood sins which nearly caused laughter among her confessors:

> And for gode myndes knowe gilte there where no gilte is, often she knelyd atte prestys feet and, accusynge hirselfe, confessyd hir with terys of sum thinge; in the whiche vnnethis wee myghte absteyne fro laghter, as sum childely woordes that she sorowed fore, the whiche as she mynned she spake in veyne in hir youthe (VII.3).

Jacques argues that good people create guilt when there is none to be had, and this is the case with Marie. The scene is startling in its description, however, since Marie is "accusynge hirselfe" and confessing "with terys," but the priests – the ever-present "wee" – find the nature of her sins ludicrous. Dyan Elliott points out that "the invocation of 'the habit of good minds' is a direct, albeit silent quotation from the letter to Augustine of Canterbury attributed to Gregory the Great" ("Women and Confession" 32). Elliot argues that the *vita* was used to promote confession, which had only been made mandatory by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Confession was initially structured as a primarily female activity, a way for inherently sinful women to live good lives. The connection between women and atonement was enhanced by its descriptions in the *vitae* of the beguines. Elliot also points out that this new emphasis on penance led to financial gain for the Church:

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> Beguine spirituality, generally, did not only corroborate the newly emphasized importance of confession, but accommodated most aspects of the penitential system. Marie of Oignies can again be seen as representative here. Her vigorous acts of penance, both on behalf of herself and others, emphasized that certain works on earth could affect one's destiny in the afterlife. The visions and supplicatory interventions of Beguine mystics on behalf of individuals in purgatory not only secured the still nebulous existence of this supernatural zone of expiation but also helped to fill church coffers by reifying the need for indulgences and masses for the dead ("Women and Confession" 34-5).

Jacques' discussion of Marie's penitence thus benefits the Church in a substantial financial way, as well as promoting a new idea of what being a Christian entailed. In doing so, however, Jacques sets up a gender hierarchy where the female is the penitent and the male is always her confessor. Marie's sins may be venial, but only Jacques has the power to absolve them.

Like Elizabeth of Spalbeek and Christina *mirabilis*, Marie has moments when she treads a fine line between orthodoxy and heresy. One of the most powerful religious proscriptions in the Middle Ages was that forbidding women to preach. When Margery Kempe comes close to disobeying this prohibition, two centuries later, she is suspected of heresy. Preaching was exclusively the right of men, and more specifically, the right of priests. However, it becomes evident through Jacques' narration that Marie *is* preaching and has an audience listening to her words:

> Wherfore, whan she was in hir laste sieknesse nere in poynte of dethe and any prechour sayde a sermone in the chirche to the pepil, than hir spirite quyckenyd ageyne to Goddis wordes. She made redy hir herte and helde vp hir eres – wolde deth or nolde – and also tolde sum wordes of the sermone to hem that stood aboute (2V.19).

After a sermon at Mass, Marie then expounds further "to hem that stood aboute" on the

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meaning of the Holy Writ. Jacques is fully aware of this precarious episode and follows it immediately with an assurance to his audience that Marie prayed fervently for a good preacher to inspire her, since she did not hold the power to do so herself:

> And certeyne with many teerful sighes, with many prayers and fastynges, she – askynge with ful grete instauns – gat graunte of oure Lorde at He wolde recompens to hir in some othere persone the merit and offys of prechynge that she myghte not get and do hirselfe in deed, and that oure Lorde wolde gif hir o prechoure for a grete gifte (2V.21).

Jacques is evidently aware that he must acknowledge here that Marie cannot "do hirselfe" the action of preaching. If the passage where Marie "tolde sum wordes of the sermone" is ambiguous, the passage that follows is clear. Marie cannot (and does not) preach. The fact that Jacques needs to so clearly spell this out for his readers, though, certainly demonstrates that the issue is not so clear cut as he would like it to be. His inclusion of the episode may also indicate that Marie had a reputation as a preacher, one that Jacques must address in the *vita* in some form.

Marie also performs sacerdotal functions that are permitted for women, but which call attention to her high status within the monastic community. In one scene, she is baptizing a child at "the holy founte" and has a vision of fiends departing and angels entering the child at the moment of baptism:

> And while she was presente a chile shulde be catecized (that is to seye, enformed in the feith atte chirche dore). She sawe a wicked spirite with grete confusyone in senshype departe fro the childe. And whan she hirselfe heef the childe of the holy founte, her eyen were openyd and sawe the Holy Goste comynge doune into the childes soule, and a multitude of holy aungels aboute the cristenyd childe (2V.29).

While it is acceptable for a woman to be holding the child at baptism, this speaks to a

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more religious than secular role for Marie. She is the one holding the child at the baptismal font (often a priestly role) and while this is not the focus of Jacques' story – he is more interested in relaying Marie's vision – it does speak to the official religious role Marie might have played in the town.

Later, Marie drinks the "rinsing" of the sacramental wine – again, a role not explicitly prohibited to women but highly unusual. Jacques is more interested in Marie's ability to fast and repulsion to all foods except the Eucharist and sacramental wine than he is in the ecclesiastical function Marie may have played:

> And after fyue wekys she, turnynge ageyne to hirselfe, openyd hir mouthe and spake and receyued bodily food. And they that stood aboute maruelyd longe tyme after hit happenyd to hir that sche myghte on no manere soffir the sauours of fleshe, or of any friynge, or of wyne, but whanne she toke wyne in the rynshynge after the sacrament. And then she myghte suffre the smel withouten any greuauns (IX.10).

The fact that Jacques does not dwell on these more unusual pious practices of Marie – participating in baptism and drinking the sacramental rinsing – shows that he does not see these behaviors as unorthodox. There is no quick defense, as there is when Marie is described as preaching. These moments do, however, show a much broader interpretation of women laity and their function within the Church than normally understood. Marie clearly had official roles even though she was not an official member of the monastic community.

Towards the end of her life Marie's piety manifests itself in her constant screaming and singing that chagrins the priests who need to say mass in the community. When she finally becomes hoarse, one priest is relieved that the she can no longer

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frighten away parishioners:

> And whanne she hadde al daye cryed vnto nyghte, here [throte] were made hose, soo that in the begynnynge of the nyghte vnnethes she myght put forthe any voys. Than the pryour of [o]ure hous was fayne for bycause on the morne, that was Sondaye, seculere men of the cuntreye are wonte to come to oure chirche, the whiche in happe if they herde hir synge withouten cecce, with so sharpe and smale voys, myghte be sclaunderid thereby and counte hir as a fole (2XII.4).

The prior of the house at Oignies is clearly glad when her throat is hoarse, relieved that his reputation would not "be sclaunderid" and that Marie would not be considered "a fole." Although in the morning Marie regains her voice and the "seculere men" who come are entranced and converted by its beauty and power, the priest's reaction demonstrates that her reputation and devotion was not embraced by everyone around her. While Marie's *vita* had made her a local saint and a clear *exemplum* in her death, this passage shows this was not always the case during her life and that some ambivalence about her excessive piety was always present.

Even after Marie's death, Jacques is troubled by the extent of her piety and the physical mortification that resulted from it. He describes a scene where Marie's women followers discover several hidden scars and wounds (remaining from when Marie cut out pieces of her flesh and hid them in the earth) when they clean her body before its burial: "And whan hir body shulde be washen after she was deed, wymmen fonde the places of woundes and hadde mykel maruaile. But thei that knew hir confessyone wiste what it was" (VIII.6). Jacques, again, injects himself into the narrative by reminding the readers that, as her confessor, he knew about Marie's wounds. This passage points to the tension of a holy woman with a male confessor – the men here know secrets about Marie's body

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that women do not. Marie's body, like her *vita*, depends on a man's knowledge.

Marie's Legacy

Of the three beguine women whose *vitae* are in MS Douce 114, Marie's legacy has lasted longest, partly because of Jacques de Vitry's fame, and partly because of her reputation as the first beguine, as the inspiration for a movement that would last well into the twentieth century in some parts of Europe. As Jacques tells us, Marie was buried in the church at Oignies – exactly where she predicted that her body would finally rest. She was initially buried in the cemetery, however, and only later moved to the church, where in 1229 her remains were interred next to the altar. But Marie's story does not end there. Her fame and importance to the community at Oignies, and to beguines generally, prompted the translation of her remains (moved from one location to another) in 1333, then again in 1460, and her remains were exhumed on October 12, 1608 (Fichefet 50). Each time she was moved to a more prominent shrine, until the decision that her bones should be distributed among various places and reliquaries. Her cult remained strong until the 19th century, and people continued to visit her tomb and reliquaries to pray for assistance both in Oignies and the nearby town of Nivelles. In 1913, the 700th anniversary of her death was widely celebrated in Nivelles.

The Middle English manuscript is also a testament to the power of Marie's *vita*. Written two hundred years after her death, it attests to remaining interest in who Marie was. Evidence that Marie was an important figure in England figures most prominently in *The Book of Margery Kempe*. Margery, whose book has been a major focus of

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medieval scholarly research in the past quarter century, cites Marie d'Oignies as one of her main two models (along with Bridget of Sweden), particularly in reference to Margery's crying and "roarings," both central aspects of Marie's piety. Even the story Margery narrates, in which the priest reads about Marie's tears and then understands Margery's, echoes Marie's own story where the priest who had asked her to stop crying was overcome with tears. The narration begins with Margery's confessor's own frustration with her excessive emotional devotion, but changes dramatically as he reads the story of Marie:

> And yet owr Lord drow him agen in schort tyme, blissed mote he ben, that he lovyd hir mor and trustyd mor to hir wepyng and crying than evyr he ded beforn, for aftyrward he red of a woman clepyd Maria de Oegines and of hir maner of levyng, of the wondirful swetnesse that sche had in the word of God heryng, of the wondirful compassyon that sche had in hys Passion thynkyng, and of the plentyuows teerys that sche wept, the whech made hir so febyl and so weyke that sche myth not endur to beheldyn the crosse, ne heryn owr Lordys Passyon rehersyd, so sche was resolvyd into terys of pyte and compassyon (Staley 149).

Margery continues on to narrate the story of Marie and the priest who could not stop crying. Margery credits the *vita* with changing her priest's mind about her own piety and it gives her a model to which she can aspire, showing how the *vita* may have functioned for its medieval readers.

Ute Stargardt even postulates that Margery was familiar with the Middle English translation of Marie's *vita* represented in the Douce MS:

> Among those she had read to her may also have been the abridged[14]

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[14]Presumably, Stargardt considers the *vita* abridged because it does not include the *Supplement to the Life of Marie d'Oignies* written by Thomas of Cantimpré. As far as Jacques de Vitry's text, however, the Middle English version is complete.

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> English translation of Jacques de Vitry's *Vita b. Mariae Oginacensis*, which was composed in 1215, two years after Mary's death, for Margery exhibits considerable familiarity with the life history of this Beguine, who almost singlehandedly transformed the local Flemish lay custom of living a religious life outside the convent into one of the most popular religious movements of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Stargardt 280).

While Margery claims that she cannot read, her literacy is in question (as is Marie's). Whether she read or a priest read to her one of the several circulating Latin versions of the *vita* or an English translation is not clear.

In addition to knowing about Marie's body after her death, Jacques also informs us (through Marie's own prophecy) about her soul. Having been informed earlier that Marie would not suffer purgatorial pains, we also learn that she performs miracles and visits the women and men of Oignies after her death:

> She forsoke hem not after hir deeth whome she loued in hir lyfe, but to summe she come ageyne. Also she spaken often to holy wymmen and of proued lyfe. And she taghte hir frendes what they shuld do and warned hem in perils, puttynge awey alle doute fro hir hertes be certeyne priue tokens. Also she gat of oure Lorde with preyers to summe of hir frendes booth grace of wisdome and feruour of charyte. Wherby to sey a monke of Cistens ordyr sawe in slepynges, after the passynge of Cristes mayden, that a golden chalys went oute of his mouthe with the whiche he gaf drynk to summe of his frendes. Another tolde me that he sawe in slepynges hir body borne as into a ful brighte precyous stone (2XIV.11-3).

Jacques is clearly setting up Marie for canonization here – a process that requires proof of miracles after death. Marie apparently had enough support after her death for beatification, but her canonization never took place. Jacques argues that Marie does not abandon her friends, even after her death, but continues to use her power of prophecy to warn "hem in perils." The passage also mentions "holy wymmen" and a Cistercian monk, demonstrating the breadth of Marie's friendships and influence in the town of

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Oignies.

This chapter began with a description of Jacques de Vitry and his major influence in both the lived life and the written *vita* of Marie d'Oignies; here it will end as well. Jacques de Vitry's dying wish was to be buried among the bones of the beguines (Lauwers "Expérience béguinale" 66). In the end, he does not want to separate himself from his beloved Marie and the women she inspired. Despite his major ecclesiastical accomplishments, in particular his time in Acre, Jacques determines that he wants to be remembered as the champion of the beguines and the hagiographer of the first in a long and distinguished line of women, Marie d'Oignies.

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Chapter Four

The *Vita* of Elizabeth of Spalbeek by Philip of Clairvaux

I. *The Apolege of the compilour*

1. As Seint Jerom[1] the holy doctour seith in a bibil[2] that he made, hit is harde to turne a language into another worde for worde, but often tymes hit byhoueth to leue and take diuerse wordes that are propur to on[3] tunge and not to another. Wherfore this Englysche that folowth heere is turnyd oute of Latyn to the worschep of God and edificacyone of deuoute soulles that are not leeryd in Latyn tunge. And therfore the wryter that is but symple letterd neither can ne purposis to folowe the wordes, but vnnethis and with harde[4] the sens, neither puttynge to nor doynge awaye any clauses that schulde chaunge the substaunce of the story, but otherewhile leuying legeauns and auctorites of holy writt that wolde be ful dymme to vndirstonde if they were turnyd into Englissh withoute more declarynge of glose.

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[1]Saint Jerome, the father of the Church most learned in the Bible. He revised and re-translated the Latin Bible. Jerome made this statement regarding translation from sense to sense, rather than word to word, in several different prefaces, and it was a popular idea in medieval translation theory. It is ironic that this translator refers to the idea, however, because he slavishly follows Latin syntax and words.

[2]bibil] this can mean either be 'Bible' or 'book.' However, Jerome's statement is not in the preface to his translation of the Bible, but rather in several different prefaces to the translations of other works. It is likely, then, that 'bibil' means 'book' here and not the Bible.

[3]on] one

[4]with harde] adverbial phrase meaning 'with difficulty'

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II. *Here bigynneth the lyfe of seint Elizabeth of Spalbeck*[5] *in the shyre of Losse,*[6] *bisyde an Abbey of Nunnys that is callid Herkenrode*[7]

1. In the prouince of Leody, bisyde a famous abbey of Nunnys of Cistens ordir that is callyd Herkenrode sex myle or seuene fro the cite of Leody, there was a mayden that hyght Elizabeth, in whom oure mercyful Lorde hath schewed merueilous miracles of his blissed Passyone that maye stir alle Cristen pepil to deuocyone. The whilke merueilous werkes of oure Lorde, whan I, Dan Philippe of Clareualle,[8] herde what tyme that I visityd howses of myn ordre in that cuntrey, I gaf no credens to hem that tolde me, til tyme that I come myselfe and sawe[9] and proued that I hadde not herde the halfe.

2. Therfore I schalle discryue a fewe merveiles of many and, after my sympul conseyte, tho that are more notabil and moor merveylous as my conscyens gyueth me, bigynnynge atte thoos thinges that I perceyued vndoutably with myn eyen, and afterwarde puttynge to that I haue herde of many othere trewe men.

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[5]Spalbeek] Modern Spaubeek, a town in the Limburg region of the Netherlands.

[6]Losse] Although 'Losse' appears to be 'Looz,' a city to the northwest of Liège, the Latin edition has the word 'Leody,' or Liège, a southeastern city and diocese in modern Belgium. In the Middle Ages, the city of Liège was the capital of an episcopal principality. Herkenrode is a city within the Liège diocese. 'Looz' appears to be more correct than 'Liège: the former is a 'shire,' while the latter is a province.

[7]Herkenrode] LAT: 'Erkenrode,' Modern Herkenrode, a town in the Limburg region of Belgium. This chapter heading has been almost erased, as has much of the rubric in MS Douce 114, and seems to have been traced over by a later hand.

[8]Clareualle] Clairvaux - the town and Cistercian monastery from where Philip comes (in today's France). The monastery was the most important in the Cisterican order in the 13th century.

[9]and sawe] LAT: 'vidi oculis meis' (363), or 'I saw with my eyes'

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3. Wherefore it is to witt that the forseyde mayden beerith ful openly tokens of the woundys of oure Lorde Jhesu Cryste – that is to saye in her handys, feet, and syde – withouten any dowte, similacyone, or fraude. Fresshe woundys are ful euydently shewed often, and namely bledynge on Fridayes. The woundys of handes and feet are rounde; the wounde in the syde is auelonge as hit were of a speer, and that othere foure woundes of nayles.

4. Also, excepte these signes of fyue woundes byfore seyde, oure Lorde Jhesu Cryste (that is spouse of virgins and specyous byfore alle men) schewith in a merueylous manere the representacyone of his blyssed Passyone in the persone of the same virgyne as moost cleen and chosen by a synguler prerogatyfe of loue – that is to seye, euery day seuen ourys: as matyns, pryme, tiers, sext, noone, euesonge and complyne.

III. *What she doth for the oure of matynes*

1. At mydnyghte sothely sche ryseth to knowleche wonderfully the begynnynge of oure Lordes Passyon – that is to saye, how hee was taken and drawen hyder and thyder ful cruelly with wicked mennes handys.

2. Neuertheles, it is to witte that booth this oure and othere oures she is rauesched or[10] sche ryse fro hir bedde, and sche abydeth in the same staat that sche is rausiched in a good while alle starke as an ymage of tree or stoon withouten felynge or mouynge and brethe that nothinge maye be touchyd or stiryd of hir not as mykel as hir litil fynger but if all the

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[10]or] before

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body be moued with alle. After the whiche raueschynge as turnyd agayne[11] to hirselfe, sche ryseth vp and goth oute swiftly of hir bedde and walkith in here chaumbyr with a merueylous and a manerly goynge, as hit is trowed with aungels ledynge.

3. Sothely, sche was holden with so mikel febilnesse of body and lymmes whanne sche was but fyue yeer olde or there aboute, that thof the hous that sche was in hadde brente ouer hir, sche myghte not haue goon oute withouten helpe, as alle the cuntrey doutles knoweth. And that contynual chastisynge of Goddes yeerd and so mortifiynge of here owne flesche fro the innocens of fyue yeer age vnto the age[12] that sche is nowe of (that is twenty yeer) is ful stronge and unfaylabil proof of hool and clene virginite. But this that I haue seyde I knewe moor be heerynge thanne be sighte.

4. Neuertheles (besyde my purpos) I put heere this incident that booth the reeders and heerers may knowe that the stirynges and berynges of this forseyde virgyn – the whiche, as men maye, schul be discryued after – come not of hir strengthe but of a priue vertue of God.

5. And so, as it is seyde, atte mydnyghte after hir raueschynge, sche ryseth merueylously stronge to suffre labour and peyne that was byfore in body weyke and vnmyghty. And whanne sche is vp, cladde as sche is allewey with a wollen coot next her flesch and with a whyte lynnen garnemente sumwhatly trailynge on the erthe, than sche walketh ful honestly in hir chaumbyr and withoute blynnynge. As sche goth and commith ageyn,

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[11]turnyd agayne] these words are used repeatedly throughout the *vita* and mean 'returns'; they are used to indicate a returning both to a physical and a mental state outside of Elizabeth's rapture.

[12]vnto the age] MS: "vnto the age vnto the age"

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sche swappeth hirselfe vpon the chekys with booth handys.

6. And of hir strokes maye be herde acordaunte sowne and cleer. And so in the steed of psalmes, as in tymbyrs and wele sownynge cymbals,[13] she solempnyzes the watches of the firste nocturne after that soothly as for lessuns. Sche makith a bigynnynge of oure Lordys Passyone, how [he][14] was taken and with a feerful cruelte drawen. Than it is to se, how sche takith her owne clothes byfore her breste with her right hande and drawith hirselfe to the righte syde, and thanne with her lefte hande to the lefte syde. And otherewhile sche berith ouer hirselfe euen forwarde dyuers tymes, as sche were drawen with vyolens as men do with thefes and mensleers that are pullyd and luggyd ful vyolently with othere mennes handes, representynge oure Lorde Jhesu wordes that hee seyde to hym,[15] "yee come to take me as a thefe with swerdes and battys."[16]

7. And anoon after sche strechys oute her righte arme and makith a fiste of her hand and lokith grymly, branniysshynge hir fiste, and makes feerful tokens and bekenynges with

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[13]"Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with timbrel and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals! (Psalms 150:3-5).

[14]he] MS: 'sche;' LAT: is 'captus fuit' (not 'capta fuit') (364), showing it is probably a scribal mistake made in the English version; St. Johns MS 182: 'captus fuit' (fol. 70r) further indicating the error was made in translation.

[15]hym] them

[16]"At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?'"(Matthew 26:55); "And Jesus said to them, 'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?'" (Mark 14:48); "Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had out against him, 'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?'" (Luke 22:52).

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eyen and handys as a body that were wrooth and angry. And after that, anoon sche smitith herselfe vpon the cheke so strongly that alle hir body bowith to that party ageyns the ground for heuynesse of the stroke. Than sche smytes hirselfe in the nodel of the hede byhynde, now bitwix the schuldirs, now in the necke. And thanne sche noseles downe forwarde and wonderly crokes her body and dasches her heed to the erthe.

8. Also, otherewhile sche takith vyolently hir heer that is aboute her forhede, but short, and smitith the grounde with hir heed with a meruaylous draughte and hir feet unmeuyd. And also sche takith hirselfe by the heer, booth on the righte syde and the lefte, her and there sterynge and bowynge hirselfe with draght of hir handys with a maner that may neither be herde ne tolde.

9. Also, sche takith her owne cheekys, the whiche byfore sche hadde smyten with many strokes, now with the platte hande, now with the fiste, and otherewhile with her fingers drawen togedir as sche wolde pulle oute her chaules. Also, otherewhile sche bowith her arme and strekith oute hir fynger nexte the thumbe, drawynge the tothere fyngers togedir into hir hande and puttith to hir eyen ofte sythes: now to that oon, now to that other, as[17] sche wolde graue hem oute or bore hem in.

10. And soothly alle this sche rehercys often and aboundauntly. Therfore it semith that in a newe and unherde manere sche schewith in herselfe booth the persone of Criste suffrynge and the persone of the enmye turmentynge. She representith the persone of oure Lorde while sche suffres and the enmyes persone while sche puttis, drawes, smytes, or thretys.

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[17]as] as if

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11. Sothely whanne these and othere lyke are doon often and vntellably, as for the firste nocturne of matyns, she wrappeth hyrselfe downe to the grounde vpon her backe ful honestly and fulle manerly, as forto reste hir fro grete charge of trauelle, so that then sche hath no powere of bodily strengthis but syghes after heuenly and goostly solas and goth in spirite vnto God.

12. And after that communly longe space of reste and swogh, sche ryseth vp as wele and fully coumforted stronge and delyuere to serue the secounde nocturne of matyns in the forme before seyde.

13. And in steed of salmes, this newe tymbrer settith her flesche for an harpe, and hir chekys for a tymber, and ioy for a sawtry, and hir handys and fyngers for a wrast (that is an instrument of organ songe). And so with a newe maner of syngynge, sche folowith forth wakynges of the secounde nocturne, doynge efte sones the figure, maners, and tokens of the biginnynge of oure Lordes Passyone, as hit is seyde byfore.[18]

14. After that whan the ende of turmente cometh in as mykel as in hir is, sche restith hir froo that vnsuffrabil trauelle euen as she were alle ouercomen and anentized. And a litil while after, now and now, sche makith sobbyngs and sighes as a body schulde dye. Then forsooth as sche schulde yeeld the gost, sche is rauesched and restith alle her body froo tourmente and laboure.

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[18]Following this passage, both St. Johns MS 182 and MS Douce 114 are lacking approximately 500 words found in other Latin versions of Elizabeth's *vita*, pointing to a common origin for both Carthusian manuscripts. The two MSS stop at "quibus expletis" ("Vita Elisabeth" 365); Douce 114 resumes at "Post haec autem" ("Vita Elisabeth" 367); while St. Johns 182 resumes one sentence earlier at "Contriti sunt" ("Vita Elisabeth" 367). The sentence contained in the St. Johns MS is a quotation from the Bible, which this scribe may have intentionally decided not to include.

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15. And tille that while she is comunly longe rauyshed, and noon other thinge is seen in hir but starkenes of membrys, palnes of visage withoute blood, and alle maner lackynge of felynge, mouynge, and breth, as hit were a deed body.

16. Atte the laste oure Lorde that slees and qwykenes, makynge cleer wedyr after tempeste, restorith hir ageyn to lyfe. And with a merueilous, onest, and schameful gladnesse of cheer caused of goostly ioye, she thinketh of no sorowe, ne grucchith not ageyns Goddes rodde. For there is seen no tokens of turbil or tribulacyone in her visage, but rathere the gracyous cleerte of hir utwarde sembelande affermith and prouith the inwarde mirthe of hir mynde.

17. And then anon is taken to hir a tabil ful wele depeynte with an ymage of oure Lorde crucifyed. And holdyng that open and vncouerd with booth handys, ful deuoutly she lokith on oure Lorde. And often and thikke sche seith these woordys: "zouche here. zouche heere."[19] That is to sey in Englysche, "Swete Loord, swete Lord." And with hire clene virgyn lippys she kysseth often sweetly the feet of oure Lordis ymage.

18. Among thees she makith fro hire priue herte rotys large, depe, iocunde, and lufsum sighes with a clere stirynge of breste and throot and with a swete sounynge whysperynge of her lippes. After that sche lokith euene in the same ymage with alle the intente of hir mynde.

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[19]zouche here. zouche heere] LAT: 'Soete Here, Soete Here' (367). Douce 114: the scribe uses yoghs, 'ȝouche here, ȝouche here.' St. Johns MS 182: the scribe uses an identical spelling of the Dutch with 'ȝouche here, ȝouche here.' The initial error most likely comes from an alternate spelling of 'soete' as 'zoete' where the scribe mistook a 'z' for a yogh. In Middle English paleography 't' and 'c' are also commonly confused making 'zoete' appear to be 'ȝoece.'

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19. And a litil after whanne she [has] tasted,[20] as it is trowed, the vnspekabil swetnesse of his Passyone forthwith as sche is wonte, sche is rauesched and waxes alle starke, holdynge the tabil as sche didde byfore.

20. And otherewhile, her lippes are ioyned to the feet of the crucifix, and hir necke and hir heed a litil reryd fro the grounde, as accordith to a kyssynge.

21. And soo she lastith vnstirred and starke, and alle that other dele of the body cleuynge to the pamente, and otherewhile the same tabil is lenyd vpon hir breste, and some tyme abouen her face, after dyuerse holdynges of the tabil in the bi[g]innynge[21] of euery rauishynge.

22. And in the spaces of thos rauischynge[s],[22] the same tabil is holden so strongly with her fyngers that when the tabil is shaken, moued, or drawen of anybody, as with enfors to haue it aweye, hit departith neuer, but alle hir body is stiryd after the sterynge of the tabel.

23. Then the spirite, turnynge ageyne fro the contrey of goostly ioyes, quykenes the body,[23] gladith the mynde, lightsomnes the semblaunte, and bishines hit with a gracyous cleerte. And soo she durith a good space with incres of swetnesse, as semes to hem that se right as she didde in biholdynge of the ymage, with othere hygh tokens of deuocyone,

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[20]she has tasted] MS: 'was tas tasted'

[21]biginnynge] Horstmann: 'bikumynge;' LAT : 'principio' or 'beginning'

[22]rauischynges] MS: 'rauischynge.' It is clear from the sense of the phrase that "rauischynge" should be in the plural.

[23]quykenes the body] MS: 'quykenes of the body.' The scribe appears to be following the syntax of the previous phrase 'contrey of goostly ioyes,' although it is clear from the sentence and the phrases that follow that 'quykenes' is a verb and not a noun.

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as hit is seyde byfore. Amonge these ioyes soothly the same virgyne chaunges no chere, but her countenaunce is stedfastly sette in consideracyone of the ymage, so that she byholdith nobody nor noon othere thinge but the tabil allonly, nor sche spekith to nobody,[24] ne gyues noon answere to hem that speke to hir, but hir thought holly vpon oure Lorde.

24. Whan alle this is doon mykel moor solempnely and moor merueylously than I can or maye write, sche keuerith and closeth the same tabil and takith hit to sombody bisyde hir, and striketh forthe hire armes to her moder and to her sostres yonger thanne sche, that serue hir. And they take and liftes hir vp fro the erthe and berith and leyeth hir in her bedde. And she schewith to hem cleernesse of cheere, charite of herte, gladnesse of mynde, and swetnesse of goostly woordes.

25. Netheles, she is but of fewe woordys, the whiche woordes are ful spoken oute, but sche makith hem swete, with an esy and mylde gladsumnes and maydenly schamefastnes. And so the nocturns, matyns, and laudys wonderly endyd, alle that other tyme vnto prime she spendith in ioye and mirthe in thankeynges and lovynges of oure Lorde, not forgetynge the contrey that sche hauntith, in the whiche, as Ysaye[25] saith, are founden ioye and gladnesse, thankynges, and voys of preisynge.[26]

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[24] nobody] MS: 'no' crossed out, leaving the word 'body.' 'No' is later added in margin, restoring the original reading.

[25]Ysaye] Isaiah who is considered the first of the major prophets. He was active in Jerusalem between 766 and 701 B.C. He was a very popular figure in Christian art and doctrine of the Middle Ages.

[26]"Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let

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IV. *What sche doth for the oure of prime*

1. Fro now forthe it is to procede shorter to discryue othere houres, for many thinges that are expounyd byfore acorden to other oures. And therfore it is no need to reherce hem so pleynly and fully at ilkan oure, but whan myster is[27] to haue recours to that at is byfore.

2. At prime soothly, after that sche is rauysched, she ryseth with a merueilous swiftnes and anoon standith vprighte and kastith booth her handes byhynde hir backe, and so ioyneth hir armes togedyr, soo that sche puttith the fyngers of the lefte hande to the righte elbowe and the fyngers of the right hande to the lefte elbowe.

3. And she walkith by hir chaumbir with her armys ioyned togedir byhynde hir bak as a theef were, openly taken and his handes bounden, ladde to the barre or to the galous, representynge alle the space of that oure how oure[28] Lorde Jhesu was ladde fro Anne[29] to Cayphas[30] to Pylate,[31] fro Pylate to Herode[32] to Pilate agen eft, with his handys bounden byhynde hym for dispite and schame. But soothly how many tokens of vyolens and schewynges of iniuries as the virgyn so bounden figures in hirselfe my mynde maye not holde nor my witte endyte.

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them give glory to the Lord, and declare his praise in the coastlands" (Isaiah 42:11-12).

[27]myster is] LAT: 'opus fuerit' or 'it is needed,' an acceptable meaning for 'mister.'

[28]that oure how oure] The first 'oure' is 'hour,' while the second one is 'our.'

[29]Anne] Annas, Caiaphas' father-in-law.

[30]Cayphas] Caiphas, the high priest of the Jewish supreme court, the Sanhedrin.

[31]Pylate] Pontius Pilate, who sentenced Jesus to be crucified.

[32]Herode] King Herod the Great

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4. After that sche was walked soo a good while in hir chaumbir with a wonderful bowynge of alle her body – and algates her handes ioyned and cleuynge to her bak – she leyth hirselfe downe to the grounde with a manerly and esy stirynge, haldynge her armes ioyned vndir hir bak. And so she restith a good space alle starke in a rauischynge.

5. And thenne sche pullith oute hir handys fro byhynde her backe and knokkith hir owne breste with so harde strokes and thicke of hir plat handys that alle that se haue mykel meruayle and deme hit aboue mannes myghte, how o persone maye booth smyte and soffre so many, soo swifte and heuy strokes, thogh hee hadde prosperite of nature,[33] age, heele, and complexion. Whiche of these I schalle calle moor merueilos, I woot not in suche a febil and freel creature: whether that atte smytes or that at suffres. Netheles, I trowe that hit is to be committid alle to God, to whome no thinge is hard nor impossibil.

6. Namely sithen the same virgyne, as hit is seyde byfore, whanne sche commith to hirselfe or is lafte to hirselfe, wantys bodily strengthes, soothly after sichekyns merueilous and myserabil disciplyne, she is vpstreyghte, anoon with a wondirly whitnesse withouten helpe of her owne handys or of any othere.

7. And so sche goth in her chaumbyr as sche didde byfore with her armes and handes ioynid byhynde hir bakke. Also sche stondith ful vprighte alle starke as an ymage.

8. And so sche solempnizes the oure of prime outhere goynge or standynge or liggynge or ellis hirselfe smitynge, puttynge to orysouns, after the whiche folowith angwisshes, akynges, and sorowes. And thanne is sche raueshed. And after the rauishynge she taketh the tabel and byholdith hit.

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[33]nature] LAT: 'sexus,' indicating that 'nature' here means 'gender.'

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9. After that commith comforte, ioye, and mirthe, and efte raueschynges, and soo [she is][34] boren to her bedde. And soo she endith the houre of prime as hit is seyde byfore in the oure of matyns.

V. *What sche doth for the oure of teers*

1. Forsooth, atte the oure of tiers and other oures folowande sche bigynneth, pursueth, and fulfillith as sche didde byfore, oute taken that in the grounde[35] sittynge and standynge, sche signifyeth and schewith how oure Lorde was bounden to a pyller – ioynyng hir armys byfore hire breste and puttynge her fynger endys vndir her elbowes – and soo puttith her armys that are togedir fro her breste as othere were lafte a voyde place for a piller bytwix hir armes and her breste. And soo sche schewith hir after her power how the piler was beclipped with the armes of oure ful swete Lorde Jhesu, faste bounden. And alle othere doynges that pertene to the forme of this oure[36] are endyd, as hit [is][37] seide byfore.

VI. *What sche doth for the oures of sexte, noon and euensong*

1. Sothely atte the houre of sexte, none, and euensonge, she kepith alleweye the same

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[34]she is]'she is' is missing from the MS, but is needed for the sense of the clause.

[35]in the grounde] LAT: 'in tertia'(369) or 'during terce;' St. Johns MS 182: 'in terra,' or 'on the ground,' a scribal error that must also have been in the MS used by the translator.

[36]form of this oure] form of this hour. St. Johns MS 182: 'horam'; The Latin edition also has 'horam,' but lists 'formam' as appearing in another manuscript. The Douce reading must derive from a form that contains both words (perhaps a text that contains correction or substitution of one word for the other).

[37]'is' missing from the Middle English, but needed for the sense of the phrase. Note IV.9 to see where this construction is used elsewhere in the text.

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forme[38] in disposicyone of hir body, excepte the spaces of tyme that sche smitith hirselfe liggynge in the maner aboue writen. But atte[39] this maye be vnderstandyn more fully, hit schal be expouned more pleynly.

2. Therfore in ilke of these three oures – anoon after the rauesshynge that goth alweye of custome byfore the oures – sche goth swiftly oute of here bedde and puttith the to foot vndir the tothere and the to wounde vndir the tother, and soo standith vprighte and – strecchynge oute her armes and her handys in the forme of a cros, with open eyen, soo abidynge a good space stille as stoon – neither seeth ne feelith. And if otherwhile the litil fynger of the righte hande bee touchyd, the fyngers of the tothere hande are moued with alle the bulke of the body in the same manere of mouynge.

3. After that sche hath standen so swetly longe in the same disposicione of fete and body, withouten any puttynge to of the handes or leenynge, not fallynge downe but bowynge her body bakkewarde, she liggeth downe to the grounde. And soo sche lyeth in a swogh and in manere of a crosse.

4. A litil after, as it is seyde byfore, longe, myghtely and swiftely sche smyteth her breste. And as it myghte be perceyued of hem that yeed neer – what by noumbrynge and supposynge – sche knocked her breste a hundreth tymes otherewhile with doubil and contynualle strokes of booth handes. After this, for sche maye not goo while the to foot lyeth ouer the tother, but for the gate of her feet as sche liggeth sche chaungith hire steed turnynge, turnynge hirselfe vpon the breste, bakke and sydes in a maner that I may not

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[38]forme] LAT: 'formam crucis'

[39]atte] that

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telle.[40]

5. And thanne sche ryseth vp delyuerly and standith vprighte on the too foot that alon cleuith to the grounde, withouten any helpe of the tothere foot or hande. And how merveylous this doynge is, ho so redith this, noot it wele.[41]

6. Then efte sche strecchith herselfe in the figure of a crosse. And otherewhile, as hit is seyde, she lenith to the erthe with the to foot alloon, and bowith alle her body towarde the grounde, a party on the too syde.

7. And soo the mayden standith longe, hengynge strongely bowynge to the to syde. And aboue mannes myghte sche susteyneth her body, hengynge with the too woundyd foot. And thus sche dothe as me menith aboute the ende of the oures in the whiche sche representith the schappe of the cros. And then betokenynge, as hit semith, the takynge downe of oure Lorde fro the crosse.

8. Ferthermore, after many maneres of representacyouns of oure Lordes crosse and many passyouns[42] of the virgyn turmentyd, there folowe vnspekabil maners of ful deuoute prayers, the whiche, not as I wolde but as I myght, I haue discriued byfore; but I woot wel that my power nor my cunnynge myghte not fulfille my wille. After that sche hath bytokenyd in her laste standynge in the liknesse of a crosse the ende of oure Lorde Jhesu, than she is alle pale and bloodles and bowith hir heed now byfore hir, now to the righte

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[40]In a maner that I may not telle] this seems to be a scribal addition; it does not exist in the Latin.

[41]noot it wele] LAT: 'notet lector' or 'let the reader note.'

[42]passyouns] LAT: 'percussiones,' or 'hitting,' not 'passions.'

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syde, now to the lefte, as if sche expounyd that at[43] is writen in the gospel: "*Filius hominis non habet vbi caput suum reclinet.*" That is to mene, "Cryste hath not wher to lene his heed vppon."[44]

9. And a litil after, with sobbynges and weymentynges vntelabil as sche schulde yelde the goost, sche leyeth downe her heed vpon hir righte schuldir. Then a litil space after, as hir custum is, she leyeth hir downe to the erthe. But sothely that at I sey heer and haue byfore seide, that sche leyth hir downe stirith and bowith and other doynge lyke to thees, I refere it to outwarde sighte thof it be leued that sche doth it not with strenghth of hirselfe, but with othere vertue that God woot. After this commith sorowes, angwysches, counfortes and gladnesse and othere thinges that are expressed atte matyns.

10. Soothely these worschypful signes of the crosse are schewyd in the body and lymmes of the innocente virgyn thoos three oures in the whiche as byleue is oure Lorde Jhesu henge on the rood, that is to seye sext, noon, and euensonge.

VII. *What she doth at the oure of complyn*

1. Forsoth, in the oure of complyn in hauynge and berynge of hir body, what sittynge and standynge, sche figurith the biriynge of oure Lorde, withouten the oures in the whiche sche smitith hirselfe vpon the forthere parte of hir body, holdynge hir armes acrosse-wise.

2. And so she contynues and endes alle that oure in smitynge of handes, rauisshynges and orysouns and othere as it is expounyd byfore.

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[43]at] that which

[44]"And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20). Phrased identically in Luke 9:58.

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3. Netheles to more declaracione of that that is seyde bifore it is to witte that the forseyde mayden is stirid to ryse merueilously atte the oure of matyns and othere oures bi an vnfaillabil clock that I knowe not.

4. And owhile sche representith with signes and berynges of hir lymmes oure Lordes Passyone.

5. And otherewhile, she schewith in weymentacyones and turments hir owne compassyone both of herte and of body.

6. And after this schewynge of semblaunte and of lokynge, as gladnes of the resurrexione and fruyte of the Passyone, and thof it be but ful selden netheles yit sche tellith yit with ful sadde and ful gladsom woordys the ioyes of hir herte.

7. Also y and my felawes, booth abbotes and monkes, atte mydnyghte and sum othere oures also, sawe blode comynge oute at hir eyen and dropped doune and dyed the linnyn garment that sche was cladde with ouerest.

8. Also wee sawe blood sprynge oute often atte the woundes of hir handys and of hir feet and oute of hir syde on a Fridaye atte noon. Wee sawe blode, not allynges rede but as it were mengyd with water, rennynge oute thorowe an hool of hir coot made aboute the pappe. And the wollen cloth that satte next hir flesche was defuyled[45] with the same blode, and also a party of hir syde aboute the wounde.[46] And wee sawe not alloonly the

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[45]defuyled] MS: the 'y' in defuyled is originally an 'l' and then later written over with a "y."

[46]As he claims in his introduction, the scribe apparently felt that some of the more biblical references should not be included in his translation. Here, the Latin version contains a quote from Isaiah that is not included in the Middle English.

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vttir clothe that toucheth the maydens flesche – that is to saye handes, feet, and syde – sprenkelyd and dyed with blood, but also hir pappys[47] were all defuyled with blode rennynge fro hir eyghen. And also otherewhile blode ranne oute at hir fynger endys bytwix the nayles and the flesche.

9. And than happely felle in the persone of oure Lorde Jhesu, for angwyshe and peynful bindynge of his armes and handes. Ferthermore, the same Frydaye sche figured vnto vs how oure blessyd lady Crystes moder stood besyde the crosse, puttynge hir left hande vndir hir lefte cheek, and bowynge hire heed and hir nekke to the same syde, and holdynge hir righte hande vndir hir righte pappe.[48]

10. And anoon she shewith in anothere liknesse blessyd John Euengelist, loutynge doun with hir heed and latynge doune on the lifte syde, booth hir handys ioyned togedir and the fyngers ilke in othere folden withouten the handes.[49]

11. Also this is to witte that in mouynges and berynges of body of the forseyde virgyn there fallith no thinge vnsemely nor no thinge that may displese any mannes syghte. For

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[47]pappys] LAT: 'maxillas,' or 'cheek,' but the scribe has mistaken this for 'mamillas' or 'breasts'; St. Johns MS 182: 'mamillas' (fol. 77ᵛ), so the mistake is probably not that of the English translator.

[48]pappe] LAT: 'maxillam' or 'cheek'; St. Johns MS 182 'maxillam' (fol. 77ᵛ); Here, it appears that the error is that of the English translator.

[49]Here, approximately 500 words that are contained in the Latin are cut out from the Middle English translation from "cum igitur" ("Vita Elisabeth" 371) to "ita valent idiota" ("Vita Elisabeth" 373). These lines are, however, contained in St. Johns MS 182. Since the two MS are taken from a common source, this would indicate a conscious decision on the English translator's part to excise these lines. The passage that the scribe omitted, however, is particularly interesting. See the section "Translating Elizabeth" in the Chapter II, on Elizabeth.

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goynge in her chaumbyre, thof sche se noghte and hir clothes trayled vpon the grounde, yit stumblith sche neuere, ne stamperthe, ne waggith.

12. And in doynge doune hirselfe to the erthe, or liggynge, or risynge, alle hir body hider or thider, she is alwey couerde and bycladde with hir own clothes, nor no thinge apperith vnsemely nor vnhonest.

13. This sufficith atte this tyme for discriuinge of the oures many thinges lafte of thos that fil besyde what for defaute of mynde and difficulte of mater that refusith a febil penne. Netheles or wee go any ferther to othere, leste the herers of this happely wil not leue siche merueils, for the whiche wee abbotis and monkes yede to see the same virgyn and taryed with hire so many oures.

14. Hit is to knowe that bekepynge and charge of the same virgyne was commendid longe sithen by the byschope of that dyocys to a worschepful man and religyous of holy and honest conuersacyone, of cleer and hool opinyone, and of grete auctorite, the abbot of Seinte Trudous[50] of the ordyr of Seinte Benyt, the whiche mayden was his fleschly cosyn and dwellyd nere hym. And he, as anothere John Euangeliste, vndirtoke cure of the virgyne and made be bigged there an honest chaumbyr and a competent and deuoute chapylle, and ordeyned sufficyently and semely alle that longith to do with Goddis seruyse, soo that the chapel is departyd fro the chaumbyr with a smalle latys closynge, and in the myddes of that closynge there is a dore that opens in to the chapelle. And fro the maydens bedde men maye see vp to the auter.

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[50]Saint Trudous] Sint Truiden, or Saint Trond, is also the town where Christina *mirabilis* lived. It is considered one of the early centers of the beguine movement.

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15. In alle this that is seyde byfore this worschypful fader and oure ful deer frende in Cryste was alweye with us. And was oure enfourmer and trewe expownner of the virgyns woordys. Here is an ende of the hours.

VIII. *What sche doth atte the Masse tyme*

1. Now goo wee to the messe that this forseyde virgyn heerith ful gladly whan sche maye haue a preste to whom sche gyueth entente with study of wonder, deuocyone, sighynge, and coueitynge with hye desyres the sighte of oure Lordes body.

2. Soothly anone as she seeth the eleuacyon of the sacramente – in the selfe momente of the sighte thereof – sche berith ouer with a merueilous mouynge alle hir body ouerthwarte the bedde, strecchynge forthe hir armes on booth sydes hir,[51] and makith a crosse of hirselfe.[52] And so sche abidith alle starke as a stok in a swogh[53] and rauischynge, soo that the armes, heed, and nekke, with a party of the shuldres, er[54] withouten hire bedde.

3. And so as vnto that parte of the body she hengith in the eyre withouten sterynge as longe as the Masse is in doynge. And the visage of the virgyne is algat sumwhatly streight vp towarde the auter as if sche byhelde allewey the sacramente thurgh the myddes of the dore.

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[51]on booth sydes hir] Linguistically notable, there is no "of" here making "hir" genitive in itself.

[52]Again, a biblical quote that exists in the Latin is excised here.

[53]starke as a stok in a swogh] The alliteration here is worth noting as it was a popular poetic style in the Middle Ages. Clearly our scribe has been influenced by contemporary poetry and is attempting his own type of flourish with the text.

[54]er] an unusual 3rd person plural present tense form of the verb "to be."

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4. And the tother dele of the body fro the lendes to the soles of the feet is stille as hit was byfore and strecchid forthe after the beddes lengthe.

5. Then whan the Masse is doon, the preste hath put of his chesibil, the forseide virgyn turnith ageyne to hirselfe and is put to the state that sche was wonte to be in, so that she liggeth in hir bedde righte as she laye or[55] she were rauesched.

6. Forsooth if sche schal than receyue the sacrament, she turnith hir anoon ageyns the auter. And hir sistres and hir moder lifte vp and vndir sette hir with clothes or with two piloues. And so sche abidith, neither liggynge ne sittynge but as bytwix booth, haldynge hire handys togedir with fulle deuoute sighynges and goostly greydlynes, and otherwhile with teerys abidynge mekely the comynge of hire savyoure and spouse.

7. And whanne the preste cladde with an albe offirs to hir the sacramente, she metith oure Lorde with alle her spirite. And in the selfe momente that sche openith her mouthe and takith the oste, she is rauyshed euen forthwith, soo that anone she closith her mouthe and stekith her lippes togider and standith stoon stille nor it maye not be perceyued that she holdith the sacramente in hir mouthe, or schewith hir moistes,[56] or swolowes, or decloseth hit in her mouthe, nor she moueth teeth, ne lippes, ne chekys.

8. And so she abidith starke and rauishid a good space. And whan the pilous are taken awaye or othere clothes that hilde hir vp byfore, neuer the latter, she abidith vnmouid in the same manere of body and membrys as she was whan sche receyued the sacramente.

9. Afterwarde sche commith agayne to hirselfe and lenys hir heed to that place as hit is

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[55]or] before

[56]moistes] LAT: 'humectet'

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wonte to ligge.

10. And hir chere semith then ful specyous and cleer and gracyous abouen that I maye write or seye and then is she delityd with heuenly and goostly swetnesse of oure Lorde. And as hit semith she loothes bodily byholdynges and takith neuere hede to mennes spekynges.

11. And as mykel as she maye for shame, she refusith to be seen and to see.

12. And so in silens and stabil ioye of mynde she contynueth that tyme vnto she ryse vp atte the oure that foloweth.

13. Also hit is to witte that she is neuere housilde or she haue shreuene hir byfore Masse, the whiche schrifte semith rathere of louvynge than of blamynge, as the forseyde abbot hir confessour tolde me.

14. Soothly she blamith hirselfe mykel for she is not so perfitely in louvynge and thankynge of oure Lorde as she aghte to be, and also that she otherewhile dredith and is sory more thanne she aghte for vnkyndenes and dampnacyone of mankynde, for bycause that men knowe not the beenfetys of oure Lordys Passyone and of here saluacyon.

15. Certeynly for that wee haue made mencyon of confessyon wee wole [thee][57] witte that liketh to heer that oure seruauntes foot men that kepe oure hors stood onys besyde hir to aske helpe of hir prayers. Thanne oon of hem that was a Braban and knewe hir langage knelyd doune and bysoghte hir that sche wolde praye for hym and for his felawes.

16. Thanne she answerid and seyde, "yif yee wil do after my counseyle I wille bisely

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[57]thee] MS: 'thei'

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praye yow." And they bihighte that they wolde. Than forthwith sche sayde, "Goo shryue yow of youre synnes and doth penauns and I schalle[58] praye yow with good wille or elles I wolde not entermete me thereof, for I schulde trauel in veyne.

17. And when sche hadde byholden hem bisely, sche callid specially to hir oon of hem that was yongest, a feyre yonge man, sympel and wel witted, and made oon that knewe booth her[59] langage seye vnto hym that as sone as hee myghte, he shulde make hym a lewde frere of Clareualle or of anothere hous of oure ordir where hee myghte fynde a place of his conuersyone. And that she counseyled hym on allwise. And this same yonge man byhighte gladly to do after hir counseyle, and so it was done.

18. For not mykel after, at the prayers of the same virgyne, wee sende the same yonge man to oure hous of Clareualle and made hym a conuers, that is to seye a lewde frere. And whan the forseide abbot, keper of the same virgyne, asked of hir while I was presente why sche chas that yonge man amonge othere and badde him be a man of religyone, she answeryd goodly and smyland that she knewe hym in state of hem that shalbe saued and yif hee hadde then dyed, hee schulde soon haue comen to heuene.

19. And therfore sche desyred that the staat of that yonge man were strengthed with remedy of religyone and felawschyp of religyous men.

20. Afterwarde it was knowen of the same yonge man that often and bysely hee wolde be schreuen, and as many tymes as hee myghte hee wolde be atte Masse ful deuoute. And in sympilnesse of obedyens and innocens, as men myghte see, he passed his felawes.

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[58]and I schalle] MS: 'and I schalle and I schal'

[59]her] 'their'

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21. Thre dayes after that atte this was doon, the forsayde Braban that prayed the virgyn to praye for him and for his felawes visityd hir efte sones. And many folke beynge there presente anoon as she bygan to loke on hym, she brest oute in to siche woordys, "yit arte thou not schreuene. Thou has don folily for thou abidith to schryue thee. Why taryes thou? Why feynes thou? The deuyl is ful slye and thou knowith not the poynte of thy deth."

22. And hee was alle aschamed and wente aweye. And on the morne hee was schreuen in the cite of Leody to a frere that hadde Popes powere, as it was seyde, and hee assoyled hym, as the same yonge man sayde afterwarde.

23. This was doon openly and in couerte nothinge. And wee bere witnesse to that at wee haue seen.

24. Therfore it is to do shortly of that that wee haue herde by tellynge of othere, for now this litil boke encreces to a gretter.

IX.

1. The forsayde abbot tolde me and my felawes that vpon a good Frydaye in the yeere of oure Lorde a thowsande two hundred sexty and sex, the same virgyne[s][60] heed bygan to ake in a tyme bytwix two ouris whan she hadde reste fro peynes, as she was wonte to haue. And sche myghte not holde hir heed vpon a pilow no while in o manere, but now and now trollid it hyderwarde and thyderwarde. And whanne hir moder and hir sustirs perceyued that, they lighted candelle and loked nere and bisily byhelde the maydens heed. And they sawe and schewed to othere bisyde prickynges as of thornes alle reed with blody

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[60]virgynes] clearly possessive, but missing the 's' in the Middle English.

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dropes rounde about the hede of the virgyne in the maner of a gerlonde, figurynge the corowne of thornes of oure Lorde.

2. Also the same yeere, on Seinte Barnabe daye,[61] the same abbot tolde vs in the hous of the virgnyne that in the vigil of the same feste atte euesonge tyme hee coom to the virgyns hous. And whanne sche hadde endyd her euensonge she asked the abbot what feste was on the morne.

3. Then the abbot that hadde seyde euensonge of the fery r[ea]dynge[62] thoghte on no feste, by negligens of his chapeleyne, answerid and seyde there was no feste on the morne.

4. "Yis, certeynly," quod sche. "There is maad a grete feste in paradys of a grete Lorde."

5. The abbot herde that and loked a kalender and seyde euensonge of the feste.

6. Also vpon a daye the abbot asked hir howe and by what strengthe she myghte suffre so many and so greuous[63] peynes. And sche answeryd, "I suffre but litil to regarde of a mayden that is callyd Mary, the whiche dwellith in a towne of Flaundirs that is callid Insula.[64] Soothly sche is turmentyd fer sharper and longer than I." And thanne sche bygan to discryue the passyone of that same Marye as thof sche hadde seen hir many tymes in angwysche of peynes, neuertheles sche neuere sawe hir.

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[61]Seinte Barnabe daye] Saint Barnabus. His feast day is June 11. He is said to have been martyred c. 60.

[62]readynge] MS: 'ridynge'

[63]grevous] ends in a short 's' and is then emended with a long one.

[64]Insula] Lille, in what is today France, near the Belgian border.

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7. And as hit is leuyd sche herde neuere worde of hir of any erthely creature.

8. Nor the same abbot knewe nothinge of that same Marye, nor neuer come tithinge of hir in to that cuntrey, for the forseyde virgyns dwellyn fer atwynne.

9. Ferthermore sche seyde that the same Marie and sche sawe ilke othere often, whanne they were rauyshed, and that sche knewe hir ful wele and seyde that she was a ful wyse mayden and that sche hadde the spirite of wisdome and cownseyle. And she tolde myche of hir pacyens and wysdome that wee knowe wele is sothe.

10. For often we haue that same Marye seen as wee wente by that forseyde towne Insula bycause of oure visitacyons. Soothly the[65] kynge of Fraunce visityd hir otherewhile and gerte make hir a ful honest chapelle, but inogh of this atte this tyme.[66]

11. Moreouere, be hit knowen to hem that wole witte, that the vtward clennes of the same virgyn Elizabeth beerith witnesse and open euydens of hir inwarde clennes. For aftir commun witnessynge of hem that dwelle with hire, she forbedith her tunge fro yuel and hir lippys that they speke no gyle, soo that fro hir mouthe cometh neither spotel, ne spittynge nor no maner of moisture or mater of vnclennes fro hir nese thirles.

12. Soothly of hir meet and drynke, I write that at I am syker of. Ones atte a dewe oure and, as me menith, bytwix sexte and noon, hir moder broghte hir a litil mylke in a litil

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[65]There is an illegible mark, resembling the abbreviation for 'quod,' in the MS here between 'Soothly' and 'the,' but there is nothing missing in the legible translation from the Latin text.

[66]This is the last place where major sections of the Latin text are missing from both St. Johns MS 182 and Douce 114. Approximately 400 words are omitted here. Douce 114 stops at "Altera autem" ("Vita Elisabeth" 376) while St. Johns 182 stops one sentence later at "ad Cujus omnibus" ("Vita Elisabeth" 376). Both manuscripts resume at "gloriæ laudis ejus" ("Vita Elisabeth" 378).

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dyshe, and then oure felawe the abbot of Clareualle putte a spoonful thereof to hir mouthe. And that she suppyd atte three suppyngis as hir semyd with difficulte. And than sche bygan to fille withalle, as she hadde lothed meet that was gyuen hir. And anoon was taken hir drynke, wyne medelid with watir, and whanne sche hadde tastyd thereof she wolde not drynke.

13. And I dare saye with good consciens that a doufe wolde haue dronken more atte oonys of the welle watir than the mayden didde of the cuppe.

14. And this is verrely leeuyd: that she etith and drynketh rathere after othere mennes wille, than for any luste or nede of hirselfe. Also otherewhile, if there be putte to hir mouth fruytes of trees or flesche or fysche, then she soukys sumwhat of the sotil substauns, nothinge receyuynge of the gros mater.

15. Ferthermore, hit is to be notyd that neithere she ne hir fader ne moder nor noon of hir moenye maye not be garte on no maner wyse to receyue any gifte or anykyns presaunte. They sey that they haue inowgh and holdeth hem payed of that atte God hath gyuen hem.

16. Soothly they are wonder symple and innocente, as wee were enfourmed by oure owne consideracyone and othere trewe mennes tellynge.

17. Wherfore this virgyne, whos lyfe is alle mirakil – ye moorouer alle hirselfe is but mirakil – as hit schewith by the abouen writynge figures and[67] expounes, not allonly Cryste, but[68] Cryste crucified in hir body. And also the figuratif body of Cryste, that is

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[67]and] MS: 'and and'

[68]but] LAT: 'et' or 'and,' although some MS contain the alternate reading of 'sed' or 'but.'

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holy Chirche. Loo in the distinxione of oures she representys the custome of holy Chirche ordeynid by God as Dauyd seith, "seuen tymes on the daye, Lorde, I seyde louvynge to the."

18. In woundes and peynes she affermith the feith of the Passyone; in ioye and myrthe after peyne, gladnes of the resurrexyone; in rauisshynge, the Ascencyone.

19. In rodynes of hire reuelacyouns and spiritual lyfe she figurith the sendynge of the Holy Goost. And of the sacramente of the auter, and of confessyon, and then of desyres of alle mennes saluacyone and of sorowe of vnkyndenes and dampnacyone of mankynde that atte is writen aboue declarith openly inowgh, that thou man arte vnexcusabil if so quik arguments and open reproues stir the not to strengthe of feith, to desyre of charyte and deuocyone. There is yit mykel to be writen of this mater but nede of occupacyones and [weikness][69] of body maketh me to putte vp my penne.

20. *Here endith the lyfe of Seinte Elizabeth of Spalbek, the whiche passed to Cryste in the yeere of oure Lorde a thowsande two hundred sexty and sext.*[70]

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[69]weikness] MS: 'werknesse'

[70]The following rubric is found on the top of fol. 12^{r} : "Elizabeth of Spalbeck. An eende."

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Chapter Five

The *Vita* of Christina *mirabilis* by Thomas de Cantimpré

I. *Here biginneth the prolog in the lyfe of Seinte Cristin the meruelous of the towne of Seinte Trudous[1] in Hasban.*[2]

1. We purposynge to write the lyfe of the memorabil Crystes virgyne Crystyne, that put wee firste in the bigynnynge of oure sermone at[3] worshepful James[4], byshope of Attone[5] – after cardinalle of the courte of Rome – seith of this Cristyne in the lyfe of Seinte Marie of Oegines[6] in these wordes:

2. "I sawe anothere womman," seith hee, "that is to sey this Cristyn Meruelous aboute whan[7] oure Lorde wroughte so merueilously that whan sche hadde liggen longe deed, she lyued ageyne or[8] she were beryed. And sche hadde graunte of God that sche, liuynge in

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[1]Seinte Trudous] Saint Trond or Sint Truiden – in the Limburg province in the northeast of modern Belgium, near the city of Liège, named for a missionary in Brabant who founded the monastery at Sint-Truiden. A 13th century beguinage church still remains there.

[2]Hasban] LAT: Hasbania. Modern Hesbaye, it is a region covering the Liège diocese in Belgium.

[3]at] that

[4]Jacques de Vitry, see introduction to this chapter

[5]Attone] LAT: Achonensis; in Modern English, Acre. Jacques de Vitry was elected bishop of Acre in Palestine in 1215.

[6]Oegines] Oignies, a town in the Liège diocese in today's Belgium.

[7]whan] whom.

[8]or] before, as in 'ere.'

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body, shulde suffre Purgatorye in this worlde. After that longe tyme she was wondirful turmontid of oure Lorde, that otherwhile she walowed in fire. Sumtyme in wynter she abode longe in frosen water and yce. Also, otherewhile, she lete as she wolde goo into deed mens graues.

3. "Atte the last, after hir penauns, she lyued in so mykel pees and deserued so mykel grace of God, that sche was rauished in spirite and ledde soulles of the deed vnto Purgatorye and thurgh Purgatory to heuene withouten any sore of hirselfe."

4. These are wordes of the worshypful byshope byfore-seyde.

5. I, soothly vnworthy frere of the ordir of prechours,[9] for edifiynge of the reders and specially to the lovynge of God, haue writen with symple worde. And I am certayne and syker of that at was me told.

6. Nor I sey not "certeyne" and "syker" withoute cause, sen I haue so many witnessys and mykel that I haue writen as were than in the towne of Seint Trudous that hadde witte and resone. Nor these thinges were not done in corners and hyrnes but openly amonge the pepil. Nor it is not so longe goon that they are forgoten, for hit is no moor but eight yere sythen sche dyed whan I wrote hir lyfe.

7. Certeynly othere thinges that no man myghte knowe but sche, I herde allonly of hem, the whiche affermyd that hireselfe tolde to hem with hir owne mouthe. And wite hee wel that redith this that I leued to siche witnesse that wolde not goo fro the sothe thof they

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[9]ordir of prechours] The Order of Preachers (Ordo Predicatorum), is the official name of the Dominicans.

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schulde lose her[10] heedes.

8. Wee knowleche withouten doute – and sooth hit is – that oure tellynge passith alle mannes vndirstondynge and witte as siche thinges that maye not be done by commun cours of nature or kynde. Neitheles, they be possibil to hym that alle maad of noghte.

9. Nor I wolde no weyes haue taken vpon me to write, but if worschepful James byshope hadde boren witnesse byfore of this same virgynes lyfe.

10. Therfore go we to the writynge. And firste how sche was norysched, after broght forthe,[11] and then pursue wee so forth hir othere dedes, as wee haue leeryd be ful certeyne and vndoutabil tellynge.

12. *Here endith the prologe.*

II. *Here bigynnith the lyfe of Seint Cristyn the meruelous.*

1. *How sche was noryshed. Capitulum P*[m12]

2. Cristyn the worschepful virgyne of Criste was goten and borne of honest fadir and moder in the toune of Seinte Trudous in Hasban. And whan hir fader and moder were deed, sche was lefte with hir two sustris. Coueitynge to dispose hir state after religyous manere of lyfe, [the sustris][13] ordeyned amonge hem that the eldist sister schulde gyf hir to prayers, the myddel sister schulde take hede to houshold, and the yongest – Cristyn – to

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[10]her] 'their' in this scribe's dialect. When the meaning of the word 'her' is not clear, it will be footnoted.

[11]broght forthe] LAT: "postmodum educata," how she was educated.

[12]Chapter divisions are the same as in the manuscript.

[13]the sustris] This necessary transition exists in the Latin MS but has been omitted in Douce 114.

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kepe hir bestes on the felde that wente to pasture. And forthewith Cristes comforte was not for Cristyn, that was putte to the lower and fouller offys, but oure Lorde gaf hir grace of inwarde swetnes and visityd hir ful often with priuetis of heuene.

3. She was vnknowen to alle men but to God allone. The pryueer sche was, the more was sche knowen.[14]

III. *How Cristyn was deed Capitulum II^m*

1. And after this, of inwarde exercise of contemplacyone she wex seek in bodily myghte and dyed.

2. Then the deed body was leyde forthe and the lyche doon of hir sistres and frendes, and on the morne was borne to kirke. And while the Masse was in doynge for hir soule, sodey[n]ly[15] the body sterid and roos vp in the bere and anoon lifte vp as a bridde, steigh into the beemes of the kyrke.

3. Then alle that were [there] fledde [16] and hir eldist sister a[l]one[17] bode stille with drede, and she abode in the kyrke roufe vnmoued tille the messe was doon. Then sche was conioured of the preste of the chirche and constreyned to come doun.

4. Soothly, as sum suppos, the soteltee of hir spirite lothed the taste and sauoure of mennes bodyes. Thenne she wente anoon hoom ageyne with her sistres and eet hir meet.

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[14]The Latin contains a quote from Isaiah 24:16, omitted here.

[15]sodeynly] MS: 'sodeymly'

[16]Then alle that were there fledde] MS: then alle that were fledde

[17]alone] MS: 'aboue,' LAT: 'sola,' or 'alone.'

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5. And than hir specyal[18] freendys yede to hir and spired hir what she hadde seen or what she hadde suffred.

IV. *How she was ledde oute of body and how sche was broghte to the body ageyne.*

Capitulum tercium

1. "Anoon," quod she, "as I was deed, mynistris of light – Goddes aungels – toke my soule and ladde me into a loothly place ful of mennes soulles. And the peynes that I sawe in that place were so grete and so cruel that no tunge maye telle.

2. "And soothly there sawe I many deed, the whiche I knewe byfore alyue. I forsooth, hauynge compassyone and grete pite of thoos wrecched soulles, asked what maner place that was. Y thoghte that hit was Helle. And my leders answeryd to me at that place was Purgatorye, in the whiche they that hadde ben synners in her lyfe suffred worthy peynes for her mysdedis. Fro thennes they ladde me to the peynes of Helle, and also there I knewe summe that I knewe liuynge.

3. "After that I was broghte to the trone of Goddes mageste. And whan I sawe oure Lorde gladsum and wele apayed to me warde,[19] then was I odly mery, thinkynge that I schulde abyde there fro that tyme forthe euermore.

4. "Thanne oure Lorde anoon answerid to my desyre: 'For certeyne, my swetynge,' quod he, 'thou haste be with me heer, but now I putte to the choys of two thinges: that is to

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[18]specyal] LAT: 'spirtuales.' The Latin abbreviation for "spiritual" and "special" are very similar, and the translator apparently mistook the latter for the former.

[19]to me warde] toward me

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seye, whether thou has[t][20] leuer dwelle stille with me now or turne ageyne to thy body, there to suffre peynes of an vndeedly soule by a deedly body withouten harme of hitselfe and to delyuere with thy peynes alle thos soulles of the whiche thou haddest pite in the place of Purgatorye.

5. "'And also with ensaumple of thy peyne and lyfe, [to] stire[21] men to repentauns and penauns, and to forsake her synnes and be trewly turnyd to me. And after alle this is doon, then thou schalte come ageyne to me with many medys.'

6. "And I answeryd withouten doutynge that I wolde turne ageyne to body vndir that condicyone that was put vnto me. Forthwith oure Lorde was wele payed with myne answere and commaundid my soule to be resteryd to my body.

7. "And see yee how swifte aungels were atte oure Lordes biddynge. For the same oure that the messe was sungen for me, whan the firste *Agnus dei*[22] was seyde, my soule stood byfore the trone of Goddis mageste. And whan *Agnus dei* was seide the thridde tyme, [I] was broght[23] to my body with thos swifte aungellis. Thus was the maner of my oute goynge and ageyne commynge and for mennes amendemente, I am turnyd fro deth to lyfe.

8. "Therfore, be not ye troubled with thos thinges that God schal ordeyne with me. For soothly there were neuere siche seen in this worlde." Hir frendes, herynge this, mykel

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[20]hast] MS: has

[21]to stire] MS: stire

[22]Agnus dei] In the MS these words are not rubricated, but underlined in red.

[23]I was broght] MS: was broght, but the subject 'I' is necessary to the sense of the phrase.

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merueilid and abode that at schulde be with grete wonder and drede.

V. *How she was taken of hir frendys and delyuerid of oure Lorde and fedde with hir owne maydenly pappe. Capitulum iiij*^{m}

1. Therfore after this whan Cristyn fledde the presens of folke with a wonder lothinge into wildernesse and into trees, into the coppys of tourys of chirches, or of othere hye thinges. And hir frendys, supposynge hir wode and ful of fendes, atte laste with grete laboure toke hir and bonde hir with chaynes of yren. And whan sche so bounden hadde soffred many pennuryes and peynes, but moost in sauour of men, vpon a nyghte sche was holpen of oure Lorde.

2. And hir bondys and fettirs vndone, she skaped aweye and fledde ferre into deserte [of] wodes.[24] And there she lyued as bryddes doon in trees.

3. And whanne sche nedid mete and was pyned with a ful grete hungyr – for hir body, thof it were ful sotil and ful lighte, myghte not bee withouten food – netheles she wolde on no maner go home ageyne but allone abyde in wildernesse priuely with oure Lorde, mekely [praying] that he wolde mercyfully see to hir angwyshe.[25] And euene forthewith she loked on the drye pappys of hir virgyne brest and sawe hit drepe swete milke agaynes alle righte of kynde and nature.

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[24]deserte of wodes] MS: 'into deserte to wodes;' LAT: 'in remotis deserti silvis' (652), or 'into remote forests of wilderness.'

[25]mekely ... to hir angwyshe] MS: 'mekely that he wolde mercyfully see to hir angwyshe;' the necessary verb 'praying' is missing from the Middle English. LAT: 'Orationem ergo fundens ad Dominum, petivit supplex, et ejus angustias misericordiæ suæ oculis intueretur' (652).

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4. This is a merueylous thinge, and neuere herde after[26] the imcomparabil and singler virgyne, Cristes moder.

5. And so the virgyne Cristyn was norysched nyne wokes with the mylke of hir owne pappe. The mene tyme she was soghte, founden, and taken of hir freendys and tyed with yren chaynes as she was byfore, but in vayne.

VI. *How she wente into watirs. Capitulum V^m^*

1. For she was then delyuerid by oure Lorde and come to the cite of Leody and preyed the preste of Seint Cristofirs that hee wolde howsel hir, harde bystad in many thinges. And whan the preste byhighte that hee wolde, but excused hym that hee myghte not for occupacyone atte that tyme, then she wolde no lengir abyde but wente to anothere chirche and asked of the preste the body of oure Lorde Jhesu Criste.

2. And hee anoon comunyd hir after hir askynge.

3. And forthwith she stired with a feersnes and bier and fledde oute of the cite. Then the preste wondred that she ranne so faste aweye and hee – with that othere preste of Seint Christofirs – folowed hir booth vnto the flode[27] allemost and were gladde, trowynge that they myghte haue agaynes the watir [stoppyd hyr][28].

4. But then they, alle astonyed, sawe the womman byfore hem – in verrey body as hit were a fantum – goo into the depe streemes of the watir and come vp harmles oute by that

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[26]after] 'since;" LAT: 'post' which can mean both 'since' and 'after.'

[27]flode] probably the Meuse river, which runs through modern Belgium. It is the river identified in the Chapter VIII.

[28]stoppyd hyr] MS: added in a later hand in the margin of the manuscript.

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othere banke.

VII. *How she was turmentyd in fyer. [Capitulum vj^{m}]*[29]

1. Crystyn then bygan to do that for the whiche oure Lorde sende hir ageyne. And she wente into hoot brennynge ouenes, redy to bake brede in, and she was turmentyd with brennynges and heet as oon of vs, so that sche cryed hidously for angwysche. Netheles, whan she come oute, there was no soor nor hurt seen outwarde in hire body.

2. And whan she hadde no fourneys nor ouenes, thanne she keste hirselfe into houge fyres and grete in mennes houses or allonly putte in hir feet and handys and helde hem there so longe vnto, but if hit hadde [not] be[30] myrakelle of God they myghte be brente to askes.

3. Also othewhile she[31] wente into cauderons fulle of hoot, boylynge watir to the breste or ellis to the lendys aftir the heighte of the cauderouns.

4. And she poured scalde hoot watir on thos membrys that were harmles withouten and cryed as a womman that trauelles with childe. Yit netheles whan sche come oute sche hadde no harme.

VIII. *How sche was turmentid in watir. [Capitulum vij^{m}]*

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[29]When the chapter number is noted in brackets, as here, it is written only in the margin of the manuscript, not within the body of the text itself. The scribe uses both methods in his text.

[30]hadde not be] MS: 'hadde be,' but the word 'not' is necessary for correct sense of the phrase.

[31]she] MS: 'she she,' with the second word expunged.

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1. She abood often tyme and longe vndir the water of the flode of Moyse[32] in f[ro]ste tyme,[33] in so mykel that she dwelled stille in the watir sex dayes or more.

2. But the preste that hadde cure of hire come and stood vpon the watir banke and adiurid hire, by the name of Cryste, and then she was constreyned to come home.

3. Also in wynter tyme, she wente streight vprighte on the watir-mylne whele forto stande so she shulde haue slyden downe hedlynge and alle hire body after.

4. And otherewhile, she cam swymmynge with the watir and felle with the water aboue the whele. Nethles, there was no hurtynge seen in hir body.

IX. *How sche was turmentyd in whelys. [*Capitulum *viij*^{m}*]*

1. Also in maner of hem that were turmentyd, she bowed hir leggys and armes in whelis, in the whiche theues were wonte to haue her iewesse, and yit, whan she come downe, there semyd no brekynge in hir lymmes.

2. Also she wente to the galous and hengyd hirselfe vp with a gnare[34] amonge honged theues, and there she henge a daye or too. And ful often she entryd into deed mens graues and maad sorowe for synnes of men.

X. *How she was turmentyd in thornes and breerys, and she was chaced of dogges. Capitulum IX*^{m}

1. And otherewhile, aboute mydnyghte, she ros and prouoked and callid forthe alle the dogges of the cite of Seinte Trudous to barke, and ranne faste byfore hem as a beste, and

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[32]Moyse] Meuse river.

[33]froste tyme] MS: 'first time;' LAT: 'glaciali tempore' (652) or 'frost time.'

[34]gnare] a noose

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they folowd after hir and droof and chacyd hir thurgh buskes and brerys and thikke thornes, soo that there lafte no party of hire body vnwoundyd. Yit nethles, whanne she hadde washen awey the blood, there apperyd no token of hurte no soor.

2. In this same manere didde she alle hirselfe with thornes and brerys, soo that alle hire body on ilke a syde semyd bedowen in blood. Wherfore many folke that sawe that often merueilid that there was so mykel blood in o body. Yit soothly withouten alle thees bledynges, she lete her blode ful often of mykel veyne blode.

XI. *Of the sotiltee of hire body and how she was whan she prayed. [Capitulum x^{m}]*

1. Hire body was [so] sotil and lighte[35] that she wente in hyghe thynges and, as a bredde, hengyd in ful smale twigges of trees. And whanne she wolde preye, she was constreyned to flee into tree coppys or touris or into othere summe hygh thinges, that she so beynge allone fro alle folke myghte fynde riste of hire spirite.

2. And efte sone whan she prayed and Goddes grace of contemplacyone come to hir, euen as she were made hote and chaufed, alle hir membrys were closed togedir on a lumpe, nor there myghte nothinge be perceyued of hir but[36] allonly a rownde gobet.

3. And after that spirituel felynge, whan the actuel felynges come[37] to hir kynde ageyne, in the maner of an vrchyn, the lumped bo[d]y yode to the owne shappe[38] and strekyd oute the

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[35]so sotil and lighte] MS: sotil and lighte, 'so' needed for sense of the phrase.

[36]but] MS: 'but but,' the latter is expunged.

[37]come] This is an acceptable form for 'came.'

[38]the lumped body yode to the owne shappe] MS: the lumkped boby. 'Yode' is the 3rd person past tense of 'gan' which means 'to go.'

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membrys that were firste stoken vndir an vnlikly mater and forme.

4. And often she stood boolt vprighte, on stakes of hegges, and there[39] she seyde hire sawter for it was ful heuy and greuous to hire to touche the erthe while she prayed.

XII. *How hire legge was broken and [she][40] taken and delyuered of oure Lorde.*

[Capitulum xj^{m}]

1. For suche maner doynge hire sistres and frendes were greetly ashamyd that men trowyd hir ful of fendes. And they made couenaunte with a ful wicked and ful strange man[41] and gaf hym mede that hee shulde pursue and take hir and bynde hir with iren cheynes. And whanne that shrewed man hadde pursued hir in wildernes and myghte not take hir with his handes, onys atte laste hee leyde hande vpon hir and brak hir legge with a reerward. Then was she broghte home and hir sisters hyred a[42] leche that shulde heel hir broken legge.

2. Thenne was she ladde in a chayer to Leody, and the leche knewe the spirite of hire strengthe and bonde hir faste to a piler in a celer, wallid alle aboute, and lokked faste the dore. Thanne hee bonde vppe hir legge with medecynnabil clothes.

3. But when the leche was gon, she drowe hem of ageyne and thoghte vnworthy to haue annothere leche to hire woundes but oure sauyour Jhesu Cryste, and allemyghty God deceyued hir not. For on an nyghte, whan the Holy Goost felle in hire, the bondes that she

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[39]there] MS: 'there there,' the latter is expunged.

[40]she] missing from the MS, but in the Latin.

[41]strange] LAT: 'fortissimum virum,' or 'strong man.' 'Strange' is the Northern dialectal spelling for 'strong' in Middle English.

[42]a leche] MS: a a leche'

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was tyed with were loused, and she, alle hoole and harmeles, walked in the celar flore, daunsynge and blessynge oure Lorde to whom allone sche hadde chosen to lyue and to dye.

4. Then hire spirite felynge that she was closed and stoken in the celar, she toke a stoon of the celare flore and in an houge spirite she made the walle thurgh. And as an arowe that euere the faster it is streyned in the bow, the strenger it fleeth, euen [so][43] hir spirit artyd abouen right with the selfe body of verrey fleshe, as hit is seide, flowe forth as a bridde in the eyre.

XIII. *How oyle spronge fro hire pappes, and so [she][44] was laten go of hire frendys. [Capitulum xij^{m}]*

1. Netheles, hir sustirs and frendes wolde [not][45] cees to pursue hire. For whan she come ageyne where as they mighte take hire, they bonde hire faste in the shuldres with a bonde of tre and fedde hir as a dogge with a litil breed and watir alone.

2. But atte Cryste wolde shewe in hire passynge myracul of his vertue, therefore hee suffred hire to be ouercomen and haue tribulacyone for the tyme. Wherfore hire buttokes were alto froten with the hardnes of the tree and hir shuldris festird, and she was with this waxen febil and feynte and myghte not ete hire brede.

3. And noon was there that hadde compassyone of hire disese, but oure Lorde hadde mercy on hire merueilosly and wroghte in hir that nobil miracul atte was neuer harde heer

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[43]so] MS: fro

[44]she] 'she' missing from the MS

[45]not] MS: so

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byfore.

4. For hire maydenly pappes bigan to sprynge licoure of ful swete oyle. And that toke she and sauerd hir brede with alle and hadde hit for potage and oynemente. And sche enoynted therewith the woundes of hir festirde membrys.

5. Then hire sustres and frendes, seynge that, bigan to wepe and fro then forth they sturglid nor enforced nothinge ageyne Goddes wille in Cristyns miracles but lowsed hire of bondys and knelyd doun preiynge forgifnes of the wronge that they hadde done to hire and so leet hire go.

XIV. *How there was made a generalle prayere of religious folke for Cristyne. [Capitulum xiij^{m}]*

1. She was thanne free and didde what hire liste and suffred paynes for mannes synnes, as hit is seyde byfore.

2. And whan there gadred mykel pepil alle daye fro ferre and nere and froo ful straunge contrees forto see miracles and meruales of God in Cristyne, then religious men and wymmen that were in the forsayde towne, dredynge leste that houge wonderynge of mer[u]eylles[46] shulde passe mannys witte and turne beestly myndes of men into wikkyd wirkynge and arre[t]te[47] Goddes dedys to vnmyghtynes in these, that she fledde presens of men and clombe vpon hyghe thinges as a brydde and dwellid longe in watirs as a fyshe.

3. They besoghte oure Lorde with bisy prayers that hee wolde tempir his myracles in Cristyn after the comun state of men. And oure Lorde dispysed not the prayers of hem

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[46]merueylles] MS: 'mereylles'

[47]arrette] MS: 'arrecte'

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mekely wepynge.

XV. *How hire lyfe was temperid to men. Capitulum xiiij^{m}*

1. And so it fel vpon a daye that she, stirid of spirite ful hougely, ranne to a chirche in a towne that is callid Wellen,[48] and fyndynge the fonte stoon[49] open, she plonged hirselfe alle therein. And with that, as it is seyde, she gate there that fro then forthe the manere of hire lyfe was more tempyrde to men and hadde hirselfe afterwarde more esely and better myghte suffre the taste[50] of men and dwelle amonge hem.

XVI. *How she was constreyned of spirite to lyue with almes and as a man.*[51] *Capitulum xv^{m} //*

1. She toke in holy deuocyon the sacramente of the auter often and moost vpon Sondayes, and in that she receyued strengthe of body, as she sayde, and most gladnesse of spirite.

2. Therfore she that hadde forsaken – for Crystes loue – hir owne godis myghte nothinge vse in mete or drynke of thoos thinges that felle to hir bi righte eritage, but she vsyd comun meetis of men and beggid daye be daye fro dore to dore that she myghte beer the synnes of hem with whos almes she was compellid of Goddes sprite to begge, almes of

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[48]Wellen] Wellen, a commune in the Tongres district (Limburg province) in the northeast of modern Belgium.

[49]fonte stoon] baptismal font. Baptismal fonts do have covers, but this also means that it was a large font that would have been covered to prevent people from bathing or falling inside it.

[50]taste] LAT: 'odores' or 'smell'

[51]and as a man] This phrase is not in the Acta Sanctorum Latin edition. However it appears to have been added in some manuscripts, including St. Johns MS 182 where it is added to the chapter heading: 'et quasi homo' (fol. 93^{r}).

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wicked men, that thereby they shulde be callyd to loothnes of synnes and to penauns of hire[52] lyfe.

3. For soothly she seyde that nothinge more makith God mercyful anenste synners thanne while synners haue pite of hir euen cristen, for mercy and pite myghte neuer but make a good ende atte laste day. And at this be shewed with ensaumpil, wee enforme hit that wee haue seyde with a dede of Cristyne.

XVII. *Of hym that she tooke drynke of. Capitulum xvi^{m}*

1. Hit byfelle vpon a daye that she was stired of God vnto an vnsufferabil thriste and ranne to the borde of a ful wikked man that yeet with ryche araye and askyd hym drynke. Thenne he, ageynes his custome, was stirid with pite and gaf hir a litil wyne to drynke. Wherfore Cristyn seide, ageyne the opinyone of alle that knowe that man, that hee hadde forgifnesse of penauns and contricyone atte his deed.

XVIII. *How it was to hir whan she eet alms of yuel doers and what was hir mete. [Capitulum xvii^{m}]*

1. And this was the cause, as wee haue seide, that she was constreyned to ete wicked mennes almes, but yit whan she yeet anythinge gifen hir for almes that was wrangesly goten, hit semyd to hir that she yeet the bowellis of paddokes or of todes or the guttis of neddirs.

2. For in etynge of siche almes, she cryed as a womman trauelynge of childe and seyde, "O Cryste, what dost thou with me? Why turmentis thou me thus?" And knokkynge hir

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[52]hire] their

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body and breste seyde, "O thou wrecchyd soule, what desyres thou? What coueites thou these foule thinges? Why etis thou these filthe?" For that was a peyne to hir whan she eet any raveyne.

3. And also she was greuyd with as mykel peyne whanne any shrewed man deneyed hir that she asked. Vpon a tyme it happed that she toke awey, with strengthe, a thinge that a wicked man denyed hire and seyde, "yif thou wilte not now, hereafter thou shalte not repente. And thanne shal it profit thee that profetis now nothinge."

4. And whanne she wantid a sleue in hir cote or an hode in hir scapulary, if she mette anybody – of whome she knewe by spyrite that shulde take hit of, she preyed hym [if he wolde gif hit][53]. And if he[54] wolde gif hit, sche thanked hym; and if he[55] denyed, she toke hit ageyne his wille and sewyd it to hir owne clothes.

5. Nor she shamed not, thogh the sleues in o coot were party and of dyuerse colours. Hir clothes was a white coote and a white scap[ula]ry[56] alle hire body to the feet, and often sewyd togedir with noon othere threde but with the barke of a tree that is callid *Tilia* or with wykers of salow or with prickes of wode. Hoses or shoes hadde she noon, goynge barefot alwey.

6. The meet that she vsyd was foule and abiecte; and washynges of dyshes that schulde be

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[53]if he wolde gif hit] this part of the sentence is present in the Latin, but missing in the MS. Because the phrase is repeated in the beginning of the next sentence, the scribe probably skipped over the first usage.

[54]he] MS: 'sche,' with the 'sc' expunged

[55]he] MS: 'she,' with the 's' expunged

[56]scapulary] MS: 'scaplury'

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caste aweye, she boyled with watir. And that yeet she with brede of bran ful harde, netheles firste softned in watir. And this was hir mete after she hadde fasten two dayes or three togedyr.

XIX. *Of hir sorowe and weymentacyone that she hadde for the dampnyd and ioye for the saued. Capitulum xviij^m^*

1. She fledde worshepes and preisynges with ful mykel bisynesse and seyde that for suche thingis they were moste turmentyd in Helle or Purgatorye to whome Cryste hadde gyuen knowynge of his treuthe in hir lyfe.

2. She wente alwey as sorowynge and weymentyng, [she][57] to whom soothly God schewyd ilke a daye the deseruynges of hem that dyed – outhere to hele or to custome of lyfe.

3. And whanne any was deed in the cite wham she knewe in spirite dampned for synne, she wepte and turmentid hirselfe and croked hir armes and fyngers as if they were wrythabil for softenesse and withouten bones.

4. Forsooth that sorowe of hir was so vnsufferabil to alle that sawe, that no duresse of men myghte sustene hit withouten ful mykel contricyone of hemselfe. And soothly for hem that steygheth vp and shulde be saued, she hoppyd and dauncyd at[58] hit was a wonder maruaile to see hir in so grete myrthe. Wherfore they that knew the vertue of hir spirite lightly myghte perceyue in hir ioye or sorow what shulde falle to hem that dyed in the cite.

5. Ful gladdely and ful goodly she wolde be aboute hem that dyed, sterynge hem to

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[57]she] 'she' missing from MS, but necessary for sense of the phrase.

[58]at] that

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schrifte of synnes and to fruyte of penauns, to hope of euerlastynge ioye, and to feer of perilous brennynge. And not oonly she didde thus to Cristen folke that dyed, but bisely also with a merueilous compassyone to Jewys, of the whiche was a fule grete congregacyone in the cite.

6. She seyde certeynly that Criste was ful mercyful to hem that wolde be turned to hym. And, neuertheles, that he wolde take ful harde vengeauns of mennes synnes, and that hee was sory as often as he was constreyned there to, by rightwisnesse as the synne of man asked; also that hee soghte bisely occasyons by the whiche hee myghte gyue hele to synners and wrecches. And whan she tolde this of oure Lorde Cryste, she hadde a wonder grace of cheer and speche.

7. Also, she seyde that there is a place nere Helle, ordeyned of God, vnto Purgacyone of hem that were defuyled with grete synnes and were repentaunte atte hir laste ende. This place, she seyde, was so feerdful for peynes that there was no differens bitwix hem and the peynes of Helle outaken that thei that were turmentid in thos peynes hadden ese in triste of mercy.

8. And ouere these soulles, she seyde, were fendys in punishynge, and they were taken to fendes to be turmentyd. And so[59] mikel sharper and sorrer peynes they suffred of the fendys, as they knewe that they hadde shorter tyme to turmente hem.

XX. *How she hadde the spirite of prophecy. [Capitulum xix^{m}]*

1. She hadde the spirite of prophecy in many thingys and warned many men to

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[59]so] MS: 'soi'

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saluacyone, and she reprehendid hem priuely of pryue and hydde synnes and broghte hem to penauns.

XXI. *How she proferyd a mans[l]aghter.*[60] *[Capitulum xx^m^]*

1. Whan that miserabil and wrecchyd company was gaderid bitwix the duke of Braban[61] and his aduersaryes, where in a place that is callid Steps[62] so many hundreth of men were slayne, this blessyd woman that same daye cryed as a womman trauelynge of childe and seyde, "Allas! Allas! I see the eyre ful of swordes and blode! Renne sistres! Rinne! Praye oure Lorde! Heelde oute teres leste hee holde his mercyes in wrath."

2. And she seyde to a nunne in the same abbey of Seynte Kateryn, "Renne doghter! Renne swiftly to prayer and praye oure Lorde for thy fader, for hee is now bestadde in fulle grete perille!"

XXII. *How she profecyed apostasy of a nunne. [Capitulum xxj^m^]*

1. Sothely, whanne a nunne of the same abbey[63] thoghte to go aweye, Cristyn seyde of hire, "O thou empty vessel, ful mykel sclaunder shalte thou be to this abbey." And hit was not longe after that she lefte hir ordyr as Cristyn seyde; and by hire incontinens she didde ful grete sclaunder to the abbeye.

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[60]manslaghter] MS: 'manshaghter'

[61]Henry Brabant I (1190-1235)

[62]Steps] LAT: 'Steps;' This battle took place near a town called Steppes, located northwest from the city of Liège (today in the Limburg region of the Netherlands) on October 12, 1213. It is considered the decisive battle in establishing Liège as its own principality.

[63]Saint Catherine's in St. Trond

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2. And whanne the couente[64] of the abbey was aboue mesure harde to receyue the same nunne to penauns whan she come agayne, Cristyn blamed the couente seiynge: "Thof yee rekke but litil of hir losse, neuertheles hir soule cost not Criste so litil that wolde dye and shedde his blode for hire."

3. And Cristyn stintid not, seiynge often these wordes tille the repentaunte nunne were recyued.

XXIII. *How she halpe a nobil man biyonde the see. [Capitulum xxij^{m}]*

1. A nobil knyghte was gon a pilgrimage byonde the se to the sepulcre of oure Lorde. Then Cristyn was preyed and adiurid of the wife of the forseide knyghte that she wolde brynge

hym saufe agayne thurgh hire prayer, whose iuracyone Cristyn took at grefe.

2. Neuertheles she offred to oure Lorde many prayers, laboures, and vowes for the knyghte and broghte hym saufe ageyne, and as with endeyne, seyde to his wyfe, "Loo," quod she, "I haue broghte thy husbande safe ageyne by importunite of thy preyers, but wit thou wele that thou shalte not haue ioye longe of his presence." Whos worde was shewid sooth soon after, for within a fewe dayes that nobil man dyed and lafte his wyfe and childer in desolacyone and sorowe.

XXIV. *How she profecyed that Jerusalem shulde be taken with paynemes. Capitulum xxiij^{m}*

1. Also, mykel byfore the[65] tyme she profecyed that the holy londe of Jerusalem shulde be

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[64]couente] the scribe often writes "convent" in this way.

[65]the] this

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taken or yolden to wicked Saracyns. And whanne the daye come that Jerusalem was taken – with the sepulcre of oure Lorde and Crystes crosse[66] – of Saladyne, Kynge of Perses,[67] she was in the castelle of Loen[68] and knewe in spirite what was done, in the whiche dede she ioyed hougely.[69]

2. And they that were presente prayed hir to telle hem the cause of so grete gladnesse. "Rightwisly," quod she, "I make ioye for oure Lorde Criste this daye, ioiynge with his gladde aungels, hath gyuen occasyone by the whiche multitude of mankynde shalbe saued."

3. And when thei enquyred what that occasyon schulde be, "Wyt yee," quod she, "that the Holy Londe is taken this daye into wicked mennys handys and by this gyuene is grete occasyone of saluacyone.

4. "Soothly, Cryste voucheth saufe his scorne in this atte that lande be taken into despyte and schame, alle thof hyt be halowed with the peyne of his Passyone. Neuertheles hit schalle perisshe with the worlde in the worldes ende, sithen by recouerynge of the same londe, soulles that shalle euere abyde and [be] boghte[70] with his blode shal be turnyd fro

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[66]Crystes crosse] "As was customary in times of crisis [the Christians] had brought with them the kingdom's holiest relic, the fragment of the True Cross discovered in Jerusalem by Arnulf of Chocques in 1099" (Riley-Smith 85).

[67]Saladyne, Kyne of Perses] The text identifies Saladin as the king of Persia, but he was the sultan of Egypt.

[68]Loen] Looz, the name of both a city and a province in modern Belgium, northwest of Liège. It was annexed to Liège in 1366.

[69]Saladin took Jerusalem in 1187.

[70]and be boghte] MS: and boghte

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the waye of wickednesse to the weye of rightwisnesse, and men shalle shed her blode for the holy londe and in grete deuocyone deye for Cristys sake." Then alle that there were meruelyd of [it].[71] Somme of hem notyd the tyme, and soo it was after knowen that Cristyn seyde byfore.[72]

XXV. *How sche profecyed a grete hungyr to come. The foure and twenty chapiter.*

1. Also she profecyed longe tyme byfore a ful grete hungyr that was aboute the yeere of oure Lorde a thowsande two hundreth and seuenty[73].

2. And many othere things Cristyne prorphecyd, thoos that are now fulfilled and thos that we leue shal be fulfilled her after.

3. Ferthermor, sithen[74] she was famylier and homely with the nunnys of Seint Kateryns withouten the toun of Seinte Trudous. And otherewhile sittynge with hem [she][75] spake of Cryste, sodeynly and vnsupposid alle hir body was taken of spirite and turnyd into a whirlynge about, as a scoprelle or a toppe that childer pleye with, soo that for houge swiftnesse of whirlynge, there myghte be perceyued no forme ne schape of membrys in

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[71]it] missing from the MS

[72]Christina's prophecy refers to the disastrous Fifth Crusade (1228-29). Jacques de Vitry, who would have been about to leave for the Holy Land as bishop of Acre, would have been particularly interested in the vision and may have been one of those mentioned here as "noting the time."

[73]a thowsande two hundreth and seuenty] LAT: 1170. Either date is possible. 1170 would mean that she had prophesied a famine when she was young (about 30) or that she had prophesied something to take place after her death in 1270.

[74]sithen] 'later.' This is an appropriate usage of 'sithen' in Middle English

[75]she] 'she' missing from MS

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hire body.

4. And whan she hadde be so longe turnyd aboute as yif she shulde defayle for hougenes, she restyd with alle hire membris. And theren, there sownyd bitwix the throte and the breste of hire a merueilous melody, the whiche no man that lyues myghte vndirstande or do lyke thereto with any craft. That songe hadde alone notes vp and down and tones of musyke. The wordes soothly of that melody – if they maye be callyd woordes – sounyd togadir incomprehensibly.[76]

5. And that whele come oute of hire mouthe or nose neither uoos[77] ne brethynge, but allonly bytwyx the breste and the throte formed a melody of aungel songe.

6. The whiles alle hir lymmes re[s]tyd[78] and hire ye[79] liddes were stoken as[80] she slepte. Then, sumwhat after that sche turnith to hireselfe bi litil and litil as dronken and, verrely dronken goostly, roos vp and cryed loude: "Brynge the couente to me that wee maye togedir louve Jhesu of hye goodnes in his meruelis."

7. Anoon the couente come rennynge about on ilke a syde and was ioyeful of Cristyns solas. Then sche bigan *Te Deum laudamus* and, alle the couente folowynge after, she made an ende thereof. And after that, whan sche was comen fully to hirselfe and knewe by rehersynge of othere what she hadde doon, she fladde for shame and demyd hirselfe a fole.

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[76]Christina's "song" appears to be tones or chords rather than words.

[77]uoos] voice

[78]restyd] MS: retyd

[79]ye] MS: 'ȝye'

[80]as] as if

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XXVI. *How she ensautid the worlde for hit knewe not his creature.*[81] *[Capitulum xxv^m^]*

1. Otherwhile, soothly, sche seyde with grete bitternesse of herte whenne she was turnyd to hir selfe fro the state now seyde, "O thou miserabil and wrecchyd worlde, not knowynge thy maker! Why serues thou hym not? Why takes thou no [h]ede[82] to his longe abidynge and pacyens? If thou sawe his goodnesse, thof another worlde seyde naye, thou myghtest not be turnyd fro hym, but atte thou shuldest loue hym. But thou, wrecchede worlde, arte turnyd aweywarde. Thou hast closed thyne eighen and wilte not vndirstonde."

2. And she, seiynge these wordes, cryed as a womman trauelynge and wrythed togadir hir membrys and walowed in the erthe with ful grete weymentacyone and criynge, often seiynge why the worlde knewe not his creature.

XXVII. *How she vndurstode by Goddes techyng alle holy write. [Capitulum xxvj^m^]*

1. After this she lefte hir owne hous and kynred and wente vnto a castelle in the marches of Almayne[83] that is called Loen, where she dwellid nyne yeere with a womman reclused of ful religyous lyfe, Iuet by name. And there oure Lorde by Cristyn wroghte meruelles, of the whiche recluse I hadde many thinges that I haue writen.[84] For soothly, I yede vnto hir for the same cause oute of fer contrees of Fraunce.

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[81]creature] creator

[82]hede] MS: 'nede'

[83]Almayne] Germany

[84]LAT: 'A qua reclusa, multa, quæ de Christina scripsi, revelata suscepi: de longinquis enim Galliarum partibus ad eam propter hoc veni" (657). Margot King translates this sentence from the Latin as "It was from this recluse that I received many of the revelations which I have written concerning Christina" (30-31).

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2. And in that same place Cristyn was atte matyns euery nyghte. And whanne alle othere were goon oute of the [c]hirche[85] and the dores lokked, she, dwellynge in the chirche paument, made a songe of so grete swetnesse that hit semyd rathere aungels songe than mannes.

3. That songe was so merueilous to hir[86] that hit passed alle the noyses and instrumentis of musikers or mynstralles but lesse and ferre vnlike to the swetnesse of that melodye that sownyd bytwix hir throte and hir brest: but that songe was Latyne and feyre sette togadir with many clauses of acordauns.[87]

4. She vndirstood soothly alle Latyn and knewe plenirly alle the menynge in scripture, thof sche neuer knewe lettir sythen she was borne. And whan she was asked moost dyuyne questyons of holy wrytte, she wolde declare hem moost openly to summe of hir spritual freendes, but ful gretely ageyns hir wille and ful selden. She wolde so do seyynge that hit byfelle to clerkys to expoune holy writte and that siche mater felle not to hir.

5. She worschepyd the clergye – and namely prestis – with a wonder manere for the houge loue of Cryste, thagh neuertheles she on contrary wyse suffred many wronges of hem. She monyshed esely and priuely with a wonder reuerens prestys and clerkys that synned as hire

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[85]chirche] MS: khirche. The scribe has two different spellings for the word church: "kirke" and "chirche." Here, it appears he began to write "kirke" and then ended with "chirche." There are no other instances of "khirche" in this manuscript, nor does the Middle English Dictionary list it as an alternative spelling for "church."

[86]That songe ... hir] LAT: 'cantus ille tam mirabilis erat auditu" or "the song was so marvelous to hear,' but the Middle English pronunciation of 'hir' may have been 'hear.'

[87]See XXV.4

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owne faders,[88] leste by hire excesses they schulde scorn the good name of Cryste amonge the pepil.

XXVIII. *How mykel she was worshepyd of the Erille Lowys. Capitulum xxvij^m^*

1. The ful nobil man Lowys, Erille of Loen,[89] knowynge by ryfe fame the holynesse of Cristyn, bygan to loue hir hertely and vsed hir cownseylles and communynges. Wheresoeuer hee sawe hire, hee roos vp ageyn hir and mette hir callynge hir "moder."

2. Sothely, if the same Erle hadde done anythinge agayne righte, or holy chirche, or ministres of holy chirche, she made sorowe for hym as a moder for the sone and, goynge to hym in his palys, reprehendid hym with a moderly triste, and sche gate of hym for satisfaccione whatsoeuere righte wolde aske.

XXIX. *Other stirynge wordes she hadde. Capitulum xxviij^m^*

1. Also whan the same Erle Lowys layed hym down vpon a daye in the chircheyeerd and, many a knyghte aboute hym, she come priuely by, nere to the Erlis heed. And holdynge vp hir eyen and handys bygan to seye with wonder grace of mouthe, "O Lorde thou arte ful feyre."

2. The knyghtys heerynge that seyde to the Eril, "Sir Eril, heerith thou not how this holy womman preysith the?" "Yee," quod the Eril, "I woot whome she preyseth. Hit am not I. She louveth hir heuenly Lorde that is feyrest of alle and maker of feirnesse."

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[88] as hire owne faders] as their own fathers

[89]Lowys, Erille of Loen] Louis II of Loon, a local count, who lived from 1197 to 1218 (Simons *Cities* 43).

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4. "Thou seith ful sooth," quod she, "therfore, why ne loues thou hym not?"[90]

XXX. *How she prophecyed greuauns to the same Erle. [Capitulum xxix^m^]*

1. The same Erle on a tyme laye in his p[a]lys[91] at Loen – that now is distroyed – with the Duke of Lymborgeus[92] and anothere Eril, in the none tyde in somer, vpon a mater as spekynge togedir. Then Cristyn ranne to her speche boldely and cryed to the Eril Lowes, "O thou wrecche," quod she, "with whome speketh thou nowe? Loo, hee doth with the as a frende that is thyne enemy, and now puttith to the hande of a traytoure!"

2. Anoon that traytour dredde the voys and helde his pees for the tyme, yit hee feyned hit in woordes, but the ende proued the sothe.[93]

XXXI. *What she didde in the dethe of the same Erile. [Capitulum xxx^m^]*

1. This same Eril Lowys, whanne he laye in his deed bed, garte calle Cristyne to hym and preyed hir mekely that she wolde abyde with hym, and she grauntid. Then hee goodly commaunded alle that were with hym to go oute of the chaumbyr and withhelde Cristyn in the chaumbyr. Then forthwith the Erille dressed hym vp with the strengthe, knelynge byfore Cristyns feet, rehercyd to hir with ful many terys alle his synnes that hee hadde

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[90]therfore, why ne loues thou hym not?] therefore why don't you love him?

[91]palys] MS: 'plys'

[92]Lymborgeus] Limburg.

[93]Thomas suggests that the Earl was somehow murdered by the "traitor" that Christina has identified. However, there is very little historical information on Louis of Loon, and this has not been verified. Bruno Demoulin and Jean-Louis Kupper have pointed out in their book on the history of Liège that, in the Middle Ages, there was always a coalition of nobility struggling for power in the diocese, including the Duke of Brabant and the counts of Looz and Dinant (38). Thus, a scenario of murder is not outside the realm of possibility.

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doon fro the eleuenthe yeere of his age vnto that daye. And that not for indulgens – the whiche sche hadde no powere to gyf – but atte she shulde be the more stired thereby to praye for hym.

2. After that, the Eril garte calle alle his men in to the chaumbyr and disposid his godes after Cristyns counseyle and deyed. And she sawe his soule bitaken to Purgatory forto be turmentyd with ful bitter peynes.

XXXII. *How she toke parte of Purgatory peynes. Capitulum xxxj^{m}*

1. Of whome this pitevous womman hadde grete pite and gate graunte of oure Lorde that she shulde take parte with the soule of peynes that hit felle to suffir in Purgatory.

2. Sothely, whanne hee apperyd to hir after his deth for helpe, Cristyn seyde to him, "Haue done now and goo hennes and thole peynes for thy synnes after Goddes dome. I sothely take vpon me halfe parte of thy Purgatory and do penauns to my body." Whan this was done men myght see Cristyn longe tyme after in the nyghtetyme be turmentyd with brennynge smokes and othere while with brynnynges of colys[94], and certeyne after that atte the soule of the Erle was peyned with o turmente and othere.

3. Also, she wepte wonderfully in places in the whiche the same Erle was wonte to synne, and where hee hadde be mery in vayne she made sorowe.

XXXIII. *How she [l]adde[95] hir in the laste yeere of hir lyfe. [Capitulum xxxij^{m}]*

1. In the laste yeere of hire lyfe she dwellid often in deserte[96] and solitude and sche cam

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[94]colys] MS: 'coldys'

[95]ladde] MS: 'hadde;' means 'conducted herself'

[96]in deserte] MS: 'in d deserte'

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ageyne,[97] neuertheles, thogh hit were ful selden, to the hele of men, or if she were constreynyd of spirite to take mete. No erthely man myghte that tyme withholde hir whanne she desyred to go to deserte.

2. And whanne she come ageyne, no man hir salutid ne no man durste aske hir anythinge. Atte euene on a tyme, soothly, she come home and passed by the hous-myddes[98] as a spirite on the erthe, and vnnethes hit myghte be discreuid if a spirite passed or a body whanne hit semyd that vnnethes she touched the grounde in so mykel. Soothly, in the laste yeere of hire lyfe the spirite hadde goten the beestly body welnye in alle partyes, that mennes myndes or eyen vnnethes hit myghte be holde the shadowe of hir body withouten feere and drede of spirite.

3. Forsooth that tyme, whanne sche come hoom, often she dwellid in the towne of Seint Trudous in the Abbey of Seint Kateryne.

XXXIV. *A tale of Dan Thomas, Abbot of Seinte Trudous*[99]*. [Capitulum xxxiij^m^]*

1. A worshypful man of myne, name Thomas – now abbot of Seinte Trudous[100], then preste of the cite – tolde me a thinge of Cristyn ful worthy to be rehercyd.

2. He, vpon a mornynge, wente home with his felowe fro matyns, and Cristyn passed by with grete bire and yede into the chirche; after whome they folowed priuely and aspyed

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[97]sche cam ageyne] she returned (to her home)

[98]hous-myddes] middle of the house

[99]Seinte Trudous] MS: 'Seinte Tru Trudous'

[100]Thomas] Abbot of Saint Trudous (1239 to 1248).

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byhynde a piler of the chirche what she wolde do.[101] And anon Cristyne cast doune hirselfe byfore the auter as a sekke ful of drye boonys.

3. Then she made weymentacyone greuously and bygan often to knokke hire breste and hir body with hire fistes. "O," quod sche, "thou wrecchyd and miserabil body! How longe shalte thou tourmente me, careful catyfe? How longe schalte thou tarye me fro the sighte of Criste? Whan shalt thou forsake me that the soule maye turne ageyne frely to hir creature?[102] Woo to the mykel wrecche, and woo to me that am ioyned to the."

4. And, thus seiynge, she knokkyd hir breste eftsones, then takynge persone of the body seyde as vnto the spirite, "O thou wrecchyd soule! Why peynes thou me thus? What holdeth thee in me or what delites thee of me. Why lettys thou me not go ageyne to the erthe that I am of taken and reste tille I be restoryd to the in the laste daye of grete dome? Why goth thou not to thy reste where thou mayste haue bettir abouen?" And seiynge this, she sighed and blewe and wepte.

5. Then, forthwith, restynge ful litil with holy meditacyone in God, she breste into a ful swete laghter and, takynge her feet with hir handes, kyssed hir soles with grete desyre and seyde thus: "O ful swete and ful blessyd body, why haue I beten the? Why haue I do wronge to the? Haste thou not obeyed to me in ilke good dede that I thurgh Goddes helpe haue done? Thou hast suffred ful goodly and ful pacyently peyne and trauelles that the spirite putte vnto the."

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[101]The suspicion that surrounds Christina is particularly obvious here. Thomas is describing a priest who literally hides behind a pillar spying on Christina and her activities.

[102]creature] creator

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6. And efte with kyssynge she seyde, "Now I suffre pacyently my beste and moost swete body. Now is an ende of thy laboure. Now schalte thou reste in poudir. A litil schalt thou sleep, schalte thou nappe. And thou, atte laste whan the trumpe blawes, thou shalte ryse ageyne cleen fro alle corrupcyone and be assocyed to the soule in euerlastynge ioye that thou haste hadde folowe in this worldes sorowe.[103]"

7. And, with siche woordes and cosses dauntynge hir body, sone after she made that merueilous ioiynge that wee seyde byfore and was fulfilled with so mykel myrthe with inforthe as hit shulde seem that hir body shulde breste withoute forthe.[104]

8. Soothly God is meruelous in alle his seintes, but in Cristyn, if I hit seye, meruelous passynge alle merueilles.

XXXV. *The manere of hir lyfe or*[105] *she deyed. Capitulum xxx*^{m} *iiij*^{m}

1. In the laste tyme of hir life, she yeet ful selden and litel. She wolde not sitte – as she vsed byfore – to speke with sisters and religyous but, etynge a litil and refreshed with slepe a while byfore myddenyghte, she wente to deserte. In thoos dayes, neuere man sawe laughynge of hir mouthe, but she was like to hym that for ouer mykel sorowe is made myndeles.

2. She yeed praynge, weymentynge, and mournynge. And therfore it is leuyd of summe

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[103]"Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51-2).

[104]More than the ravishing described in the *vitae* of either Elizabeth of Spalbeek or Marie d'Oignies, Christina's is infused with the most eroticism. The orgasmic image here is particularly explicit.

[105]or] before

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that oure Lorde shewed hir, moor than byfore, the staat and wickednesse of the worlde.

3. On thinge was there for the whiche she often made sorowe with a wondir weymentacyone: that wel neer alle mankynde was corrupte in abhomynabil spyces of leccherye. And therfore Goddes wrathe was nere to take sone vengeauns wel nye on alle Cristiante.

XXXVI. *Of hir sieknes byfore hir dethe. [Capitulum xxxv^m^]*

1. Forsooth, whan tyme come that she shulde beholden with langour of dethe,[106] she hadde siche abidynge grace of contemplacyone that hit was ful greuous to hir to haue hire thoghte oghwhere ellis then.

2. Then at laste, restynge fro alle, she prayed benignely on Beatrys, nunne of Seint Kateryns, that she wolde ordeyne hir a bedde priuely in a chaumbyr for bycause hit semyd to hir at[107] she shulde be seke. And she redely didde hir askynge.

3. Then Cristyn laye doune. And, the euyl encresynge, she laboured in sieknes. And whan she [had] b holden[108] with langour by wokys, she asked to be comunyd and aneled. Whan that was done, the same Beatris knelyd down byfore Cristyn and prayed that she shulde clarifye hir in sum thinges or[109] she passed of lyfe.

4. And while she was stille supposynge hir bisy, otherwarde differred the questyone and

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[106]shulde beholden ... of dethe] LAT: 'quo languore mortis debuit detineri' (659) or 'be beholden with languor of death.'

[107]at] that

[108]she had beholden] MS: she be holden

[109]or] before

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wente oute of the chaumbyr to do what ellis and the while lafte Cristyn allone.

XXXVII. *Of hir secounde deth, and how she lyued agayne, and the thridde tyme deyed Ca^m xxxvj^m*

1. Wherefore, hit is seyde of summe that Cristyn preyed often oure Lorde that hee shulde not worshyp hire in hir deth with any myracles, but latte hir dye the commun deth of men. And in this soothly she was hard of oure Lorde. For or[110] the same Beatrys come ageyne, atte Crystes callynge, Cristyne yolde the gost.

2. And anoon the forsayde Beatris come with anothere sustir and fonde the deed body on the grounde forthe streight in manere of deed bodyes and, I leue verrely, with seruys of aungellis.

3. Thanne Beatrys, doynge impacyently, felle on the deed body criynge and hougely weymentynge. And whan amonge criynge she hadde asked the deed why she wolde passe withouten gladnesse and leeue takynge of sisters, atte laste she conceyued triste vnto oure Lorde[111] of an houge spirite, and with hir visage fix[id][112] in the mouthe of the deed body, seyde: "O Cristyn, thou has ben in thy lyfe euere obedyente to me! I adiure the now and byhote the, by oure Lorde Jhesu Criste whom thou louedist in thy lyfe with brennynge desyre, that thou obey to me also now, for thou arte myghty and mayste doo what thou wolte thurgh hym to whome thou arte now ioyned.

4. "Therefore, turne now ageyne to lyfe and telle me that I haue asked with grete desyre to

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[110]or] before

[111]oure Lorde] MS: 'oure oure Lorde'

[112]fixid] MS: fix

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be openyd of the in thy lyfe."

5. A meruelous thinge!

6. Anoon as Beatrys hadde cryed thees wordes in the deed erys, Cristyn turnyd to lyfe and maad an heuy sighynge and with a sory chere, betynge Beatrys that reuoked hir ageyne, seyde, "O Beatrys, why hast thou dissesid me? Why haste thou callid me ageyn? Now was I ledde to the sighte of Cryste. But now, sustir myne, what thou wolte, faste aske; and I besoeke the, late me go ageyne to that at I haue coueytid so longe." Then Beatrys, askynge that she purposed, hadde witerynge of Cristyn.

7. In the meenwhile, nunnys of the Abbey were gaderyd on ilke a syde, and Cristyn – with token of crosse and woord – blessed hem. And the thridde tyme was experte of dethe and the thridde tyme dyed.

8. And so she passed to immortal worldes of worldes. She lyued soothly after she firste roos froo deth to lyue two and fourty yeere. And she dyed aboute the yeere of incarnacyone of oure Lorde a thousand two hundreds and foure and twenty.

XXXVIII. *Of hire sepulture and translacyone of hire body. [Capitulum. xxxvij^{m}]*

1. She was biryed soothly withouten the towne of Seinte Trudous, in the Abbey of Seynte Kateryne, and there she restyd seuene yeere vnto tyme that the bigynnynge[113] of the Abbeye was transferred to a better place and nerre.

2. Thanne alle the pepil gaderyd togadir, the clergye and the couente of nunnys, wente to

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[113]bigynnynge] LAT: 'aedificuum' which can mean both 'building' and 'beginning.' Here, it seems that 'building' should be the correct word, but it may be 'beginning' indicating the 'first' or largest building of the abbey.

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the toumbe of worshypful Cristyn. Whan they hadde openyd hi[t][114] and leyde the couertour besyde, so mykel grace of swetnesse was felte of alle that there was that alle with oo thoghte, with o mouthe, cryed alle togadir how Cristyn was in alle hir lyfe meruelous and also after hir deth gloryous.

3. Soothly, no man doutyth the myracles there haue be doon to hem that visityd hir toumbe with verrey feith. But wee maye not pursue siche maters atte this tyme.

XXXIX. *The conclusyon of the booke. [Capitulum xxxviij^m^]*

1. Take heed therfore, thou reder, how mykel wee be bounden that see Cristyn haue suffryd so many turmentys – not for hirselfe, but for hir neighbores. And wee dreed to do penauns for oure selfe and for oure synnes. Certeynly, that daye schalle come, and shal not tarye, that wee wolde ful fayne assaye to doo moor thanne thees if spase of penauns were gifen to hem that aske and if they myghte turne agayne to do the tymes that they sette not by before.

2. And woo to hem that wil not by[115] oyle of mercy while tyme of sellynge passes. And, therfore, with voyde laumpe they shalle knokke on the gate, but noon entry shalle they get. For hit shal be seyde to hem, "Soothly, I seye to yow, I knowe yow not. Therfore wakith, for yee knowe neither the daye ne oure."[116] Wherfore the sleper is concludid with a

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[114]hit] MS: 'hir'

[115]by] buy

[116]"But he replied [to the maidens], 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:12-13). This biblical passage, from the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, was often used in the Middle Ages as a warning to always be prepared for death. Jacques de Vitry also emphasizes its relation to Marie d'Oignies in her *vita*.

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necessarye argumente, while he, forgetynge daye and oure, wolde not wake with a ful laumpe of oyle of good werkys and worthy fruytes of penauns.

3. Wakith, therfore, for yee knowith neithere the oure ne the daye whan youre Lorde shalle come. And what ellis cryed Cristyn in alle hir lyfe but do penauns and men to be redy ilkan oure? That taughte she with many woordes, with weymentynges, with weepynges, and moor with ensaumpil of lyfe thanne wee haue witen bi writynge or tellynge of any othere heere byfore or comynge after vnto the worshyp and louvynge of Cryste, that with the Fadir and the Holy Goost, lyueth, and reignith God withouten[117] ende.

A . M . E . N .

Here endith the lyfe of Sein Cristyn the meruelous.

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[117]withouten] MS: 'with with outen'

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Chapter Six

The *Vita* of Marie d'Oignies by Jacques de Vitry, Book I

I. *A litil prologue of the Englyshe compyloure:*[1]

1. Worshypful James, byshope of Actone,[2] wrote vnto the byshope of Tholose[3] a longe proheme into the lyfe that heere folowith, in the whiche proheme hee writith compendiously dyuerse commendacyouns and merueilles of many deuoute and holy wymmen in the dyocis of Leody[4] and in that cuntreye.

2. And amonge his writynge, as clerge and rethorik asketh, hee puttith legeauns and figuratif spekynges that are not lighte to be turnyd into Englische langage withouten moor expounynge. And if a man wolde take summe of the same proheme, the sentense wolde

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[1]compyloure] 'Compilour' can mean many things, according to Malcolm Parkes, among these, a rearrangement of texts imposing chapter divisions on a text, or indexing a selection of texts. These may or may not have involved translation. It was a common term in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but its exact definition varied according to compiler. It is used in the beginning of the Elizabeth of Spalbeek chapter as well.

[2]Actone] Spelled variously as 'Actone,' 'Attone,' and 'Accone' throughout the MS, it refers to Acre, a town on the Palestinian coast.

[3]byshope of Tholose] The *vita* is dedicated to Bishop Fulk of Toulouse, a city in Southern France. The Bishop visited Marie in 1211-1212 and 1213, according to Walter Simons (*Cities* 168). For more on Bishop Fulk, see the section "The *vita* of Jacques de Vitry" in the chapter concerning Marie d'Oignies.

[4]Leody] Liège, a southeast city and region in modern Belgium. In the Middle Ages, the city of Liège was the seat of a large diocese and the capital of an episcopal principality.

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not woele accorde. And therfore, I leeue alle that proheme excepte this shorte[5] ouerly touchynge:

3. Heere bigynneth the chapiters of the firste boke of the lyfe of Seinte Marye of Oegines,[6] the whiche lyfe Maister James, confessour and famylier of the same Marye (after byshop of Attone, and after that Cardynalle of the courte of Rome), endyted in Latyn in the yeere of grace a thowsand two hundred and fiftene.

- *Of hir childehode j*[m][7]
- *Of hir matrymone Capitulum ij*[m]
- *Of the conuersacyone of hir spouse and that they forsoke the worlde iij*[m]
- *Of the dispisynge and persecucyon of hir cosyns iiij*[m]
- *Of hir compunccyone and terys v*[m]
- *Of hir confessyon and schrifte vj*[m]
- *Of hir penauns and satisfaccyone vij*[m]
- *Of hir fastynge viij*[m]
- *Of hir praiynge ix*[m]
- *Of hir wakynge and slepynge x*[m]

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[5]short] According to the Middle English Dictionary, 'short' can be used as a noun meaning "a brief summary." This is how the translator is using the word here.

[6]Oegines] Oegines (as it is spelled in the Latin), or Oignies, is a town in the Namur province in the south of modern Belgium.

[7]The MS reads Ca[m] p[m] (*Capitulum Primum*, or "Chapter one"). Throughout this table of contents and the text itself chapter divisions are marked with Latin abbreviations (a common feature of manuscripts in the vernacular). Here (and throughout this *vita*) the word "Capitulum" is silently expanded, but Roman numerals are printed as they appear in the manuscript.

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- *Of hir clothinge and arraye xi*^{m}
- *Of the laboure of hir handes xij*^{m}
- *Of hir berynge and composicyone of chere and other membrys of hir body xiij*^{m}

II. *Here bigynneth the lyfe of Seint Mary of Oegines.*

1. *Of hir childehode. Capitulum primum*

In the bisshoperiche of Leody in a toun that is callid [Niuelle][8] there was a yonge mayden, in lyfe and name gloryous, the whiche highte Mary, comen of fadir and moder that were of comun.[9] And thof they aboundid in ricches and many worldy goodes, neuertheles worldly godes neuer entyced hir mynde to hem, fro she was a childe, so that welnye fro hir moder wombe she was casten into oure Lorde. And neuere, or elles ful selden, she played hir as othere do, nor she was felawe with suche damysellis that fare alle with fantum, but kepynge hir soule fro alle couetyse and vanyte, shewynge thurgh Goddes ordynauns in hire childeholde what she shulde be in eldir age. Wherfore often in her youthe, she knelyd byfore hir bedde and offred to oure Lorde orysouns that she hadde leryd as firste fruytes of hire lyfe.

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[8]Niuelle] The town is Nivelles in modern Belgium, Nivella in Latin, but the Scribe consistently makes the error of writing 'Vinelle.' This will be silently corrected 'Nivelle' for the rest of the *vita*. Nivelles (or Nijvel) is in the Brabant province of southcentral modern Belgium. The eleventh-century church of St. Gertrude located there was rebuilt in the eighteenth century. Nivelles was one of the major centers of the beguine movement.

[9] that were of comun] It is evident from the context that Marie's family is wealthy, therefore *not* common. This phrasing, however, exists in the Latin as well. It is emended in the Acta Sanctorum edition (639), as well as Sarah McNamer's Modern English translation of Book I of this MS, as "uncommon." However, it may indicate that she is not *noble*, and is not a reference to her family's wealth.

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2. In so mykel, soothly froo a childe litil grewe with hir mercy and pite and, as with a naturel pite, loued religyone. Than whan there come brethere of Cistens ordyr otherewhile by hire fader hous, she, lokynge vp, folowed after priuely and hadde wondir of hire[10] abyte.

3. And whan she hadde no more that she myghte do, for desire she sette hir fete in the steppes of the conuerses or monkes.

4. Also whan hir fader and modir, as maner is of seculers, wolde haue rayed hire with delycate garmentis and gaye, she was sory and forsoke hem as if she hadde redde impressed naturally in hir mynde that Seinte Petir seith of wymmen thus: "Whas araye of clothynge be not withoute for the tressynge and tiftynge of hire[11] or tire of golde or gownes."[12]

5. And also Seinte Poule seith, "Not in crumpled lokkys, or golde, or perilles, or precyous clothe."[13] Wherfore hir fader and modir, lawghynge and scornynge the mayden, seyde, "What maner womman schalle oure doghter be?"

III. *Of hir matrymoyn. Capitulum II^m*

1. And therfore they, hauynge envye at hir gracyous dedys, whanne she was fourtene

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[10]hire] their

[11]hire] hair

[12]"Let not yours be the outward adorning with braiding of hair, decoration of gold, and wearing of fine clothing" (I Peter 3:3).

[13]"I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hear or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion" (1 Timothy 2:8-10).

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yeere olde, maryed hir to a yonge man. So thanne she, remeued fro fadir and modir, was kyndelyd into soo passynge feruour and with so grete fightynge chastysed hir body and broghte hit vndirneth[14] that often whan she hadde trauailed with hir owne handes, mykel parte of the nyghte after labour she was ful longe in hir prayers. And that othere dele of the nyghte, as often as hit was leeueful to hir, she slepte but litil (and that vpon a fewe lattys, the whiche she hadde priuely hidde atte hir beddes feet). And for she hadde not openly power of hir owne body, she bare priuely vndir hir smok a fulle sharpe corde, with the whiche she was girdid ful harde.

2. I seye not this preisynge the exces, but tellynge the feruoure. In this, and many other that she wroghte by priuelege of grace, lat the discrete reder take hede that priuilege of a fewe makith not a commun lawe. Folowe wee hir vertues; withouten specyal priuelege, folowe maye wee not [the workes of hir vertues].[15]

3. Soothly, thof the body be[16] constreyned to serue the Spirite[17], thof we ow to bere in oure body the woundys of oure Lorde Jhesu Cryste,[18] neuertheles wee woot that the

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[14]broghte hit vndirneth] LAT: 'in servitutem redigebat' (639) or, she brought her body under control.

[15]the workes of hir vertues] This part of the sentence is missing from the MS. It is, however, present in the Latin and necessary for the sense of the phrase. LAT: "Ejus virtutes imitemur; opera vero virtutum ejus, sine privato privilegio imitari non possumus" (639).

[16]be] MS: 'be to be'

[17]Spirite] Holy Spirit, or the spirit in oneself

[18]"Henceforth, let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus" (Galatians 6:17).

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kynges worshyp loueth lawe and righhte, ne sacrifice of raueyne plesith not oure Lorde. Certeynly, necessaryes are not to be withdrawen fro the pore fleshe, but vices are to be refreyned. And therfore that atte[19] wee rede sum seyntes haue done by famylyer and homly counseyle of the Holy Gost, wee shalle rathere meruaile thanne folowe.

IV. *Of the conuersacyone of hir spouse, and that they forsoke the worlde and lyued chast. Capitulum iij*^{m}

1. And whan she so a good while had lyued with John, hir spouse, in matrymoyne, oure Lorde byhelde the meeknes of His mayden and gracyously herde hir prayers. For John was enspyred to haue Mary as taken to kepe,[20] whom he hadde firste as wife. Hee made the chast man tutour of His mayden that she shulde haue solas of hir keper and lafte to hir a trewe puruyour, that she myghte more frely serue oure Lorde. And also byfore of a naturel goodnes, the same John ageyne seyde not the holy purpos of his wife (as a custum is of othere men) but ful goodly suffred and compassyone hadde of hir laboures; and visityd was of oure Lorde, that hee deserued not allonly [a][21] verre aungels lyfe by contynens and chastite, but also to gyue alle that hee hadde for Crystes loue to pore men and to folowe his felowe in holy purpos and holy religyone.[22] For euere the ferre hee was

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[19]that atte] that which

[20]to haue Mary as taken to kepe] LAT: 'Mariam habere commendatam' (640), meaning that John was willing to give Mary to God's protection rather than keep her beholden to wifely duties (i.e., he agrees to a chaste marriage).

[21]a] MS: '&.' The original text read 'celibate and truly angelic life' (see footnote 22). The scribe probably had not copied the word 'celibate' but left the 'and.'

[22][and was visityd ... religyone] LAT: 'Visitatus est a Domino, ut non solum coelibem & vere Angelicam vitam continendo promeretur; sed sociam suam in sancto

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departyd fro hir by carnelle affeccyone, the nerre was hee knytte to hir by loue of sprituel spousehode.

2. Wherfore oure Lorde apperyd after in visyone to His mayden and bihighte that as reparelde matrymoyne, He wolde gyue ageyne to hir in heuene hir felowe, the whiche for loue of chastyte, withdrow hym fro fleshely luste in erthe.

3. Therfore, wrecchyd lecchours, fulynge hem owne selfe oute of wedloke with vnleueful commixtions, maye be schamed and ferde sythen booth these blissed yongelynges, absteinynge fro leeueful halsynges for Goddes loue, ouerecome[23] the harde heet of brennynge youthe thurgh feruour of religyone. For they deserued corons for the pryse, to whome oure Lorde gaf in His hous and in His wallis place and name better than sones and doghters of a blessed kynde of martirdome: in fyre not brennynge, where luste aboundid her owne luste sleynge, nere the flude, thristynge and amonge [a banquet][24] hungerynge. They stikked her fleshes with nayles of Goddes drede, yee noghte settynge by hemselfe for oure Lordes loue. They serued sumwhile to summe mesellis bisyde Niuelle, in a place that is named Villambrote.[25]

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proposito & sancta religione imitaretur, omnia pro Christo pauperibus erogando' (640). King translates this as 'He was visited by the Lord and he not only promised to live a celibate and truly angelic life in continence, but also promised to imitate his companion in her holy plan and in her holy ascetic life by giving up everything to the poor for Christ' (48).

[23]ouercome] an acceptable form of "overcame."

[24]a banquet] these words are completely missing from the Middle English translation, but are present in the Latin. LAT: 'inter epulas esurientes' (640).

[25]Villambrote] Willambroux or Willebroek, a town in the Antwerp province in the north of modern Belgium. Sometimes referred to Villambrouk in the MS.

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V. *Of the dispisynge and persecucyone of hire cosyns. Capitulum iiij^m*

1. Deueles sawe and envyed. Seculers and cosyns[26] sawe and, with teeth ageyns hem, firste they worshepyd ryche, after they disspysed and scornyd. For Crystes loue made pore, vile, and abiecte, they were accountyd; for God, vpbreydynges hadde they many for oure Lorde sake.

2. Drede thou not, Crystes mayden, to goo wilfully with thy Criste vnto contumilious scornes of the crosse and sette besyde the ioye and this worldes worshyp. Hyt better is to the[27] bee abiecte and noghte sette by in the hous of oure Lorde, thanne dwelle in haulles and chaumbirs of synners. Thou has loste grace of cosyns, but thou haste founde in Criste,[28] grace. Haste thou loste thy cosyns loue? Naye, for certeynly thei loued thee neuere but thy catelle. Flyes felowe hony; wolues the carryone; and theues hir[29] praye, not the man.

VI. *Of hir compunxione and teerys. Capitulum v^m*

1. Lorde, thou arte ful good to hem that cristen in the;[30] thou arte trewe to hem that abyden thee. Thy mayden hath despysed the reume of the worlde and alle the worshyp

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[26]cosyns] relatives

[27]the] thee, a spelling common in Middle English.

[28]Criste] MS: Cristes. The scribe read this as a possessive, but it is clear from the Latin that 'grace' is the direct object of 'found.'

[29]hir] their

[30]cristen in the] LAT: 'bonus es, Domine, spirantibus in te'(640), or 'you are good, Lord, to those who hope in you.' It is not clear how the scribe came to the word 'cristen' here.

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thereof for thy loue. Soothly, thou hast gyuene hir ageyn the hundirdfold in this worlde and euerlastynge lyfe in that atte is to come.

2. Than loke wee with how grete stoonys of vertues – as a sadde and hool vesselle of golde, onoured with euery precyous stoon – thou hast arayed and tyred thy ful dere frende. With how grete miracles thou haste worschepyd hire, that abiecte and scornyd of seculers! The bigynnynge of hire conuersacyone to the, [the][31] firste fruytes of hir lyfe, was thy crosse and thy Passyone; thy herynge, she herde and dredde; she byhelde th[y][32] werkys and was aferde.

3. Forwhy vpon a day whan she, preuent and inspirid of the, considerid the beenfetz that thou mercyfulle schewdist in flesche to mankynde. She fonde so mykel grace of compunxyone, so grete plente of terys thristyd oute in thy Passyone with the pressure of thy crosse, that hir teerys copiously dounrennynge on the kirke paumente shewed where she yeed.

4. Wherfore, longe tyme after this visitacyone of hir, she myghte not byholde an ymage of the crosse, ne speke, ne heere othere folke spekynge of the Passyone, but if sche felle into a swounynge for hygh desyre of herte.

5. And therfore, otherewhile to tempir hire sorowe and to withholde aboundauns of teerys, she lafte the manhede of Criste and helde vp hire mynde to the godhede and mageste that she myghte fynde comforte in His vnsufferabilite.

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[31]the] 'the' is missing from the MS. The original may have read 'the the' (for the pronoun 'thee' followed by the article 'the'), and the scribe may have skipped one.

[32]thy] MS: ' the,' but clearly the possessive pronoun is intended here.

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6. But whereas she enforced hir to restreyne hir wepynge, there encresed meruelously teerys moor and moor. For whan she toke hede how grete He was that suffred for vs so mykel dispite, hire sorowe was efte[33] renewyd and hire soule with newe teerys was refresshed by a swete compunxione.

7. Hit was vpon a daye byfore Good Fridaye, nere Cristes Passyone, whanne she hadde offred hirselfe to oure Lorde with mykelle watir of teerys, sobbynges, and sighynges. A preste of the kirke, as with plesauns[34] blamynge hir, badde that she shulde praye softely and latte be hir wepynge. She soothly, as she euer was shamfaste and in alle thinges sympil as a doufe, didde hir bisynesse to obey.

8. Thenne she, knowynge hir vnmyghte, wente priuely oute of the chirche and hidde hir in a priue place fer fro alle folke. And gate graunte of oure Lorde with terys that He wolde shewe to the same preste that hit is not in mannes powere to withholde the stronge streme of teerys whanne a grete blaste blowth and the watir flowith. Wherfore that preste, the while hee sange Masse that same daye, was so ouercomen with abundauns of terys that his spirite was wel nyghe strangelyd.

9. And the more that hee bisyed hym to reffreyne his terys, the moor not oonly hee, but also the buke and the auter clothes, were wette with water of wepynge. Soo that hee vnavisy man, he, that blamer of Crystes mayden,[35] leeryd with schame by experiens what

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[33]dispite ... efte] The Latin word used here is 'rursus' (640) which can mean both 'on the contrary' and 'in turn.'

[34]with plesauns] as if he were being pleasant

[35]Soo that ... mayden] In the Latin this is formed as two questions: 'Quid ageret ille improvidus? ille ancillae Christi increpator?' (640) or, as King translates, 'What

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hee schulde do that hee wolde not firste knowe by meeknesse and compassyone. For after many sobbynges, pronounsynge many wordes vnordynatly now and now, atte laste vnnethes hee skaped fro perille. And hee bare witnesse that booth sawe and knewe, and wee wot that his witnesse is trewe.

10. Soothly, then longe tyme after the messe was endid, Cristes mayden – turnynge ageyne and wondirly as if she hadde be presente – vmbreidynge tolde what felle vnto the preste. "Now," quod sche, "yee haue leeryd by experyens that hit is not in a man to withholde the fersenes of the wynde whanne the sowth bloweth."

11. And while booth daye and nyghte, contynuelly water wente aweye by hir eyen. And not oonly her terys in hir chekys, but also leste they shulde be perceyued in the paumente, she kepte hem in kerchefs with the whiche she couerd hir heed. And siche lynnen clothes she vsed ful many, the whiche sche nedid often to chaunge that as on wette, anothere myghte drye.

12. And then certeynly whan men of compassyone with desyre – after so longe fastynge, after so many wakynges, and after so many wepynges – asked hir whethere she felte any soor or akynge as hit is wonte to be of a tome hede:

13. "Thes teeris," quod she, "are my refresshynge. Thes are my sustynauns nyghte and daye that dissese not the hede, but feden the mynde. They angwyshe with noon akynge, but they lightsum the soule with a shynnynge. They avoyde not the brayne, but they fille

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could he do, he who had been so thoughtless, he who had rebuked the handmaid of Christ?' (51).

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the wille of the soule with a fulnes, and [softnes][36] hit with an esy enoyntynge whan they are not oute wrongen with laboure and vyolens, but helde oute gracyously and gyfen of oure Lorde."[37]

VII. *Of hir shryfte. Capitulum sextum.*

1. After hir compunccyone, now see wee shortly of hir shrifte. I take God to witnesse, neuere in alle hire lyfe or conuersacyone I myghte perceyue oon deedly synne.

2. And if happely hit semyd to hir that she hadde trespassed any litil venial synne, she shewyd hir to a preste with so grete sorow of herte, with so mykel schame, and with so longe contricyone that othere while for grete angwyshe of herte she was const[r]eyned[38] to crye loude in maner of a woman trauelynge of childe. Ye, thof she so eshewed fro smal and veniels, that otherewhile she myghte not fynde in hir herte, in fiftene dayes, vnordynate thoghte.[39]

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[36]softnes] MS: softnesse, but it is clear from the Latin (see the next footnote) that 'softens' is the verb intended here. The scribe apparently transcribed the verb 'softnes' to be parallel with the noun 'fulnes' and made the error of 'softnesse.'

[37]They avoyde ... Lorde] LAT: 'Non cerebrum evacuant, sed animam satietate replent, & suavi quadam unctione mulcent; dum per violentiam non extorquentur, sed sponte a Domino propinantur' (641). The King translation does not reflect the Latin set forth here.

[38]constreyned] MS: consteyned

[39]Ye, thof ... thoghte] LAT: 'Licet sic etiam a modicis & venialibus sibi caveret, quod plerumque per quindecim dies nec unam inordinatam cogitationem in corde suo posset reperire' (641). King translates this as 'Although she guarded herself against small and venial sins, it often happened that after a fortnight she could not detect even one disordered thought in her heart' (52).

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3. And for gode myndes knowe gilte there where no gilte is,[40] often she knelyd atte prestys feet and, accusynge hirselfe, confessyd hir with terys of sum thinge; in the whiche vnnethis wee myghte absteyne fro laghter, as sum childely woordes that she sorowed fore, the whiche as she mynned she spake in veyne in[41] hir youthe.

4. But soothly after that she was passed childes age, she besyed hir to kepe hir soule with so grete drede, hir wittes with siche diligens, and hire herte with so grete clennesse, hauynge euere byfore hir eyen Salomons worde: "hee that rekkith not smale thinges, fallith doune by litlum."[42] That wee myght neuer or selden perceyue in hir ydel worde, or vnordynat lokynge, or vnhonest hauynge of body, or vnmesurabil laghter, or vnsem[ly][43] and vnmanerly berynge of body, thof otherewhile for abundaunt ioye whanne she myghte vnnethes holde hirselfe were constreyned to shewe the ioynge of hir herte by outewarde berynge of body (with a litil excesse). And gladnesse of chere, outher brestynge oute by cleernesse of herte into an esy laghynge, outher of her goodnesse receivynge any of hire frendys with a litil and shamfaste clippynge, outher of entir deuocyone sum prestis handes or feet kissynge.

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[40]gode myndes knowe gilte there where no gilte is] good minds acknowledge guilt where there is none.

[41]in] MS: 'iin' with initial 'i' crossed out.

[42]"A workman who is a drunkard will not become rich; he who despises small things will fail little by little" (Ecclesiasticus 19:1).

[43]vnsemly] MS: 'unsem'

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5. And whanne she comen to hirselfe ageyne as after a moystnesse of mynde, [she][44] rekenyd and comitid streitly atte euene alle hir deedys. If she myghte perceyue that she hadde excedid neuer so litil, she shroue hir and a wondirful contricyone of herte. She, punyshynge hirselfe often, dredyd there where was nouther drede ne doute. And in this allone wee, sekynge solas to oure slouth, otherewhile reprehendid hir that she shrof hir of siche smale thinges oftener thanne wee wolde.

VIII. *Of hir penauns and satisfaccyone. Capitulum vij^{m}.*

1. Now, after hir confessyone, seye wee ferther with how mykel and merueilous penauns she punyshed hir body, with how grete loue and delyte in clippynge Cristes crosse she pyned hir fleshe. Let vs see that firste scole-lessun of oure Lorde Jhesu Cryste and that firste techynge of the gospellys lore.

2. "Whoso wole come aftir me, forsake hee hym owne selfe and take his crosse and folowe me?"[45] She tyrnyd this often in hir herte and bisyed hir to folowe Criste in these thre paces and steppys. For, certeyne, she forsoke not oonly othere mennes goodes, nothinge of other men coueityng, not oonly hir owne [but][46] alle thinges leuynge, not oonly hirselfe the body punyshynge, but hir owne selfe hir owne wille fully forsakynge.

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[44]she] 'she' missing from MS. This error, where a pronoun is missing from a relative clause, happens consistently throughout the manuscript. This is an acceptable sentence structure in Middle English. For ease of comprehension, however, I have included the pronoun where it would normally belong in Modern English to make sense of the phrase.

[45]"And he said to all, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me'" (Luke 9:23).

[46]but] 'but' missing from MS

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3. She forsoke hir owne selfe, submittynge hir to an othere mannes wille by obedyens. She toke the crosse, chastisynge hir body by abstynens, and she folowyd Criste[47] settynge noghte by hirselfe thurgh meeknesse.

4. In so mykelle soothly she hadde taste of spirite that alle fleshely delyte[48] was to hir vnsauery. So that on a tyme, she broghte ones to mynde at[49] after a grete sieknesse that she hadde, was constreyned as of nede to vse a litil while fleshe and wyne. And of abomynacyone of that delectacyone byfore, she punyshed hirselfe and hadde no reste in spirite vnto she hadde made aseth, wonderly turmentynge hir fleshe for thos delytes byfore siche as was.

5. For with feruour of spirite she, lothinge hir fleshe, cutte awey grete gobettis and for shame hidde hem in the erthe. And for she was enflaumed with houge heet of loue, she sawe on of Seraphyn – that is a brennynge aungel – standynge by hir in this excesse of mynde.

6. And whan hir body shulde be washen after she was deed, wymmen fonde the places of woundes and hadde mykel maruaile. But thei that knew hir confessyone wiste what it was.

7. They that worship and meruaile wormys wellynge oute of Seint Symeons woundes and Seint Antones fyre how he brent his fete, why wonder they not in a freel kynde so grete strengthe of a womman that, woundyd with charite and quyckenyd with Cristes woundys,

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[47]folwyd Criste] LAT: 'Christum imitabatur' or 'imitated Christ'

[48]delyte] MS: 'delyte delyte'

[49]at] that

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sette not by the woundes of hir owne body?

IX. *Of fastynge. Capitulum viij*^{m}

1. Crystes mayden passed[50] and was excellent by so grete grace of fastynge that thos dayes, in the whiche hir byhoued to haue recreacyone of body, [she][51] wente to mete as to medecyn. She yete onys and a litil in the daye: in somer atte euene, in wynter at the firste oure of the nyghte. Wyne dranke she noon, she vsed no fleshe, and fishe yeet she neuere but selden smale fyshes; and she was sustenyd with frutes of trees, erbys, and potage. And longe tyme she yeet ful blak brede and ful sharpe that dogges vnnethis might ete of.

2. Soo that for ouer mykel sharpnesse and hardnesse, hir chaules were flayne withinne-forth and blode come oute of the woundes. But thinkeynge of Crystes blode made hit swete to hir, and with woundes of Criste her woundes were lokned. And the sharpnesse of ful harde brede was swetned with softenes of heuenly brede.

3. Vpon a daye while she ete, she sawe the olde en[m]ye[52] alle bypayned with enuye. And whan she hadde no more that hee myghte do, he scornyd hir and seide, "Loo, thou gloten, thou fillith the ouere mykelle."

4. Soothly, she hadde dissese often tyme in etynge for mykel fastynge and longe. Moorouer, hir stomak aked and wroghte as lothinge mete for coldenesse and bolnynge. But she knewe the sleightes and wiles of the enmy that gladly wolde strabil hir whome

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[50]passed] LAT: 'præcellebat' (642) or 'surpassed,' meaning she excelled in her fasting.

[51]she] 'she' missing in MS

[52]enmye] MS: 'ennye'

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hee wiste dreedful at she shulde defayle with ouer mykel abstynens. Therfore, euer the more that the venemous spirite [was][53] turmentid with hir etynge, in so mykel she enforced hir to ete the more and scornyd hym. For whether she eet or fasted, she didde alle to the worshyp of God.

5. Soothly, she fasted three yeer togedir in brede and watir fro Holy Rode daye[54] vnto Pask.[55] Yit, neuertheles, she soffred no harme of body nor of hir handes werkys. And, whanne she refreshed hir body with a litil brede and watir in hir celle within the chirche, at euene or in the nyghte, for the begynnynge of graces vnto the graces after, sum of holy aungellis stode byfore hir at that sobir soper. And they come vp and doune as thurgh a brighte wyndowe, of whos presens she hadde so grete comforte and so grete ioye of spirite that the goostly swetnesse passed alle delite of sauoure.

6. Also, Seinte John Euangelist,[56] whom she loued with entier affecyone, come otherewhile to hir borde while she eet. And in his presens, hir sensibil appetite was so voyded for deuoute desire that she myghte vnnethes take any mete; and certaynly oure Lorde rewardid hir bodily desertes in soule that she hadde forsaken for the loue of Criste,

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[53]was] MS: 'with,' but the sense in the Latin is clearly 'was.' Perhaps the scribe's eye skipped ahead to the 'with' in the phrase 'with hir etynge.'

[54]Holy Rode daye] Feast of the Holy Cross, celebrated on September 14.

[55]Pask] Easter

[56]Seinte John Euangelist] Saint John Evangelist or "St. John the Divine." One of Jesus' disciples. He is the only one of the twelve apostles who, according to legend, was a martyr. Died c. 100. His feast day is December 27.

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as hit is writen, "man lyueth not in brede allon."[57] Otherewhile, thurgh comforte of this mete, she fastid, neither etynge ne drynkynge, eyghte dayes – sumtyme elleuene (that is, for[58] the Ascencyone of oure Lorde vnto Witsondaye).[59] And wondirly, hir hede akyd no tyme, ne she lafte not for[60] that laboure of hir handes, as stronge the laste daye of hir fastynge as the firste.

7. And if she wolde haue eten thoos dayes, she myghte not vnto the sensualite that was as slokenyd with the spirite come agayne to hirselfe. For as longe as the soule abundaunt so copiously was so ful of spirituel fedynge, [it][61] wolde not suffir hir receyue any refeccyone of bodily mete.

8. Also, otherewhile she, restynge esely with oure Lorde fyue and thretty dayes in a swete and blyssed silens, vsid no bodily mete, and sumdayes she myght brynge forthe no worde but this allone: "I wole the body of oure Lorde Jhesu Cryste." And whanne she hadde receyued the sacramente, she dwellid with oure Lorde euery daye in silens.

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[57]"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4); "Man shall not live by bread alone" (Luke 4:4). These words are Jesus' as he speaks to Satan, who is tempting him during a forty-day fast, urging him to turn stones into bread so that he can eat. Jacques is pointing to Marie's ability to fast and resist the hunger and temptation that come with it.

[58]for] from. Occasionally, as in this instance, the scribe uses the word 'for' to mean 'fro' or 'from.'

[59]Witsondaye] Pentecost

[60]for] from

[61]it] 'it' is missing from the MS

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9. Soothly, [s]he[62] felid in thos dayes hir spirite as departid fro the body, so beyng in the body as if hit were hidde in a vessel of cley, and hir body as [in][63] a cloth of cleye belappynge and couerynge hir spirite. In this manere, she was abstracte froo sensibil thinges and raveshyd abouen hirselfe in an excesse.

10. And after fyue wekys she, turnynge ageyne to hirselfe, openyd hir mouthe and spake and receyued bodily food. And they that stood aboute maruelyd longe tyme after hit happenyd to hir that sche myghte on no manere soffir the sauours of fleshe, or of any friynge, or of wyne, but whanne she toke wyne in the rynshynge after the sacrament. And then she myghte suffre the smel withouten any greuauns. Also, whanne she went by dyuers townes to a byshope for to haue the sacramente of confirmacyone, the sauours that she myght not suffir byfore dredde hir not a deel.

X. *Of hire prayer. Capitulum ix^{m}*

1. Euer the more that she made hir body lene with fastynges, the more freer was hir spirite and replete with praiynges. The body with abstynens was febled and the soule more in oure Lorde was strengthed.

2. She gat of oure Lorde so grete grace and so specyalle a praiynge that, nyghtes and dayes, neuere – or selden – hir spirite was ouercomen ne releced fro prayer. She prayed withouten blinnynge outher criynge to God with stille herte, or ellis with hir mouth expressynge the hertys desyre.

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[62]she] MS: 'he'

[63]in] 'in' missing from MS

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3. Soo that whiles she wroght with hir handes and spanne. She hadde a smaule[64] set byfore hir and swetly seyde salues there to oure Lorde, with the whiche, as with nayles, she couplyd hir hert to God leste hit wandird in veyne. And whanne she prayed specially for anybody, as with a wondirful experiens oure Lorde shewyd to hir and answerid hire spirite. Soothly, she perceyued othere while by eleuacyone of hir spirite or depressyone whether she were herde or noon.

4. Vpon a tyme she prayed for a deed man soule, and hit was seyde to hir, "Prey not for hym, for hee is reproued of God." In certeyne the same man hadde his dethes wounde and wrecchedly was deed in turnament and dampned was foreuir.

5. Also, on the daye, while she was in hir celle besyde the chirche of Oegines, she sawe a multitude of handes byfore hire as praynge. Then she, meruelynge and not knowynge what that shulde be, was sumwhat adredde and fledde to the chirche. Anothere daye, while she was in hir celle, she sawe eftesones the same handes and was afferde, and whan she wolde efte flee to the chirche, she was holden with the handes and taryed.

6. Then she yede to the chirche and preyed oure Lorde that He wolde certefy hir what thoos handes bemened. And she was answeryd of God that soulles – the whiche be peyned in Purgatory – asked helpe of hir prayers or of anothere, with the which her[65] sorowes were softenyd as with a precyous oynemente. Soothly, she lafte othere while custumabil orysouns for swetnes of contemplacyone.

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[64]smaule] LAT: 'psalterium' or 'psalter.' Neither the Middle English Dictionary nor the Oxford English Dictionary have a meaning for 'smaule' or a variation thereof which means 'psalter.'

[65]her] their

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7. Also sumtyme she myghte not open hir mouthe, nor she myghte thinke on noon othere thinge but of God. She vsed by cause of pilgrimage or prayer to vyset Seint Mary chirche of Oegines, where sche hadde grete comforte of Oure Lady, and that chirche was fro hir place two grete myles. And whan hit was wonder houge wynter, she yede barefote to that chirche thurgh f[ro]st[66] withoutene any harme or hurt of hirselfe.

8. And whil she hadde but o mayden with hir and knewe not the wey that is ful vnredy and ful of wode, a lighte but wente byfore hir shewynge the weye, that she yede neuere wronge. Also, sythen that daye she hadde nothinge eten and alle nyght waked in the chirche. On the morne whanne she shulde go home and not ete til euene, neuertheles withouten any difficulte she wente home ageyne, holy aungels ledynge hir on booth sydes.

9. Soothly, sumtyme in the same weye, whan there semyd an houge rayne in the cloudys and she hadde no clothes to chare hir fro the rayne, she, lokynge vp, sawe sum sterris, obeysaunte to hir, withholdynge the rayne, and so in the rayne tyme come home ageyne vntouched.

10. Also, otherewhile, whan hir soule was replete and purifyed as sumtyme more than othere, she myghte [not] cese[67] fro prayere. Wherfore she salutid Oure Lady in the nyghte and in the daye, knelynge a thowsande sythes and an hundirde, contynuynge this meruelos and vnharde offys of salutacyone fourty dayes togedir. The firste tyme, in an houge spirite, she knelyd withoute stynte sex hundreth sythes; the secunde tyme, standynge on

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[66]frost] MS: 'first,' but the meaning is frost

[67]myghte not cese] MS: 'myghte cese'

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hir feet, she redde all the sauter, and atte ilke salme knelynge seyde the salutacyone of Oure Lady *Aue Maria,* but the thridde tyme, th[r]e hundredth[68] sythes at euery knelynge, with scharpe yeerd smytynge hire, sacrifyced and offerde hirselfe with a longe martirdome to God and to the blessed mayden Mary. Soothly, with the laste strokes to sauer with the tothere, she broghte aboundauntly blode oute of hir body, and than she but knelyd fyfty sythes and endyd soo that seruyse. This didde she not with bodily strengthe, but with aungels helpe that sustenyd hire and socoured.

11. How mykel the vertue of hire prayer was, not oonly men were often except to socour but also fendys to turmente,[69] the whiche in so mykel she constreyned that she drowe hem as with ropes. And they were compellid to come to hir, by brennynge of hire prayers, otherwhile gnastynge with hire teeth and ageyns hir, sumtyme makynge quarels and pleinynge of hir, and also vmwhile as bisechynge hir lowly.

12. Soothly, whan any of hir frendes were trauelid with any temptacyone, she was stired with the spirite of compassyone and cesed not of hir prayere tille the enmy were ouercomen and the man delyuered. And so there was on of hir specyalle frendys that otherewhile the more sotily, the more perliously was temptyd of the deuelry that walkes in derknesse. That sly enmy, transfigurynge hym into an aungel of lighte, as vndir a spyce of pite apperyd homely in slepe to hir frende byforeseyde, blamynge hym of summe

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[68]thre hundredth] MS: 'the hundredth,' but LAT: 'trecentis' or 'three hundred.'

[69] How ... ropes] LAT: 'Virtutem orationum ejus quanta esset, excepti sunt sæpe, non solum homines ad succursum, sed dæmones ad cruciatum' (643); King translates this: 'The power of her prayers was so great that not only did other people experience succour from them, but demons as well were tortured by them' (60).

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vyces and warned hym, also gylously, of sum good dedys that hee shulde do, and gaf hym firste tryacul that hee myghte the more priuely brynge in after venym then, whan hee was trowed as hee hadde be trowe.[70]

13. Then, in maner of a sofister amonge sum trewe, that traytour enforced hym to medil false with alle, hydynge deceyuaundly wikke with medelynge of good. Atte the laste, his engyne come to that poynte as that brother hadde be concluded with a myserabil conclusyone, but [if] Crystes mayden hadde [not][71] by reuelacyone of the Holy Goost perceyued the symulacyone and sotilte of that sly sofister.

14. And whan she seyde at[72] that reuelacyone was not of God but deceyte of a wicked spirite, hee answeryd the contrarye and seyde: "Sythen that spirite hath done me so many godes and hath tolde me byfore so many trewe thinges to come, he wole on no manere deceyue me."

15. Thenne she gaf hir to prayers and wepynges and restyd not til that spirite, with grete

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[70]That sly enmy ... be trowe] LAT: 'Callidus enim ille inimicus, transfigurans se in Angelum lucis, quasi sub specie pietatis, in somnis prædicto amico suo familiariter apparebat; de quibusdam vitiis eum aliquando reprehendens, quædam etiam bona ut faceret fraudulenter admonens; promittens antitodum ut, latentius subinserret venenum. Linguam mellitam serpens prius leniter exercebat, ut postea dentem figeret, & ad ultimum caudam ut dhelydrus stringeret' (643); King translates this: 'That cunning enemy transfigured himself into an angel of light with an outward appearance of righteousness and privately appeared to her friend, reprimanding for some vices and knavishly warning him about some good things he should do. The serpent first gave him an antidote so that he might the more secretly slip in the poison: he smoothly exercised his honeyed tongue so that afterwards he might pierce him with his teeth and the poisonous water snake draw him to the last end' (60).

[71]if ... not] MS: 'of;' LAT: 'nisi' (643), or 'if...not.'

[72]at] that

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weymentynge and shame, stode byfore hir vpon a nyghte in hir celle while she prayed. Then she, byholdynge hym with a fals shynynge, "What arte thou?" quod she, "or what is thy name?" And hee, as he was of a proude loke, byhelde hir alle astoyle.

16. "I am he," quod hee, "whome you corsed womman hath garte come to the thurgh thy prayers and has byraste me my frende. Slepe is my name, for I appere as Lucifere in slepe to many, and most to religyous. And they obey to me and falle in to pryde thurgh my comfortes, lattynge hemselfe worthy to be visytid of God and of aungellis." And after the ende proued openly atte that man was deceyued of the feend.

17. Also, there was a yonge virgyn in an abbey of the Cistens ordir amonge nonnes vndir abyte of religyone seruynge oure Lorde, to whome the olde serpente hadde the more envye in as mykelle as hee sawe hir take the purpose of so harde ly[u]ynge[73] in freel kynde and yonge age.

18. And sythen hee knewe that virgyne dreedful and meke, hee assayled hir with blasfemys and vnclene thoghtes at[74] hee myghte caste hir downe into dispayre by ferdefulnesse and vnordynate drede. Then, as she was dreedful and not vsed to siche thoghtes, in the firste entre of the thoghte leued that she hadde loste feith and withstood longe tyme with mykel sorowe. Atte laste soothly, not suffrynge nor openynge to any othere the wounde of hir herte that she myghte receyue medecyn for feerfdulnesse, [she][75] felle as into despayre.

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[73]lyuynge] MS: lyynge

[74]at] so that

[75]she] 'she' missing from MS

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19. For so mykel the enmye hadde depressed hir mynde that she myghte seye neither 'Pater Noster'[76] ne 'Credo;'[77] and hir synnes wold she not schryue.

20. And if otherewhile she were coacte, either with feyre wordes or pretys, to confesse sum thinges, she myghte be broghte on no maner to aske forgifnesse. She myghte not be atte the sacramentis of holy chirche; the sacramente of the auter wolde she not receyue; she asayed often for perturbacyone to sle hirselfe; she dispysed Goddes worde and prechynge for hir hele; she hatyd alle good; the deuel putte oute by hir mouthe many woordes of blasfemye and scorne.

21. And whan hir meke sistirs hadde mykel prayed for hir to oure mercyful Lorde, they myghte not byreue his douue[78] fro the deueles chaules, nor this maner of deuilry myghte not anoon be custen oute in fastynge and prayer, not for the mercyfulle spouse dispysed the prayers of so many holy virgyns, but for[79] He reserved that most cruel kynde of deuelry to be ouercomen by His mayden, that[80] she shulde thirle thurgh the chekys of the fende with the spedfulnesse of hir prayers, and myghtely drawe the praye fro his mouthe.

22. Therfore, whan that yonge virgyne was broghte to Cristes mayden, as she was ful of compassyone and of goostly swetnesse, [she][81] receyued hir ful godely, not oonly in hir

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[76]Pater Noster] Our Father

[77]Credo] Nicene Creed

[78]douue] dove

[79]for ... for] because ... because

[80]that] so that

[81]she] 'she' missing from MS

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celle by liberalle and free hospitalite, but also in herte by spririte of charite.

23. And whanne she hadde prayed mykel for hir to oure Lorde, yit hee that wende haue holden hir faste wolde not leue hir. Then she sacrifyed hirselfe more to oure Lorde and fasted fourty dayes with wepynge and prayers so that she yeet but twyes or thryes in the woke.[82]

24. Soothly in the ende of fastynge, hee – that most hidous spririte – lafte the virgyne and was constrayned to come to Crystes mayden with senshyp, sorowe, and shame, wonderly bounden and peyned of Cristes aungelle, soo that hit semyd as hee hadde casten oute alle his bowellis berynge wrecchidly on his nekke alle that was within hym, for that at oure Lorde wirkith invisibily in spirite, otherewhile Hee shewith hit visibily by vtwarde signes.

25. Then by weymentynge and bisekynge that she wolde haue mercy on hym, and prayed hir that was Crystes frende to enioyne hym penauns, for hee seyde he was coact and moste do whatsoeuere she enioyned hym.

26. And than she, that neuere presumed of hireselfe nor anythynge wolde do withouten conseille, called a famylier frende and maister on whome she trustid. Than whan he counceylid hir that she shulde sende hym into a deserte place where he myghte noye no man vnto the Daye of Dome,[83] another man ful homely and priuey to hem booth come to. And whan hee knewe the cownseile, as more feruente thurgh fersnesse of an houge spirite, "Nay," quod hee, "that traytour shal not scape so! Bydde hym that hee go doune

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[82]woke] an acceptable spelling for 'week..'

[83]Daye of Dome] Judgment Day

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anoon into the depe of Helle." And she badde so, than he f[e]lle[84] downe with yellynge, and she herde in spirite a grete crye of fendys whan they sawe so grete and so myghty prynce come to hem. Then Cristes mayden meruailed that mykel and thanked God of His grete grace and goodnesse. And that forsaide virgyne was delyuered that same oure, and shroue hire, and receyued the sacramente, and, thankynge God, went home ageyne saufe and sounde.

27. Also, otherewhile, she rested in hir bedde after many wakynges; the fende apperyd to hir in dyuerse liknesses, gnastynge agayns hir and cursynge: "I nel riste haue. Thou with vs," quod he, "in Helle be thy riste. I am no lesse payned with thy reste than I am turmentid with thy labour and thy prayers."[85] And she, smylynge, blessyd hir and garte that grysely goost go his gate.[86]

XI. *Of hir wakynge and slepe. [Capitulum x^m^]*

1. This stronge, wise womman thoughte greuous and unsuffurabil harme of ydel tyme, for dayes ouerpasse but they come not ageyne. Wherfore the harm of losse of tyme maye not be recuuerid, nor dayes lost maye not be restoryd as maye othere bodyly thinges that are loste.

2. And therfore she eschewyd with most bisynesse, in as mykelle as was leueful to hir, that noon oure of the daye or nyghte shulde ouerpasse hir vnoccupyed or ydel. For she

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[84]felle] MS: 'fille'

[85]The demon says he is tormented by Marie's labor and prayers, but also when she decides to rest. He tells her that he will only rest when she is with him in Hell.

[86]garte ... gate] phrases with alliteration such as this demonstrate that the translator was attempting his own rhetorical flair, beyond mere translation.

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slepte selden a nyghtes, knowynge that slepe is to vs mercyabil lafte of oure Lorde, not to meryte and mede but to recreacyone of mannes freel febilnesse. Soth hit is that wee deserue no mede slepynge, for wee haue noon vse of fre choys and dome.

3. Wherfore as mykel as she myghte, absteinynge fro slepe, she serued oure Lorde in the nyghtes watchys, and so mykel more deuoutely that she was not letted with outewarde noyse of any hustlynge or bustlynge. The vertue of abstynens driynge and lenynge hir body, and the fire of Goddes loue within brennynge, esely putte fro hir alle slomerynge of slepe. And swete aungel songes – with whome she woke often alle nyghte – didde awey fro hir eyen alle slepe withouten any bodily disese. And so, solitary fro company of men in the nyghtes tyme, she hadde felawshyp of ostes of blessed spirites whos meruelous noyse – as of a multitute of pepil – delyted hir eres with a doucet and mery melody. Hit shoke awey slouthe; hit refreshyd the hede, hit comfortyd the mynde with a wondir swetnesse, hit sterid deuocyone, hit enflaumed desyre and to the louvynge and thankynge. Hire had hir by ensaumpil of hitselfe rehercynge ofte, "*Sanctus sanctus sanctus Dominus and c.*"[87] That is, "holy, holy, holy Lorde."

4. Latte wrecched and fonned wymmen loke this and take hede and sorowe for her[88] synnes that with hir vntoune and lacches songes kyndelith the fyre of lecchery and makith coles to brenne with her mouthees breth. And therfore they, alyenid fro the songe of

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[87]Hire had ... and c.] LAT: 'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus, frequenter replicans, exemplo suo [alios] invitabat' (645). King translates this: 'She frequently repeated the *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus* and incited others to follow her example' (65).

[88]her] means 'their' throughout this sentence

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aungels, perisshe in hir vanyte and pryde whos laghter shalbe turnyd into wepynge,[89] ioye into sorowe, and songe into a careful yellynge. To whome oure Lorde byhetith for hir gaye girdille, a rope; for swete sauour, stynke; and for crisped colryd here, a balled hede[90].

5. Sothely, oure Mary, for the loue of Cryste, dispisynge caroules and alle the deuils bostys, deserued to be amonge mery melody of holy aungels, ful blessyd and ful swetly.

6. And for she kepte anyghtes precyous relikes of seintes, with the whiche the chirche of Oegines is warshed and worshepyd, thos same relikes, ledynge an hoy[l][91] nyghte with hir and as beynge fayne with here[92] wardeyne, gladid her spirite with a meruelous mirthe, and in hir laste sicknesse, hauynge compassyone, coumfortyd hir and byhette hir helpe and mede anent God for hire labour and kepynge.

7. She hadde a bedde in hir celle – neuertheles with litille stre – in the whiche she rested selden. For ful often she, sittynge in the chirche and lenynge hir hede to the walle, was refresshed with a litil slepe and hadde recours to the swete laboures of wakynges. Neuertheles, she spendid not the tyme of hir slepe alle withouten fruyte, for while she slepte hir herte waked.[93]

8. And she, sadly holdynge in herte Cryste that cleuyd to hir wakynge, dremyd nothinge

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[89]into wepynge] MS: into wepynge in to wepynge'

[90]"Instead of perfume there will be rottenness; and instead of a girdle, a rope; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; instead of beauty, shame" (Isaiah 3:24).

[91]hoyl] MS: 'hoy,' but the word should be 'whole,' or 'hoyl.'

[92]here] their (refers to the relics)

[93]"I slept, but my heart was awake" (Song of Songs 5:2).

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but hir Crist. For as a man that hungyrs dremith in his slepe and metis of many maner meces of metis,[94] so she hadde euere byfore hir eyen in sweuenes hym that she desyred. For where loue is, there is the eye, and soothly where hir tresoure was, there was hir herte[95]. As Cryste seith of Hymselfe, "where I am, there my seruante shal be."[96]

9. Also, often oure Lorde shewed to hir many thinges while she slepte and visitid His mayden with many reuelacuones, lesse slepe shulde passe in ydel, as Joseph and othere seintes were war[n]ed[97] in hir slepe,[98] as God byhetith by the prophete *Johel*, "Youre olde men shal dreme sweuens, and youre youngelynges shalle see visyouns."[99]

10. Otherewhile, she myght haue rest in hir celle. But sumtymes – and moste whan grete sollempnites were nere – she myghte fynde no reste but within the chirche, within the presens of Criste. And thanne she muste abyde in the chirche nyghte and daye.

11. For firste in alle thinges, hir byhoued to obeye to hir famylier aungel that hadde hir in kepynge as to an abbot. The whiche aungel, whan she was otherewhile afflicte with

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[94]metis ... metis] this phrase is another instance of the translator's penchant for alliteration, reflecting a popular poetic style of the Middle Ages.

[95]"For where you treasure is, there will be your heart also"(Matthew 6:21).

[96]"If any one serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be also; if any one serves me, the Father will honor him"(John 12:26).

[97]warned] MS: 'warmed'

[98]Joseph was warned by an angel in a dream that King Herod would try to kill the baby Jesus, which caused him to flee to Egypt with Mary and her infant son (Matthew 2:13).

[99]"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

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ouermykel fastynge, warned hir to take reste. And whan she hadde rested a litil, he reysed hir and ladde hir ageyne to the chirche.

12. And so by houge incitacyone of hym and mynistracyone of vertue and strengthe vpon a tyme fro the feste of Seint Martyn[100] vnto Lenten,[101] she cleued so to the paument of the chirche, that whethere she satte or laye, she myghte not suffir bytwix hir and the bare erthe as mykel as o litil stre. And while she slepte she hadde the bare erthe or a stoke of tre ouerthwarte byfore the grees of the auter instede of a pilowe.

13. Soothly, in that same wynter there was so grete colde and so grete froste that, as me menith, in the holy chalys while the preste songe, wyne fros sensibly and sodeynly into yce. Neuertheles, she felte no colde, nor hir hede akyd but litil, the holy aungel mercyabely haldynge [it][102] vndir his hande.

14. Woo to yow that are lacches, slepynge in softe shetys and yuery beddys that vsith softe thinges and sliken. Yee are booth deed and biryed in youre fleshes lustes and likynges. Yee that lede youre dayes in this worldys welth, but in a poynte yee shal doune falle into the deppeste of Helle, where vndir yow shal be strewed vermyne, and youre couerynge shal be wormes![103]

15. Loo, the erthe serueth to Crystes mayden that she be not hurte with hardnenesse, for

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[100]feste of Seint Martyn] November 15

[101]Lenten] Lent. The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday, a moveable feast that occurs forty days before Easter.

[102]it] 'it' missing from MS, refers to her head.

[103]"Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, the sound of your harps; maggots are the bed beneath you, and worms are your covering" (Isaiah 14:11).

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she serued deuoutly oure Lorde. The wynter sparith hir that sche be not schente with colde. Holy aungels mynistir to hir that she in nothinge suffer sore.

16. Ageyne yow, fonned foles, the world shalle fighte for God for that at He made shal be armed to vengeauns of His enmyes, and the creature that seruith to the maker shal be wroth ageyne yow worthe.

XII. *Of hir clothes.* [*Capitulum xj*^{m}]

1. She that was cladde with the holy lambys flees, she that was withinne onoured with the brydalle garmente, she that with inforthe hadde clothed hir with Cryste, chargyd not of outewarde araye. Neuertheles, hir clothes were in a mene for desyred filthes, and studiously soghte clennesse plesyd hir neuere.

2. Soothly, she eschewyd fayre araye and foule booth ilike, for that one sounes delytes and lustes, and that other ypocricy and preisynge of the pepil.

3. Neuertheles, she knewe that Seinte Johnn Baptiste was praysed of oure Lorde for sharpnes of clothes and that Cryste seith Hymselfe, "they that are clad with softe thinges are in kynges houses."[104] Therfore, she vsed not next hir flesche a lynnen smok, but an harde sakke that is callid in open tunge "stamyne."[105]

4. Also, she hadde a white, wollen cote and a mauntil of the same coloure withouten any skynnes or furrur, not vnknowynge that oure Lorde couerde the naked of oure firste fader and moder after hir falle, not with precyous clothes or craftyously coloured, but with

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[104]"Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in kings' houses" (Matthew 11:8).

[105]stamyne] a cloth of some kind, usually made of wool

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letheren cotes. She that brennyd withinne forthe helde hir payed with the sympelnesse of these clothes and dredde no colde, nor she nedid no materyal fyre to chare awey chele in wynter.

5. But in a meruelous manere, when there was sharpe wynter and harde frost, as she was feruente in spirite, so withoute forthe she was hote while she prayed – and namely in body – in so mykel that otherewhile hir clothes smellid withinne of hir swete, sauoured swote.

6. Also sumtyme the sauour of hir clothes was as odour of encens whil she offerde hir orysouns to oure Lorde with censour of clene herte.

7. What seye yee to this, yee superflue wymmen, ful of pompe and pryde, that chargith youre caryones with many folde of clothes and shewith youreselfe like bestiss oute of kynde, with youre longe tayles shyndynge youre semblaunte with hornys and hokes tifted as a temple? Youre clothes ar[e][106] gnawen with moughtis and stinken. The clothes of this holy womman are kepte for relikes and sauoureful swete. Thees are precyous clothes, ouercomen with no colde, were they neuere soo thinne, and therforse halowed bycause of colde. And sothely, for the halowynge they are kepte ful bisily and worshepyd with affeccyone of pite of deuoute pupil after hir obyte.

XIII. *Of the labour of hir handys. [Capitulum xij^{m}]*

1. This wise womman wiste wele that oure Lorde hadde putte penauns to the firste fadir and moder after synne, and thurgh hem to her childer, that is: "In swote of thy semelande, thou shalte ete thy mete."[107]

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[106]are] MS: 'ar'

[107]"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3:19).

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2. Wherfore as longe as she myghte, she laboured with hir owne handys at she shulde pyne hir body with penauns, at she shulde mynister necessa[r]yes[108] to the nedy, and also at she myghte gete lyuelode and clothinge to hirselfe, as she[109] that hadde forsaken alle thinges for Crystes sake.

3. Soothly, oure Lorde lente hir so grete grace and vertue of wirkynge that she fer passed hir felawes, so that she myghte nerehande fynde hirselfe and anothere with hir handes fruyte and laboure, bisily ententynge that the Apostil seith, "whooso wirkith not, ete he not."[110]

4. Forsothe, ilke an exercise of labour she comyted ful swete, while she toke entente that the only goten sone of the hye kynge of heuene, that openith His hande and fillith euery beste with His blessynge, was noryshed with handes laboure of Joseph and of a litil pore trauelynge virgyne. Therfore in reste and silens, after the Apostil, she, wirkynge with hir handes, ete hir brede.[111] For hir strengthe was in silens and hope. In so mykel, soothly, she fledde noyse and company of men and loued stilnesse and reste, that on a tyme, fro holy rode daye to Paske, she kepte silens, vnnethes spekynge any worde. And siche maner silens oure Lorde acceptyd so mykel that by reuelacyone of the Holy Goste she gat

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[108]necessaryes] MS: 'necessayes'

[109]she] The Latin is not specifying a 'she,' it reads, rather as 'someone' who has forsaken all things for Christ. The 'she' here refers to Marie.

[110]"For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: If any one will not work, let him not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

[111]The Latin echoes this phrase exactly. "But we exhort you, brethren, to do so more and more, to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we charged you" (1 Thessalonians 4:10-11).

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graunt of God therefore, aboue alle othere thinges, at she shulde passe to paradys withouten Purgatory peyne. Hereby shewith how grete is the vice of eloquacite and iangelynge, sythen that silens and stilnesse is so plesaunde to oure Lorde.

5. And thenne atte laste, she multipliynge euery daye with a besy labour the besaunte that was taken to hir, and ilke a daye steighynge vppe by the laddyr of Jacob fro vertue to vertue,[112] sithen she was sette in the hyest and as putte in there ouerest stage and lafte alle sensible thinges. So mykelle with abundaunt spirite hir sensualite was absorpt, that she than myghte not wirke but [for][113] mete that perissh not, as the gospel seith.[114] For she was alle occupyed and fulfilled with Cryste.

6. Wherfore as an ermyte and free for alle wirchynge of handes, fro thenforthe she restyd allonly in oure Lorde with the whiche fredome Cryste endowyd His mayden.

XIV. *Of hir biriynge and composicyone of chere and of othere membrys. [Capitulum xiij^{m}]*

1. Composicyon of berynge of hir outewarde and ferthermore partyes shewyd the inwarde makynge of hir mynde, and the semlynes of hir semelande wolde not late the ioye of hir hert byhydde.

2. Forsoth, in a meruelous mesure she tempyrde the sadnes of hir herte with gladnesse of

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[112]"And [Jacob] dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!" (Genesis 28:12).

[113]for] 'for' missing from Middle English

[114]"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of man will give to you" (John 6:27).

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chere, and somwhatly couerde the mirthe of hir mynde with symplenesse of shame of visage and, for the apostil seith "Wymmen shul prey with hilid hede,"[115] the white veyle that hidde hir hede hynge byfore hir yghen.

3. She wente mekely with a slowe and esy paas, hire hede loutynge and hir face lokynge to the erthe. In so mykel, soothly, the grace of hir soule shyned in hir visage of plente of hir herte that many of the selfe-lokynge of hir were goostly refreshed and stired to deuocyone and wepynge, and redynge in hire chere the vnccione of the Holy Goste, as in a boke, knewe that fro hir come vertue.

4. And so hit felle on a daye that a goodly man, famylyer and frende of relygious persones, Guy, sumtyme chauntour of the chirche Cameracense,[116] turnyd oute of his wey to viset hir. Then on of his felawes – the whiche happely vnto then knew not by experiens how mikel visitacyone and homblynes of gode folke maye do to meke myndes[117] – as in scornynge the goodly labour of the forsayde deuoute man, seyde: "For Goddes loue, sir chauntour, what seke yee? Why leue yee youre weye? Whethere wil

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[115]"For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her wear a veil" (1 Corinthians 11:6).

[116]Guy ... Camarecense] Camarecense is Cambrai, a town and diocese to the southwest of Liège. The priest mentioned here could possible by the future bishop Guy of Cambrai who condemned Marguerite Porete's book *The Mirror of Simple Souls* between 1296 and 1306 (Simons *Cities of Ladies* 132), but it is not clear from the text whether the Guy referred to here is the same.

[117]the whiche ... myndes] LAT: 'qui nondum forte per experientiam cognoverat, quantum piis mentibus visitatio bonorum familiaritasque conferat' (646); King translates this phrase from the Latin as 'who had perhaps not known from experience until then the degree to which intimacy with good people and visits to them can contribute to pious minds' (70-71).

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[yee][118] folowe and take flyes and flyand botirflyes with childer?" Hee, soothly, that was meke, mylde, and suffrynge, lefte not his weye that hee purposed for siche wordes but deuoutly wente to Cristes mayden, of whos presens anothere tyme hee hadde not a litil comforte.

5. And while hee spake to hir, his felow, as seculer manere is, sette litil by siche wordes and on another syde was occupyed with dyuerse and ydel wordes. Than, whan hee was ful and irke of abidynge, hee come to the chauntour to bidde hym that hee shulde hye in haste. And happely, as he loked rudely in the visage of Cristes mayden, sodeynly and meruelously he felle into so grete wepynge of terrys that vnnethes hee myghte be broghte a longe tyme after fro that place and presens of hire.

6. Than the chauntour, thogh he wolde for shame haue holden counseile, takynge hede and knowynge the chauns, was gladde and scornyd his felowe ageyne and seyde, "Goo wee hennes. What stande wee? In happe yee wole dyne and chace boterflyes?" And hee, after many sighynges and terys, vnnethes atte laste hee myghte be pullyd thennes seiynge, "Forgif me fadir, for I wiste not what I seyde byfore. Now, soothly, I haue perceyued by experyens Goddes vertue in this womman."

7. Also vpon a tyme whan hir body myghte no more bere the feruoure of spirite, she felle into a grete siknesse. So mykel forsothe the meke Fadir disciplyned His doghter that Hee loued, atte[119] the lymes and membres of hir body wondirly wroghte: for otherewhile, hir armes were wrythen as a serkil for sorowe and she was constreyned to bete hir breste with

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[118]yee] 'yee' missing from MS

[119]atte] so that

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hir handes.

8. And whanne the strengthe of the sieknes a litille while slaked and restyd, than she thanked oure Lorde with so mykel ioye that chastisith ilke a childe that Hee receyueth. At the apostils worde is openly fulfillid in hir seiynge thus: "Whan I am sieke, thanne am I stronge and myghty."[120] Thenne, after that, oure Lorde hadde proued His chosen childe with this infirmyte as golde in a furneys.[121] She, puryd and polisshed atte the ful, fro thanforthe gate so grete strengthe of God in wakynges, fastynges, and othere laboures that vnnethes stronge men myghte suffir the thridde parte of hir labour.

9. Neuertheles, otherewhile, whan any of hire frendys were greued with any dissese or casten doune with any temptacyone, than she was seke with the seke and was brente with the sclaundird with an houge sorowe. And than sumtyme she felte sumwhat the same sieknes [in][122] summe of hir membrys.

10. Then anoone in a newe manere of myracul, she callyd sum preste that shulde make a crosse with his fynger on the sore place of seeknesse, and the yuel fledde to an nother place as dredynge the vertue of the holy crosse.

11. And so efte and efte he made a crosse and the wauerynge yuel and fleynge durst no lenger abyde the birthen of the crosse, butte atte laste wente alle awey fro the body of

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[120]"For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

[121]"Like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them" (Wisdom of Solomon 3:6).

[122]in] MS: 'and'

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Cristys mayden with a mervelous and vnherde manere of worshepynge of the crucifixe. Soothly she, lokynge with the eyghe of feith into the brasen serpente and delyuered fro bitynges of the neddirs yuel,[123] thanked God many folde and the holy crosse.

12. And not oonly in hir chere thurgh byholdynge many men gat grace of deuocyone, but also of spekynge togader. She gaf plentivous swetnesse to summe – and not allone goostly in herte, but also they hadde sensible in the mouthe – as sauour of hony. Men that are slowe to leue shalle here this and grucche; but they that are experte and knowe siche goodes comfortes wole leue ful lightely when they here, "Thou spouse of Cryste, thy lippes are an honycombe distillynge hony, and mylke is vndir thy tunge."[124]

13. Wherfore whan a grete man, thof hee were litil in his owne eyen, spake to hir vpon a daye, (the whiche man of grete mekenesse and entere charyte come to hir fro ful ferre contre), hadde so grete comforte of the sighte of hir and of hir woordes, so grete swetnesse, atte all that daye no sauoure of material mete myghte putte aweye fro his mouthe that hony-swete sauoure that he hadde (whos holy mannes name I reherce not of purpos, for hee is wondirly dissesed with his preisynges and he is proued in the mouthe of

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[123]"Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses, and said, 'We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.' So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live" (Numbers 21:6-9).

[124]"Your lips distill nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue" (Song of Songs 4:11).

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preysers as golde in a furneys: an exiled byshop hit was).[125]

14. But now, putte wee an ende to this firste libelle, in the whiche we haue seyde of thoos thinges that pertene to the outewarde man, that is to seye the body, and sensibly are vsed withoute forthe. And as halfe oure daye iourneye done, or[126] wee passe ferthere to more inwarde and more sotil thinges, late vs reste a litil.

Here endith the firste boke.

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[125]Margot King speculates that this is Bishop Fulk of Toulouse, who was exiled in 1211 (155 n.89), the man to whom Jacques de Vitry dedicates his *vita* in the prologue (see I.1). In the Latin editions, XIV.13 concludes with a long rebuke directed at Fulk (who fled from the Cathars) that is missing in the Middle English translation.

[126]or] before

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Chapter Seven

The *Vita* of Marie d'Oignies by Jacques de Vitry, Book II

2I. *Here bigynneth the chapiters of the secounde boke.*

- *Of the dyuerste of vertues of the kynges doghter and seuene gyftys of the Holy Goste. Capitulum j^m*
- *Of spirite of Goddes drede. Capitulum ij^m*
- *Of the spirite of pite. Capitulum iij^m*
- *Of the spirite connynge . Capitulum iiij^m*
- *Of the spiryte of strengthe. Capitulum v^m*
- *Of the spirite of counselle. Capitulum vj^m*
- *Of the spirite of vndirstandynge. Capitulum vij^m*
- *Of the spirite of wisdome. Capitulum viij^m*
- *Of hir comynge to Oegines . Capitulum ix^m*
- *Of hir dwellynge at Oegines, and of thoos thinges that felle to hir in the same place. Capitulum x^m*
- *Of hir songe. Capitulum xj^m*
- *Of hir sieknes byfore hir deth. Capitulum xij^m*
- *Of hir deth. Capitulum xiij^m*

2II. *Of the dyuerste of vertues of the kynges doghter and seuen giftes of the Holy Gost . Capitulum j^m*

1. Now ferthermore, seye we how grete was the kynges doghters ioye fro withinwarde

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and with how mykel dyuerste of vertues she was arayed and tyred withinforthe of the Fadir. Sothly, many doghters in oure dayes han gaderid rycchesses; she – this as we leue – hath ouerpassed ilkon.

2. To whome the Fadir made a cote sere colerd comynge to the helys depeynted with alle maner of vertues, and floryshed with alle the floures of Goddes gardyns. But for we maye not, ne suffys to, noumbir by on and other alle the sterres of this shynynge firmamente, alle the floures of this feyre medowe, and alle dyuerstees of hir vertues, go we to the seuene giftes of the Holy Goste that are origynal causes fro the whiche, as fro wellys, alle hir good dedys folowed.

3. Sothly, oure Lorde fillid hir with the spirite of wisdome and vndirstandynge, with the spirite of counseile and strengthe, with the spirite of connynge and pite, and with the spirite of Goddes drede.

4. The spirite of[127] wisdam made the Kynges doghter in delytes haboundynge and in charite brennynge; the spirite of vndirstondynge made hir contemplatif of gostlynesse; the spirite of counseyle made hir ware and avisy; the spirite of strengthe made hir pacyent and esy berynge; the spirite of connynge made hire discrete; the spirite of pite made hir mercyful; and the spirite of Goddes drede made hir eshewe and meke.

2III. *Of the spirite of Goddes drede. Capitulum ij^m^*

1. Of the whiche spirite of drede se we first, not allonly [for][128] the drede of oure Lorde is

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[127]of] MS: 'of of'

[128]for] 'for,' meaning 'because,' is missing from the MS

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begynnynge of wisdome,[129] but also keper of alle godes. And thof perfite charyte putte oute fro the kynges doghter alle drede – that is to seye pyne and heuynesse of drede – neuertheles, she was so dreedful thurgh plente of loue and toke so mykel kepe and cautel in alle thinges (not oonly in wekys but also in wordes and thoghtes) that she was rekkeles in nothinge or litil. For she toke often entente to that at is writen: "Hee that rekketh not smale thinges, bilitil and litil fallith doune."[130]

2. In sooth, she was aferde and dredde alle hir werkes, purveynge oure Lorde allewey in hir sighte and thenkynge on Hym in alle hir wayes, leste she shulde displese Hym in any tyme.

3. Also wele she wiste that thof a man eschewe grete thinges, yit maye hee be casten downe with grauelle. Absolon, hanged with multitude of heerys, was slayne.[131] Many venyal synnes of contempte, while they like and not,[132] rekkyd bryngen to euerlastynge deth.

4. Therfore she hadde holy drede in herte – as a brest bande that streynid togadir hir thoghtes, and in mouthe as a brydel that refreyned hir tunge, in werke as a prikke lest she shulde be flowe thurgh sluggednesse: in alle thinges, drede was rule leste she shulde

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[129]"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it" (Psalms 111:10).

[130]"A workman who is a drunkard will not become rich; he who despises small things will fail little by little" (Ecclesiasticus 19:1).

[131]This refers to 2 Samuel 18:9-17, where Absalom, riding a mule, gets his hair caught in the branches of an oak tree. As the mule continues to walk, Absalom remains entangled in the oak, where he is then killed by his enemy, Joab.

[132]while they like and not] means 'whether [the venial sins] are enjoyed or not.'

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excede mesure. This drede as a besome swepyd and clensed hir herte fro doubilnesse, hir mouth fro falsenes, and hir werkes fro alle vanite. She sothely as a gardyn closed and a welle couerid receyued nothinge lightely, but Criste and thoos thinges that pertenyd to Cryste. Criste was to hir thoghte in herte, worde in mouthe, ensaumpil in werke. I haue no mynde that euere I herde wor[l]dly[133] worde of hir mouthe and vnnethis in spekynge she seyde o clause, but if she put Criste often amonge. For so mykel the holy drede of God occupyed hir mynde that while she was atte Willambroke bisyde Niuelle, oftentyme she garte gadir herbes alone that are not sowen and othere that growen by hemselfe withouten settynge atte she myghte make hir potage of hem, leste she yete almes that raueynours and vsurers vse to gif to houses of mesels that are callid spitellis.

5. She absteynid not oonly for vnleueful but also she restreyned hirselfe fro many leful thinges, leste she ouerlouse by liberte, [she][134] myght declyne any maner to that atte is vnleful.

6. So mykel loue, soothly, she conceyued of pouerte thurgh the spirite of drede, that vnnethes she wolde haue hir necessaryes. Wherfore vpon a daye she proposid to flee, that vnknowen and dispised amonge straungers, myghte begge fro dore to dore that she naked myghte folowe Cryste, leuynge the mantelle of alle worldly goodes as Joseph,[135] the

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[133]worldly] MS: 'wordly'

[134]she] 'she' missing from MS

[135]"And when [his master's wife] saw that [Joseph] had left his garment in her hand, and had fled out of the house, she called to the men of her household and said to them, 'See, he has brought among is a Hebrew to insult us; he came in to me to lie with me and I cried out with loud voice; and when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, he left his garment with me, and fled and got out of the house'" (Genesis 39:13-15).

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pycher as the Samarytan,[136] the sendel as Seint John Euangelist.[137] She toke hede often and thoghte on Cristes pouerte that, whan He[138] was borne, hadde not a place in the comun market stede, that had not where He myghte leue His hede,[139] that also hadde no mony wherof to pay His tribute, and that wolde be fedde of almes and be receyued in othere mennes herburgh.

7. And so vpon a tyme she hadde so grete desyre of pouerte that she toke with hir a sachel to put almes in and a litil coppe whereof to drynke watir, or ellis to putte in potage if they were gifen hire while she eet. And so cladde with olde clothes, vnnethes atte last she myghte [be] byholden[140] with mykelle wepynge of hir frendes. For whanne she hadde taken hir leue at hir frendes and pore Crystes mayden wolde haue taken the weye in siche araye with hir sachelle and cuppe, there was so grete sorowe and so grete wepynge of hir frendis that loued hir in Cryste that she, as she was ful of charite, myghte not suffre.

8. Therfore she was constreynyd of two thinges: hauynge desyre to fle and begge with Criste, neuertheles, she chas to abyde for hire brethir and sistris, to whome hir absens

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[136]"So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?'" (John 4:28-29).

[137]"And a young man followed him, with nothing but a linen cloth about his body; and they seized him, but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked" (Mark 14:51-52).

[138]He] MS: 'she'

[139]"And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head'"(Matthew 8:20). Phrased identically in Luke 9:58.

[140]myghte be byholden] MS: 'myghte byholden.'

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semyd vnsufferabil. She didde therfore that she myghte.

9. After that, she lyued in so grete loue of pouerte that otherewhile she cuttyd hir kerchifes or hir borde clothe that she eet vpon, holdynge sum to hirselfe and dalte parte to the pore.

10. Woo to yow that ioynith hous to hous and coupil felde to felde vnto the stedes ende! Ye that maye not be filled with mony and fruyte, maye ye noon take there of that maketh tresours to yow in erthe where ruste and moghtes distroye, where theues delueth and stelith euer are gaderynge and euer nedy and wantynge what lacked thereto?[141] This pore Cristes mayden that euere fledde rycchesses and hadde alwey wherof to gif othere.

11. S[h]e[142] loued euere pouerte and so mykel the more oure Lorde lant hir that she nedid.

12. Also, not only thurgh the spirite of drede, she displesed rycchesses, but with hir pouerte she was so litil in her own yghen. And with so mykel mekenes, she caste downe hirselfe that she countyd hireselfe as noghte: and whan she hadde done alle wele, not only with hir mouthe seyde that she was vnprofitabil, but felte so in herte. Supposynge hirselfe lowere than alle othere, she neuere presumed of hirselfe, holdynge alle folke holyer thanne she. And whan oure Lorde didde hir any gode, she rect it to othere mennes merite. She soghte neuere hir preisynge, but referred alle to Hym of whome comith alle

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[141]"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-20).

[142]She] MS: 'se'

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good. She demyd hirselfe vnworthy the godis that she hadde. She dispysed noon but hirselfe allone, were hit neuere so vnsadde man or synner.

13. And soothly whan she was noghte sette by of othere, she sette there by nothinge.

14. She was vmbly lapped with the shelde of trewthe by alle fame on the righte syde and the lifte, for as hir merkenesse so was hir lighte. Nor she was depressed with reproues, ne prouded with hir preisynges: for thurgh large lownesse she coueytid euere to be priuey as myche as she myghte, wherfore when for ioy of herte and plente of grace she myghte not byhidde with hirselfe.

15. Sumtyme she fledde to feldes nerhand and buskys that sche, eschewynge mennes eyen, myght kepe hir pryuey councelle to hirselfe and to God in a coffer of clene conscyens. Neuertheless, sumtyme she was compelled with preyers of frendes or sende specially fro oure Lorde to sum man, or ellis with wille of compassyone stired to comforte febil folke in the feith and then of many thinges that she knewe. She tolde a fewe with meknesse and shame.

16. O how often she seyde to hir frendes: "What aske yee me? I am not worthy to fele siche thinges as yee aske." How often she answerid oure Lorde as with grucchynge: "Lorde, what is that to me? Sende whome thou arte to sende.[143] I am not worthy to go and bere thy counseilles to othere." And yit, she myghte not with stande stirynge of the Holy Gost, but tellynge summe thinges deserued to profit of othere.

17. How many of hir famylier frendys she warned byfore in perils! How often she

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[143]"And I heard the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me'" (Isaiah 6:8).

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discoueryd to frendes the priuey gnares of wicked gostes! How ofte she strengthed febil folke and wauerynge in the feith with miracles of Goddis reuelacyouns! How often she warned men that they shulde not performe thos thinges that they thoght allonly in mynde! How often she releuid by Goddys comfortis folke fallynge in synne and welny in dispeyre!

18. What schames the, therfore, thou feerdful womman? Why drawest thou so many goodis fro the nedy? Thou, chyrche, why holdest thou the fro thy neyhbores dwellynge for ouer mykel mekenesse? Whethere for thee that as vnseuerably was ioyned to God, not nedynge siche reuelacyons, God shewed to the so many and so grete giftes and not rathir for hir vauntage that leued the and nedid thy helpe?

19. Allas! How many and how grete giftes of God she concelyd, with the whiche the febil myghte haue be strengthed, the slow stirid and lightenyd, and oure Lorde in His halowes more meruosly bekenned?

20. Therfore, why hydes thou thy besaunt? Why shewist thou not thy Criste to the worlde that is neuertheles, thof othere haue parte? Whedir thou cryedist not sumtyme for moystnes, whanne the kynge ladde the in to the wyne celer:[144]

21. "O Lorde, why hydest thou the? Why shewist thou not the what thou arte? For if the worlde knewe the, thenne wolde it cese of synne, and anoon sue after the sweye sauoure of thyne oynementis."

22. But blessyd by God that, thurgh His liberalite and largenesse, lettid thy scarsnesse,

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[144]"Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you" (Song of Songs 1:4).

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and woldest thou or noon shewe thy pryue dennes, for whan thou was filled with must of a feruente spirite, but if thou had hadde euentynge, thou shuldest haue brusten.[145] Sythen thou myghte not bere fire brennynge withouten sum rakynge.

23. Then atte last, treuthe was tryed oute of a childe and dronken man. Then wonder thinges and vnherde thou puttist forthe of plente and sodeynly turnyde fro disciple into a maistres. Thou raddest to vs in the boke of lyfe[146] many meruelous lessouns the whiche we myghte not vndirstande.

24. And whan thou was reysed after slepe, as a stronge man ouercomen with wyne and restoryd to thyselfe, then outher thou was stille and haddest forgoten what thou saydest, or ellis happely if thou broghtist to mynde anythinges of the mater that thou of tolde byfore, then was thou shente for shame and domedist thyselfe a iangelynge fole. And mykel thou meruelid what the hadde happed and askedist God forgifnesse.

25. Sumtyme whan we asked of hir whether she felte any titillacoun of veynglorye of mennys preisynges or of Goddes reuelacyouns: "Lo regarde," quod she, "of the verrey

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[145]But blessyd ... brusten] LAT: 'Sed benedictus Deus, qui tuam avaritiam liberalitate sua retundebat, & latibula tua, velles nolles, revelebat. Nam cum jam ferventis spiritus æstuante musto, nisi respiraculum haberes; rumpereris'(649); King translates this difficult sentence from the Latin edition as "But blessed be God who, through his liberality, curbed your avariciousness and revealed your hiding place whether you liked it or not. Had it not been that you had to breathe, you would have burst from [the pressure] of the fermenting must of a fervent spirit" (79).

[146]"And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3). "He who conquers shall be clad this in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels" (Revelation 3:5). "This is the second death, the lake of fire; and if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (Revelations 20:14-15).

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ioye that I desyre, alle mannes ioye and preisynges is noghte, nor of no reputacyone."

26. Soothly, she was groundid in so grete treuthe, saddid in oure Lorde in so grete graunte, she was so ful of verrey godes. In so mykel she was fattid and farsed with goostly fodes that as any man, after he were filled amonge many manere deynte metes, wolde forsake an vnsauory and werysshe mete if I putte it to hym; righte so, not onnly she receyued no worldes ioye, no vanyte of mannys praysynges for the swetnes of endles goodes, but forsoke hym with a lothsumnes of herte. Sikirly as Criste maye not be swete to hym to whome this worlde is yit swete, so the swetnesse of Cryste; so mykel occupyed alle hir mynde that nothinge hir saueryd but Cryste.

2IV. *Of the spirite of pyte.* [*Capitulum iij^{m}*]

1. Not oonly thurgh the spirite of drede sche eschewyd fro alle yuelle, but thurgh the spirite of pite she was redy to alle good. Exercitacyone of body, she sette litil by to regarde of pyte, the whiche as the apostil seith avayles to alle thinges, hauynge byheste of the lyfe that now is and schal be.[147] And she kyndelyd in the laumpe of hir herte contynuelly the fire of charite with oyle of mercy, leste in happe she were founden with the fonned maydenes withouten oyle, and putte aweye fro the weddynge of myrthe withouten ende.[148] Therfore she bisyed hir atte [she][149] myghte to fulfille withouteforth

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[147]"For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:8).

[148]"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise,

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alle the werkes of mercy with aboundaunt pyte of herte. But abouen alle werkys of mercy she hadde in custum to be besyde sieke folke and be at mennes[150] diynge or biriynge, where sche perceyued ful often by reuelacyone of oure Lorde many thinges of heuenly priuetes.

2. Soo hit felle vpon a daye that a sister of the brether of Oegines laye on diynge. While she was in hir celle, sche perceyued a multitude of fendes rorynge ageyns the bedde of the siek sister. Then she, as forgoten hir custummabil sadnesse and naturel shamfastnesse, turnyd hir to the bedde and putte hirselfe ageyns the wicked spirites, not oonly faght with hir prayers but also with hir mantil drofe hem aweye as flyes.

3. And whanne thos wicked wightes withstode feerfully and wolde haue chalenged the soule of the sister as hers, then she, no lenger suffrynge, cryed hir Cryste, the blode of Cryste that Hee schadde for soulles and callid faste the dethe of the crucifix.

4. Then sothely, while they rorynge and redy to mete, assayled that soule with many false accusynges, atte laste she conceyued trist of the Holy Gost – for where the spirite of God is, there is a fredome – and answeryd: "Lorde, I vndirtake borowshyp for this soule.

'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut...Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:1-13).

[149]she] MS: 'hir,' but the sentence calls for a subject or 'she.'

[150]mennes] Jacques usually uses the word "frende" to mean both men and women, so in this instance the word "mennes" may actually mean men, specifically. However, there seems to be no reason why Marie would not attend the deathbeds of both men and women.

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Soothly, thof she haue synnyd, she is shreven of hir synnes. And if anythinge happely by lafte in hire by neglygens or ignorauns, thof she maye not speke, neuertheles thou haste lente hir space." The brether allonly perceyued the voys of hir and [hir][151] fightynges ageyns the fendys, and they preyed deuoutely for the soule of hir sustir. Atte laste the fendes were confused and ouercomen.

5. And holy aungels come and she, thankeynge God, come to hireselfe and restid, and takynge hir mantil ageyne, that she hadde furthe casten in the fighte, fledde for shame fro hir celle and closed the dore and hidde hir. Not mykelle after that – in the feste of Petir and Poule[152] – while she prayed deuoutly for the same soule and was bisy aboute the state of hir for whom she was borowe, Seinte Petir schewed to hir that soule hougely disesyd with peynes of Purgatory.

6. Soothly, Seinte Petir shewed to hir the peynes and the causes of the peynes.[153] For she was turmentyd hogely with hete for bycause she hadde loued oueremykel the worlde and lustis of the worlde. Otherewhile, she was pyned with ful mykel colde, for she hadde ben slowe to gode, and, moost, for she ouere neglygently correctyd hir childer and hir owne meenye.

7. Moreouer, she was wrecchedly angwishyd with thriste, for she gaf hir ouere-mykel in

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[151]hir] 'hir' is not in the MS, but the possessive pronoun is needed in order for this sentence to make sense.

[152]feste of Petir and Poule] The feast of Peter and Paul is on June 29.

[153]Soothly ... of the peynes] In the margin to the left of these words, the scribe has drawn a key in St. Johns MS 182. This is particularly significant since the St. Johns MS – like MS Douce 114 – is almost completely free of marginalia.

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hire life to drynkynge. Also for she hadde be superf[l]ue[154] in clothes, she suffred ful grete sorowe for nakyd.

8. Than the pitevous mayden of triste, as she was alle ful of pite namely agenst hem that were pyned in Purgatory, not oonly content with hir owne prayers but sche gat to that soule many suffragys and helpes of messes and prayers of othere.

9. Anothere tyme, whan a religyous widowe – that longe in holy wydowshyp hadde serued God and kepte hir doghters in holy maydenhode to the heuenly husbande – laye on hir deth bedde atte Villambroc bysyde Niuelle, she[155] sawe Oure Lady standynge by the holy wydowe, and as with a wisker waftynge wynde vpon hir, temperd mercyfully the hete that dissesed hir.

10. And whanne hir soule wolde haue goon oute of the body, a company of deuyls aspiynge there wolde not departe fro thennes with no instauns of prayers, vnto an aungel drof hem oute, confused with a baner of the crucifix. And whan that wydow was dede, Crystes mayden sawe Oure Lady with a multitude of heuenly dameseles, singynge and louvynge God as queres[156] departyd about the body. And after the preste hadde done Dirige for the dede (as the maner is) than Cryste with multitude of halowes, as to hir semyd, endyd the offys. And whan the body was done to byriels, Cristes mayden sawe the soule of hir that was neuer in this worlde playnly purged be putte to Purgatorye to

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[154]superflue] MS: superfue

[155]she] This sentence is confusing, but the 'she' here refers to Marie.

[156]queres] choirs

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fulfille that wantid of hir peyne; for [her][157] husbonde was a merchaunte and hadde goten summe goodes be gyle, as is merchaunts maner.

11. Also she hadde receyued in hir ostry summe men of the dukys meynye of Louayne[158] that hadde mykel spendid in hir hous of wrange goten goodes. And for they hadde not yit made ful restorynge of siche trespasses, she seyde that hirselfe was withholden yit in Purgatory.

12. Whan this was tolde, hire doghter, deuoute virgyne Margarete of Villambroc, and hir sistirs, they gat gir many prayers and after her power made restitucyone.

13. Wherfore not mykel after, the soule of that wydowe – clenner than glas, whitter than snowe, brighter thanne the sunne – apperyd to Crystes mayden. Whanne she steygh vp to euerlastynge blysse and as hit semyd she holdynge the boke of lyfe in hir handes radde there vpon.

14. Also, whanne a holy blessyd olde man – that in his childehode hadde lyued [in][159] innocens and maydenhode – was nere deed, whose name was John of Dynant Ortolanus,[160] that hadde forsaken alle worldly goodes and with his ensaumpil and holy

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[157]her] MS: 'his'

[158]Louayne] Leuven or Louvain - a city in the Brabant province in modern Belgium. It is particularly noted for its university, founded in 1423 by John IV of Brabant.

[159]in] MS: 'and'

[160]John of Dynant] Margot King notes that John of Dynant flourished in 1195 (King in de Vitry, 159 n.109). Dinant is a town the Namur province in the south of modern Belgium, on the Meuse river. It was the fief of bishops of Liège from 1070 until the French Revolution and was a major market center in the Middle Ages.

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prechynges hadde gotene many soulles to God. She, whan she was presente by hym in his sieknes, sawe a multitude of aungels beynge aboute the olde man and ioiynge.

15. She felte also a wonder sauour of swetnesse, that she myghte not for gretnesse of ioye contene hereselfe.

16. Sothly, she loued hym ful mykelle and hadde hym as for fadir. And then it was shewed to hir in spirite at that olde man, that hadde done so grete penauns in fleshe whil he lyued, and hadde suffred pacyently for Cryste so many persecucyouns and reproues, and so iustly and dreedly hadde lyued, and also hadde goten so many soulles to God, wente frely to heuene withouten any greuauns of Purgatory.

17. Wherfore as often as she passed byfore his graue, that is atte Oegines, she alwey louted lowly.

18. And afterwarde, whanne she laboured in hir laste sieknesse, the soule of the holy olde man, with anothere dede frende of hirs, Frere Richard of Menese Chapel, was sende fro oure Lorde to hir specialy by cause of visitacyone and comforte.

19. Cristes mayden hirselfe was ful compacyente and grete pite hadde on the seke aboute the while; somtyme she slepte not a nyghte.[161] And whan the modir of the brethere of Oegines was trauelyd with a ful greuous and longe sieknes, and she sumtyme was by to counseile hir, the seke womman – and welnye an hundrede yeere olde and nere the dethe hadde a ful greuous brethe.

20. And whan the holy womman on a nyghte vnnethes myghte here hir breeth withouten grete sorowe of herte, neuertheles, she beynge nere hir, as by vyolens, garte hirselfe

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[161]nyghte] MS: 'nyghtes'

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abyde. Than, whan she myghte no more beer and welny defayled, oure Lorde sawe the mekensse of His mayden and sende into hir mouthe a sauoure as of precyous spyced wyne and she felte most swete smelle, as of encens brente with that sauoure, nerehande thre dayes, soo that sauour of no manere mete myght putte aweye that forseyde spyced sauoure.

21. Also oure Lorde not oonly gaf to many seke, comforte and pacyens of hir presense, but also often bodily hele thurgh hir meritis, for summe burstyne[162] childer were broght to hir, and after she hadde handelyd hem they were alle hool.

22. There was a childe bisyde Oegines that hadde a perlyous sieknes, for contynuelly atte his eere blode ranne fro his heed. And whanne hee myght not be cured by no leche crafte, be medecyne of hir prayers and handelynge, hee hadde perfitely hele, then the childes moder bare hym to the chirche and thanked God and His mayden for hir sone.

23. Also, a womman was heled atte hir touchynge of a ful perlyous yuel that is a posteme of the throt that is callid the "squynnacy."[163]

24. Also, a clerke that was sieke at Oegines, Lamberte by name, was cured of the same sore atte the touchynge of hir.

25. On Guerryk,[164] preste of Niuelle, tolde me that whan hee hadde a fulle grevous sieknes, and alle lechys hadde lafte hym for dispayre, and noon was that byhighte hym

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[162]burstyne] broken, as in limbs

[163]squynnacy] LAT: 'squinancia;' Modern English: quinsy,' an acute inflammation of the tonsils and the surrounding tissue.

[164]On Guerryk] a certain Guerric (a first name).

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hele, hee come to Crystes mayden and gate with many prayers at she wolde put hir hande on hym.

26. Soothly, the same nyghte, hym semyd in his slepe that Oure Lady come to hym, and after she was passed fro hym, hee was al hole.

27. Also anothere preste, meke man and deuoute and hir goostly fadir, Maister Guy of Niuelle,[165] after that Crystes mayden hadde touched a ful perlyous yuel thatte hee hadde in his throte, was perfitely cured.

28. Also another man, of whos yuel alle men dispayred – and hymself also, after he had assayed many lechys and was neuer the better and abode but deeth – was heeled atte the touchynge of hire heerys.

29. But why abyde we aboute smale ymages sethen there be yitte byhynde so many grete meruayles?

30. For thof hit be pite to socour bodily sieknesses, neuerthelesse it is ferre incomparabil more to gif hede and charge aboute the hele of soulles. For in sooth, no sacrifys plesith more God than yele and luf of soulles. Wherfore she was alweye gladde, mery, and ioyful in herte, but whan for sorowe, perel of soules troubled hir mynde.

31. In this oonly atte I speke with hir pees, she hadde no mesure.[166]

32. She, sorowful, weyled. She, desolate, made dule. She ete no mete. She drofe awey

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[165] Maister Guy of Niuelle] Guy or Guido of Nivelles is Marie's husband's brother. This is revealed later in the *vita* in 2X.4. He "served as chaplain in the leper house of Willambroux while Mary and her husdand lived there until around 1207, and afterward ministered to the hospital chapel at St. Sépulchre and its adjacent beguine community until his death in 1227" (Simons *Cities of Ladies* 46).

[166] In this ... mesure] peace was the only thing she did not have in moderation

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slepe for hir ayen, and otherewhile cryed as a trauelynge womman.

33. With how grete sorowe, troweth thou, she was woundede whan fendes – rorynge and gnastynge with teeth – felle flokke by flokke vpon the congregacyon of holy maydenes in a towne[167] where they serued deuoutly to oure Lorde. And atte laste how the envyous and wicked deuyls as hauynge her wille, daunsed for ioye for eieccione of the holy wymmen. Thenne she, criynge and yellynge, vnnethes myghte susteyne hirselfe for sorow.

34. Anothere daye she sawe moste noumbir of wicked spiritys, the whiche, as alle blody after batayle with proude and pompos blasterynge, come fro the wastynge of the cite of Leody[168] and yitte they thrette with a scornynge countenauns to do more yuel.

35. And not mykel aftir, there come messangers to Oegines that tolde at[169] the cite of Leody was destroyed and chirches spoyled, wymmen oppressed with fors, cytisens flayne, and alle the godes of the cite robbed with enmyes.

36. That tyme, as happenyd, there was atte Oegines an holy man of honest conuersacyone and of good opinyone ye anens[170] ille men, lanter, doctour, and goostly fader of alle the byschoperiche. Masiter John of Niuelle.[171] The whiche good man whan he perceyued

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[167]a towne] The Latin specifies that this village is called "Manni." This is probably Menin, a town in the West Flanders province in the west of modern Belgium.

[168]The destruction of Liège by the soldiers of Henry I of Brabant (1190-1142) took place May 3-7, 1212.

[169]at] that

[170]anens] among

[171]Maister John of Niuelle] John of Nivelles (Jean de Nivelles) was a canon regular at the house in Oignies at Liège (c.1200). He was a colleague of Jacques de Vitry. He died in 1233.

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siche warste tithinges, was casten downe and slokenyd nere for sorowe and moste for hee douted with a fadirly bisynesse leste the holy virgyns that he hadde be prechynge and good ensaumpul goten to oure Lorde shulde be oppressed with vyolens (as summe gabbers sayde).

37. Hee made not mykel doel for the losse of temperel goodes, that cou[n]tid[172] worldly thinges as mukke, but the holy man with precyous stone of alle vertues, specially and passyngly onoured, made dule vncomfortabely for defoylynge of chirches and destroiynge of soulles, and as a fadir sorowed for his sones, as a patroun for his chirche, and as a frende of the spouse for the virgyns whome hee hadde weddyd, chaste to the chaste spouse.

38. Soothly Crystes mayden was not myche turblyd with thos tithinges. And they merveylid that knewe with how grete affeccyone she loued clene virgyns, that in the cite of Leody serued deuoutly Cryste.

39. But the mercyful Fader of heuene wiste wele that His doghter shulde haue be shente and confoundid, but if she hadde be warned byfore in this caas.

40. And whan brether of Oegines, as clerkis maner is, were ful ferde, for that at hit was seyde how enmyes wolde come to hem, she in alle thees was vnturbilde and dreedles, for holy aungels confortyd hire and seyde pees in londe to men that are wele willy. She felte grete pees and reste anenst oure [house] of Oegines[173] and certyfyed in spirite, booth of

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[172]countid] MS: 'counitid'

[173]house of Oegines] MS: 'lord of Oegines;' LAT: 'domum de Oignies,' meaning 'the [monastic] house of Oignies.' It appears the translator understood 'dominum,' or 'lord,' instead of 'domum.'

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pees and hirs, and of vndefoylynge of the forseyde holy virgyne.

41. Neuertheles, hit semyd to hir that the erthe quaked and in maner playned that sofferyd men so contraryous to her creatour in so outrage shrewdnesse.[174]

42. Hit byfelle vpon a tyme, that a nobil knyghte of hir cuntre – stronge man in armes and gyfen to the worldes vanyte, whos name was Juan of Rome,[175] inspyred of God and holpen thurghe monyshynges and prayers of the holy womman – lafte the worlde and was conuerted to oure Lorde. Thanne the wikked fende, wode and wonderly confused, aperyd to Cristes mayden pleynynge and with pretynge contenauns, as an houge grete dogge batynge hire, seyde: "O thou, shrewe and oure enmye! O thou, oure aduersarye! I hadde late an houge harme thurghe the, for thou haste rafte fro me oon of my specyalle seruants."

43. And afterwarde, whan the same knyghte hadde perseuerid in good purpos a while, hit happenyd vpon a daye that hee eet in the hous of an ost of his to whome hee was doctoure while hee was in the worlde, a ryche burgeys of Nyuelle, in whos hous hee lyued secularly and made superflu spens (as maner of knyghtes is), for hee myghte not lightly be departid fro his company for dette that he aughte hym.

44. And so whan hee, that burgeys, serued the knyghte with many deynty metes and

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[174]Neuertheless ... shrewdnesse] It seemed to her that the earth shook and complained because men were set against their creator with such shrewdness.

[175]Juan of Rome] LAT: 'Ywain de Zoania.' St. John's MS 182: 'Juan of Zoania,' so this alternate spelling must have been circulating among the Latin texts as well. "Zoania" may refer to modern "Zeune" (medieval "Zona"), a region in modern Belgium.

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delycate – while they were atte mete, the wicked en[m]y[176] sawe than abil tyme of temptynge and gaderyd a cumpany to get the kepte cite – that is to seye, the knyghte – and reduced to mynde worshyp that hee hadde in the worlde: luste and likynge and alle maner fantum that fallith to the fleshe. And the fende temptyd and tyced hym, soo that he was neer ouercomen.

45. Then the mercyful louer of men, that latith no man be temptyd abouen his powere,[177] shewyd to His mayden in spiryte how that knyght, how hee eschewed not felawshyp of seculers floteryd with a seke soule. And yitte while hee satte atte the Lorde avisynge mykel with hymselfe with a wanderynge thoghte, there come a messanger of Crystes mayden lokynge priuely atte dore. And as sone as hee myghte spake with hym, and seyde that hee shulde come a noon to his lady: and whan hee come to the place where she dwelled withoute Niuelle, hee fonde hir for sorowe and dissese of herte as seke, and waterynge with plente of wepynge the fete of the crucifixe that she hadde halsed.

46. Thenne he, meruelynge and abashed for shame whan hee asked the cause why she sorowed: "Grete cause haue I," quod she, "to make doel for yow and for youre wrecchednesse. My herte is troublid that sythen yee haue bygunen with the spirite, yee purpose wrecchedly to ende and to be consumed with the fleshe. That after yee haue

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[176]enmy] MS: 'enny'

[177]"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not ley you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

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putte youre hande to the ploghe, ye loke byhynd yow with the wyfe of Loth,[178] and are vnkynde and forgetyl of the beenfets and ouerabundaunte mercy of Hym that hath delyueryd yow fro the brennynge of this worlde while othere perisshed."

47. Than he turnyd agayne to hymselfe and holsumly compunct with myrakil of so grete reuelacyone. "Forgif me," quod hee, "meke moder. And preyeth for me, wrecche. And I behete to God and to yow that I shalle abyde saddely fro now forthe in His seruys that thurgh yow hath callid me ageyne."

48. Soothly, while the worlde withholde hym in sum partye and was tangelde with many seculer nedes that compellyd hym to go often to grete lordes courtis, thanne they that were sumtyme his felawes, cosyns, and familylyers, sorowynge for hym as for a fole, and shewynge hym to other with her finger as a wondir, and othere enforced to angyr hym and breke hym with wranges and scornes, also, summe seruantes of the fende drowe hyder and thyder the nobil man that was not vsed to siche wronges by the cappe or by the hode, hee – soothly agayne alle thees – put wondirful pacyens as a shelde and otherewhile, as mannes custume is, was sumwhatly aschamed. And whan he come home agayne, as a schepe pullyd fro wolues mouthes, [he][179] wente to comforte of his goostly moder after so grete perelle.

50. And she, meruelosly inspired of God, tolde with spirite of prophecy, scornys and vmbraydynges seyde to Crystes knyghte and the oure in the whiche he was sumwhat

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[178]"But Lot's wife behind him looked back [at Sodom and Gomorah], and she became a pillar of salt" (Genesis 19:26).

[179]he] 'he' missing from MS

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trubeld. "Yisterday this tyme," quod sche, "yee nedid helpe. And than I prayed to oure mercyful Lorde for yow atte Hee wolde graunte yow thurgh folowynge of Hym to dispise welthe of the worlde and to drede noon aduersite thereof." With the whiche myrakel and comforte of Crystes mayden, hee was so mykel comfortid that neither wynde ne rayne myghte throwe doune his hous that was sadly sette vpon a stronge stone.

51. For in soth, he was often putte atte hee shulde falle, but oure Lorde vndirsette his hande that hee slode not thurgh merites of His mayden.

52. Sumtyme, whanne she was atte Willambroc and sawe fendes ordeyne pryue gnarys with sly engynes to take sum of hir frendys, whos falle hadde be a ful grete sclaunder to the sympil pupil, thanne she, seynge that the enmye hadde bente his bowe to shete rightwis men in dirknesse, was not contente with terys or preyers, and bygan a fastynge, knowynge that siche maner of deuilry is noghte lightly casten out but in fastynge and prayere.

53. And whan she hadde mekyd hir soule with fourty dayes fastynge, then at laste oure Lorde, hauynge compassyone of His mayden, suffryd no lenger hir affliccyone and shewed that Hee hadde delyuerid hir frende; and openy[d][180] to hir into how grete slogh of synne hir famylier frende hadde fallen but if the enmye hadde be oppressed with hir fastynges and prayers. Woo is vs that haue loste in this wrecchidnesse so grete solas and so grete socoure in tribulacyouns and temptacyouns to vs in heuene that wee haue loste in this exile. Ferthermore, thof the instauns of hir prayers were spedeful medecyne ageyns dyuers and manyfolde sieknesses of soulles, she passed with a syngulere grace ageyne the

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[180]openyd] MS: 'openy'

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spirite of blasfemye and despayre, for sythen that spirite is moste wicked amonge alle othere tempte, she was moste myghty to socoure.

54. Hit happenyd that a monke of Cistens ordyr hadde so grete zele and loue of innocens and clennesse – thof not after sciens – that hee enforced and bisyed hym with seruous of spirite to come as to the euenlik state of the firste fadir, Adam.

55. And whan longe with ful myche laboure (but veyne), turmentynge hymselfe in fastynge, wakynges, and prayers, hee myghte not recuuir the firste state of innocens, he felle firste into an heuynesse and slouthe; for hee wolde ete his mete, but he wolde not fele no sensibil delite while he eet. Hee studyed not oonly to refreyne but to qwenche fully the furste stirynges of sensualite and bodily felynge. He studyed also to kepe his lyfe in perfite clannes withouten any venyalle synne, and so, by entisynge of the myddaye fende, while he desyred impossibil, nor how so mykelle he hadde labored he myghte on no maner haue hadde that hee wolde.

56. Atte laste for sorowe, hee slode into the dyche of dispair in so myche that hee hapyd to gete saluacyone no wyse in the state of corrupcyone that hee was in, as he that comitid deedly synnes, thoos that are venyalle, the whiche wee maye not wante in this lyfe. Wherefore hee wolde not receyue Crystes body any maner, not thoos dayes that were ordayned thereto in the ordyr. Lo, to how grete vnhappe and to how mikel and how myserabil ful vndir the coloure of gode! That olde enmye drowe a symple soule that was sieke and fledde salue and that – onys hadde forsaken his owne wille – putte aweye fro hym the yok of obedyens.

57. And atte I telle a fabil not fabulos and sey fals not falsly: this monke that assayed to

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come to the euenlike state of the firste fadir, to whome is hee like but vnto a paddoks that, seynge an ox of grete strengthe and fayre quantite, wolde haue comen to the gretnnesse of hym and haue be like to the same ox. Then she bygan with grete enfors to streke hir and blowe hirselfe abrode but in veyne, for thof she hadde brosten she myghte not haue taken the quantite of the ox.

58. And so, that brother – while hee wolde haue enhaunced hymselfe aboue hymselfe – felle wrecchidly be dispeyre vndir hymselfe. And whan his abbot, that was pitevous man and frende of alle gode, knewe the sieknesse of his soule; thof hee and many othere hadde prayed to God for the monke, neuertheles, the enmy ouercome and withouten blynne turmentid hym whome he streyned with a stronge snare.

59. Thanne the abbot, frende of the holy womman as he that knewe hir vertue sumtyme he felte by experiens in hymselfe, made the monke be ladde to Crystes mayden.

60. And whanne she bysoghte oure Lorde for the monke with terful sighes in a meruelos maner while the monke seyde Confitior byfore the offys of the Masse, and she prayed enterly for hym as litil blake stonys were seen falle oute of the monkes mouthe atte ilke a worde of Confiteor. Than she, perceuiynge in that sighte that obstynacyone of despayre and blaknesse of sorowe and woo hadde lafte the monke, thanked oure Lorde that wole not the dethe of a synner but rathir that hee be conuertid and lyue.

61. The monke soothly after Masse, as fro a ferre contre, tornyd to hymselfe ageyne, receyuynge Cristes body, and, after he hadde taken heelful medecyne, perfitily recuueryd.

2V. *Of the spiryte of connynge.* [*Capitulum iiij^{m}*]

1. For in eshewyng yuel thurgh the spiryte of drede, and in doynge good thurgh the

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spirite of pite, is cautelle and wisdome of discrecyone. The Fadir of lightes, whos vnccyone techith vs of alle goodes, lightenyd His doghter with the spirite of connynge atte she shulde witte whate is to be done or eschewyd and on what maner that she shulde sauer alle hir sacrifys with salte, that is to sey with discrecyone.

2. For yuel is nye to the gode and otherewhile we eshewe o vyce, wee slyde into the contrary, as whan a man fleeth superluyte sumtyme fallith into chynchery, or whanne hee eschewith abyte of seculere clothynge hath ioye in foule arraye.

3. For otherewhile vyces semen a spyce of vertue, wherfore the warre they deceyue her sowers, for they hadde hem vndir a vayle of vertue. For vndur coloure of rightewisnesse cruelte is done, and an heuy slouthe is crowed buxumnesse.

4. Also sumtyme to do a thinge with reklesnesse or forgettilnesse is callid ese and reste.

5. Soothly, she declyned neither on righte syde nor lifte but wente a blessed meen weye in a meruelous maner. For she gaf to G[o]d[181] that His was; and in as myche as was in hir she kepte in alle thynges neyghbors pees, not oonly to pesibil men but also with hem that hated pees. She was pesibil, lyuynge wisely amonge men of schreude nacyone, and she was made accordynge to alle men atte[182] she myghte wynne also to oure Lorde.

6. Wherfore hir two fleshly brethere and somme othere, thof they wer firste gyuene to the worlde, enspyred of God and holpen thorow hir wyse admonycyone, lafte alle and wente to the Cistens[183] ordir.

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[181]God] MS: 'gad'

[182]atte] that

[183]Cistens] Cistercian

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7. Also otherewhile, whan she swetly and esely was ioyned to oure Lorde with glowe of loue as o spirite made with Hym, wee tolde hir that somme men were comen fro fer contrees to see hir and hasted faste homwarde ageyne. And thof oure Lorde hadde adiured, as hee does [thorow does][184] and hertys of the feldes atte we shulde not ryse ne wake the byloued but if hirselfe wolde, neuertheles – for she wolde neuere but allewey desyred to ligge with oure Lorde in myddaye – otherewhile if a triste vnnethes wee reysed hir.

8. She, sothly herynge that straungers were comen – leste in happe she schulde sclaunder any man – compellid hir spirite with so grete sorowe fro hir ioye of contemplacyone and clippynge of hir spouse that sumtyme sche euomyte pure blode in grete quantite as hir bowelles hadde brusten. Hauynge leuer to be tourmentyd with that martirdome than to turbil or disese hir euene Cristen – and principally pees of pilgrimes – neuertheles, otherewhile, whan by reuelacyone of the Holy Gooste, she knewe byfore the comynge of sum that were ferre fro hir, she fledde to feldes or to woddes nere and hidde hir that vnnethes wee myghte fynde hir of alle a daye. Yit vmwhile for profit of summe that nedyd helpe, she was compellid to brest oute by no mannes stirrynge but thurgh the Holy Goste: "Goo thou spirite," quod she, "for not curiusly, but for cause of necessite,

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[184]thorow does] 'thorow does' missing from the MS. LAT: 'per capreas cervosque camporum' (654). The scribe had apparently skipped from 'does' the verb to 'does' the noun. 'Thorow' here is a translation of the Latin 'per,' meaning 'by means of' or 'by example of.' This refers to a passage in the Song of Songs: "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field, that you stir not up nor awaken love until it please" (Song of Songs 2:7).

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summebody abyde the."[185]

9. And thof she kepte pees with a wondir discrecyone anent hir neighbors, not oonly that were good and esy but also agenst hem that were vnreuly, neuertheles to hirselfe she was ful vndiscrete, setty[n]ge[186] ouere litil by hirselfe and turmentynge aboue mesure as hit semyd to vs sumtyme.

10. In so myche she was more discrete anenste hirselfe, in as myche as she presumed to do nothinge of hirselfe but famylierly taghte of the Holy Goste.

11. Soothly, she dorste not passe o daye withoute refeccyone of mete, but if sche knewe ful certeynly hirselfe rauishid abouen hirselfe and hir sensualite slokenyd. Neuertheles otherewhile, atte she shulde kepe pees of hem that were bisyde hir, she assayed to take sumwhat in siche state, and she myghte no thinge take but nere defayled for sorowe.

12. Wherfore afterwarde she gat so grete prerogatif of fredome that no man durste saye, "Why dost thou so?" And, for hir lyfe passed mannes resone with a specyalle priuilegge she lafte to God, to hirselfe demed alle but of no man was demyd. Soothly the Holy Goste shewed to hir ofte reforme in thinges to be done or to be lafte, the whiche we maye not come to by no mannes witte.

13. Wherfore, a hile of the yeer – whanne she toke mete thryes in the woke – she eet on the Fridaye and on Sondaye nothinge. Also, on Thursdaye she fasted fully fro metes whanne hit semyd to vs resonabil that she shulde rather not haue eten on Frydaye (that is

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[185]Goo thou ... abyde the] LAT: 'Vade, aiebat spiritus; quia non curiose, sed causa necessitatis aliquis expectat te' (654). King translates this as 'Go, [spirit], not out of idle curiosity but because someone is waiting for you from necessity' (94).

[186]settynge] MS: 'setticge'

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a daye of penauns) and haue taken mete on Thursdaye and Sondaye.

14. Then she answerid: "Sumwhile," quod she, "I condescende to myselfe to sensibil thinges, not withouten labour, while I breke ioye of contemplacyone and take bodily mete. Sothly vpon Thursdaye, that is a daye of the Holy Goost, and Sondaye, for ioye of Resurrexione, I am contente with goostly refresshynge and fillyd with euerlastynge metis, and al daye I make a feste, sethen me nedys not to descende lower for any vse of sensibil refeccyone of fleshe." And I, herynge this, helde my pees, and ferthermore openyd not my mouthe ageyne hir, and countynge my resounse noon, was sympled in myne owne sighte.

15. Forsooth, thof she by endeyn forsake not synners, but rather by compassyone, with wise warnynge, she withdrowe often many men fro the wey of wickednesse, neuertheles, hir spirite lothed synnes ful mykel, that neuer tristynge presumptuously of hirselfe, eschewed dwellynge and homlynesse of yuel men; for yuel togedir spekynges harmeth good maners.

16. And oure Lorde badde His disciples whan they entred in to a cyte that the[y][187] shuld aske if any therein were worthy in whose ostage they myghte dwelle honestly and sikirly.[188] Wherfore hit felle on a tyme that – bycause to viset sum of hir homly frendes while she dwellid at Oegines – she wente to Willambroc; and in hir commynge-agayne, as

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[187]they] MS: 'þe.' There is no other instance of 'the' for 'they' in the MS.

[188]"And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it, and stay with him until you depart. as you enter the house, salute it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if any one will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town" (Matthew 10:11-14).

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she yede thurgh Niuelle, fille to hir mynde synnes and abhomynacyouns that seculers done often in that toune. And she concyued and toke in herte so grete endeyn and lothinge that sche bygan to crye for sorowe and, askynge a knyfe of hir mayden whan she was withoute the towne, wolde haue kitte the skynne fro hir feet, for that she hadde passed by places in the whiche wrecchyd men prouoken her creature with so many wronges and wraththen Hym with so many mysdedys and synnes. And sythen she sorowed not oonly in soule but also – that more meruelous is! – felte sore in hir feet with the whiche she trode, neuertheles atte laste vnnethes myghte she haue reste after she hadde often tymes smyten hir fete togedir.

17. Soothly, the wise and discrete womman was suffyciently byshyned with holy writte, for often she herde Goddes wordes and kepte and bare in herte wordes of holy writte.

18. And hauntynge holy chirche, she hidde holy hestes wysely in hir herte. And for vndirstandynge is to alle that do hit that atte she herde deuoutly, she bisyed hir to fulfille hit more deuoutly in dede.

19. Wherfore, whan she was in hir laste sieknesse nere in poynte of dethe and any prechour sayde a sermone in the chirche to the pepil, than hir spirite quyckenyd ageyne to Goddis wordes. She made redy hir herte and helde vp hir eres – wolde deth or nolde[189] – and also tolde sum wordes of the sermone to hem that stood aboute.

20. And in so myche she loued prechours and trewe kepers of soulles that, with a wonder

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[189]wolde death or nolde] would or would not death, meaning regardless of whether or not Marie should die.

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affeccyone, she, holdynge her[190] [fete][191] after the trauel of prechynge – and whethere they wolde or noon – outher she muste longe tyme kysse hem, or ellis she cryed for sorowe whanne sche withdrowe hir.

21. And certeyne with many teerful sighes, with many prayers and fastynges, she – askynge with ful grete instauns – gat graunte of oure Lorde at[192] He wolde recompens to hir in some othere persone the merit and offys of prechynge that she myghte not get and do hirselfe in deed, and that oure Lorde wolde gif hir o prechoure for a grete gifte. And God gaf hir askynge. And thof oure Lorde pronounced wordes of prechynge by hym as by instrumente, the holy womans lyfe wroght with alle and, with prayers of hir, gaf hym in trauelle strengthe of body, ministryd worde, gouernyd his gates,[193] and, thurgh merite of His mayden, gaf grace and fruyte in the herers. For why leste he shulde haue ceced in labour of prechynge, she bysoghte for hym to oure Lorde and to Oure Lady and seyde ilke a daye a hundred tymes: "*Aue Maria*" as Martyne[194] prayed while Hillary[195] preched.

22. And soothly, she commendid ful deuoutly to oure Lorde hir prechour, whome she

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[190]her] their (i.e., the preachers)

[191]fete] MS: fetete. This is a scribal error where the scribe repeated the last two letters of the word.

[192]at] that

[193]gouernyd his gates] directed his steps

[194]Martyne] Martin of Tours, considered the founder of monasticism in France. His shrine at Tours was a great pilgrimage destination.

[195]Hillary] Hilary of Poitiers who, along with Martin of Tours, established the first monastery in France (then, Gaul) at Poitiers c. 360.

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lafte alyue atte hir dethe For wh[y][196] she hadde lyued hirs, she loued hem to the laste ende.

23. Vpon a daye, whil she was in an arber of a man of Willambroc, the deuyl apperyd to hir in the liknesse of an hirdeman. For that tyme hee, that wicked wighte, hadde gaderyd many knyghtes that on the morne shulde be at a turnamente besyde a towne that is callid [Tr]asignes[197] and that nyghte hadden hir ostages atte Niuelle. And whanne that wicked and proude fende bosted hym to be an hirdeman: "Nay," quod she, "thou arte not a hirdeman. But our maistirs that preche Goddes wordes and feden trewly oure soulles, they are verrey herdemen." "I," quod he, that shrewde and proude enmye, "haue [more][198] flokkes and more obeiynge to me than thoos maisters. For I knowe hem and they me and they here my voys and folowen me atte my wille."[199]

24. Than she myghte no lenger forbere that hee wrangusly toke to hym the name of an hirdeman that ledith his gote by pastures of vanyte to pastures of dampnacyone, where deth shalle wrecchedly deuoure hem. But she, hauynge compassyone of wrecchys, lafte

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[196]why] MS: 'wha'

[197]Trasignes] MS: 'Casignes;' Modern Trazegnies, located in the Charleroi region of modern Belgium.

[198]more] MS: 'no;' LAT: 'plures' or 'more' (655). The English probably originally read 'mo,' an acceptable variation of 'more,' but it was eventually mistranscribed as 'no.'

[199]The devil is echoing Jesus' words in the gospel here: "To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice" (John 10:3). See the chapter on Marie in the section entitled "Prophecy, Vision and Miracles" for more information on this episode of the *vita.*

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the fende and fledde to chirche. And longe tyme after whan she reduced to mynde hym that warste herdman, she myghte not absetyne fro terys.

25. And thof she were taughte withinforthe thurgh vnxione of the Holy Goste and Goddes reulacyons, neuertheles sche gladly herde withouteforthe wordes of holy writte the whiche accordid fully to the Holy Goost.

27. For oure Lorde, thof Hee myghte haue taughte His disciplis thurgh inwarde lighte withouten voys, nethertheles outewarde techynge with worde expouned to hem scriptures: to whome Hee seyde, "Now are yee clene, for the worde that I haue spoken to yow."[200]

28. Therfore sche, fro daye to daye, was more wasshen in clennesse with the wordes of Godde[s][201] writynge, was edifyed to exhortacyone of vertues, was enlumynid to the feith. Netheles, if feith may propirly be seyde in hir, the whiche – by reuelacyoune of oure Lorde – perceyued inuisibil thinges as visibil with an open feith.[202]

29. In a tyme whanne she was in a village that is callid Itre,[203] bisyde Niuelle. And while she was presente a chile shulde be catecized (that is to seye, enformed in the feith atte chirche dore). She sawe a wicked spirite with grete confusyone in senshype departe fro the childe. And whan she hirselfe heef the childe of the holy founte, her eyen were

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[200]"You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3).

[201]Goddes] MS: 'godde'

[202]Marie's faith is so strong that she sees invisible things. Jacques is making an important biblical allusion: "Now faith is the assurance of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

[203]Itre] modern Itère, located in the Péronne region of France.

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openyd and sawe the Holy Goste comynge doune into the childes soule, and a multitude of holy aungels aboute the cristenyd childe. Also often, whan the preste lifte vp the sacramente, she sawe bytwix the prestys handes the lyknes of a feyre childe and an oost of heue[n]ely[204] spirites doune-commynge with mykel lighte.

30. And whanne the preste receyued the sacramente after the fraccyon,[205] she sawe in spirite oure Lorde abidynge in the prestys soule and abeshynynge the soule with a meruelous cleerte. And if hee toke hit vnworthily, she sawe that oure Lorde wente aweye with grete indignacyone and the soule of the wrecchid preste was laft tome and voyde and ful of derknesse.

31. And thof she were not in the chirche but in hir celle and hir eyghen couerde as she vsid (with a white vayle) and preyed with Cryste. In seiynge of the woordes of sacrament, Cryste come[206] doun in the autere. Neuertheles she, wondirly chaungyd, felte Crystes commynge.

32. Also whil siek men toke the sacramente of anoyntynge in hir presens, she felte Cryste presente with a multitude of seyntes that mercyfully strengthed the seke, put awey fendes, purged the soule. And as in a lighte transfused hymselfe thurgh alle the body of the seke while diuerse membres of hym were anoynted.

2VI. *Of the spirit of strengthe.* [*Capitulum v^m^*]

1. And for it profetith litil to eschew yuel thurgh the spirite of drede, to do good by the

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[204]heuenely] MS: 'heuenenly'

[205]fraccyon] the breaking of the host during Mass.

[206]come] came

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spirite of pite, to haue discrecyone in alle thinges by the spirite of connynge, but if we withstande yuel by strengthe, kepe oure good dedys by pacyens, endure to the ende by sadnesse, and abyde the mode of euerlastynge life by perseuerauns and suffrauns, therfore, the Fadir vncuuered His tresours and onoured His doghter with a grete precyous stone – that is, the spirite of strengthe – and warisshed hire agayne alle contraryes atte she schulde not be broken with assaylynge of aduersite, nor made proude with glauerynge of prosperite atte she shulde suffre scornes with pees and tranquillyte, atte she shulde doo to no man yuel for yuel.

2. She answeryd not to vntrewe accusers. She prayed for hir pursuers, abidynge in hir purpos by sadnesse of mynde, berynge alle thinges esely by sikernesse of resone, takynge on hande wilfully harde thinges by strengthe of herte, not dredynge harmes euen atte hande by sykernesse, hauynge certeyne hope by triste to brynge hir gode purpose to a good ende, and by mykelnesse of myghte gyuynge a ful fynyshynge of hir holy and pure purpos.

3. Forsothe, not oonly in persecucyones and disseses she hadde pacyens, but alle in tribulacyones she toke[207] with grete desyre disciplyne of oure Lorde. Wherfore in hir laste siekenesse, whanne she hadde be vexed greuously nerehande fourty dayes togadir, and we asked of hir whedir she were heuy in any manere for soor of sieknesse:

4. "I wolde rather," quod she, "if it plesed God, that these fourty dayes bygan ageyne newe." And that more meruel is, she seyde ferther that she neuer sawe seke man but she desyred his sieknesse what sum euere hit were.

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[207]toke] accepted

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5. Woo to yow that berith oure Lordes crosse vnwillynge, that castith awey disciplyne of oure Lorde, that as a wodde hounde bytith the yerde of oure Lorde while yee grucche ageyne His scourge. Sothly, this precyous Crystes perle with gladnesse of a taghte and curteys herte was seke as not felynge and swetly suffred hir sores, for the inwarde esines softenyd outewarde sorowe and sumtyme lokkenyd and cecyd the burthen of sieknesse.

6. Vpon a tyme, whan she was compellid to knokke hir breste and crye for akynge of the palsye, a famyliar man of hirs, hauynge compassyone of hir, hidde hym in a place and bysoghte God for hir. Thanne she felte hir sieknes sumwhat aswaged thurgh the meke preyers of the deuoute man. "Go," quod she to hir mayden, "and seye to that man at[208] hee cece to preye for me. For while I fare better thurgh medecyn of his prayers, I take harme of my disciplyne."[209]

7. Also on a tyme, whan she was vexyd with a greuauns, on of hir frendes made dule for hir dissese, priuely allone in herte. Than sche, by reuelacyone of oure Lorde knowynge the priuetes of his herte, sende hir mayden to hym seiynge, "Sey thou to hym atte[210] hee make no more dule for me." Soothly, she was more greued with othere mennes sorowe thanne she was vexid with hir owne infirmytes.

8. And not oonly she hadde powere to withstond aduersitis thurgh the spirite of strengthe but also to absteyne hir fro alle fleshly freeltes. For in so mykel she chastised hir body

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[208]at] that

[209]Although the man's prayers begin to cure Marie's illness, she prefers the discipline involved in suffering.

[210]atte] that

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and broghte it vndir to thraldome at the body euer obeyed at hir biddynge and grucchyd not ageyne. She, excusynge hirselfe with no feinynge, motered not ageyne God but, folowynge the strengthe of hir Lorde, slugged neuer with slouthe.

9. She defayled in trauayle neuere or selden. For in so mykel she, that yonge tymberer, hadde strecchyd hir body and dyed hit as bytwix two trees of the crosse that many yeeris togadir she neuere felte ryse ageyne hir the firste sterynges of lecchery. Wherof sche hadde so grete triste amonge men, that of aboundauns of innocens and pure sympilnesse, she supposed alle othere like hirself.

10. Wherfore, whan a famylier frende of hirs of ful grete excesse of gostly affeccyone helde faste hir hande on a tyme – thof with a chaste welle he thoghte noon ille – yit he felte as man of that ouer nere,[211] neyghynge the firste felynges of freel fleshe. And sythen she wyste nothinge therof, she herde a voys fro aboue that was, "*Noli me tangere*"[212] (that is to seye, "wille thou not touche me"). Neuertheles she vnderstode not what hit bytokenyd.

11. Soothly, good God and compacyent to oure infirmite wolde not haue hym shamed byfore the holy womman, yit He wolde as a gelous louer kepe the chastite of His spouse and warne hym fro perils that myghte falle. Wherfore, whan she seyde to hym, "I harde now a voys, but what hit betokenith, in sooth, I wote nere – that is *'Noli me tangere'*" – hee, vndirstandynge what this was, fro thenne forthe was the bettir ware, and, thankeynge

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[211]ouer nere] too close physically

[212]"Jesus said to [Mary Magdalene], 'Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father'" (John 20:17).

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God that wolde not discuuer his febilnesse, toke his leue and wente his weye.

2VII. *Of the spirite of counseil.* [*Capitulum vj*^{m}]

1. Forsothe thurgh the spirite of counselle she doynge nothinge on hede, nothinge vnordynatly, purveynge and doynge alle thinges diligently with diliberacyone and avyce in alle that she shulde do or leue, she abode hym that shulde make hir saufe fro ferdenesse and hastynesse of spirite, nothinge leuynge thurgh febilnesse or feer, and nothinge hastely, nothinge vnavisely, nothinge doynge with a fers mynde in alle hir wayes. Hire eygh liddes yede byfore hir fete, wirkynge alle by councelle leste she shulde neuer so litel afterwarde repente.

2. For what myghte she do withouten sadnesse, withouten maturite of councelle, [she][213] whos mynde He fulfilled and in whos wille of soulle Hee dwellyd that saith of Hymselfe, "I, wisdame, dwelle in councels and am amonge wyse thoghtes?"[214]

3. And thof she vsed inwarde homly councelle of the Holy Gost, thof sche were enformed sufficyently with holy writte, yit for houge plente of mekenesse – leste she shulde seme wyse in hir owne sighte, forsakynge hir owne wille – she endeyned not to lowe hirselfe gladly and deuoutly to othere mennes councelle.

4. Neuertheles, many of hir famylier frendes that were often expert of hir goodly wisdome durste do no grete thinge withoutene hir councelle, for that atte she myghte not knowe by mannes resone, she wiste thurghe preyer by inspiracyone of God.

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[213]she] 'she' is missing from the MS.

[214]"I, wisdom, dwell in prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion" (Proverbs 8:12).

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5. Wherfore, whane a frende of hirs – content with goodes that God gaf hym, the more sikirly that hee was oute of mennes eyen and fro seculer boste serued oure Lorde in lownesse – was required of a nobil man to be his mayster that purveyed hym plentivously hors and clothes and many othere goodes. Hee asked councelle of the holy womman what hym was to do.

6. She soothly – that neuer presumed of hirselfe, after she hadde preyed and was comen fro pryue chaumbyrs of Goddes councels – answeryd. "I sawe," quod she, "in this deed, a blakke hors be ordeyned to yow that neyde towarde Helle, and an oste of fendes thereof were fayne. Therfore, after my councelle, dwellith in this callynge in the whiche yee are called of oure Lorde, leste yee gif occasyone to the fende by couetyse of worshyp and pompe of the worlde."

7. Also anothere amonge hir frendes, the meker that hee was, the homlyer to hir.[215] Whan hee hadde a prouendour menely sufficient to hym was ouercomen with many prayers and receyued another prouendere that was gretter of dignite and rentys. Whan he, as he was righte deuoute and dreedful, asked councelle of Cristys mayden whether he hadde offendid God in that dede, she (as hir maner was) asked a litil respyte of answere. And atte laste she enspyred and by reuelacyone of God certifyed, withouten any scrupul of doute: "I sawe," quod she, "a man clothed in white clothes and redy inow to renne, becladde aboue with a blacke mantel and charged with an vnprofitabil fardelle."

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[215]Also anothere ... to hir] LAT: 'Alias vero inter amicos suos tanto sibi carior, quanto humilior' (656-7). Or, 'Among her other friends was one who the more humble he was, the more dear to her.'

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8. Whanne she hadde [seyde][216] these wordes and othere like, he helde to hym the first provendir that was sufficyent, and, leste he schulde ambiciously occupye the stede of another man, the wyse man, dredynge God and assentynge to heelful councelle withouten tariynge, resigned that othere prouendere. Forgyueth me brethere, yee that coupil dignite to dignyte and ioyne provendyr to provender! Hyt is not myne that I haue tolde but Crystes owne schewynge.[217]

9. Sparith Cristes mayden and wille yee not bakbyte the innocent. In what hath she hurte yow? If she holsumly counceylid hir frende, if sche tolde the trewth that she herde of oure Lorde? But happely, while ye often turne the corne and loke neuere on this libelle, outher ye wil count the visyouns of Crystes mayden fantoms or ellis (as youre maner is) scorne hem as dremes.

10. For the Pharysees, whanne oure Lorde desputid of couetyse and seyde that riche men myght not entre the kyngedome of heuene, not oonly scornyd Hym but also demed Hym as a man oute of mynde.[218]

11. And soothly, atte I telle the grete dedes of the holy womman withoute accepcyone of persones, I shalle not spare myselfe, but I shalle sey a story of myne owne infelicite.

12. Whan I, thof vnworthy, bygan to preche Goddes worde to lewde symple folke and hadde neither exercise nor custom to make a sermone to the puple, euere dredynge of

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[216]seyde] 'seyde' missing in MS; LAT: 'dixisset' (657).

[217]schewynge] this is the same word used by Julian of Norwich in her book to describe her visions of Christ.

[218]See Luke 18:25; Matthew 19:24; Mark 10:25.

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myselfe leste in happe I shulde haue wantid wordes and not endid my sermon, I gaderid togedir here and there many auctorites, and so, whanne I heped mykel mater togedir, whatsoeuer I hadde in mynde that wolde I sey forthe: for a fool tellith forthe alle his spirite, but a wise man kepith sum to afterwarde.[219]

13. And whan I shent myselfe with so grete delauynesse, turnynge to myselfe after the sermon, I felle into an heuynesse of herte for bycause me semyd that I hadde seyde mykelle vnordynatly and vnmanerly. And on a tyme whanne Cristes mayden sawe me drery with siche manere sorowe, I wolde not for shame shewe to hir the cause, and atte more wrecchedful was: whan any man that herkenyd no blethely preysed me after the sermone, as custome is, as if I hadde seyde sotily, I receyued in that sum manere comforte.

14. I am schamed to shewe my foulnesse, but I dare not councelle the preisynge of the holy woman, the whiche vpon a tyme whan she, biholdynge me as confused and couerde with a clowde of the forsayde sorowe, callid me to hir and openyd to me the thre folde wounde of temptacyons with the whiche I was wrecchidly woundyd within. "I sawe," quod she, "the liknesse of a man ful of clowdes, couerde with superfluyte of heeres, and a strumpet arrayed as with summe brighte bemes byholdynge hym,[220] wente rownde aboute hym with a shinynge laumpe. And whanne she hadde often compassed aboute, she caste oon of hir brighte beemes towarde hym and drofe awey a party of the derknesse."

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[219]"In everything a prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly" (Proverbs 13:16).

[220]"And a great portent appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelations 12:1).

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15. Therefore, at this ensaumple of hir I perceyued ful certeynly anoon that I was sieke of the soores, for the superfluyte of heres genderid to me sorowe. The strumpet arayed (that is pryde) gaf me comforte wrecchedly with brighte beemes of glauerynge. I woot not with what lowuynges, thou holy womman, I shalle preyse the that knewe the priuetis of God, to whome oure Lorde openyd thoghtes of men, not withouten cause, and gaf vertue to thy werkes to make medecyne for many mannes malady.

16. Also whan she was homely with a good holy yonge woman, Heluyde by name, that was enclosed at Willambroc, whom she mykel loued and norysched in oure Lorde as the moder a doghter nerehande twelue yeere togadir. Whan that yonge womman was tempted with any greuauns, she openyd the thoghtes and temptacyons to the same yonge womman, that meruelyd how she shulde knowe hir thoghte. And also she warned hir byfore ageyne temptacyons that were to come longe or[221] they felle.

17. And sithen that same recluse hadde grete coumforte of the presens of Maister Guy that then was preste in the chirche of Willambroc, and for that atte fallith sedeynly bringeth more turbelle, she tolde hir[222] halfe a yeere byfore or[223] maister Guy wente fro Willambroc with John,[224] his brothere, and warnyd hir with many exortacyouns atte[225] she

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[221]or] before

[222]she tolde hir] 'she' refers to Marie here, the 'hir' is Heluyde.

[223]or] before

[224]John] John is Marie's husband. In 2X.4 Jacques writes that John, Marie's husband, is the brother of Guy, her spiritual advisor.

[225]atte] that

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shulde suffir pesibily hir[226] absence whos presens she loued so mikel.

18. Also of a religyous womman that hight Beselne, the whiche trewly serued longe tyme Cristes mayden – of whos presens the forsaide recluse hadde grete comforte – she seyde longe byfore that she shulde go fro hir seruys, and at she shulde suffir withouten turbille that oure Lorde [provyded].[227] And also on a tyme, a maister, while hee was in Fraunce, purposed to come to the place of Oegines, and whan oon of the brethere of the same hous purposed to go vnto Parys[228] forto be the maisters lodesman, "Abyde," quod she, "and hye not so faste. For the messanger that the maister sendith to yow is nowe in the weye commynge."

19. And so thurgh hir councelle that brothere abode stille to the messangere come to Oegines that was to come, as she byfore tolde thurgh the spiryte of prophecye. And whan the forsayde maister was gone in pilgrimage to Rome forto visite the apostils, vntrewe tithinges were tolde that he shulde be deed, and his frendes leuyd so and grete dule made for his deeth.

20. And whanne som wolde haue songen Masse for hym, "hee is not deed," quod she, " but hee lyueth!"[229] And siche a daye hee wente fro Rome saufe and sounde to come home agein. Then alle men merueled and lafte of to synge for hym. And as she seyde, so the

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[226]hir] 'their' (i.e., Maister Guy and John)

[227]provyded] The verb 'provided' is missing from the MS, but present in the Latin: '...& quod sine perturbatione, quod Dominus providerat, sustineret' (657).

[228]Parys] Paris

[229]"The official said to him, 'Sir, come down before my child dies.' Jesus said to him "Go; your son lives'" (John 4:49-50).

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ende proued.

2VIII. *Of the spirite of vndirstondynge.* [*Capitulum vij^{m}*]

1. Therfore the doghter of Jerusalem, onowryd with these broches, beshyned with thees forseide giftys of the Holy Goste as with lanternes of lightes; hir lyfe was in heuenly thinges with purifyed herte thurgh the spirit of vndirstondynge. For in so mykelle hir soule chace suspencyone fro alle worldlynesse that otherewhile alle a daye she flewe fulle hye (and sumtyme many dayes togadir) with clere brightnesse of herte,[230] not smyten ageyne, she byhelde the sune of rightwisnesse as an egil.[231] With the whiche sunne bemes she dryed up fro alle moisture of sensibil thinges, purged fro euery cloude of bodily ymages withouten any fantasye or ymagynacyone. She sawe in soule sympil fourmes and dyuyne as in a clene myrror.

2. For sensibil formes putte oute of hir, vnchaungeabil and fourmed spyces of abouen heuenly thinges resultid.[232] The more pure in hyr mynde, the more that she tented to the most souerayn sympyl and vnvaryabil mageste. And whanne hir spirite, sotil and smal, brente with the hete of meke loue, perced abouen-heuenly thinges as a smale yerde of smeke, of swete sauerynge gummes, and as by summe grecys in the contreye of quyke folke. Walkynge by stretys and lanes, she soghte whome she loued. Now delyted with lylyes of holy virgyns, now refresshed with swete smellynge roses of holy martirs,

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[230]herte] LAT: 'solis,' or 'sun.'

[231]"But for you who fear my name the sun or righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings" (Malachi 4:2).

[232]For sensibil ... resultid] Having out of her mind sensible forms, the unchangeable and complete species of heavenly things resulted [in her mind].

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vmwhile receyued worshypfully of the senate of holy apostils, otherewhile socyed to setes of aungels. Whanne she hadde gon vp by alle greces, whan she hadde walked with gladde wille by alle the places of paradys a litil, after shee was passed alle; she fonde that at[233] hir soule feruently desyred. There atte laste she hadde ful reste; there she abode fix and vnmoued, alle thinges forgoten that were byfore, then myghte she not prey for hir frendes were they neuere so dere, nor thenke on holy aungels, alle seintes as leuynge byhynde hir, [she][234] cleued to that at[235] she brennyngly coueytid.

3. And whan she loked nere in the boke of lyue, sche perceyued therein many thinges thurgh the spirite of vndirstandynge, the whiche atte laste, after she was turnyd to hireselfe she seyde, or[236] they felle, with a spirite of prophecy.

4. Wherfore three yere or[237] men were signed agayne prouyncyalle heretykes, she seyde that she sawe crosses copyously comynge doune fro heuene vpon multitude of men. Neuertheles, no mencyone was made that tyme in oure contreye of thoos heretykes, yit oure Lorde seide often to hir in spirite as planynge that Hee hadde welny loste alle that londe and at as banyshed was casten oute of that cuntrey.

5. And whanne the holy martirs of Criste that – for loue of the crucifix, come fro ferre

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[233]that at] that which

[234]she] 'she' is missing from the MS

[235]that at] that which

[236]or] before

[237]or] before

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contrees to a place that is called *Mons gaudij*[238] (that is, 'Hille of Ioye'), to venge the villany of Cryste – were slayne there of Crystes enmyes, thof she were fer cuntrey thennes, she sawe holy aungels ioiynge and berynge soulles of men slayne to hye ioyes of heuene withouten othere Purgatorye.

6. Wherof she toke so grete desyre of that pilgrymage atte she myghte not byholden if she myghte haue gone any maner withouten sclaunder of neyghbores. And whan we, as laghynge, asked hir what she wolde do there if sche hadde comen thider, "atte leste," quod she, "I wolde worshyp my Lorde, knowlechynge His name, there were[239] wicked men haue disspysed [Hym][240] and denyed."

7. And whan a famylier frend of oure hous at Oegines, signyd with the crosse, shulde dye, she sawe a multitude of fendes as rorynge[241] and redy to mete. And whan she blamed the fendes and bade that they schulde departe fro Cristes seruaunt that was signed and kepte with the baner of the crosse, they putte to hym maliciously many synnes and keste agayne hym that at precedyd not in treuthe. And whanne she bysoghte [the][242]

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[238]Mons Gaudii] present day Montjoie in the Arras region of France. This battle occured in 1211 (King in de Vitry, 163 n.144). 'Mons Gaudii' is the name given to the hill where pilgrims first see Jerusalem. However, this refers to a city in what is today France, named after the Jerusalem site. Naming local towns and places after those in the Holy Land was a common medieval practice.

[239]were] where

[240]Hym] MS: 'hir'

[241]rorynge] MS: 'romynge'

[242]the] 'the' missing from MS

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Lorde for the siek man, she sawe a brighte crosse descendynge vpon[243] hym and defendid hym on euery syde.

8. And thof that man taken with dethe didde not his pilgrimage, yit mykel parte of Purgatory for that, atte hee hadde wille and fulfillid hit not, was forgyuen to the same man signed with the crosse, as oure Lorde shewyd to the holy womman.

9. A frende of oures – nobil of kynde but more nobil of feith, deuoutly seruynge God and as myche as in hym leuynge alle worldly thinges for Crystes loue – hadde a wyfe ful worldly and ageyn seiynge his purpos. And whanne hee mykel dredde leste his wicked wyfe shulde dryue hym oute of his hous – for as Salamon seith, "there are three thinges that dryue a man fro home: smeke, droppynge rofe, and a wicked wyfe"[244] – the holy woman, hauyng compassyone of the yonge man, preyed mykel for his wyfe to oure Lorde and, esely comfortynge that nobil man, seyde that his wife shulde sone after be conuerted to oure Lorde; and that we knewe done and thanked God thereof.

10. For she – perfitely disspisynge vanyte of the worlde, as she was byfore contraryous to the gode purpos of hir husbande – so she stirred forthe afterwarde and as goynge byfore drowe hym that she fyrste hynderyd and letted.

11. Also, vpon a daye, whanne a chanone of the chirche of Seinte Geretrude in Niuelle[245]

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[243]vpon] MS: 'vpoin'

[244]A combination of the following: "A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife's quarreling is a continual dripping of rain" (Proverbs 19:13), and "A continual dripping on a rainy day and a contentious woman are alike" (Proverbs 27:15).

[245]Seinte Geretrude in Niuelle] St. Gertrude of Nivelles. She was made abbess of her mother's foundation (her mother was Ida of Nivelles) and both abbey and abbess became very famous. She died in 659.

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was in poynte of deth, [the][246] breether of Oegines wold for a righte wys cause witte the daye of his diynge.

12. And whan hit was tolde to a lewde man of Niuelle that was thenne atte Oegines that shulde go thennes and sende hem witerynge whan the chanone shulde dye, "if thou wolte," quod the holy woman, "sende tithinges be tyme of that atte is bidden thee, thee byhoueth to go thennes[247] in the mornynge and take thy weye. And on the morne, whanne he[248] yede to Niuelle, the belles were rungen for the dede chanone.

13. Vpon a fastyngange Tusedaye[249] atte nyghte, whanne seculere men vse to gif hem to etynge and drinkeynge,[250] she sawe some fendes sory and confused comynge fro a religyous womman that hadde dissesyd hir greuously with temptacyouns; but thurgh socoure of oure Lorde they hadde not the victory. And after that whan she asked of the womman how hit was with hir: " I," quod she, "was greued gretly, but that oure was I delyueryd thurgh the grace of God." And she knewe that atte that tyme she sawe the fendes go aweye fro the same womman.

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[246]the] There is no article 'the' in the MS, but the word 'breether' is being used in the plural here, meaning the brethren of the monastery at Oignies.

[247]There is an illegible character after the whord "thennes." Horstmann has no notation, and the English omits nothing from the Latin text.

[248]he] MS: 'she'

[249] fastyngange Tusedaye] Shrove Tuesday (also Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras) is the last day before Lent and a day of festivities and carnival, before the fasting of Lent begins.

[250]Marie does not engage in the Shrove Tuesday activities, and Jacques indicates that demons take advantage of those who do by tempting them with sin.

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14. Also a preste on a tyme songe Masse while she was presente and for she oftene preyed for that preste. Sithen he hadde nothinge more that hee myghte rewarde hir with, leste hee shulde serue vnkynde, hee purposed to synge that Masse for hir. And whanne the preste hadde endyd Masse she seyde to hym, "this Masse was myne. Soothly this daye yee haue offerd for me the sone to the fadir." Whanne hee meruelde and asked how she knewe that, for God allone knoweth mennes thoghtes. "I," quod she, "sawe a ful fayre douve comynge downe aboue youre hede in the auter that as flikerynge stryked hir wenges to me, and I knewe in spiryte that the Holy Gost transferid that Masse to me."

15. And what tyme prestes sange Masses worthily and deuoutly, she sawe holy aungellys ioynge and helpynge the prestes with grete gladnesse, and byhelde thos same prestes with goodly chere and worshepyd hem ful deuoutly.

16. Woo to yow wrecchyd prestes, felawes of Judas, the traytour that crucifye Cryste, efte sones as myche as in hem and defuyle the blode of the testamente that with handes polluted, with leccherous eyen, with venemous mouthe, with vnclene herte, while they go vnreuerently to the worshipful sacramente, offenden holy aungellis there presente for of an heelful medecyn they wrecchedly geten deth.

17. Vpon a tyme, whanne a ful dere frende of hirs was ordeyned preste atte Parys,[251] she sawe how hit was with hym whan he was enoynted into preste and the place where hee toke ordir and his clothinge and his wille and tolde the preste as she sawe, and hee therof hadde wonder.

18. And, whan she sende summe lettirs to hym to Parys, she wrote amonge other, sum

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[251]Probably Jacques de Vitry, himself, who was ordained in Paris.

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wordes that the preste myghte not vndirstande vnto they were fulfilled, that are these wordes or lyke: "*A newe tree now hath floured, of the whiche oure Lorde hath ordeyned to me the first fruytes.*" For sethen the preste purposed to synge his firste Masse in Fraunce, hit happened as plesed to oure Lorde that hee songe firste at Oegines in presens of the holy woman.

2IX. *Of the spirite of wisdam.* [*Capitulum viij^{m}*]

1. Forsothe, atte the wise werkeman shulde brynge his werke to a parfite ende – the hyest preste his chirche, the worthyest kynge his doghter – hee honestly arayed and passyngly onowred hir with the seuenth gifte of the seuenfolde Gost as to sauer with other; that is to seye, with the spirite of wisdome that is the firste in dignyte but the laste in perfeccyone of ende. She tasted sauer of this wisdom and sawe that oure Lorde is swete. While hir soule was fulfilled as with grees and fatnesse, while she was moisted atte mydday with Joseph atte the borde of oure Lorde ful of delytes and lenyng of hir loue, while she souked milke and hony of hir spouse[s][252] lippys[253] and yete priue aungels mete in the gardeyne of louely luste and likynge, hir herte was inwardly affecte with the delycyous gifte of this wisdam: hir wordes were swetned and alle hir werkes were fattened with esynes of goostly enointynge.

2. She was meke in herte, swete in mouthe, softe and esy in dede, dronken in charyte, and so dronken and abstracte fro sensibil thinges that vmwhile whenne we ronge to noon

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[252]spouses] MS: 'spouse'

[253]"Your lips distil nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue" (Song of Songs 4:11).

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or to euensonge she, as wekenynge, askyd whether hit were yit prime.

3. Also vpon a tyme – whanne she hadde liggen three dayes in hir bedde and restyd esely with hir spouse for swetnesse of houge myrthe – so mykel dayes wente priuely aweye that her semed atte she hadde liggen vnnethes a momente. For otherewhile she hungyrde God with wondir chaungynge of affecyones and vmwhile she toke hym.[254] And for it is writen, "they that ete me shalle yit hunger, and they that drynke me shalle yitte thriste,"[255] euer the more she felte oure Lorde, the more hir desyre encreced. She was greuyd and cryed and bysoghte that Hee wolde abyde, and leste He shulde go she helde Hym as halsynge bytwix hir armes and preyed with wepynge atte He wolde shewe Hym more to hir.

4. Sumtyme thre dayes togadir or more as hir semyd, she clypped oure Lorde as a litil babbe dwellynge bitwix hir pappys and hidde Hymselfe that othere shulde not se Hym. Sumtyme she, kyssynge, played with Hym as with a childe.

5. Sumtyme He shewed Hymselfe as a meke lambe besyde hir skyrte.

6. Otherewhile the meke Maydens sone shewed Hymselfe as a doufe to solas of His doghter,[256] vmwhile as a wether hauynge a bright sterre in His forhede yede aboute the chirche and, as hit semyd to hir, visityd His trewe pupil. For righte as oure Lorde shewed

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[254]she toke hym] she received the eucharist.

[255]"Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more" (Ecclesiasticus 24:21). "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35).

[256]"And John bore witness, 'I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him'" (John 1:32).

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Hym to His disciples, doutynge vndir the liknesse of a pilgryme,[257] and as Hee toke the forme of a merchaunte whan He sende Seinte Thomas[258] into Inde, so His wille is to shewe Hymselfe to His frendes for comforte vndir amyabil likkenesse.

7. As witnessith *Seint Jerome*[259] that *Seinte Poul[a],*[260] whanne she come to Bedelem,[261] she saw [hym][262] liggynge in a cracche as a litel babe, and in dyuerse solempnites of oure Lorde, He schewed Hym to hir as likned to His feste – as in Criste-Masse, lyke a childe soukynge the pappes of the moder mayden and weymentynge in cradel clothes, and thanne she hadde hir to Hym as to a childe, hauynge dyuerse affecyones and desyre after dyuerse shewynges, and so solempnites were renewed euery yeere.

8. In the Feste of Purificacyone[263] she sawe[264] Oure Lady offrynge hir sone in the tempil

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[257]Luke 24:15-31

[258]Seinte Thomas] Saint Thomas the Apostle. The unverified tradition is hat he was the apostle of southern India and was martyred near Madras. He is the "doubting Thomas" of the gospels.

[259]Seint Jerome] Saint Jerome. He was the father of the Church most learned in the Bible. He revised and re-translated the Latin Bible.

[260]Seinte Poula] MS: 'Seinte Poule.' LAT: 'St. Paula.' So 'she' in the next sentence is Paula: 'St. Paula cum veniret Bethlehem.' (659). She was a disciple of St. Jerome. She settled near him at Bethlehem, forming a community of religious women, building a monastery for women, and establishing a hospital.

[261]Bedelem] Bethlehem

[262]hym] 'hym' missing from MS

[263]Feste of Purificacyone] The feast of the Purification of Mary takes place on February 2. It is also known as Candlemas Day or the Feast of the Holy Family and celebrates the end of Mary's 40 day seclusion (under Jewish law) after giving birth. It is on this occasion that Saint Simeon sings the "*Nunc dimittis.*" Also see 2XII.18.

[264]sawe] MS: 'sawe sawe'

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and Symeon receyuynge Hym in his armes. And in this visyone she ioyed as myche for myrthe as if she hadde be presente whan hit felle in the tempil done in dede.

9. And sumtyme in this feste, whan hir serge hadde be longe vnlighted in the processyone, sodeynly hit receyued a ful clere lighte no man kyndelynge hit but God. And in the Passyone vmwhile oure Lorde apperyd in the crosse, but selden, for vnnethes myght she suffir that.

10. Also whanne there was any grete solempnyte neer, she felte ioye otherewhile eyght dayes byfore. And so after the cours of alle the yere she was chaunged in dyuers maners and hadde hir meruelosly. And whan any seyntes holy day was nere, that seinte shewid to hir his feste comynge to hir vpon his daye and visityd hir with a multitude of heuenly felawes – so that hir spirite rested with ioye alle that daye with the same seinte.

11. For of homely and often togedir spekynge of seintes as any man can knowe one of his neyghbors fro anothere,[265] righte so she knewe on aungel or o seynte fro anothere. Also, otherwhile, sum seynte fully vnknowen in this cuntreye tolde hir his fest that was done in ferre contrees atte she shulde make ioy in his feste.

12. And also, withouten any tellynge,[266] she discriued with herte holy dayes fro werke dayes bycause that solempne dayes saued hir swetter than sympil dayes. Soothly she halowed festful dayes writen in hir mynde and inpressed in hir herte as in a martiloge.

13. Wherfore whan she was on a tyme in a chirche of Seynte Geretrude,[267] in a village

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[265]anothere] MS: 'an nother'

[266]withouten any tellynge] without being told

[267]St. Gertrude of Nivelles's feast day is March 17.

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that is cleped Latilos,[268] and a feste of Seint Geretrude virgyn shulde be on the morne. And the preste of the same towne perceyued not that feste, she – felynge in soule solempnite nere hand – myghte no lenger contene hirselfe. And whan the preste was not redy and noon othere body range the belles (as custum is to the firste euensonge of a feste), she rose vp fro hire stede, and as she myghte, bygan to rynge the belles. The preste herde that and meruelynge ranne to hir. "Why," quod hee, "rynge yee as thof hit were holy daye? Sithen [we][269] vse not but if it be a feste to rynge this tyme of the daye." Than sche schamfaste and ferde, "Forgif me, sire," quod she, "for a grete feste is this nyghte, but of whome I wote not. Sothly now I fele this chirche filled with ioye." Than the preste opened his kalender and fonde that on the morne shold be the feste of Seynte Geretrude.

14. Sothly she hadde so many and so grete comfortes that thof she entendid to noon outewarde thinges, as mede sumtyme to recreacyone, she myghte sitte euer in o stede withouten any felawshyp, withouten slouthe or heuynesse.

15. Sumwhile forsothe she was in hir celle, she herde a moste swete voys of oure Lorde seiynge, "This is my doghter beloued, in whome I ful mykel delyte."[270]

16. And whanne she was rauished bysyde hirselfe, hit semed to hir that she helde hir

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[268]Latilos] LAT: 'Lenlos' Modern 'Lillois' in the Brabant region of modern Belgium.

[269]we] MS: 'she'

[270]This is my ... mykel delyte] This phrase is used throughout the gospels, but in relation to Jesus with the word 'son' instead of 'daughter.' It associated with the baptism of Jesus. Matthew 3:17, 12:18, 17:5; Mark 1:11, 9:7; Luke 3:22, 9:35.

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hede vpon the knees of Criste glorifyed. Sumtyme on of aungels messagynge,[271] she was salutid of sum heuenly cytesyns.

17. Also vpon a tyme while she preyed byfore an auter of Seint Nicholas,[272] her semyd that mylke flowed fro his reliques.

18. She also vmwhile [saw][273] sum brighte bemes goynge oute fro the ymage of the crucifix and comynge to hir and as persynge euene to hir herte. In alle whiche sightes she myche delyted and hir spirite was wondirly comfortyd in siche ymages.

19. Vpon a tyme blessed Benet, fadir and lanterne of Cistens ordir,[274] apperyd to hir as wynged and spradde his wynges aboute hir. And whan hee hadde sitten longe with hir in the chauncelle of the chirche and she askyd what maner wynges thoos were, hee answeryd that hee as an egyle thurgh hye fliynge come to hy and sotil thinges of holy writte, and that oure Lorde hadde openyd to hym many thinges of heuenly priuetis.

20. And sithen she hadde – in grete worshyp and with a specyal loue – loued seint John

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[271]on of aungels messagynge] when an angel brought a message

[272]Seint Nicholas] Saint Nicholas is a fourth-century saint and the patron saint of children (he later becomes the figure Santa Claus).

[273]saw] the verb 'saw' is missing from the MS.

[274]blessed Benet, fadir and lanterne of Cistens ordir] The translator (or scribe) mistakenly identifies the founder of the Cistercian order as 'Benet,' or St. Benedict of Nursia (c.480-c.550), known as the 'patriarch of Western monks' because he founded the Benedictine order. The 'lantern' of the Cisterican order, however, was St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), as in fact he is named in the Latin manuscripts. Although the order founder was St. Robert, Bernard may indeed be called the 'fadir,' having established what would become the great abbey of Clairvaux in 114, which at the time of his death had more than 700 monks and significant daughter houses. His feast day is August 20.

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Ewangeliste, hit happenyd on a tyme that she confessed to a preste a litil venyalle synne with myche weymentynge and wepynge. And whan the preste asked why she wepte so faste, "I maye not," quod she, "refreyne wepynge." For why she sawe an egil[275] vpon hir breste, that as in a welle plonged the bile in her breste and filled the ayere with grete noyse. And she vndirstode in spirite that blessed John bare aweye hir weylynge and wepynge.

21. She sawe on a tyme a preste syngynge messe deuoutely with terys, and her semyd that a douve come doune on the prestys shuldir and that a ful clere welle spronge oute of his shulder.

22. Otherewhile, she sawe the Maydens sone[276] as a childe with fulle grete brightnesse aboute the box in the whiche the sacramente of the auter was put. And whan we asked what maner brightnesse that was, she answeryd that as mykel as the lighte [of the sun, the lighte][277] of a candil, so mykel or more that brightnesse passed the brightnesse of the sun.

23. Also whan any relikes were broghte to oure chirche, she felte byfore in spirite comynge of the reliqes and alle nyghte ioyed with the holy reliqes. And she sawe Criste ioiynge, and othere relikes as with ioye and worshyp receyuynge the newe reliqes. And whether they were verrey relykes, hir spirite perceyued wonderly, for of the litil crosse

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[275]an egil] The eagle is the iconographic symbol of John the Evangelist.

[276]Maydens sone] Mary's son, i.e., Jesus.

[277]of the sun, the lighte] These missing words are in the Latin, and the sentence does not make sense without them. The verb "passed" is understood to apply to both comparisons. LAT: 'quod quantum lumen solis candelæ lumen excedit, tantum vel amplius calritas illa claritatem solis excedebat' (660).

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that is in the chirche of Oegines in the which is summe of the tre of the holy crosse, she sawe go oute a beem ful of brightnesse and a heuenly clernesse.

24. Also a famylier frende of oure hous, amonge othere relyqes that hee hadde, fonde a bone of a seynte withoute writynge and wiste not whos relikes they were. And whanne he broghte to hir these relikes to wite the sothe, she perceyued in spirite the vertus and the verrynesse of hem. And whan hee prayed that God shulde shewe to hir of whome they were, a grete gloryous seinte apperyd to hir. Then the holy woman asked, "Who arte thou?" But hee named not hymselfe but discreued foure lettirs byfore hir mynde. And whan she helde the lettirs in hir thoghte but wist not what they mente, she cleped a clerke and tolde hym the lettirs that were *a, i, o, l* and asked what they betokenyd. Than hee, spellynge hem togedir, answeryd that they signifyed *Aiol*.

And thenne she knewe openly that this relikes were of *Seint Aiol,*[278] the whiche atte prime[279] in Chaumpayn[280] is hadde in grete reuerens.

25. Forsoth sithen she angwysshed in this exile for desyre of euerlastynge lyfe, for loue of the sighte of God, and for yernynge of the coueytid blissednesse, neuertheles, on lepy and hy remedy and singler solas was to hir aungels mete, heuenly brede vnto she come to

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[278]Seinte Aiol] LAT: 'Aiolis.' This saint was probably Aigulphus, also known as Ayoul, Aieul, Aout, and Hou, a ninth-century solitary who lived in the forests near Bourges. In 812 he was against his will placed in the see of Bourges, which he governed till his death. Bourges is a town in central France.

[279]at prime] LAT: 'apud Pruvinum' or 'at Provins,' a town in France in the Seine-et-Marne. The scribe has mistaken the word to mean the liturgical hour of 'prime.'

[280]Chaumpayn] Champagne, a region in modern France.

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the londe of byheste.[281] In this, the sorowe of herte was tempirde. In this, hir woo was lokkened and hir spirite strengthed. In this hye and passyngly worthy sacramente she suffred pacyently alle periles of this pilgrimage. She ouercome alle the labours of this wildernesse and she, quickenyd with this fode, sette litil by alle defautes of this wrecchednesse.

26. For holy fleshe fatned hir and blode quikenyd, wossh, and clensed hir thro. Only solas she myghte not longe wante; for it was euen lyfe to hir to receyve Crystes body, and that was deth to hir to abstene and be desseuered fro this sacramente.

27. For in sothe she hadde leryd by experiens in this worlde that atte oure Lorde seith in the gospelle, "but if yee ete the fleshe of the sone of a woman and drynke his blode, yee shalle not haue lyfe in yow. Whoso etith my fleshe and drynketh my blode hath euerlastynge lyfe."[282] This worde was not harde to hir as to the Jewes,[283] but softe, for not only inwarde in soule but also in hir hony swete mouthe, she felte alle delyte and alle swetnes of sauour in receyvynge of this sacramente. And otherewhile – vndir the liknesse of a childe, vndir sauour of hony with smelle of swete sauerynge spyces – she receyued hir Lorde blessedly in a clene and arayed chaumbir of herte. And whan she, thristynge

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[281]londe of byhest] the promised land

[282]"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:54).

[283] This worde was not harde to hir as to the Jewes] There is a red dot marking this passage in the margin of the MS. It appears to be the same ink used in rubrication throughout the manuscript. This phrase is referring to the Jews' reaction when Jesus' preaches to them about the difference between spiritual and literal food, after the miracle of the loaves and the fishes. They do not understand his meaning and fight among themselves.

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the blissed blode, myghte no more do, vmwhile after the Masse, she asked that she myghte atte lest byholde longe the bare chalys on the auter.

2X. *Of hir comynge to Oegines.* [*Capitulum ix^m^*]

1. But for we haue shewyd the precyous broches of this kynges doghter and the sote sauourynge clothes of this spouse of Cryste, thof not sufficiently, neuertheles after oure powere now go we to the hemmes of hir clothes, that is to seye to hir blyssed passynge, that we offre with the hede the tayle of oure ost.

2. Whan she hadde longe tyme sacrifyed hirselfe to oure Lorde atte the forseyde place that is cleped Willambroc, she – that couetyd to gif hirselfe to God allone – myght no lenger suffir mykel recours of men that come to hir often of deuocyone for bycause she was so nere the next towne that is clepyd Niuelle.

3. And whan she hadde bysoghte oure Lorde often tymes with many prayers that He wolde purvey to His mayden a couenabil place to hir purpos and persones that mekely wolde agre hem to hir desyre, the place of Oegines was shewyd to hir, that[284] she sawe neuer byfore (sithen also that, for newnesse and pouerte of the hous, vnnethes was than any mencyon thereof amonge men). And longe avisynge hirselfe, she wiste not what maner place hit shulde be.

4. Forsothe she, tristynge of oure Lordes byheste longe or[285] she come to the place, as doghter of obedyens toke leue of John hir husbonde and of his brothere Maister Guy, hir gostly fader, to visit that place and to dwelle there if hir liste.

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[284]that] that which

[285]or] before

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5. Sothly, lest they shulde make hir sory whome they loued in charyte, graunte hir lightly leue, forwhy God enspyred hem to gyue hir leue. And they trowed on no manere that she shulde dwelle in siche a place that she neuer knewe, ne hadde any homlynesse of hem that there dwelled.

6. Than she, thurgh Goddes ledynge, takynge wey towarde the place ordeyned to hir, or[286] she come thyder by a good space, Seint Nicholas, patrone of the same place, mette hir with mikel myrthe and ladde hir to his chirche.

7. Soothly alle that daye while she was in the wey she mykel meruelid, for why she felte in hir herte a grete sollempnyte of Seint Nicholas to be atte that tyme. For hit was not vnknowen to hir that the feste of Seint Nicholas is wonte to be halowed byfore Criste-Masse and not in Maye that was then. Neuertheles, the same daye that she come, brether of Oegines made a grete feste of his translacyone.[287]

8. And whan she come to that place, she knewe in a wondir maner disposicyone of the place and brether of the same hous as God shewed to hir byfore, and perceyued that hit was Seint Nicholas daye. And prophecyed that she shulde make hir ende in the same place.

9. Also she shewed to me afterwarde a place in the chirche where hir biryels shulde be whan she dyed. As the ende after proued: for in the same place of Oegines she dyed, thof many after that enforced to lede hir ageyne, and in that party of the chirche whiche she

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[286]or] before

[287]grete feste of his translacyone] The Feast of the Translation of St. Nicholas is celebrated on May 9, and his regular feast is on December 6.

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seyde to me byfore was she biryed, thof othere men wolde haue done otherewyse after hir obyt.

2XI. *Of hir dwellynge at Oegines and of thoo thynges that felle to hir in the same place. Capitulum xᵐ*

1. After that, thurgh oure Lordes biddynge, she was goon fro hir owne cuntrey and kynred. After that she hadde sitten the more priuely, the more esely, vndir the vmbre of Hym[288] that she de[s]yred.[289] I suffis not to conceyue with thoghte ne telle with worde how grete thinges oure Lorde wroghte for hir in that place, how often, more plentivous than byfore, Hee visityd hir with comforte of aungellis, how often she had homly spekynges togedir in the chirche with oure Lordes moder, how often oure Lorde Hymselfe presencyally apperid to hir.

2. For euer the more the terme that she desyred and the laste yeere of hir temperal lyfe neyghed, oure Lorde shewed to hir the more aboundaunt tresours of His largenesse.

3. And whan the laste yeer that oure Lorde byhighte was nere, the whiche hirselfe myghte not hyde for ioye for six yere byfore she named hit to Maister Guy. Also she prophecyed to vs often booth the yeere [and][290] the tyme of hir passynge, but she expressed not the daye. Neuertheles, whan she myghte no lenger contene hirselfe, she panted, sighed, and for desyre cryed as no lenger suffrynge to she shulde clyppe oure

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[288]"As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow and his fruit was sweet to my taste" (Song of Songs 2:3).

[289]desyred] MS: 'deyred'

[290]and] 'and' missing from MS

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Lorde.

4. "Lorde, I wole not thou go withouten me. I coueyte no mo[r]e[291] here to abyde. I wole go home." And in a meruelous manere while she so oute-rauisshed was, angwysshed with houge desyre, for plente of herte she semed wel nye alto brusten in body. And whanne she was turnyd to hirselfe, she myghte not stande on hir fete longe tyme after.

5. Also for feruour of spirite while she, criynge, was drawen oute of hirselfe, she semed as firy in visage. And atte more meruele is, while she was in that excesse of mynde she myghte byholde the compas of the material sunne with the sighte of hir eyen vnsmyten ageyn. Than she, moysted with mirthe, myghte not be stille, but cryed: "Hit is seyde to me of oure Lorde that I go *in sancta sanctorum,*" (that is to sey, 'into holy thinges').

6. "O so swete a worde. Telle me Clennes,[292] what is 'sancta sanctorum?'" For Clennes hight hir mayden, of whom for goostly drunkenesse she asked significacyone of the worde that they neither wiste.

7. Neuertheles that worde she rehercyd often, for hit sauered swetely to hir herte. Than whanne she, turnynge to hirselfe, meruelde that she was rauyshed abouen hirselfe more hougely thanne byfore, hit was seyde to hir: "Meruel thou not. This is the laste yeere. Now hath thou no more tyme." And she herde a voys of oure Lorde clepynge hir and seiynge, "Come thou my frende, my douve, and thou shalte be coroned."[293]

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[291]more] The scribe initially wrote 'moȝe' and then corrected this by writing over the yogh with an 'r.'

[292]Clennes] LAT: 'Clementia '

[293]"Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night" (Song of Songs 5:2).

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8. Vpon a tyme whan she was stired with an houge spirite and hadde forgoten hirselfe more than won[t][294] was for plente of herte, she sayde amonge many othere: "the clothes of the kynges doghter smellen like spyce and the membrys of hir body are halowed of oure Lorde as precyous relykes."

9. Soothly in the yeere that she passed to God – whan I made me redy ageyne heretikes of offys enioyned to me by the legat of oure Lorde, the pope, to preche and signe whom God enspyred – she asked me whanne I purposed to come ageyne. And whan I answeryd that I shulde tarye longe tyme thanne, sythen she hadde no maner sieknesse byfore Lentone,[295] "I," quod she, "leue to yow of testament that I wole yee haue after my dethe."

10. For as hit is seyde, she hadde seen hir obyt longe byfore that tyme. And she seyde to me that dissolucyone of hir body neyghed nere. And for she knewe not when I schulde come ageyne, she hyed to make hir testamente, leuynge to me a thonge that she was girde with, and a lynnyn moctour with the whiche she wipte hir teres, and summe othere smale thinges derrer to me withouten comparysone than golde or siluere.

11. And whan tyme of hir desyred sieknesse, tyme of hir laste infirmyte, come nere, she seyde to hir mayden, deuoute womman of virgyns that serued hir: "I drede lest I moue be charge to the[296] and othere, for with [l]onge[297] and grevous sieknesse I moste passe fro this worlde to oure Lorde. Who schalle nowe abyde so longe by me?" Soothly she

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[294]wont] MS: 'wone'

[295]Lentone] Lent

[296]the] thee

[297]longe] MS: 'songe'

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dredde alwey leste by occasyone of hir anybody shulde be greuyd, neuertheles whan nere-hande alle were sory that they myghte not be by hir often and serue hir. For she tolde byfore that she shulde ligge dede abouene the erthe on a Monendaye, wherfore alle that yeere welny she fasted the same fery so that she that daye yete no maner mete.

12. And euere the nere that hir tyme come, the more she bisyed hir to serue and plese oure Lorde withouten any stynte nyghte and daye. Wherfore fro the Annuncyacyone of Oure Lady[298] vnto myssomer daye,[299] no but elleuene tymes and in a litil quantite she toke bodily mete, euer ioiynge, abidynge the brydalle daye with myrthe. Forsothe she hadde ful famylier and most loued amonge othere seintes, Seint Andrewe Apostil, that clepyd to hym oure Lordes crosse with so grete loue that hee wolde not come doune there fro.[300] Soothly that blessed apostil of Cryste seyde to Crystes mayden byfore hir laste infirmyte:

13. "Syker be thou doghter, for I schalle not leue the. For as I knowlechyd the feith of Cryste and denyed not, righte so in the daye of thy passynge schalle [I][301] stande by the and knowleche the byfore my God and also bere the witnesse."

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[298]Annuncyacyone of Oure Lady] The feast of the Annunciation takes place on March 25.

[299]myssomer daye] midsummer day is June 21.

[300] Seint Andrewe Apostil] Saint Andrew. He is the first of Christ's apostles. His feast day is November 30. He is said to have been martyred by crucifixion.

[301]I] 'I' is not in the MS. This is another instance where the pronoun is lacking in the second part of a sentence.

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2XII. *Of hir [songe].*[302] [*Capitulum xi*^{m}][303]

1. Whan the tyme byhighte was nere, the whiche she hadde desyred byfore with many teres and asked with many sobbynges and sighes. And loo sodeynly was made a sowne fro heuene and a turtirs voys herde in oure chirche,[304] voys of ioiynge and confessyon, as noys of on etynge and gladdynge, as noys of hye God in heuene.

2. For oure Lorde shoke aweye alle wepynge fro the eyen of His mayden and fillid hir herte with myrthe and hir lippys with modulacyone.

3. Sothly she bygan to synge with an hye voys and clere and cecyd not the space of three dayes and three nyghtes to louve God, to do thankeynges, and to sette togedir a ful swete cantelene and melody with doucet not and ryme of God, of seintes, of Oure Lady of othere holy thinges, of hir frendes, and of holy writte, and she avised hir[305] not to fynde sentens[306] ne abode to sette hem[307] togedir that were founden, but as they hadde be writen byfore hir.

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[302]songe] The chapter title in the MS is 'Of hir deth,' which is incorrect in comparison to the Latin. The title should be 'Of hir songe.'

[303]The chapter number is also incorrect here. The scribe has written "*Capitulum xiii*^{m}" but the chapter that follows is chapter eleven in the MS.

[304]The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land" (Song of Songs 2:12).

[305]she avised her] MS: her; LAT: 'deliberabat.' The Latin makes it clear that the verb, and therefore 'her' in this phrase, is reflexive.

[306]finde sentens] grammatically construct sentences

[307]hem] ie., words

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4. Oure Lorde gaf hir into that oure[308] what sche shulde seye. Ioiynge with contynuel crye, nor she in thankynge labored ne sturbled hir mynde in disposynge and settynge of hir wordes. For, as hir semyd, oon of Seraphyn (that is, a brennynge aungel) spradde his weyngys abouene hir breste, by whos mynistrynge and swetly bistandynge that rymed dyte was enspyred to hir withouten alle difficulte or hardnesse. And whanne she hadde al daye cryed vnto nyghte, here chekes were made hose,[309] soo that in the begynnynge of the nyghte vnnethes she myght put forthe any voys. Than the pryour of [o]ure[310] hous was fayne for bycause on the morne, that was Sondaye, seculere men of the cuntreye are wonte to come to oure chirche, the whiche in happe if they herde hir synge withouten cecce, with so sharpe and smale voys, myghte be sclaunderid thereby and counte hir as a fole.

5. For why men of the worlde, men of sorowe, merueile not if anybody crye for angwyssh and ache as it fallith in a trauelynge womman, but they haue wondir and meruel if any man criynge for ioye of plente of herte maye not holde his pees. But men of ioye, whan they here siche thinges, moter not nor grucche leste they be sclaunderyd, and with alle mekenesse worshyp the grete giftes of God in His seyntes. And atte morne oure tymbrere bygan to harpe hyer and clerer than byfore. For oure Lordes aungel that nyghte didde aweye alle hosenesse fro hir throte, puttynge into hir breste enoyntement of wondir

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[308]oure] hour

[309]here chekes .. hose] LAT: 'raucæ factæ sunt fauces ejus' (663) or 'her throat was made hoarse.'

[310]oure] MS: 'ure'

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soupilnesse. And so hir artery veynes repareld and voys renewed, welny al daye she ceced not and men herde louvynge of God, voys of gladnesse, and mery notes of melody.

6. Sothly the dores were staken and alle shytte oute and oure pryour and the holy wommans mayden abode in the chirche. But they myghte not vndirstonde many thinges that she seyde of heuenly priuatys, and summe they undirstode, but woo the while they helde not a fewe.[311] Atte the firste she bygan hir antem fro[312] the hyest tone – that is fro the holy Trinite – louvynge ful longe tyme the Trinite in vnite, [vnite] in Trinite,[313] settynge amonge to hir swete songe meruelous thinges and vnspekabil of the holy trinite, also summe thinges of holy writte and wondirly expownynge of the gospelle with salmes of the olde testamente and the newe, shewynge sotily mykelle that she neuer herde.

7. Fro the trinite, soothly, she come doune to the manhede of Cryste; fro thens to Oure Lady, fro thennes pronouncynge many thinges of holy aungels of the apostils and othere seyntes folowynge. Thenne, as in the laste poynte and lowest, she seyde mykil of hir frendes that yit are in the worlde and, commendynge hem to oure Lorde ilke after othere by rowe, preyed to God for hem with many orysouns.

8. And alle this she seyde in ryme and Romayne tunge.[314]

9. Forsoth she seyde amonge many othere, that of the lighte of the holy trinite holy

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[311]they helde not a fewe] they could remember but a few things

[312]fro] MS: 'fro fro'

[313]Trinite in vnite, vnite in Trinite] LAT: 'Trinitatem in unitate, unitatem in Trinitate' (663). The second use of 'vnite' is missing from the MS.

[314]Romayne tunge] vernacular French.

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aungellys haue vndirstondynge, and the lighte of Crystes body glorifyed in holy soulles they haue fruyte and ioye.

10. Also she affermyd sadly[315] that Oure Lady Seynte Mary, Goddes moder, is now glorifyed in body, and at[316] the bodyes of seintes that roos in Crystes Passyone neuere after turned ageyne into pouder.

11. Also she seyde (and thereof she was ful gladde) that the Holy Goost in haste shulde visit His chirche and more plentivous than byfore shulde send holy labourers to fruyte of soulles thurgh alle holy chirche and shulde beshyne the worlde for the most part.

12. She seyde also, whan she songe[317] of Seint Stephen,[318] whom she clepyd 'Rosyer of Paradys,' that while he prayed in his passyone, oure Lorde gaf hym Seint Poule in gyft. And whan Seint Poule consecrate thurgh martirdome yelde the gost att his diynge, Seynte Stephen was thereby and offird the spirite of Seint Poule to oure Lorde seiynge, "Lord, thou gaf me this grete and singulere gifte, and I, with many folde fruyte, gif hit ageyne to the."

13. And then she myche besoghte oure Lorde for a prechor that Hee hadde gifen hir.

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[315]sadly] seriously

[316]at] that

[317]songe] sang

[318]Seint Stephen] St. Stephen the Deacon (Protomartyr). The disciple chosen by the apostles as the first of the seven deacons. He was stoned to death by the Jews at the instigation of the Sanhedrin, thus becoming the Christina protomartyr. His dying prayer obtained the conversion of St. Paul, who was actively engaged in his martyrdom.

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14. And with many orysons preyed that God schulde ende hym firste atte[319] she myghte offyr his soule to oure Lorde whanne hee dyed, at[320] she myghte bere ageyne to God with vsure in the ende that He gaf to hir byfore.

15. And in a meruelous maner, she rekenyd vp alle the temptacyones of hir prechour, and welny alle his synnes that hee hadde done, sumtyme preiynge oure Lorde that Hee wolde vouchesaufe to kepe hym fro suche synnes that hee hadde done, sumtyme preiynge oure Lorde that Hee wolde vouchesauf to kepe hym fro suche synnes.

16. Oure pryour herde that, knewe that mannes conscyens, and herd his confessyone; and goynge to hym, seyde "Whethere yee haue seyde youre synnes to dame Marye? For while she songe, she tolde so youre synnes as if she hadde sene hem writen byfore hir in a boke."

17. The louely songe of Oure Lady – that is 'Magnificat' – she rehercyd ful often and expounynge hit in Romayne tunge fonde there in mykel mirthe and swetnesse.[321]

18. Whan the ende of the songe, she come to the songe of Symeon, then she commendid ful deuoutly to oure Lorde hir frendes and religyous wymmen that dwellen in the cite of Leody; and preiynge for hir pees, she rehersyd the firste verce of the songe, atte euery clause that is *'Nunc dimittis seruum tuum Domine secundum verbum tuum in pace.'* That

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[319]atte] so that

[320]at] so that

[321]Magnificat] The "Magnificat" is Mary's prayer found in Luke 1:46-55 and Luke 2:29-32.

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is to saye, "Lorde, now thou leuys thy seruaunte in pees after thy worde."[322]

19. Then, the three dayes of ioiynge paste, she garte make hir bedde in the chirche byfore an auter and comen ageyne to hirselfe. She callid men to hir and seyde: "Lamentacyons are passed byfore while I sorowed for synnes. Songe is gon byfore while I was iocounde and ioyful for euerlastynge godes. Loo, now foloweth wee of syeknesse and deeth; I schalle neuere ete after now. I schal neuere herafter rede in this boke." And takyng to brether a litil boke that sche hadde in the whiche she vsed to seye orysouns and somme dytees and rymes of Oure Lady, she putte hirselfe pacyently vndir disciplyne of oure Lorde and abode with ioye a blessyd ende in silens and in hape.

2XIII. *Of hir sieknes byfore hir deth.* [*Capitulum xiii*^{m}]

1. Sothly in this sieknesse, she was trauelyd greuously withouteforthe, but she restyd ful esely within, for seintes that hadde stonden by hir often in state of heel visityd hir oftener in sieknesse.

2. And Cryste, apperynge often to hir, as with chere of compassyone byhelde hir. Also His blessed modir Mary was welny alwey bisyde hir. And amonge alle othere, Seint Andrewe the Apostille, comynge often to hir, gaf hir ful grete comforte and made the sore of hir sieknesse as insensibil to hir. And also holy aungels were by hir and serued hir deuoutely, wherfore whan she thristed on a nyghte and for mykel febilnes myghte not ryse ne sitte by hirselfe, two holy aungellis holdynge hir vp and ledynge hir to a place where

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[322]The "*Nunc dimittis*" is the song of Simeon in Luke's gospel: "Lord, now lettest thou servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel" (Like 2:29-32).

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water was putte, she dranke; and they ledynge ageyne, she yede to hir bedde withouten any trauel. And thurgh warnynge of Oure Lady whan she sholde be anoynted, alle the apostils were presente.[323] Seynt Petir soothly shewed the keyes and byhyghte that he shulde open heuene gate. And Cryste styked to hir fete the merke of the holy crosse, baner of His victory.[324]

3. And whanne sche was turnyd in dyuerse sydes in takynge of the sacramente, she felte wirkynge of the Holy Goste with fulle grete lightnesse of that party of the body.

4. Also summe of hir frendes knowleche that were dede byfore were sende to hir for comforte: John of Dynant, that regnyd with Cryste; and frere Richard of Messeere, prest,[325] holy man and good in his lyfe, the whiche netheles was yit in Purgatory.

5. Also a man that aske[d][326] helpe of Crystes mayden apperyd to hir in hir sieknesse that with moste peyne was turmentyd in Purgatory; for hee sumtyme hadde name of religyone and shewed hymselfe in state of perfeccyone, but after that with sclaunder of many men and shame of religyone, turnynge ageyne to the worlde, made a contracte with a womman that also longe tyme shewyd parfite lyfe and brake hir firste feith.

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[323]The Virgin Mary tells the apostles that Marie will be undergoing the Last Unction (the sacrament given to the dying), and all of them are present for the anointing.

[324]Part of the ceremony of Holy Unction is the making of the sign of the Cross on the soles o f the dying person's feet. Jacques is saying that Christ himself – not the local priest – administers the sacrament to Marie. Some critics have suggested that the "merke of the holy crosse" here may be the *stigmata,* but that seems unlikely.

[325]The Acta Sanctorum notes that both John of Dinant and Richard of Manechan were important figures in 1195, although there appears to be no more information on either of them than this.

[326]asked] MS: 'aske,' but the sense of the phrase clearly calls for a past participle.

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6. And abouen alle thinges hee seyde that hee was peyned and punysched for hee hadde with sclaundir hurt Goddes Holy Chirche.

7. Also whanne the holy byschope of Tholose[327] come to visit hir, she receyued for the tyme ful mykelle comforte and bodily strengthe of the byschopes presens. And as it semyd to hir, Oure Lady liftyd hir as in the ayere ageyns the byshope.

8. Also whan the same byshope[328] hadde halowed the auter of Oure Lady in the same chirche and songe Masse, she[329] sawe in percepcyone of the sacramente as a white douve that put the sacramente in the holy byshopes mouth and alle ful grete brightnesse beshynynge hym within, and by reuelacyone of oure Lorde, she knew his soule be lemned. And also in hir sieknesse whan sche myghte ete no maner mete, nor myghte sofour the sauoure of a litil brede, lightly she toke often Cristes body – that anoon, as meltynge, wente into hir soule and not oonly comforted hir spirit but also esyd withouten tariynge hir bodily sieknesse.

9. Sothly hit felle in hir infirmyte, while she receyued Cristes body, that hir semblaunde shyned, as with sunne, brighte bemes of lighte.

10. And whanne wee assayed vmwhil whether she myghte take an obley vnconsecrate, anoon she lothed the sauoure of brede. For whanne a litil party touched hir teeth she bygan to crye, to spitte, and to pante as hir brest shulde haue bristene. And whanne she hadde longe cryed for ache and often tymes hadde washen her mouthe with watir, after

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[327]Bishop Fulk, to whom the *vita* is dedicated.

[328]byshope] MS: 'byshope bysshope'

[329]she] refers to Marie

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mykel parte of the nyghte was passed, vnnethes myghte she ryste.

11. Forsooth, were she neuer so febil in body and hir heed neuer so weyke and tome (as she that thre and fifty dayes or[330] she dyed ete no maner mete), neuertheles, alwey she suffred the lighte of the sunne and neuer closed hir eyghen ageyns brightnes of the lighte. And that more meruelle is, whil we songe with hye voys bysyde hir and as atte hir eerys[331] in the chirche, and while wee ronge the bellis longe and faste, and also while wee reryd an auter to be halowed of the byshop of Tolose[332] with many masons, smytynge with malles bisyde hir, she myghte neuere be grettered[333] with any bustelynge that she wist pertene to God and to His chirche.

12. For as she hirself seyde whan wee were sory for hir, that noys hirt not hir hede ne smote not hir brayne, but anoon she toke hit in hir soule with grete reste.

13. Also hir frendes and of hir knowleche come faste to hir fro dyuers cuntreys to visite hir, and whan wee spake of summe that were absente and hadde not comene to hir, of summe she seyde, "Yit shalle I see hem," and of summe she seyde, "I shal neuer see hem in this worlde." And that haue witen falle.

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[330]or] before

[331]as atte hir eerys] as if it were directly in her ears

[332]Tolose] Toulouse, a town in the south-west of modern France, in the Languedoc region. It was an important medieval city.

[333]grettered] The MED has no entry for "grettered," but defines 'igreten' as 'to afflict.' It appears that the word has lost its prefix "I," which gradually disappeared from Middle English in the 15th century. Horstmann emends this word as "greued."

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14. Also a nobil woman, sumtyme wyfe of the Duke of Louany[334] that lafte the worlde and made hir a nunne of Cistens ordyr, hadde seen Cristes mayden longe or[335] she dyed while she dwelled atte Willambroc.

15. And whan she departed fro hir and seide, "Dame, I wote not whether I schalle euere see you more." "Yit," quod the holy woman, "shalle yee see me." Than, whan she that dwelled aboute Coleyne[336] fer fro oure contrey, herde that the holy woman laye on diynge. "I triste in God," quod sche, "that yit I schalle see hir as she byhight." And so was hit, for whan sche come to vs the belles were rungen for the liche and then she was present while the body was wasshen and buryed.

16. Soothly, summe thinges she seyde to a pryue man of vs that shulde falle after hir deeth, as she knewe by reuelacyone and byheste of the Holy Goste, the whiche thinges for sclaundir of febil folke wee write after that when they falle may lightely be perceyued by scripture.

17. But the more[337] tyme wee haue seled the wordes and clapsed the boke, for haply many men shalle passe ouer and cunnynge shalle multiply. Certeynly summe men, but if they see a noon falle that at God reserues to profite of hem that come after, bygynne to

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[334]Duke of Louany] The Duke of Louvain may refer Godefroid III (1142-1190). The Acta Sanctorum edition identifies this woman as Smaina, the daughter of Godefroid III.

[335]or] before

[336]Coleyne] Cologne, an important cultural and historical city (and the seat of an archdiocese) in the north of modern Germany (approximately 110 miles east of Brussels).

[337]more] Horstmann: 'mene'

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grucche and moter, seiynge with the Jewys "*Manda, remanda, exspecta, reexpecta.*" That is a scorneful worde writen in the prophet Ysaye and be moueth thus: "*Bidde and efte bidde, abyde, abyde and efte abyde.*"[338] *As whoo seith thou prophecyes often, but hit is not trewe, for wee maye abyde and longe loke aftir.*

18. Neuertheles, summe haue wee now seen falle:[339] as of the place that sche is inburyed; and of the clothes halowed and honoured for colde;[340] and of the Monday in the whiche she, biryed, laye deed. The whiche thinges soothly, as she seyde byfore, felle afterwarde, and therfore we abyde to the tother dele to come ful certeynly: as of the newe songe that oure Lorde byhighte hir of the [newe] sollempnite[341] for[342] aungellis voys herde; of myracles for brightnesse that she sawe, as hit I seyde byfore, that God apperyd to hir often in grete brightnesse; of the doubil fastynge of the two sollempnites for two dayes, ([for

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[338]"'For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.' Nay, but by men of strange lips and with an alien tongue the Lord will speak to this people, to whom he has said, 'This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose'; yet they would not hear. Therefore the word of the Lord will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little; that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken" (Isaiah 28:10-13).

[339]falle] happen

[340]for colde] because of the cold (i.e. because they kept her warm despite the cold)

[341]newe sollempnite] MS: 'sollempnite;' LAT: 'novae solemnitatis' or 'new solemnity' (665). The translator took 'novae' as modifying 'songe,' even though it should have modified 'sollempnite.' The 'sollempnite' probably refers to the feast of *Corpus Christi.*

[342]for] because of

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after feasting for two dayes], the thridde day she toke mete);[343] of the firste[344] and to be worschepyd ymage, for often she, knelynge, worsshepid the ymage of Oure Lady Seint Mary.

2XIV. *Of hir deth . Capitulum xiij^m^*

1. Forsoth whan hir tyme neyghed nere, oure Lorde shewed to His doghter porcyone of hir erytage amonge hir brethere and she sawe a place in heuenly thinges ordeyned to hir of oure Lorde. She sawe and ioyeful was. The heyght of the whiche place, the gretnesse of the whiche ioye, we myghte summe maner suppose if wee myghte holde in the herte the precyous stones and vertues of perles and gemmes that she wondirly discryued, and the names of stones that she named thurgh shewynge of oure Lorde. But for hit is writen "Ighe hath not seen God except the, that thou hath ordeyned to hem that louene the."[345] We maye not comprehende, but allonly we maye knowe how grete ioye she is worthy, that serued God so deuoutly, that loued Cryste so feruently. And whan oure Lorde honoured in erthe with so many priuileggys synggulerly the Thursdaye byfore the daye of hir passynge, while we were presente and stode by hir in the euenynge, she wolde not

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[343]of the doubil ... toke mete] MS: the bracketed phrase is missing from the MS; LAT: 'de duplici jejunio in duabus solennitatibus, propter biduana jejunia (nam frequenter post duos dies tertop cibum capiebat)' (665), or "of the double fast on two feasts, because of her two-day fast (for frequently after two days, she took food on the third).' The scribe seems to have skipped from the first usage of 'two dayes' to the second one, leaving out what should have been in between.

[344]firste] LAT: 'propria' or 'proper,' but the St. Johns MS 182 contains the error 'prima,' which is what has been translated here.

[345]"From of old no one has heard of perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides thee, who works for those who wait for him" (Isaiah 64:4).

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speke to vs nor turned hir eyen towarde vs, but she laye vnmeuabely with hir yghen euene lokynge into heuene.

2. For she laye withouten hir celle vndir the eyre and her chere bygan to wex clere as with a brightnesse.

3. Then she for ioye ful longe, as smylynge, bygan to synge with a lowe voys I woot not what, for then myghte she not synge hyghe. And whan I neghed more nere and herkenyd bisily, I myghte not vndirstonde but a litil of hir songe and that was this: *Quam pulcher rex noster Domine.* That is to sey in Englysche, "ful feyre kynge oure Lorde."

4. Whanne she hadde longe abyden in so grete ioye, singynge, laghynge, and otherewhile hir handes clappynge, than she turnyd to hirselfe as of a newe comynge-ageyne to felynge of infirmyte that she not felte byfore and bygan a litil to be greued. And whanne we asked of hir what she hadde seene sythen she wolde ne myghte not speke to vs but litil, neuertheles quod she, "I wolde sey to yow yif I durste."

5. Soothly, the same Satirdaye at euene, whan the daye of ioye and myrthe was ne[r]er,[346] daye that oure Lorde made, daye that oure Lorde purveyed and bihighte to His mayden, oure Lordes daye, daye of resurrexyone, daye of the vigil of Seint John Baptiste[347] in the whiche also – as men seith – Seint John Euangelist passed fro this worlde thof his feste beholden another tyme, then Crystes mayden that hadde eten no maner mete two and fifty dayes bygan with a swete voys to synge "Alleluya," and welny alle that nyghte as boden

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[346]nerer] MS: 'neuer'

[347]Seint John Baptiste] Saint John the Baptist. His feast day is June 24. His life is narrated in the gospels, especially in the gospel of Luke.

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to a feste she was in ioye and mirthe.

6. Soothly, the fende apperyd on the Sondaye and vexed hir gretly. For she bygan sumwhat to drede and also to aske helpe of hem that stode aboute. But then she, takynge ageyne triste of oure Lorde, and strongly brekynge the dragons hede, and sheldynge hirselfe with the signe of the crosse, "Go abacke," quod she, "thou filth and foulnesse!" For she called hym not "foule," but "foulnesse."

7. Than, the fende fleyng aweye, she bygan to synge and thonked God of His grete grace.

8. And than certeinly whan the euene come nere byfore the fest of Seint John Baptist, aboute that oure[348] that oure Lorde yolde the gost in the crosse (that is the oure[349] of noon), she soothly passed to God, neuer chaungynge for any sorowe of deth, gladnesse of semelande, or visage of ioiynge. Nor I haue mynde that in hele she hadde more gladnesse[350] of chere and more liknesse of lyfe; nor as custum is after deth she semed broune or blo in face but with an aungels contenauns and douvely sympilnesse, white and clere in visage. In hir diynge and after hir deth she stired many to deuocyone.

9. Also many were moysted swetly in hir obyt with plenevous flode of teerys and they perceyued hemselfe visityd of God thurgh hir prayers, as a holy woman[351] sawe byfore of the Holy Goste and seyde byfore that they that come togadirs at hir passynge shuld

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[348]oure] hour

[349]oure] hour

[350]gladnesse] MS: 'glad gladnesse.' It appears the scribe began the word "gladnesse" and then wrote it again.

[351]a holy woman] refers to Marie

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receyue mykel comforte of oure Lorde.

10. Forsoth whan hir holy body shulde be washen in hir obyt, she was founden so smalle and lene thurgh infirmite and fastynges that the rigge bone of hir bak was clungen to hir wombe. And as vndir a thinne lynnen clothe, the bones of hir bak semyd vndir the litil skynne of hir bely.

11. She forsoke hem not after hir deeth whome she loued in hir lyfe, but to summe she come ageyne.[352]

12. Also she spaken often to holy wymmen and of proued lyfe. And she taghte hir frendes what they shuld do and warned hem in perils, puttynge awey alle doute fro hir hertes be certeyne priue tokens. Also she gat of oure Lorde with preyers to summe of hir frendes booth grace of wisdome and feruour of charyte.

13. Wherby to sey a monke of Cistens ordyr sawe in slepynges, after the passynge of Cristes mayden, that a golden chalys went oute of his mouthe with the whiche he gaf drynk to summe of his frendes. Another tolde me that he sawe in slepynges hir body borne as into a ful brighte precyous stone.

14. Sothly in the yeer of incarnacyone of Cryste a thowsande two hundreth and threttene, the nynthe kalendis of Jule,[353] in the euen of Seint John Baptist,[354] the Sonday aboute

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[352]She appeared in visions to some of her friends after her death.

[353]nynth kalendis ... Jule] The "kalends" are the Roman calendrical system which marked the first of the month as the "kalend," and counted backwards from that date. The ninth kalends of July is thus June 23.

[354]euen ... Baptist] The feast of St. John the Baptist is June 24, so the eve of the feast is June 23.

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noon, the precyous perle of Cryste – Mary of Oegines – aboute sex and thritty yeere of hir age was borne into the palys of euerlastynge kynge, where is lyfe withouten dethe, daye withoute nyghte, treuth withouten falsnesse, ioye withoute sorowe, sikernesse withouten drede, rest withoute trauelle, euerlastyngenesse withoute ende; where the herte is not angwyshed with besynesse, where the body is not dissesed with sorowe, where the ryuer of luste[355] fillith alle thinges and stoppis with spirite of ful fredome, where we shul knowe as wee are knowen; whan God shal be alle in alle and shalle gif reyne to God the Fader, oure Lorde Jhesu Criste, that with the Fadir and the Holy Gost lyueth and reyneth withouten ende. Amen.

16. *Here endith the boke, writen in the yeer of grace a thousande two hundreth and fiftene, that is to wite of the life of Seint Mary of Oegines, endytid in Latyn of Maister James, bishop of Acton.*

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[355]ryuer of luste] LAT: 'torrens divinæ voluntatis' (666), or 'torrent of the divine will.' The scribe seemed to confuse 'voluntatis' with 'voluptatis,' or 'pleasure.'

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Glossary

- MED = Definition found in the Middle English Dictionary.
- OED = Definition found in the Oxford English Dictionary (used only when a word does not appear in the MED).
- * = Spelling not recorded in the MED or OED.
- The lead spelling of a word in the MED or OED immediately precedes the definition between inverted commas. The MED identifies if words are spelled in two different ways through the use of open parenthesis. Thus, 'ayen(es' means the word can be spelled as 'ayen' or 'ayenes.'
- For words with several definitions, the number and letter which designates the one used is noted.
- If no dictionary is designated, I have provided the definition myself.
- The characters that follow each entry identify the location of usage of that word in a particular text. The first character identifies the subjects of the *vita*: (E=Elizabeth, C=Christina, M1=Marie Book I, M2=Marie Book II), followed by the chapter and paragraph (in Roman and Arabic numerals, respectively). Thus, in the first entry the word "abhomynabil" appears in the *vita* of Christina *mirabilis*, chapter 35, paragraph 3.
- Parts of speech are identified within parentheses, according to traditional dictionary abbreviations (adj=adjective, adv=adverb, conj=conjunction, ger=gerund, n=noun, ppl=present participle, prep=preposition, v= verb).
- Within the body of the definitions, abbreviations are used (eccl. - ecclesiastical, sb=somebody, sth=something, mus=music).

A

*abhomynabil CXXXV.3: MED: (adj) 'abhominable' - (2.a) of a thing, a doctrine, a vice, a sin, etc., morally disgusting, detestable, odious, cursed

*abiecte C XVIII.6, M1 V.1, M1 VI.2: MED: (ppl) 'abject' - (1) outcast, rejected; wretched; expelled

abidynge C XXVI.1: MED: (ger) 'abiding' - (5.a) patience, endurance, forbearance

*abstynens M1 X.1: MED: (n) 'abstinence' - (2.b) fasting, a fast

abyden M1 VI.1: MED: (v) 'abiden' - (7.a) to wait for (sb) to arrive, wait for (sth) to come or happen

abydeth E III.2: MED: (v) 'abiden' - (3.a) of persons: to remain (in a place), stay

abyte M II.2: MED: (n) 'habit' - (1.c) the characteristic attire of members of a religious

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or clerical order; monastic habit

abode C IV.8: past tense of 'abiden;' see 'abyden'

abood C VIII.1: past tense of 'abiden;' see 'abydeth'

accordith E III.20: MED: (v) 'accorden' - (5.c) to be comparable, similar or alike

*acordaunte E III.6: MED: (adj) 'accordaunt' - (1.c) (mus) harmonious, pleasing

Actone M1 1.1: see 'Attone'

adiure C XXXVII.3: MED: (v) 'adjuren' - (a) to bind (sb) by oath; also, to entreat (in the name of, or for the sake of, sth holy)

adiurid C VIII.2: past tense of 'adjuren;' see 'adiure'

ageyne seyde M1 IV.1: MED: (v) 'speken' - (1.c[a]) ~ ayen(es to speak things contrary to

aghte E VIII.14: MED: (v) 'ouen' - (4.a) as modal verb expressing moral or legal obligation, necessity, propriety, etc: to be supposed (to do, undergo, or be sth), ought, should; have a duty or right (to do or have sth); be obliged (to do sth)

*albe E VIII.7: MED: (n) 'alb' - (1.a) an ecclesiastical vestment (usually of white linen) reaching to the ankles

*algates E IV.4, algat E VIII.3: MED: (adv) 'al-gates' - (2.a) all the while, unceasingly, continually

*alloonly E VII.8: MED: (adv) 'al-oneli' - (1) merely, no more than, by itself

allynges E VII.8: MED: (adv) 'allinge(s' - (1.a) in every way, wholly, entirely, sufficiently

almes M2 III.6, alms C XVIII: MED: (n) 'almes(se' - (1.a) anything given to relieve those in poverty or distress, any charitable gift or offering

*alyenid M1 XI.4: MED: past tense of (v) 'alienen' - (2.b) be estranged

amendemente C IV.7: MED: (n) 'amend(e)ment' - (5) moral improvement, edification

aneled C XXXVI.3: MED: past tense of (v) 'anelen' - (b) to anoint

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anenste C XVI.3, M2 V.10: MED: (prep) 'anent(es' - (2.b) against (sb or sth)

anent M1 XI.6, M2 V.10: see 'anenste'

*anentized E III.14: MED: past tense of (v) 'anienten' - (b) to go to nought, to be ruined

Anne E IV.4: Annas, Caiaphas' father-in-law

*anone E VIII.2, anoon E VIII.6: MED: (adv) 'anon' - (1.a) at once, immediately, right away, shortly, soon

anoyntynge M2 V.31: MED: (ger) 'enointing' - (4) the sacrament of extreme unction; last enointing

*anykins E IX.15: MED: (adj) 'anikin(nes' - any kind(s) of, any

apayed C IV.3: MED: past tense of (v) 'apaien' - (2.a) be content or satisfied

apostasy C XXII: MED: (n) 'apostasie' - (2.a) abandonment of holy orders without dispensation

arayed M1 VI.2: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'araien' - (4) to adorn (sth), decorate, beautify

arrette C XIV.2: MED: (v) 'arretten' - (1.a) to attribute (sth to sth)

*artyd C XII.4: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'arten' - (2.a) to force or impel (upward)

assaylynge M2 VI.1: MED: (ger) 'assail(l)ing' - (b) assailing, temptation (by evil)

askes C VII.2: MED: (n) 'asshe' - (2[2.a]) ashes of the human body left after cremation or other burning

aspyed C XXXIV.2: MED: past tense of (v) 'aspien' - (1.a) to spy upon

assoyled E VIII.22: MED: past tense of (v) 'assoilen' - (1.a) (eccl.) to absolve of sin by divine or sacerdotal authority

astonyed C VI.4: MED: (ppl) 'astoned' - (3) overcome with surprise or wonder; surprised, amazed, astonished

astoyle M1 X.15: MED: (adj) form of (n) 'hostilite' - hostile action, hostility

aswaged M2 VI.6: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'as(s)wagen' - (1.a) to mitigate, alleviate, relieve

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(sorrow, pain, illness)

atwynne E IX.8: MED: (adv) 'atwin(ne' - (2.c) asunder, apart

*auelonge E II.4: MED: (adj) 'avelong' - oblong, elongated

aughte M2 IV.43: see 'aghte'

auter M VI.9: MED: (n) 'auter' - (1.a) the altar of a church; also, the altar placed before the shrine or image of a saint

avisynge M2 IV.45: MED: (ger) 'avising' - taking thought, consideration, deliberation

avyce M2 VII.1: MED: (n) 'avis' - (3.a) act of thinking, reflection, meditation

B

badde E VIII.19: MED: past tense of (v) 'bidden' - (1.a) to ask, beg or plead for

*bakbyte M2 VII.9: MED: (v) 'bak-biten' - (2) to speak ill of; disparage; criticize

barre E IV.3: MED: (n) 'barre' - (2.a) the railing in front of the judge's seat in a court of law; the court itself

*battys E III.5: MED: (n) 'bat,' pl. 'battes' - (1.a) a war club or mace; a cudgel

*beclipped E V.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'biclippen' - (3.a) to surround, envelop or encompass; (3.c) to encircle (something), wind around

*bedowen C X.2: MED: (ppl) 'bedoven' - drenched

*beenfetys E VIII.15, beenfetz M1 VI.3: MED: (n) 'benefet(e' - (2.a) a beneficial thing, a gift, an advantage

beer M2 IV.20: see 'berith'

bekenynges E III.6: MED: (ger) 'bekening' - (1.a) mute signaling, nodding, beckoning

*belappynge M1 IX.9: MED: (n) 'lapping(e' - (c) fig. envelopment

bemened M1 X.6: MED: past tense of (v) 'bimenen' - (2[1.a]) to signify or mean (sth), symbolize; purport, betoken, portend

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bere C III.2: MED: (n) 'ber(e' - (8[2.a]) a bier; also, a coffin

berith E III.6: MED: (v) 'beren' - (1.a) to carry, bring (oneself)

berynges E VII.4: MED: 'bering' - (6.a) behavior, conduct, manners

besaunte M1 XIII.5, besaunt M2 III.20: MED: (n) 'besaunt' - (3.e) a mental or physical gift, a capacity, a talent

besoeke C XXXVII.6: MED: (v) 'bisechen' - (1.a) to beg, entreat or pray (sb), beseech

*bestadde C XXI.2: MED: (ppl) 'bistad' - (2.a) placed (in a certain state), circumstanced

bestes C II.2: MED: (n) 'best(e' - (4.a) cattle, livestock

*bestiss M1 XII.7: MED: (n) 'best(e' - (2.a) one of the lower animals, any member of the animal kingdom other than man

besyed M1 VII.4: MED: past tense of (v) 'bisien' - (1.a) to occupy, bestir, exert (oneself); be engaged (in an activity or effort); undertake or strive (to do or accomplish sth)

besynesse M2 XIV.15: MED: (n) 'bisinesse' - (4.c) anxiety, worry, vexation; trouble, difficulty

*betokenynge E VI.7: see 'bytokenyd'

bier C VI.3: MED: (n) 'ber(e' - (9.a) outcry, clamor, commotion, disturbance

bigged E VII.14: MED: past tense of (v) 'biggen' - (2.a) to build, erect

*bihighte E VIII.17, M1 IV.2, M2 XIV.5: MED: (v) 'behesten' - (1.a) to promise, promise on oath

bire C XXXIV.2: see 'bier'

biriynge E VII.1: MED: (ger) 'biriing(e' - (1) interment, burial, funeral

bisechynge M1 X.11: see 'besoeke'

bisekynge M1 X.26: see 'besoeke'

*bisshoperiche M1 II.1: MED: (n) 'bischop-rich(e' - (1.a) the province under the authority of a bishop; diocese

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bitwix C XXV.4: MED: (prep) 'bitwix(e' - (1.a[b]) in between (surrounding objects)

blasfemye M2 IV.54, blasfemys M1 X.18:: MED: (n) 'blasfemie' - (1.b) any action, belief, or utterance offering insult to God; (2) abusive speech, defamation, slander

*blawes C XXXIV.6: MED: (v) 'blouen' - (b) of a wind instrument: to sound, give out (a signal)

blinnynge M1 X.2: see 'blynnynge'

*blynnynge E III.5: MED: (n) 'blin' - In phr. withouten - (a) without stopping, unceasingly

boden M2 XIV.6: MED: (v) 'biden' - (6) to await (sth or sb), wait for

bolnynge M1 IX.4: MED: (ger) 'bolning' - (1) swelling or distention (of some part of the body)

boonys C XXXIV.2: MED: (n) 'bon' - (1[1.a]) a bone of the human or animal body

borde C XVII.1: MED: (n) 'bord' - (4.a[a]) a dining table

*boren E IV.9, C I.10: see 'berith'

bowellis C XVIII.1, M1 X.25: MED: (n) 'bouel' - (1.a) a human intestine, usually plural; (1.b) the intestine of an animal or bird

bowith E VI.6: MED: (v) 'bouen' - (1[1.a]) to bow, kneel, or prostrate oneself

Braban E VIII.16: Brabant, a predominately French-speaking territory located in the central Low Countries.

bran C XVIII.6: MED: (n) 'bran' - (a) the ground husk of wheat (or other grain) as separated form the flour by bolting

*breerys C X: MED: (n) 'brer' - any plant that bears prickles of thorns; a brier

brennynge C VII.1: see 'brente'

brente E III.3: MED: (v) 'brennen' - (1) to be consumed by fire; burn

brest E VIII.22: MED: (v) 'bresten' - (3.b) to burst out (into speech, etc.)

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brestynge M1 VII.4: see 'brest'

brerys C X.1: see 'breerys'

broches M2 VIII.1: MED: (n) 'broche' - (1[2]) an ornament

brosten M2 IV.60: see 'brest'

bryddes C V.2: MED: (n) 'brid' - a bird of any kind

buke M1 VI.9: MED: (n) 'bok' - (1[3.a]) the Bible

burgeys M2 IV.44: MED: (n) 'burgeis' - (1.b) a citizen at, in or of (a specific town)

burstyne M2 IV.21: MED: (v) 'bresten' - to break (sth), shatter, crush

buskys M2 III.15: MED: (v) 'busken' - (4.a) to go hastily

buxomnesse M2 V.3: MED: (n) 'buxomnes(se' - (a) humbleness

*bycladde E VII.12: MED: (ppl) 'biclad' - dresssed, clad

byhote C XXXVII.3: see 'bihighte'

byhoued M1 IX.1, M1 XI.11: MED: (v) 'bihoven' - (1.c) of persons: a) to need, have need of something

*byraste M1 X.16: MED: (v) 'bireven' - (1) to deprive or rob (sb of sth)

byreue M1 X.21: MED: (v) 'bireven' - (2.a) to take (sth) away, esp. by violence

*bysely E VIII.21: MED: (adv) 'bisili' - (2.) Attentively, scrupulously; intently, zealously, eagerly; earnestly, devoutly

byshyned M2 V.17: MED: past tense of (v) 'bishinen' - (3.a) to radiate or reflect light

*bytokenyd E VI.8: MED: past tense of (v) 'bitoknen' - (1) to be a symbol or emblem of something, represent symbolically

C

cantelene M2 XII.3: MED: (n) 'cantelene' - a sacred song

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carryone M1 V.2: MED: (n) 'careine' - (3.b) something vile, something worthless or disgusting

catecized M2 V.28: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'catecizen' - to instruct (sb) in the Christian religion, catechize

catelle M1 V.2: MED: (n) 'catel' - (2) livestock

catyfe C XXXIV.3: MED : (n) 'caitif' - (2.a) a miserable or unfortunate person, a wretch

cautel M2 III.1: MED: (n) 'cautel' - (a) caution, prudence, precaution

Cayphas E IV.4: Caiaphas was the high priest of the Jewish supreme court, the Sanhedrin, that brought Jesus to Pontius Pilate asking that he be crucified.

*cauderons C VII.3: MED: (n) 'caudroun' - (1.a) a kettle or pot (as for water or cooking), a caldron

cees C XIII.1: MED: (v) 'cesen' - to cease (to do sth), cease (to be)

celar C XII.3, celer C XII.2: MED: (n) 'celer' - (3) an underground chamber, vault, dungeon, or cave

censour M1 XII.6: MED: (n) 'censure' - a judgment or sentence pronounced by ecclesiastical authority

*chace M2 VIII.1: see 'chas'

chaced C X: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'chacen' - (2.a[a]) to pursue (sb); press upon (a fleeing enemy); harass

chalys M1 XI.13: MED: (n) 'chalice' - (2.a) eccl. the cup or goblet for administering the sacramental wine

chanone M2 VIII.11: MED: (n) 'canon' - (2[1.a]) a clergyman living under canon rule, a canon

*chapeleyne E IX.3: MED: (n) 'chapelein' - (2) any clergyman who assists a cleric of higher rank in performing his administrative and religious duties

chare M1 X.9, M1 XII.4: MED: (v) 'charen' - (2) to direct or drive (sth or sb); ~ away, drive off, dispel, divert; ~ fro, avoid (sth)

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*chas E VIII.19, M2 III.8: MED: (v) 'chesen' - to select or choose (sth or sb)

chastisynge M1 VIII.3: MED: (ger) 'chastisinge' - (2.a) control or mortification (of the flesh)

chastysed M1 III.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'chastisen' - (3.b) to bring under control or subdue (the flesh, the body)

chaufed C XI.2: MED: past tense of (v) 'chaufen' - (a) to make (th. or sb) warm, heat

*chaules E III.9, M1 IX.2: MED: (n) 'cholle' - (a) throat, gullet

*chaumbyre E VII.11: MED: (n) 'chaumbre' - (1) a room or apartment for personal use; a private room or suite, chamber, bedroom

chauncelle M2 IX.19: MED: (n) 'chauncel' - (a) the part of the church containing the altar and the choir seats, set off by a railing or screen from the nave

chauntour M1 XIV.4: MED: (n) 'chantour' - (1[2]) eccl. the leader of a choir

*chayer C XII.2: MED: (n) 'char' - (2) a cart of wagon

chele M1 XII.4: MED: (n) 'chele' - a coldness of air, weather or climate

chere M1 I.3, M1 XIV: MED; (n) 'chere' - (1[1.a]) the human face

chesibil E VIII.5: MED: (n) 'chesible' - (1.a) a priest's garment worn over alb and stole at mass, chasuble

childer C XXV.3: MED: (n) 'child' - (1.a) a young child

chynchery M2 V.2: MED: (n) 'chincherie' - miserliness, stinginess

*Cistens E II.1: MED: (adj and n) 'Cisterciens(e' - Cistercian

cladde E III.5: MED: (v) 'clothen' - (3.a) (ppl) dressed, clothed

Clareualle E VIII.18: Clairvaux, a town in southeastern France (very close to modern Geneva) and the site of a Cistercian monastery, residence of Philip of Clairvaux; the monastery was the most important in the Cistercian order with a largely international population until the thirteenth century.

clarifye C XXXVI.3: MED: (v) 'clarifien' - (4) to set forth, declare, make known

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clerge M1 I.2: MED: (n) 'clergie' - (1.a) the clergy (as distinguished from the laity); also, a particular group of clerics

cleuynge E IV.4: MED: (v) 'cleven' - (1.) to hold or hang (onto something), as with hands or feet, cling

clyppe M2 XI.3: MED: (v) 'clippen' - (1[3.a]) to encircle (sth), surround, enclose; embrace

clippynge M1 VII.4, M1 VIII.1: (ger) of 'clippen;' see 'clyppe'

clombe C XIV.2: MED: (v) 'climben' - (1.a) to climb

coacte M1 X.20: MED: (ppl) 'coact' - (a) to be compelled or forced (to do sth)

*colryd M1 XI.4: MED: (ppl) 'curled' - curled

comitid M1 VII.5: MED: past tense of (v) 'committen' - (1.c) to commend or entrust (oneself, sb to God, etc.)

commendacyouns M1 I.1: MED: (n) 'com(m)endacioun' - (2.a) eccl. one of the 'offices of the dead' in which the soul(s) of the dead are commended to the mercy of God or the Virgin

commixtions M1 IV.3: MED: (n) 'commixtioun' - (c) sexual intercourse

communynges C XXVIII.1: MED: (ger) 'communing' - (4.a) the action of conversing, discussing, conferring, negotiating

compas M2 XI.5: MED: (n) 'compas' - (3.b) a bounded area; realm; scope

compendiously M1 I.1: MED: (adv) 'comepndiousli' - (1.c) comprehensively, fully

complexion E IV.5: MED: (n) 'complexioun' - (3.a) of persons: constitution or general nature resulting from the blending of the four humors in varying proportions

complyne E II.4: MED: (n) 'compline' - The last of the seven daily services or 'hours' observed by monastics and priests of the Roman Church

compunccyone M1 VII.1: MED: (n) 'compuncciоun' - (1) remorse, contrition, repentence

compunxione M1 V.2, M1 VI.6, compunxyone M1 VI.3: see 'compunccyone'

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comunly E III.15: OED: (adv) 'comminli' - commonly

comyted M1 XIII.4: MED: past tense of (v) 'committen' - (5.a) to engage in or perform (an activity)

Confitior M2 IV.63: MED: (n) 'confiteor' - a prayer said by a priest as part of the Mass

conioured C III.3: MED: (v) 'conjuren' - (1.b) to beseech or beg (sb), implore. (2.b) to exorcise (an evil spirit)

connynge M2 II.4: MED: (ger) 'conninge' - (2) knowledge, understanding, erudition

conseyte E II.2: MED: (n) 'conceite' - (4.c) summary or digest (of a subject)

constreyned C III.3, M1 VII.2: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'constreinen' - (1.a) to compel or force (sb to do sth)

contumilious M1 V.2: MED: (adj) 'contumelious' - insolent, arrogant

contynens M1 IV.1: MED: (n) 'continence' - (1) moderation, restraint, absetemiousness

conuers E VIII.19, conuerses M1 II.3: MED: (n) 'convers' - (1[1.a]) a lay member of a religious house, a lay brother

conuersacyone M1 IV.1: see 'conuersyone'

conuersacyone M1 VI.2: MED: (n) 'conversacioun' - (1) manner of living, conduct, behavior

conuersyone E VIII.18: MED: (n) 'conversioun' - (2.) life in holy orders or as a hermit

coppys C XI.1: MED: (n) 'cop' - (1.b) the top (of a tower), the ridge (of a house)

corons M1 IV.3: MED: (n) 'coroune' - (2.a) a wreath of laurel, garland of flowers, etc. (as an award for virtue or victory)

corne M2 VII.9: MED: (n) 'corner' - (1[3.a]) the place where converging walls, sides of a buildings, streets, or boundary lines meet; a corner

cosses C XXXIV.7: MED: (n) 'cos' - (a) a kiss, kissing

coueites C XVIII.2: MED: (v) 'coveites' - to covet (worldly goods or estate); desire strongly

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coueitynge E VIII.1, C II.2: MED: (ger) 'coveiting' - (2) strong desiring (often, sexual desire, concupiscence)

couetyse M1 II.1: MED: (n) 'coveitise' - (1) immoderate desire for acquiring worldly goods or estate, greed

couertour C XXXVIII.2: MED: (n) 'coverture' - (3) the lid (of a coffin)

*cownseile M1 X.27: MED: (n) 'counseil' - (5.a) counsel, advice, instruction

cracche M2 IX.7: MED: (n) 'cracche' - (1[1.a]) a manger

craftyously M1 XII.4: MED: (adv) 'craftiousli' - skillfully, artfully

creature C XXVI: MED: (n) 'creatour' - (1.a) The Creator

croked C XIX.3: past tense of 'croken;' see 'crokes'

crokes E III.6: MED: (v) 'croken' - (2.) of the human body or a member of it: (a) to become stopped, bent, twisted or crippled

crowed M2 V.3: MED: past tense of (v) 'crouen' - (2.a) to croak, crow or caw

crumpled M1 II.5: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'crimplen' - (a) to plait (the hair)

cure E VII.14, C VIII.2: MED: (n(1)) 'cure' - (3.b.) custody, keeping, charge, care, control

*custen M1 X.21: MED: (v) 'casten' - (10). ~ out: drive (sb) out of (a place); cast out

custome C XIX.2: MED: (n) 'custum(e' - (3) natural or normal way

custumabil M1 X.6: MED: (adj) 'custumable' - (1.a) customary, traditional; usual

cytisens M2 IV.35: MED: (n) 'citisein' - (1) any established inhabitant of a city or town

D

dalte M2 III.9: MED: (v) 'delen' - (3) to give (sth) to (sb); give (sth) away; distribute as alms

dampned M1 X.4: MED: (ppl) 'dampnen' - (4.a) damned to eternal suffering in hell

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*damysellis M1 II.1: MED: (n) 'damisele' - (1) an unmarried woman, a maiden or maiden lady

dauntynge C XXXIV.7: MED: (ger) 'daunting' - (c) cherishing, fondling

deceyuaundly M1 X.13: MED: (adv) 'deceivandli' - deceitfully

deel M1 IX.10: MED: (n) 'del' - (2[3]) a small number (of sth)

defaute E VII.13: MED: (n) 'defaute' - (2.c) faintness, weakness

defayle C XXV.4: MED: (v) 'defailen' (1.c) to die

*defuyled E VII.8: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'defilen' - (1.a) to make something dirty, befoul

delauynesse M2 VII.13: MED: (n) 'deslavenesse' - (a) lack of restraint or moderation; (b) dissoluteness

*dele E III.21, E VIII.4: MED: (n) 'del' - (2.d) that other ~, the rest, remainder

*delyuerly E VI.5: MED: (adv) 'deliverli(che' - (a) actively, nimbly, swiftly, vigorously

demyd C XXV.7: MED: past tense of (v) 'demen' - (11.a) to hold an opinion, assume, think

*dennes M2 III.22: MED: (n) 'den' (1[4]) a hiding place

depeynte E III.17: MED: (v) 'depeinten' - (1.a) to portray or depict (sth), represent in color; emblazon

deserte C XXXIII.1: MED: (n) 'desert' - (2[1.a]) a barren area, wooded or arid, and hence uninhabitable or sparsely inhabited

deseruynges C XIX.2: MED: (ger) 'deservinge' - (2) whatever one deserves by virtue of one's conduct, merit, worthiness, desert

desolacyone C XXIII.2: MED: (n) 'desolacioun' - (1.a) a state of distrust or hardship, ruin

*dewe E IX. 12: MED: (adj) 'du(e' - (3.a) a ~ hour; at an appropriate time

dirige M2 IV.10: MED: (n) 'dirige' - (2.a) the chanting or reading, in whole or in part, of the Office of the Dead as part of the funeral service for a dead person

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discrete M1 III.2: MED: (adj) 'discret(e' - (1.a) of persons: wise, discerning, prudent, circumspect

*discreuid C XXXIII.2: past tense of 'discriben;' see 'discryue'

*discriuinge E VII.13: (ger) of 'discriben;' see 'discryue'

*discryue E II.2: MED: (v) 'discriben' - to give a written account of (sth), describe

disese C XIII.3: MED: (n) 'disese' - (1.a) physical hardship or suffering

dissesid C XXXVII.6: (ppl) of (v) 'disesen' - (2) to distress (sb) in mind or feeling

disposicyone E VI.1: MED: (n) 'disposicioun' - (7.a) position in space

dissolucyone M2 XI.10: MED: (n) 'dissolucioun' - (2.a) disintegration, dissolution; weakening

doel M2 IV.37, M2 IV.46: MED: (n) 'dol' - (2[1.a]) the emotion of grief or sorrow

dome C XXXIV.4, M1 XI.2: MED: (n) 'dom' - (1.b[a]) The Last Judgment, also, the judgment of the soul at death

domedist M2 III.24: see 'demyd'

don E VIII.22, doon E VIII.22: MED: (v) 'don' - (1[1.a]) to perform (an action), do (sth), carry on (an activity)

*doubilnesse M2 III.4: MED: (n) 'doubilnesse' - (1.a) duplicity, deceitfulness, treachery

doucet M1 XI.3: MED: (adj) 'doucet' - (2.a) sweet or pleasant to the ear

doufe E IX.13, M1 VI.7: MED: (n) 'douve' - (1.a) A pigeon or a dove

dounrennynge M1 VI.3: - running down

douue M1 X.21: see 'doufe'

dorste M2 V.11: MED: (v) 'durren' - (1.a) to have the courage (to do sth), to dare

doynge C XXXVII.3: see 'don'

draughte E III.8: MED: (n) 'draught' - (3.a) A motion of movement; (11) A mystical

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ecstasy

*drawen E III.5, drawes E III.10: MED: (v) 'drawen' - (1.a [a]) to pull, tug, draw

dredde M1 VI.2: MED: (v) 'dreden' - (3.a) to fear (God), stand in awe of, honor, revere

dredde M1 IX.10: MED: (v) 'dreden' - (2.a) to fear (sb or sth), be afraid of

dredde M2 VIII.9: past tense of 'dreden,' see second instance of 'dredde'

drery M2 VII.14: MED: (adj) 'dreri' - (1.a) downcast, dejected, melancholy

droof C X.1: MED: (v) 'driven' - (1.a[a]) to chase (sb or sth), pursue, drive

dule M2 IV.32, M2IV.37: see 'doel'

duresse C XIX.4: MED: (n) 'dures(se' - (3.a) forcible, compulsion, coercion, restraint, imprisonment

durste C XXXIII.2: see 'dorste'

dyocis M1 I.1: MED: (n) 'diocise' - eccl. a bishop's diocese

dytees M2 XII.21: MED: (n) 'dite' - (a) a poem, song, hymn

dyuers E III.6: MED: (adj) 'divers(e' - (4) several, more than one, numerous

E

efte M1 XIV.11: (adv) eft - (1) again

efte sones E III.13, eftsones CXXXIV.4, eftesones MX.5: MED: (adv) 'efter-sone(s' - soon after, immediately afterward

eieccione M2 IV.33: MED: (n) 'ejeccioun' - expulsion, banishment

eighen C XXVI.1: *pl.* of 'eygh'

*eleuacyone E VIII.2: MED: (n) 'elevacioun' - (3) eccl. the elevation of the Host (in celebrating mass)

elequacite M1 XIII.4: MED: (n) 'eloquacite' - talkativeness, loquacity

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encens M1 XII.6: MED: (n) 'encens' - (1) incense, the smoke or fragrance of burning incense

endeyn M2 V.15, M2 VIII.3: MED: (v) 'endeinen' - (1) to be or become displeased or indignant, to take offence

endyte E IV.3: MED: (v) 'enditen' - (1.a) to write or compose

*enfors E III.22: MED: (n) 'enforce' - an exertion of strength, an effort

enfourmer E VII.15: MED: (n) 'enfourmer' - (a) one who teaches or gives advice

engyne M1 X.13: MED: (n) 'engin' - (1.b) deceitfulness, trickery, evil intention or design; a trick or snare

enioyne M1 X.26: MED: (v) 'enjoinen' - (1.c) to prescribe or impose (penance)

enlumynid M2 V.28: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'enluminen' - (2.b) to enlighten (the heart, the mind)

enmye E III.10: MED: (n) 'enemi' - (1.b) an adversary of God, an unbeliever or heathen

enoynted C XIII.4: MED: past tense of (v) 'enointen' - (3) Medical: to apply a healing unguent or medicine to (the body, a wound, etc.)

enoyntynge M1 VI.13: MED: (ger) 'enointing' - (2) a healing ointment or salve

ensaumple C IV.5, ensaumpil CXXXIX.3: MED: (n) 'ensaumple' of persons: (a) a model (good or bad) likely to be imitated; an example of virtue or of vice

ensautid C XXVI: MED: past tense of (v) 'ensauten' - to assail or reproach (someone); to insult

entente E VIII.1: MED: (n) 'entente' - (6.a) attention, heed; given ~ : to pay attention

entermete E VIII.17: MED: (v) 'entermeten' - (2.a) to undertake (a task)

*entisynge M2 IV.58: MED: (ger) 'enticing' - (a) the action of inciting or tempting (to sin)

*erille C XXVIII: MED: (n) 'erl' - (1.a) any noble ranking below emperor, king, prince or duke

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eritage C XVI.2: MED: (n) 'heritage' - (1.b) something given to another, a gift

ermyte M1 XIII.6: MED: (n) 'heremit(e' - (1.a) a person who, from religious motives, lives in relative solitude; a hermit

erthely C XXXIII.1: MED: (adj) 'ertheli' - (1) belonging to this earth (i.e. not of heaven or hell)

*eschewyd M2 IV.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'escheuen' - (1.a) to stay away from, avoid, shun

*eshewe M2 II.4: MED: (v) 'escheuen' - (4) to withdraw or dodge; to retire

eshewyng M2 V.1: see 'eschewyd'

esines M2 V.5: MED: (n) 'esines(se' - (a) spiritual comfort, tranquility

euen C XVI.3: MED: (adj) 'even' - (16) fellow

euenlik M2 IV.56: MED: (adj) 'evenlich' - (3) the same as to kind; like

euensonge E II.4: MED: (n) 'eve(n - song' - (1) the service held at the sixth canonical hour; vespers; also, the prayers said at that time

euomyte M2 V.8: MED: (v) 'evomiten' - (a) to eject from the stomach by the way of the mouth, vomit

exercitacyone M2 IV.1: MED: (n) 'exercitacioun' - (b) the practice or exercise (of patience); spiritual discipline, tribulation

exortacyouns M2 VII.19: MED: (n) 'exhortacioun' - (a) exhortation, admonition, or an instance of it

expouned E VI.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'expounen' - (2.a) to explain, interpret, or make clear

expounynge M1 I.2, M2XII.19: see 'expouned'

*expowner E VII.15: MED: (n) 'expounitour' - an expounder (of the Scriptures)

eygh M2 VIII.1: MED: (n) 'eie' - (1[1.a]) the organ of vision, the eye

eyghe M1 XIV.11: see 'eygh'

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eyghen E VII.8, M2 V.31, M2 XIII.11: *pl.* of 'eygh'

eyre E VIII.3, C XII.4: MED: (n) 'air' - (1[1]) air, the atmosphere

F

famylier M1 I.3: MED: (n) 'familier' - (2) a close personal acquaintance, associate, or friend

fantum C VI.4: MED: (n) 'fantom' - (2.b) an illusory experience or object; an apparition, a specter

fantoms M1 II.1, M2 IV.44, M2 VII.9: MED: (n) 'fantom' - (1) any of the world's vanities

fardelle M2 VII.8: MED: (n) 'fardel' - (1.a) a pack of goods or supplies bound together to be carried or transported, a bundle

farsed M2 III.26: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'farsen' - (a) to stuff (game, fowl, etc.) with seasoned stuffing

fayne M2 VII.6, M2 XII.5: MED: (adj) 'fain' - (1.a) joyful, happy, pleased, delighted

*feersnes C VI.3: MED: (n) 'fersenes(se' - (2.c) violence, impetuosity, force

*felawe M1 II.1: MED: (n) 'felau(e' - (a) a close or intimate companion; a good and loyal friend

fendes C V.1: MED: (n) 'fend' - (7) a demon or devil which has entered into a person to cause madness

fendys M1 X.11: MED: (n) 'fend' - (6.a) one of the fallen angels, a devil, an evil spirit, a demon

ferre C XXVII.3: MED: (adj) 'fer' - (1.c) farthest, most remote

feruour M1 III.1: MED: (n) 'fervour' - (3.a) ardor, passion, excitement

*fery E IX.3: MED: (n) 'feri(e' - (1.b) an ordinary day (as distinct from a religious festival)

festird C XIII.2: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'festren' - (1.a) of a wound or sore: to become fistulous or ulcerous; fester

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feynes E VIII.22: MED: (v) 'feien' - (1[4]) to put off, delay

Flaundirs E IX.6: Flanders, a region comprising the northern half of modern Belgium where Dutch is the primary language

flayne M1 IX.2: MED: (v) 'flen' - (2.1) to tear the skin to shreds

flode C VI.3: MED: (n) 'flod' - (1.a) a flowing body of water; river, stream

flude M1 IV.3: see 'flode'

*flyand M1 XIV.4: MED: (ger) 'fliing' - the act of flying with wings

fole C XXV.7: MED: (n) 'fol' - (1.a) a foolish, stupid, or ignorant person

fonned M1 XI.4, M1 XI.18, M2 IV.1: (adj) 'fonned' - (1.a) unwise, foolish, silly, misguided

forwhy M1 VI.3: MED: (pronominal adv. and conj) 'for-whi' - (5) in a clause giving the reason or cause: for the reason that; because

forsakynge M1 VIII.3: MED: (ger) 'forsaking' - (d) renunciation (of worldly goods, sin, etc.)

fraccyon M2 V.30: MED: (n) 'fraccioun' - (b) theol. the breaking or dividing of the Host

froten C XIII.2: MED: (v) 'froten' - (2.b) to scratch

G

gabbers M2 IV.36: MED: (n) 'gabber(e' - (a) a liar, deceiver, cheat

gaf M1 IV.3: MED: (v) 'yeven' - to give

garte E IX.15: MED: (v) 'geren' - (2.b) to cause (sth), to bring about

garte M1 X.16: MED: (v) 'geten' - (3.a) to bring (sth to sb)

garte M1 X.28: MED: (v) 'geten' - (3.b) to send (sb) to a place

gate C XV.1, C XXXII.1, M1 VI.8: MED: (v) 'geten' - (1.a) to acquire (sth), earn, buy, win, receive, find

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gate M1 X.28: MED: (n) 'gate' - (1.d) fig. the path (to heaven, hell, etc).

gerlonde E IX.1: MED: (n) 'gerlond' - (1.c) Christ's crown of thorns

gerte E IX.10: MED: (v) 'geren' - (3) an auxiliary - (a) have (sth done)

gete M1 XIII.2: see the first entry for 'gate'

gilte M1 VII.3: MED: (n) 'gilt' - (1[1.a]) a sin, transgression, offense, misdeed, crime

girdid M1 III.1: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'girden' - (1[1.a]) to encircle the waist of (sb with a belt or girdle)

girdille M1 XI.4: MED: (n) 'girdel' - (1[1.a]) a belt worn around the waist, used for fastening clothes, or for carrying a sword, purse, etc.

gladsom E VII.6, C IV.3: MED: (adj) 'gladsom' - (3) cheering, pleasant

glauerynge M2 VI.1: MED: (ger) 'glaveringe' - deception, flattery

glose E I.1: MED: (n) 'glose' - (1.a) a gloss or explanatory comment on a text or word

gnare C IX.2: MED: (n) 'gnare' - (b) a noose for hanging persons

gnastynge M1 X.11, M1 X.28, M2 IV.33: MED: (ger) 'gnasting(e' - (a) the act of grinding teeth together; also, gnashing at one's teeth in anger, in sorrow, or as a threat

gnawen M1 XII.7: MED: (n) 'gnauen' - (1.a[a]) to gnaw (sth) with the teeth or other biting organs; bite, chew, nibble

gobet C XI.2: MED: (n) 'gobet' - (2.a) a lump, a mass

gobettis M1 VIII.5: MED: (n) 'gobet' - (1.a) a fragment; a bit of flesh

*goostly E III.11, M2 III.26: MED: (adj) 'gostli' - (1.a) consisting of spirit, not material

graue E III.9: MED: (v) 'graven' - (1[2.d]) to tear; ~ out, gouge out (an eye)

grauelle M2 III.3: MED: (n) 'gravel' - (b) gravel, shingle, pebbles

graunte C XXXII.1, M1 VI.8, M2 III.26: MED: (n) 'graunt' - (1.a) allowance, consent, permission

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graunte M2 IV.50: MED: (v) 'graunten' - (1.a) to permit, allow, or grant

greces M2 VIII.2: MED: (n) 'gres' - (1.b) pl. stairs in a flight, a flight of stairs

grecys M2 VIII.2: see 'greces'

grefe C XXIII.1: MED: (n) 'gref' - (3.b) taken at ~, to take (sth) amiss, take umbrage or offence at (sth)

*grettered M2 XIII.11: (ppl) of (v) 'igreten' - (3.b) to afflict (sb with harm)

greuauns C XXX, M2 VII.18: MED: (n) 'grevaunce' - (1.c) a state of hardship, distress, misery

greuous E IX.6: MED: (adj) 'grevous' - (2.b) physically painful, unpleasant

greuyd C XVIII.3: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'greven' - (3.a[a]) to be physically painful, cause discomfort, cause pain

*greydlynes E VIII.6: MED: (ger) 'greding(e' - (b) weeping, lamentation

grucche M2 XIII.17: see 'grucchith'

grucchith E III.16: MED: (v) 'grucchen' - (2.a) to moan, lament, to mourn over (sth)

grucchynge M2 III.16: gerund form of 'grucchen;' see 'grucchith'

gummes M2 VIII.2: MED: (n) 'gomme' - (b) an aromatic gum or resin used for embalming or as incense, perfume, spice, etc.

*guttis C XVIII.1: MED: (n) 'gut' - (1) an abdominal organ

gyle E IX.11, M2 IV.10: MED: (n) 'gile' - (3[1.c]) something deceptive or illusory, delusion

gylously M1 X.12: adverb form of 'gile;' see 'gyle'

H

haboundynge M2 II.4: MED: (v) 'abounden' - (1.a) to exist or be present in great numbers or quantity, be plentiful

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*halowed C XXIV.4, M2 IX.12: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'halwen' - (1.a) to make (sb or sth) holy, sanctify, hallow

halowes M2 III.19: MED: (n) 'halwe' - (1.d) the communion of saints

halsed M2 IV.45: MED: past tense of (v) 'halsen' - (1.b) to embrace spiritually or mystically

halsynges M1 IV.3, M2 IX.3: MED: (ger) 'halsing(e' - (2[1.a]) act of embracing, an embrace. (2[1.b]) sexual intercourse

happe M1 XIV.6: MED: (n) 'hap' - (2.a) chance event

*harde E I.1: MED: (n) 'hard' - (2.c) in adverbial phrases: bi (of, with) ~, with difficulty

hauntith E III.25: MED: (v) 'haunten' - (1[2.a]) to stay in, dwell in, live in

hedlynge C VIII.3: MED: (adv) 'hedling(e' - (a) headlong, headfirst (downward)

*heele E IV.6: MED: (adj) 'hel' - (a) healthy, cured

heerys M2 III.3, M2 IV.28: (n) 'her' - the hair of (one's) head

hegges C XI.4:MED: (n) 'hegge' - (c) a hedge, a fence of bushes used to mark boundaries

hele C XXXIII.1: MED: (n) 'hele' - (1[2.d]) comfort, consolation

helys M2 II.2: MED: (n) 'hele' - (3[1.a]) the heel of a person

hengyd C XI.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'hongen' - (1.a) to suspend (sb or sth) from an elevated point

*hengynge E VI.7: MED: (ger) 'honging(e' - (3.a) the condition of being suspended

herburgh M2 III.6: MED: (n) 'herberwe' - (2.a) lodgings in general, shelter for a traveler a place to stay

Herode E IV.4: The biblical King Herod the Great

highte M1 II.1: see 'hyght'

hile M2 V.13: MED: 'while' - (1.b) the period of time during which certain cicumstances exist or certain conditions prevail

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hirdeman M2 V.23: MED: (n) 'herde-man' - (b) a tender of goats, cattle, horses, other livestock; a herdsman

*hokes M1 XII.7: MED: (n) 'hok' - (7.a) a curved or hook-like object

holpen C V.2: MED: (v) 'helpen' - (1.a) to give aid or assistance to (sb or sth)

holsumly M2 IV.47: MED: (adv) 'holsomli(che' - (a) healthfully; medicinally, curatively

*hool E III.3: MED: (adj) 'hol(e' - (2[1.a(e)]) of a person's physical condition, life spirits: healthy, sound

hoot C VII.1: MED: (adj) 'hot' - high temperature; hot

hoses C XVIII.5: MED: (n) 'hose' - (1.a) a legging or stocking of woven cloth or leather, with or without feet; often plural

housilde E VIII.14: MED: (v) 'houselen' - (a) to administer the sacrament of holy communion

howsel C VI.1: see 'housilde'

hoyl M1 XI.6: MED: (adj) 'hol(e' - (5.a) undivided, whole

hyght E II.1: OED: (v) 'behighten' - to call

hyred C XII.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'hiren' - (1.a) to hire (sb) to work for wages

hyrnes C I.6: MED: (n) 'hirn(e' - (1.b) a hiding place, secret nook or cranny

I

iangelynge M2 III.24: MED: (adj) 'jangling(e' - (3) distracting babbling of idle thoughts

*iewesse C IX.1: OED: (n) 'iuise' - judgment, doom; a judicial sentence, penalty

Ighe M2 XIV.1: see 'eygh'

ilkan E IV.1, ilke E VI.2, C XXXIV.5: MED: (pron) 'ilke' - (1) as adj: designating a person, thing, time, place, etc., previously mentioned or about to be specified: same, very, aforementioned, given, specified

ilkon M2 II.1: see 'ilkan'

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impacyently C XXXVII.3: MED: (adv) 'impacientli' - (a) without control

importunite C XXIII.2: MED: (n) 'importunite' - (a) persistence, insistence, overeagerness

incontinens C XXII.1: MED: (n) 'incontinence' - (b) inability to keep a religious rule

indulgens C XXXI.1: MED: (n) 'indulgence' - (2.a) a pardon or forgiveness of sins granted by God to penitent believers

Insula E IX.6 - Lille, a town in northern France, on the modern Belgian border

iocunde E III.18: MED: (adj) 'jocounde' - (2) of actions, things, behavior: (a) giving pleasure, pleasing (b) expressing pleasure, joyous

*ioy E III.13: MED: (n) 'joi(e' - (1.a) A feeling of happiness or pleasure

*ioyneth E IV.2: MED: (v) 'joinen' - (1[3]) to unite, be joined

iren C XII.1: MED: (n) 'iren' - (1.a[a]) iron, as ore, metal, or commodity

irke M1 XIV.5: MED: (v) 'irken' - (a) to be weary, be bored, ~ of, be tired (of doing sth)

iuracyone C XXIII.1: MED: (n) 'juracion' - earnest request, adjuration

K

keste C VII.2: MED: (v) 'casten' - (1.a) to throw (sth) to a distance, fling, hurl

keuerith E III.24: MED: (v) 'coveren' - (1[1.a]) to cover (an object) by laying or spreading material over or about it; cover up or envelop

knowleche C I.8: MED: (v) 'knoulechen' - (3.a) to acknowledge (that sth is true), admit (sth), grant

knytte M1 IV.1: MED: (v) 'knitten' - (5.a) to unite; join together, combine

kynde C I.9, C V.3: MED: (n) 'kinde' - (1.a) the aggregate of inherent qualities or properties of persons, animals, plants, elements, medicines, etc.; essential character

kyndelyd M1 III.1: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'kindelen' - (1.c) to incite (sb), stimulate, inflame; also stir up (feelings, prayers, etc.), excite

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kyrke C III: MED: (n) 'chirche' - (1.a) a church

L

lacches M1 XI.4, M1 XI.14: MED: (adj) 'laches(se' - (b) lazy, soft, luxury-loving; of a song: soft, wanton

langour C XXXV.1: MED: (n) 'langour' - (a) a sickness, disease, mortal illness; infirmity

lant M2 III.11: OED: (v) 'lend' - (2[2.a]) to give, grant, bestow; to impart, afford

*latys E VII.14: MED: (n) 'latis' - (a) a lattice-work structure of metal or wooden strips or rods, used in windows or doors instead of glass or to protect the glass

lattys M1 III.1: see 'lattys'

leccherye C XXXV.3: MED: (n) 'lecheri(e' - (1.a[a]) a lascivious way of life

lecchours M1 IV.3: MED: (n) 'lechour' - (a) a lascivious person, fornicator, adulterer

leche C XII.1, M2 IV.22: MED: (n) 'leche' - (3[1.a]) a physician or surgeon

leeryd, E I.1: MED: (ppl) 'leren' - (1.b[a]) cultivated, wise, educated

leeueful M1 III.1, M1 IV.3: MED: (adj) 'lefful' - (a) permissible, permitted; allowable, allowed

leeuyd E IX.14: MED: past tense of (v) 'leven' - (4[2.b]) to believe (sth, that sth is the case)

legeauns M1 I.2: MED: (n) 'legeauns' - the citing of authorities in support of a doctrine or opinion

lendes E VIII.4: MED: (n) 'lend(e' - (1.a) the human loins, the flesh of the lower back between the ribs and hips

lendys C VII.3: see 'lendes'

*lenynge M1 XI.3, M2 IX.1: MED: (ger) 'lensing' - making lean; mortification of the flesh

lepy M2 IX.25: MED: (adj) 'lepi' - single

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letheren M1 XII.4: MED: (adj) 'letheren' - (a) of leather; leathern

leuer C IV.4: OED: 'liefer' - with an infinitive or clause as subject - [I had rather]

leuynge M1 VIII.2: MED: (ger) 'leving(e' - (2.c) abandonment, rejection; giving up, renunciation

lewde E VIII.18: MED: (adj) 'leued' - (1.d) ~ frere (brother), a member of a religious community without the scholastic training or duties required of other religious, a lay brother

libelle M1 XIV.14, M2 VII.9: MED: (n) 'libel(le' - a treatise, book; a major section of a larger book

licoure C XIII.4: MED: (n) 'licour' - (1.a) a liquid

lightsomnes E III.23: MED: (v) 'lightsomen' - to illuminate (sth), also enlighten (the soul)

lightsum M1 VI.13: see 'lightsomnes'

ligge E VIII.10, liggen C I.2, M1 IX.3: MED: (v) 'leien' - (1[2]) to place (sb, oneself) in a recumbent posture, lay down

liggynge E VI.1, M2 IX.7: (ger) of 'leien;' see 'ligge'

lodesman M2 VII.18: MED: (n) 'lodes-man' - (b) a guide, conductor

lokkys M1 II.5: MED: (n) 'lok' - (1[1.a]) a lock of human hair, *sg. and pl.* the hair of the head

loothes E VIII.11: MED: (v) 'lothen' - (2.a) to hate (sth or sb), despise

*loothnes C XVI.2: MED: (n) 'lothnesse' - (b) wickedness, immorality

lothinge C V.1: MED: (ger) 'lothing(e' - revulsion, distaste; also, hatred

lothsumnes M2 III.26: MED: (n) 'lothsomnes(se' - (a) detestation, aversion

loused C XII.3: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'losen' (3[2.a]) to unite or loosen (bonds, shoelaces, stitches, etc.)

louted M2 IV.16: past tense of (v) 'louten' - (1.a) to bow, kneel, or prostrate oneself;

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make obeisance.

*loutynge E VII.11, M1 XIV.3: MED: (ger) 'louting(e' - (a) a bow, a kneeling, a genuflection, an obeisance

*lovynges E III.25: MED: (ger) 'loving(e' - (2[2.a]) praise of god, glory; also, the reverence of images

lowe M2 VII.3: MED: (v) 'louen' - (1[4.b]) to humble oneself, be humble

lowly M2 IV.17: MED: (adv) 'louli' - (3.a) humbly, meekly

lownesse M2 VII.5: MED: (n) 'lounes(se' - (2.a) humility, meekness; also, obedience

lowsed C XIII.5: see 'loused'

lufsum E III.18: MED: (adj) 'lofsom' - (1.b) pleasant, delightful

luggyd E III.5: MED: (v) 'luggen' - (a) to pull (sb or sth) forcibly; (b) to drag

lyuelode M1 XIII.2: MED: (n) 'livelihed(e' - (b) 'lif-lod,' an inheritance providing someone's livelihood

M

mageste M1 VI.5: MED: (n) 'mageste' - (1.a) of God or Christ, His might or power

make E VIII.17: MED: (v) 'maken' - (1[6.a]) ordain or appoint (monks)

malles M2 XIII.11: MED: (n) mal(le - (a) a hammer; usually, a heavy iron hammer used for driving posts, breaking rocks, etc.

*manerly E III.2: MED: (adv) 'manerli' - (b) in accord with custom or propriety, properly, becomingly

marches C XXVII.1: MED: (n) 'march(e' - (2[1.a]) the boundary of a country; border district

martiloge M2 IX.12: MED: (n) 'martiloge' - (a) the register of martyred saints

martirdome M1 X.10: MED: (n) 'martirdom' - (c) torture; suffering, anguish

maruaile C XIX.4: MED: (n) 'merveille' - (1.a[a]) a thing, act, or event that causes

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astonishment or surprise

masons M2 XIII.11: MED: (n) 'masoun' - (1.a) a mason, worker or builder in stone

matrymone M1 I.3: MED: (n) 'matrimon(e' - (1.a) the married state, marriage; bond of matrimony, wedlock

matyns E II.4: MED: (n) 'matin' - (1.a) matins - the first canonical hour (usually comprising matins and lauds), recited at midnight or in the early morning

mayste C XXXVII.4: OED: (v) 'maiste' - (1) may

meces M1 XI.8: MED: (n) 'mes' - (2[1.a]) a course of a dish of prepared food sent to, and served at, the table

mede C XII.1: MED: (n) 'mede' - (4[1.a(c)]) a fee; ransom; reparation

*medecynnabil C XII.2: MED: 'medicinable' - (a) medicinal, healing, therapeutic

medelid E IX.12: MED: (ppl) 'medled' - (a) having a mixed constitution

medil M1 X.13: MED: (v) 'medlen' - (1.a) to blend, mix

medys C IV.5: MED: (n) 'mede' - (4[2.a]) moral consequence or spiritual reward; requital, retribution

meenye M2 IV.6: see 'moenye'

mengyd E VII.8: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'menglen' - to mingle (sth with sth else), mix

mensleers E III.5: MED: (n) 'man-sleer(e' - (a) a homicide, a murderer

merkenesse M2 III.14: MED: (n) 'mirkines' - darkness

merveiles E II.2: MED: (n) 'merveille' - (1.b) a miracle

meruaile M1 III.3: see 'merveiles'

mesellis M1 IV.3: MED: (n) 'mesel' - (1.a) a leper

mesels M2 III.4: see 'mesellis'

mete M2 VIII.7: MED: (v) 'meten' - (4[3.c]) to strike against (sth), strike (sb), clash

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together, collide

metis M1 XI.8: MED: (v) 'mete' - (1[1.a]) to dream, to have a dream

metis M1 XI.8: MED: (n) 'mete' - (1[1.a(c)]) food, nourishment, sustenance

meynye M2 IV.11: see 'moenye'

mikel E III.3: MED: (adj) 'muchel' - (1) with reference to amount: much, in a large amount

moctour M2 XI.10: MED: (n) 'mokadour' - a handkerchief; also, a bib

modulacyone M2 XII.2: MED: (n) 'modulacioun' - harmony; the act of singing or making music; also, a song or melody

moenye E IX.15: OED: (n) 'meinie' - company

moistes E VIII.8: MED: (n) 'moist(e' - (c) saliva

moisted M2 IX.1, moysted M2 X.5, M2 XIV.10: MED: past tense of (v) 'moisten' - (2) to inspire, intoxicate, or refresh (sb, the mind, etc.) with spiritual love or understanding, joys of contemplation; encourage or inspire (sb to be meek)

monyshed C XXVII.5: OED: past tense of (v) 'monish' - to admonish (a person)

monyshynges M2 IV.42: OED: (n) 'monishing' - warning, advising

moter M2 XIII.17: MED: (v) 'moteren' - (a) to mutter; grumble or complain about (God)

motered M2 VI.8: past tense of 'moteren,' see 'moter'

*moughtis M1 XII.7: MED: (n) 'motthe' - (1.a) the larva of the clothes moth

moystnesse M1 VII.5: MED: (n) 'moistenes(se' - (2) *Fig.* joy, fervor, spiritual intoxication; also excess, indulgence

mukke M2 IV.37: MED: (n) 'muk' - (a) animal or human excrement; dung, manure; also, dirt, filth, sewage; putrescence

musikers C XXVII.3: MED: (n) 'musiker; - a musician

myddes C XXXIII.2: MED: (n) 'middes' - (1.a) the middle part of something, the center

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mykel C IV.8: see 'mikel'

myles M1 X.7: MED: (n) 'mile' - (1[1.a]) a measure of distance (denoting any of several variously measured or loosely conceived distances)

mylne C VIII.3: MED: (n) 'milne' - (1.a) a water mill for grinding grain

myndeles C XXXV.1: MED: (adj) 'mind(e)les - (a) senseless; beside oneself, irrational, stupefied

mynistracyone M1 XI.12: MED: (n) 'ministracioun' - (5.a) provision, dispensation

*mynistris C IV.1: MED: (n) 'ministre' - (5.a) *Fig.* an inanimate or abstract servant, attendant, deputy or agent

*mynistris C XXVIII.2: MED: (n) 'ministre' - (2.a[a]) a man consecrated in the Christian Church, an ecclesiastic of any rank; a priest, a cleric

mynned M1 VII.3: MED: past tense of (v) 'minnen' - (1[1.a]) to remember of think about (sb or sth), call to mind, recall; also, take note of (sth)

mynstralles C XXVII.3: MED: (n) 'minstral' - (1.a) an instrumental musician, singer or story teller

*mysdedis C IV.2: MED: (n) 'misdede' - (1.b) wrongdoing, misconduct, wicked or sinful conduct; wickedness, sinfulness

myster E IV.1: MED: (n) 'mister' - (5.a) need, necessity

N

nacyone M2 V.5: MED: (n) 'nacioun' - (3.a) a class or group of people

nature E IV.5: MED: (n) 'nature' - (5) type, species, sort

*neddirs C XVIII.1, neddir M1 XIV.11: MED: (n) 'naddre' - (1.a) a serpent, a snake

nere M2 VIII.3: MED: (adv) 'ner(re' - (2.b) more closely, more strictly

neyghed M2 XI.2, M2 XI.10: MED: past tense of (v) 'neighen' - (2.b) of time or events: to approach; draw near to (sb); also, or persons: draw near to (death)

nodel E III.7: MED: (n) 'nodel' - (a) the back of the head

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none tyde C XXX.1: MED: (n) 'non-tide' - (a) noon; midday

noone E II.4: MED: (n) 'non' - (a) the canonical hour of nones; three o'clock p.m.

*norysched C I.11: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'norishen' - (d) to take nourishment, eat

noseles E III.7: MED: (v) 'noselen' - to bend down

noumbrynge E VI.4: MED: (ger) 'nombring(e' - (b) act or process of counting

noye M1 X.27: MED: (v) 'noien' - (1.a) to harm (sb or sth), injure

nyghe M1 VI.8: MED: (adj) 'neigh' - (3) as quasi-preposition: close to (sb or sth), near

O

obeysaunte M1 X.9: MED: (adj) 'obeisaunt' - (a) obedient, dutiful

obyte M1 XII.7, obyt M2 X.9: MED: (n) 'obit(e' - death

occupacyoun E IX.19: MED: (n) 'occupacioun' - (6) exercise of an office; discharge of service

odly C IV.3: MED: (adv) 'oddeli' - (a) extremely, very; also, particularly

offys C II.2: MED: (n) 'office' - (3.c) a piece of work, job, task

*onowryd M2 VIII.1, onowred M2 IX.1: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'honouren' - (1.a) to honor (sb or sth), show respect to

onys C XII.1: MED: (adv) 'ones' - (4.b) emphatically: once and for all

ordeyne C IV.8: MED: (v) 'ordeinen' - (3.e) to bring about (sth), cause; carry out (sth)

ordynauns M1 II.1: MED: (n) 'ordinaunce' - (9) divine or fated disposition or arrangement; a divine plan or decree

orysouns E IV.8, M1 II.1, M1 X.6: MED: (n) 'orisoun' - (1.a) the action or practice of praying; also a prayer

ostage M2 V.16, ostages M2 V.23: MED: (n) 'hostage' - (2.a) a dwelling place, (one's) lodging or abode; a lodging house, inn, hospice

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oste E VIII.7: MED: (n) 'host(e' - (4[2]) the bread consecrated in the Eucharist, the Eucharistic wafer before or after consecration

ostes M1 XI.3: MED: (n) 'host(e' - (1[2.c]) the collective body of angels in heaven, the angelic host

ouenes C VII.1: MED: (n) 'oven' - (1.a) an oven used for baking, cooking, toasting, or drying foodstuffs

*ouerthwarte E VIII.2: MED: (adv) 'overthwert' - (1.a) across; crosswise, transversely

outhere C XIX.2: MED: (conj) 'outher' - as the first conjuction: "either...or"

P

paddokes C XVIII.1, M2 IV.60: MED: (n) 'paddok(e' - (a) a toad; (b) a frog

*palsye M2 VI.6: MED: (n) 'palesi(e' - (a) the failure of a part of the body to function properly; loss of motor power, paralysis; loss of tactile sensation, numbness

palys C XXVIII.2: MED: (n) 'palais' - (1.a) a luxurious dwelling of a ruler, noble, or high public official; a palace

pamente E III.21: MED: (n) 'pavement' - (a) the paved, tiled, or otherwise hardened surface of the ground, of a house, church, etc.

pappe E VII.8, CV: MED: (n) 'pappe' - (1.a) a woman's breast

Pask M1 IX.5, Paske M1 XIII.4: Easter

paument C XXVII.2: see 'pamente'

payed C IV.6: MED: (v) 'paien' - (2.a) paied (ppl) - satisfied, content

paynemes C XXIV: MED: (n) 'painim(e' - (2.a) a non-Christian, pagan, heathen

perilles M1 II.5: MED: (n) 'perl(e' - (2[1.a]) a pearl

pesibil M2 V.5: MED: (adj) 'pesibile' - (1.a) mild, peace-loving, gentle, peaceable; also, trusted

pertubacyone M1 X.20: MED: (n) 'pertubacioun' - (a) a mental disturbance; mental confusion or disorder

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planynge M2 VIII.4: MED: (ger) 'pleininge' - (b) lamenting, lamentation; a lament

platte E III.9, plat E IV.6: MED: (adj) 'plat'- (a) flat, even, smooth

pleinynge M1 X.11, pleynynge M2 IV.42: MED: (ger) 'pleininge' - (a) complaining, complaint; a murmuring or groaning

*plentevous M2 XIV.9: MED: (adj) 'plenteous' - (a) abundant, plentiful, copious

ploghe M2 IV.46: MED: (n) 'plough' - (1.a[a]) a plow

pompos M2 IV.34: MED: (adj) 'pompous' - (d) arrogant, presumptuous

posteme M2 IV.23: MED: (n) 'apostem(e' - (1) any morbid swelling or inflammation in any part of the body, internal or external

potage C XIII.4, M2 III.4: MED: (n) 'potage' - (1.a) a thick soup or stew, variously with or without meat

poudir C XXXIV.6: MED: (n) 'poudre' - (1[3.a]) dust of the earth, dirt soil

prerogatif M2 V.12: MED: (n) 'prerogatif' - (b) a special right or privilege granted to someone

presencyally M2 XI.1: MED: 'presencialli' - (adv) in one's very presence

pretynge M2 IV.42: MED: (v) 'preten' - (b) to utter (words) foolishly

prikke M2 III.4: MED: (n) 'prikk(e' - (2.a) a goad

priue E III.18, M1 VI.8: MED: (adj) 'prive' - (1[3.a]) unseen, invisible; ~ herte rotes - the bottom of one's heart

priue C XX.1: MED: (n) 'prive' - (1.a) privacy, secrecy; also, secrets

priuely C XX.1: MED: (adv) 'privili' - (a) openly, publicly

proheme M1 I.1: MED: (n) 'proheme' - an introduction of a narrative, treatise, book, etc., a preface, a prologue

prouded M2 III.14: MED: past tense of (v) 'prouden' - (a) to be or become arrogant or haughty

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*prouencyalle M2 VIII.4: MED: (adj) 'provincial' - (1.b) of or pertaining to a province or a district of an order of friars

prouendere M2 VII.7: MED: (n) 'provendre' - (c) *eccl.* the stipend of a member of the chapter of a cathedral or collegiate church, a prebend; (d) one who holds a prebend, prebendary

prouoked C X.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'provoken' - (3.a) to anger (sb), enrage, vex

pryckes C XVIII.5: MED: (n) 'prik(e' - (1.a) a pointed object, something that punctures or stabs; (1.e) a thorn of a plant, spine, prickle

pryueer C II.3: MED: (v) 'priven' - (a) to deprive (sb) or (sth), deny (sb, sth)

priuetis C II.2: MED: (n) 'privete' - (3.c) 'privete(s of heaven' - sacred mysteries

pryme E II.4: MED: (n) 'prime' - (1.b) the canonical hour of prime; the hour of sunrise

purgatorye C I.2: MED: (n) 'purgatori(e' - (1.a) *theol.* a place or conditional of temporal punishment for the spiritual cleansing after death of souls desired for heaven, purgatory

puruyour M1 IV.1: MED: (n) 'purveiour' - (1.b) one who is in charge; an overseer, a deputy

purvey M2 X.3: MED: (v) 'purveien' - (5.a) to ordain, make arrangement; take measures

puryd M1 XIV.8: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'puren' - (1.a) to purify or cleanse (a substance), remove impurities from (sth)

puttis E III.10: MED: (v) 'putten' - (1.a) to push, shove, thrust; strike a blow, smite

Pylate E IV.4 - Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Palestine, who sentenced Jesus to be crucified

Q

quarels M1 X.11: MED: (n) 'quarele' - (2.a) a complaint, an occasion or grounds for dispute

queres M2 IV.10: MED: (n) 'quer' - (1.d) a choir of angels or of the elect of heaven; a company of angels

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quyckenyd M1 VIII.7: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'quikenen' - (3.b) to give spiritual life; renew spiritually

*quykenes E III.16: MED: (v) 'quikenen' - (1.a) to return to life, rise from the dead

R

rakynge M2 III.22: MED: (ger) 'raking(e' - raking, use of a rake; raking away, clearing

rauesched E III.2: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'ravishen' - (4.a) to enrapture, overwhelm

raueynours M2 III.4: MED: (n) 'ravinour' - (a) a thief, robber, plunderer

raveyne C XVIII.2: MED: (n) 'ravin(e' - (a) prey (of a bird or an animal), carrion

rayed M1 II.4: MED: (v) 'raien' - (3.a) to dress (sb oneself), ppl. raied as adj, dressed, attired

recreacyone M1 IX.1: MED: (n) 'recreacioun' - (d) nourishment, refreshment, or comfort provided by food

*rect M2 III.12: MED: (v) 'recchen' - (1[1.b]) to expound, explain, interpret

*reerward C XII.1: MED: (n) 'rere-ward(e' - (c) a blow from the rear

refeccyone M1 IX.7: MED: (n) 'refeccioun' - (1) refreshment, nourishment, sustenance

reffreyne M1 VI.9: MED: (v) 'refreinen' - (2[1.a]) to check (the flow of liquids, humors, etc), suppress

regarde E IX.6: MED: (n) 'regard(e' - (e) comparison; at (in) ~, by comparison; at (in, to, as to) ~of, at ~ at, in (as to) ~ to, in comparison to (sth), by comparison with, compared with

rehercys E III.10: MED: (v) 'rehersen' - (3.a) to repeat (an action, a process, words); reiterate

rehersynge C XXV.7: MED: (v) 'rehersen' - (1.a) to narrate (sth, a story, that sth happened), report, tell, describe (sth)

rekenyd M1 VII.5: MED: past tense of (v) 'rekenen' - (2.a) to relate (sth), recount, narrate (a story)

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rekke C XXII.2: MED: (v) 'rekenen' - (2.b) to impute, consider, declare, rate, value

rekketh M2 III.1: MED: (v) 'recchen' - (1.a) to care, heed

releuid M2 III.17: MED: past tense of (v) 'releven' - (1.b) to give relief, afford comfort, relief, etc.

relikes M2 IX.23: MED: (n) 'relik' - (1.a) part of the body of a saint, or other material object associate with a saint or with some religious significance

renne C XXI.1: MED: (v) 'rennen' - (1[1.a(a)]) of humans: to run, move quickly on foot

*rentys M2 VII.7: MED: (n) 'rent(e' - (1.a) revenue from property, income

reparelde M1 IV.2: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'repareilen' - (2.a) to restore (sth), revivify

replete M1 X.1: MED: (adj., ppl) 'replete' - (a) filled (with sth), full

reryd E III.20: MED: (v) 'reren' - (1[1.a]) to lift (sth), raise, hold (one's head) erect

reryd M2 XIII.11: MED: (v) 'reren' - (1[3.b]) to erect (a monument, statue, cross, etc.)

*resteryd C IV.6: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'restoren' - (4.d) ~ to, to return (sb, the soul) to possession of (sth)

rethorik M1 I.2: MED: (n) 'rethorik(e' - (1.a) that one of the seven liberal arts dealing with eloquence and persuasiveness of language, rhetoric

retyd C XXV.6: MED: past tense of (v) 'resten' - (1[2.a]) to cease temporarily from a journey, battle, etc; rest, regain strength

*reume M1 VI.1: MED: (n) 'reaume' - (1.a) a kingdom, realm

reuoked C XXXVII.6: MED: (v) 'revoken' - (a) to call (sb) back (to a place or state); revive

rigge M2 XIV.10: MED: (n) 'rigge' (1.a) the back of a person; rigges bon, the back bone

rinne C XXI.1: see 'renne'

riste C XI.1: MED: (n) 'rest(e' - (1[6.a]) spiritual or mental tranquility, peace of mind

riste M1 X.28: MED: (n) 'rest(e' - (1[1.a(b)]) the repose of the grave, death

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rodde E III.16: MED: (n) 'rode' - (5[2.a(a)]) the cross on which Christ died

rode M1 IX.5, MXIII.4: see 'rodde'

rodynes E IX.19: MED: (n) 'redines(se' - (2.e) capability, activtity

rood E VI.11: see 'rodde'

rorynge M2 IV.2, M2 IV.33, M2 VIII.7: MED: (v) 'roren' - (1[1.a]) to cry out loudly, shout out; wail in pain or anger; also, groan, snort

ros C X.1: MED: (v) 'risen' - (2.a) to rise from sleep, get out of bed; wake up, rouse

rotys E III.18: MED: (n) 'rote' - (4[2.b]) the depths (of sth), inmost part; the depths of the heart

ryfe C XXVIII.1: MED: (adj) 'rif(e' - (1.b) widespread, plentiful, abundant, abounding

*rynshynge M1 IX.10: MED: (ger) 'rincinge' - the rinsing of a vessel; the purification of the chalice after communion, the ablution rite

S

sadde M1 VI.2: MED: (adj) 'sad' - (3.d) solid, not hollow or porous; dense, compact

saddely M2 IV.47: MED: (adv) 'sadli' - (5.a) seriously, soberly, gravely; also, maturely

sakke M1 XII.3: MED: (n) 'sak' - (4.a) a sack used as a piece of clothing; sackcloth; a piece of garment of sackcloth, frequently used as a sign of mourning or penitence

salmes E III.13, salme MX.10: MED: (n) 'psalm(e' - (2.a) a specific sacred recitation, canticle, or song

salow C XVIII.5: MED: (n) 'salou(e' - (a) a willow tree or branch

salutid C XXXIII.2: MED: past tense of (v) 'saluten' - (a) to greet (sb) courteously or respectfully

salutid M1 X.10: MED: past tense of (v) 'saluten' - (d) to bow, bend

saufe C XXIII.1, M1 X.27: MED: (adj) 'sauf' - (1.a) unscathed, unhurt, uninjured

sauer M1 X.10: MED: (v) 'savoren' - (8.e) to have a spiritual experience, experience (sth)

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spiritually

sauoure C III.4: MED: (n) 'savour' (2.b[e]) disagreeable odor, offensive smell

sauoure M1 IX.5: MED: (n) 'savour' - (1.b[a]) the flavor or taste of food, wine, milk, etc.

sauter M1 X.10: MED: (n) 'sauter' - (1.a) the Book of Psalms of the Old Testament

sawter C XI.4: see 'sauter'

sawtry E III.13: MED: (n) 'sautri(e' - a stringed musical instrument; psaltry

scape M1 X.27: MED: (v) 'scapen' - (1[1.a]) to escape or depart from confinement, captivity, a prison, siege, etc.

scapulary C XVIII.4: MED: (n) 'scapulari(e' - a sleeveless garment usually worn by religious

schadde M2 IV.3: MED: past tense of (v) 'sheden' - (7.b) ~ blod, to lose blood, bleed; also, die, be killed, be martyred

*schamfaste M2 IX.13: MED: (adj) 'shamefast(e' - (1.a) modest, humble, virtuous

*schamefastnes E III.25: MED: (n) 'shamefastnes(se' - (1.a) modesty; soberness, seriousness; bashfulness, shyness

schente M1 XI.15: MED: (ppl) 'shent' - (e) to be lost, undone, ruined

schreude M2 V.5: MED: (adj) 'shreued' - (1.a) wicked, evil, depraved; malicious

schreuen E VIII.21: MED: (v) 'shriven' - (1.a) to make confession, to confess

schrifte C XIX.5: see 'schreuen'

sciens M2 IV.54: MED: (n) 'science' - (1.b[b]) wisdom

sclaunder C XXII.1, M2 IV.53, M2 XIII.5: MED: (n) 'sclaundre' - (2.a) an action or a situation bringing disgrace or shame

sclaundird M1 XIV.9: MED: (v) 'sclaundren' - (2.a) sclaundred (ppl). disgraced, evil, abandoned

scoprelle C XXV.3: MED: (n) 'scopperel' - (a) a toy that spins around, a top, a whirligig

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seculers M V.1: MED: (n) 'seculer(e' - (a) a member of the laity as opposed to a cleric, a layman, lay woman

Seint Andrewe M2 XI.12: Saint Andrew. He is the first of Christ's apostles. His feast day is November 30. He is said to have been martyred by crucifixion.

Seint Barnabe E IX.2: Saint Barnabus. His feast day is June 11. He is said to have been martyred in Cypress c. 60.

Seint Benyt E VII.14: Saint Benedict. His feast day is March 21. He is considered the patriarch of the monks of western Europe, d. 550.

Seint Bernard M2 IX.19: Saint Bernard. His feast day is August 20. He formed and became abbot of the monastery at Clairvaux. During his life he established 68 Cistercian monasteries.

Seint Cristofir C VI.1: Saint Christopher. His feast day is July 25. He is the patron saint of things related to travel, and was martyred c. 251.

Seint Geretrude M2 VIII.11, M2 XI.13: St. Gertrude of Nivelles. Her feast day is March 17. She was made abbess of her mother's foundation (her mother was Ida of Nivelles) and both abbey and abbess became very famous. She died in 659.

Seint Jerome E I.1, M2 IX.7: Saint Jerome. He was the father of the Church most learned in the Bible. He revised and re-translated the Latin Bible.

Seint John Baptiste M2 XIV.5: Saint John the Baptist. His feast day is June 24. His life is narrated in the gospels, especially in the gospel of Luke. He dies protesting the wickedness of Herod.

Seinte John Euangelist M1 IX.6, M2 XIV.5: Saint John Evangelist or "St. John the Divine." One of Jesus' disciples. He is the only one of the 12 apostles who is certainly known not to have been a martyr. Died c. 100. His feast day is December 27.

Seynte Kateryn C XXI.2: Saint Catherine. Probably Catherine of Alexandria, a virgin-saint, martyred c.310. Her feast day is November 25.

Seynte Mary M2 XII.12: Saint Mary, Jesus' mother, the Virgin Mary.

Seint Nicholas M2 X.6: Saint Nicholas, Patron Saint of Children (later becomes the figure Santa Claus). Died in the 4th century. His feast day is December 6.

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Seinte Poula M2 IX.7: Saint Paula. Her feast day is January 26. She was a disciple of St. Jerome. She settled near St. Jerome at Bethlehem, forming a community of religious women, building a monastery for women, and establishing a hospital.

Seint Stephen M2 XII.14: St. Stephen the Deacon (protomartyr). His feast days are December 26 and August 3. The disciple chosen by the apostles as the first of the seven deacons. He was stoned to death by the Jews at the instigation of the Sanhedrin, thus becoming the Christina protomartyr. His dying prayer obtained the conversion of St. Paul, who was actively engaged in his martyrdom.

Seinte Thomas M2 IX.6: Saint Thomas the Apostle. The unverified tradition is hat he was the apostle of southern India and was martyred near Madras. He is the "doubting Thomas" of the gospels. His feast day is December 21.

Seint Trudous E VII.14: Saint Trond, a town in modern Belgium, named for a missionary in Brabant who founded the monastery at Saint Trond, d. 695. His feast day is November 23.

sekke C XXXIV.2: MED: (n) 'sak' - (1.a) a sack, bag

selden E VII.6: MED: (adv) 'selden(e' - (1.a) infrequently, rarely, seldom

semblaunde M2 XIII.9: see 'semblaunte'

semblaunte E III.23: MED: (n) 'semblaunt' - (1.a) external appearance; shape, form; also, aspect

semelande M1 XIII.1, M2 XIV.9: see 'semblaunte'

*sen C I.6: MED: (conj) 'sinnes' - seeing that, because

*sendel M2 III.6: MED: (n) 'sandal' - (a) a kind of shoe, a sandal

sepulcre C XXIII.1: MED: (n) 'sepulcre' - (1.a) a tomb, a place of burial, grave

sere M2 II.2: MED: (adj) 'ser(e' - (2) ~ coloured, many colored

serge M2 IX.9: MED: (n) 'cerge' - a wax candle, especially one of large size used in religious ceremony

serkil M1 XIV.7: MED: (n) 'cercle' - (2.a) the form of a circle

serue M2 VIII.14: MED: (v) 'serven' - (2[2.c]) to act so as to deserve (to have thanks or

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dishonor, to be condemned, etc.); act in a way that (someone should sth in response)

seruys C XXXVII.2: MED: (n) 'servise(e' - (7.a) assistance, help; a helpful act

sex C VIII.1: MED: (num) 'six' - (1.a) cardinal number as adj., six

sext E II.4: MED: (n) 'sext(e' - (a) the canonical hour of sext, a time in midday

shamefaste M1 VII.4: see 'schamefastness'

sharpe M1 III.1: MED: (adj) 'sharp' - (3.b) of cloth, clothing, etc: rough in texture

sharper E IX.6: MED: (adj) 'sharp' - (6.a) of life, labor, an experience, etc: difficult, hard, trying

shorte M1 I.2: MED: (n) 'short' - (d) a brief summary

shrewed C XVIII.3: see 'shreude'

shrof M1 VII.5: past tense of 'shriven;' see 'schreuen'

shryfte M1 VII.1: MED: (n) 'shrift' - (1.a) confession to a priest, auricular confession; (3.b) repentance, penitence

shryue E VIII.17: see 'schreuen'

shul E III.3: MED: (v) 'shulen' - (1[3.b]) as model auxiliary expressing duty, responsibility of secular obligation: ought (to do sth), should (do sth, be of a certain nature, etc).

*shyndynge M1 XII.7: MED: (ger) 'shendinge' - (a) destruction, ruin; harm, damage

shynynge M1 X.15: MED: (ger) 'shining(e' - (2) supernatural light, supernatural radiance, splendor, glory

shyre E II: MED: (n) 'shire' - (a) a region, district, province

shytte M2 XII.7: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'shitten' - (2.a) to lock; lock (a lock, door, etc.), fasten closed

siche M1 VI.11: see 'sichekyns'

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sichekyns E IV.6: MED: (adj) 'swichkinnes' - of the sort previously mentioned, described, etc.

sikerly M2 V.16: MED: (adv) 'sikerli' - (3.a) in safety, in security; safely, securely

sithen E IV.6: MED: (conj) 'sitthen' - (3) ever since

skaped C V.2: past tense of 'scapen;' see 'scape'

slees E III.16: MED: (v) 'slen' - (2) to kill; cause death; destroy

sleynge M1 IV.3: see 'slees'

*sliken M1 XI.14: MED: (adj) 'silken' - of silk, silken

slokenyd M2 IV.36: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'slokenen' - (d) to immerse (sth), soak; *fig.* immerse (sb in sorrow)

*slomerynge M1 XI.3: MED: (ger) 'slombering(e' - (b) a fit of drowsiness

slouth M1 VII.5, M2 VI.8, slouthe M2 IX.14: MED: (n) 'slouth(e' - (a) indolence, slothfulness, sluggishness; neglect of one's responsibilities, negligence

slugged M2 VI.8: MED: past tense of (v) 'sluggen' - to be lazy or slothful

sluggednesse M2 III.4: MED: (n) 'sluggednes(se' - slothful, indolence

slyden C VIII.3: MED: (v) 'sliden' - (1.a) to fall

smok M1 III.1, M1 XII.3: MED: (n) 'smok' - (a) a woman's undergarment, shift, chemise

smytes E III.10, smyte E IV.6, smitith E VI.1: MED: (v) 'smiten' - (1.a) to deal a blow, strike, beat

socoure M2 VIII.13: MED: (n) 'socour' - (1.a) aid, assistance, help; support, encouragement; also spiritual aid, spiritual comfort

socoured M1 X.10: MED: past tense of (v) ' socouren' - (1.a) to render assistance, provide aid, assist

sofister M X.13: MED: (n) 'sophistre' - (a) one who employs ingenious but fallacious reasoning in arguments or proofs; usually in order to deceive, a quibbler

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solas C XXV.7, M1 IV.1: MED: (n) 'solas' - (a) joy, pleasure, happiness

solempne M2 IX.12: MED: (adj) 'solempne' - (1.b) of days or seasons; devoted to religious observances, sacred

solempnely E III.24: MED: (adv) 'solempneli' - (d) excellently

solempnyzes E III.6: MED: (v) 'solempnisen' - (d) to celebrate (sb or sth) with praise

sollempnites M1 XI.10, solempnites M2 IX.7: MED: (n) 'solempnite' - (1.a) religious celebration or ceremony, sacredeness; dai of ~, a festival day

sones E III.13: see 'efte'

sore C I.3: MED: (n) 'sor(e' - (1(1.a)) the sensation of physical pain or soreness

sorrer C XIX.8: MED: (adj) 'sor(e' - (2(1.a)) physically painful

sostres E III.24: MED: (n) 'suster' - (1.a) a female sibling, a sister

soteltee C III.4: MED: (n) 'sotilte' - (3.a) complexity, intricacy, abstruseness

sothe E IX.9: MED: (n) 'soth' - (2) a true thing, a true statement, certainty

soothly E III.6: MED: (adv) 'sothli' - (1.a) truly, in truth; actually, really assuredly, certainly; indeed, in fact

sotil E IX.14: MED: (adj) 'sotil' - (3.b) of food: consisting of small pieces; light, delicate; also, plain, simple

sotil C V.3, MXIV.14: MED: (adj) 'sotil' - (3.a[a]) of a substance, human body, etc.; not dense, light

sotily M1 X.12: MED: (adv) 'sotilli' - (2) with insidious cunning; insidiously, treacherously; slyly; deceitfully

sotilitee C XI: MED: (n) 'sotilte' - (6.a) thinness, slenderness, smallness

sotilte M1 X.13: MED: (n) 'sotilte' - (4.a) trickery, guile, craftiness; dissembling, deceit

soukys E IX.14, soukynge M2 IX.7: MED: (v) 'souken' - (3.a) to draw liquid, etc. into the mouth by sucking

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sounynge E III.18: MED: (ppl) 'sounen' - (2.c) harmonious, melodious

sowne E III.6: MED: (adj) 'sound(e' - (3) solid

sownynge E III.6: see 'sounynge'

specyal C III.5: MED: (adj) 'special(e' - (3) intimate, particularly close or dear; devoted

specyous E II.4: MED: (adj) 'specious' - (a) beautiful, fair, lovely to behold

spedeful M2 IV.53: MED: (adj) 'spedeful' - (1.c) curative, effectively medicinal

spens M2 IV.43: MED: (n) 'spens(e' - (1.a) finds, money for expenses; a monetary payment or reward

spired C III.5: MED: past tense of (v) 'spiren' - (1.a) to make inquiries; inquire about (sb or sth)

spitellis M2 III.4: MED: (n) 'spitel' - (1.a) a place of quarantine for lepers

spotel E IX.11: MED: (n) 'spotel' - (a) saliva of a human or an animal

spyces C XXXV.3: MED: (n) 'spice' - (2[1.e]) *theol.* a subclass or branch of sin, penance, moral virtue, etc.

spyces M2 VIII.2: MED: (n) 'spice' - (2[2.a]) a visible form of shape; appearance or semblance

squynnacy M2 IV.23: MED: (n) 'squinaci(e' - *pathol.* an inflammation or swelling of the throat of part of the throat; tonsilitis, laryngitis, goiter, or other malady of the throat; quinsy

*staat C XXXV.2: MED: (n) 'stat' - (1.a) a moral or spiritual state or condition

staken M2 XII.7: MED: (v) 'steken' - (7.b) to lock (a coffer, door, gate, lock, etc.), make fast, secure

stakes C XI.4: MED: (n) 'stake' - (3) a stake, usually wooden, used in combination with others for a particular purpose - usually plural. (a) as part of a hedge or as a paling in a fence; also, as part of an enclosure

stamperthe E VII.11: MED: (v) 'stamperen' - (b) to walk clumsily, stagger

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stamyne M1 XII.3: MED: (n) 'stamin' - (a) cloth of some kind, usually made of wool; also, a piece of cloth

steed E III.13: MED: (n) 'stede' - (1[4.b]) in or ~, in place of (sb or sth), instead of (sb or sth)

steigh C III.2: MED: (adv) 'streight' - (a) directly to or from a person or place; without deviation or interruption

steighynge M1 XIII.5: MED: (v) 'stien' - (1.a) to move in a vertical plane, move up or down

sterynge E III.8: MED: (v) 'steren' - (1[1.d]) to conduct oneself in a certain way

steygh M2 IV.13: see 'steighynge'

stinted C XXII.3: MED: past tense of (v) 'stinten' - (1.a[a]) to cease in one's actions, efforts, etc.

stirynge C XXIX: MED: (ger) 'stiring(e' - (7.b) inspiration of the Holy Spirit or divine grace; also, a spiritual inspiration

stok E VIII.2: MED: (n) 'stok' - (1) the trunk of a tree

stoken C XII.4: see 'staken'

stoken C XXV.6: MED: (v) 'steken' - (4.b) to remain joined, hold together

strabil M1 IX.4: MED: (v) 'stroublen' - (a) to disturb (sb), trouble in mind, disquiet

stre M1 XI.7, M1 XI.12: MED: (n) 'strau' - (1.b) a stalk or stem; straw

streitly M1 VII.5: MED: (adv) 'streitli' - (3.a) in accordance with a strict standard (especially a standard of religious observance or conduct)

streyned C XII.4: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'streinen' - (1[2.a]) to stretch, extend

strokes M1 X.10: MED: (n) 'strok(e' - (1.c) a blow or lash made with a whip or an instrument of punishment

strumpet M2 VII.15: MED: (n) 'strumpet' - (a) a prostitute, whore; a concubine; a loose woman, an adulteress

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sturbled M2 XII.5: MED: (v) 'stourblen' - (1) to trouble (sb, oneself), disquiet, upset

sturglid C XIII.5: MED: past tense of (v) 'strogelen' - (b) to contend verbally (with sb), argue, debate; also, struggle (with difficult circumstances), occupy oneself, offer resistence (to God's will)

superflue M2 IV.7, superflu M2 IV.43: MED: (adj) 'superflu(e' - (a) exceeding what is necessary or normal

superfluyte M2 VII.15: MED: (n) 'superfluite' - (1.a) an excess in number or quantity, overabundance

suppyngis E IX.12, suppyd E IX.12: MED: (ger) 'sippinge' - taking a small drink, sipping

sweuenes M1 XI.8: MED: (n) 'sweven' - (a) a dream experienced in sleep; a dream-vision, prophetic dream

swogh E III.11, E VIII.2: MED: (n) - (2) a forceful or violent motion, an onrush; impetus, momentum

swolowes E VIII.8: MED: (v) 'swolwen' - (1.a) to swallow

swounynge M1 VI.4: MED: (ger) 'swouning(e' - (a) a state of temporary unconciousness, fit of fainting; also, the act of swooning

syker E IX.12, C I.5: MED: (adj) 'siker' - (4.a) of persons: having complete certainty, fully assured, guaranteed

Symeon M2 IX.8: Probably Saint Simeon, martyr, who was crucified c.107. His feast day is February 28.

symulacyone M1 X.13: MED: (n) 'simulacioun' - (a) dissimulation, insincerity, pretense, deceit, deception, a deceptive trick

sythes E III.9: MED: (adv) 'sitthe' - (a) subsequently

sythes M1 X.10: MED: (n) 'sith' - (4.c) one of a number of repeated instances, a recurrent or potentially recurrent occasion

sythen C I.6, M1 X.14: MED: (adv) 'sitthen' - (b) thence forward, from that time on

T

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tabil E III.17: MED: (n) 'table' - (1.d) a surface prepared to receive a painting; also, the painting itself

taryed E VII.13: MED: past tense of (v) 'tarien' - (1[1.h]) to remain in a place, stay, abide, reside, dwell

tempir M1 VI.5: MED: (v) 'tempren' - (4.b) *refl.* to restrain oneself, exercise moderation; control oneself emotionally; restrain oneself (from sth)

tempyrde C XV.1: MED: (v) 'tempren' - (e) to modify (a view, method, etc.)

theues C IX.1: MED: (n) 'thef' - (1.a[a]) one who steals, a robber

thirle M1 X.22: MED: (v) 'thirlen' - (1.a) to pierce, stab, usually with a sharp weapon, nail, etc.

thirles E IX.11: MED: (n) 'thirl' - an external bodily orifice, esp. a nostril

*thof E III.4: MED: (adv) 'tho' - (5) though, even though

thole C XXXII.2: MED: (v) 'tholen' - (1.a) to be made to undergo (a penalty for misdeeds)

thonge M2 XI.10: (n) 'thong' - (2.b) a cord used as a fastening device for shoes, clothing or armor

thretys E III.10: MED: (v) 'threten' - (1.a) to make threats, utter dire promises

tiers E II.4: MED: (n) 'terce' - (2) the third canonical hour of the day, 9 a.m.

tifted M1 XII.7: MED: (v) 'tiften' - (a) (ppl) tifted - adorned, dressed up

tiftynge M1 II.4: MED: (ger) 'tiftinge' - in phrase ~ of her, the arranging of hair, hairdressing

tire M1 II.4: MED: (v) 'tiren' - (3[1.a]) to clothe (sb, oneself), dress, attire

tithinge E IX.8: MED: (n) 'tiding(e' - (1.a) a report of an occurrence or event, a report brought by an official messanger; (2.a) general information about a situation; news

titillacoun M2 III.25: MED: (n) 'titillacione' - pleasing stimulation of the mind or senses

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to E VI.2: MED: (adj) 'to' - usu. preceded by the: a) one, the one b) one (of two) - usu. in correlation with that other, the tother, etc.

todes C XVIII.1: MED: (n) 'tode' - (a) a toad; also, a frog

tome M1 VI.12: MED: (adj) 'tome' - empty, also fig. of a head: deliriously light

tothere E VI.2: MED: (adj) 'tother' - (2.a) of one element of two: the other

touris C XI.1: MED: (n) 'tour' - (1[1.a]) a building characterized by height, often free-standing; a tower

translacyone C XXXVIII, M2 X.7: MED: (n) 'translacioun' - (c) the disinterment of the body or relics of a saint and the removal of such to another grave, reliquary, etc.

tressynge M1 II.4: MED: (ger) 'tressing(e' - the arranging, braiding, or binding of hair

tribulacyone C XIII.2: MED: (n) 'tribulacioun' - (b) an instance of physical, emotional or spiritual affliction, a trouble, a torment, a sorrow, etc.

triste C XIX.7, C XXVIII.2: MED: (n) 'trust' - (1.a) confidence (in sb or sth), reliance (on sb or]sth), trust

trollid E IX.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'trollen' - (1.a) to roll (sth), turn; move (the head) to and fro, rock

trone C IV.3: MED: (n) 'trone' - (2[2.a]) the seat of God or Christ

trowed E III.2, M1 X.12: MED: (v) 'trouen' - (2.b) to believe (sth, sb)

trowynge C VI.3: see 'trowed'

trumpe C XXXIV.6: MED: (n) 'tromp(e' - (1) any of several trumpetlike horns in the Middle Ages

tryacul M1 X.12: MED: (n) 'triacle' - (a) an antidote for poison or venom

turbil E III.16, M2 V.8: MED: (n) 'turble' - (a) agitation, disturbance; also, unrest, confusion, tumult

turments E VII.5: MED: (n) 'torment' - (2.b) physical, mental, or spiritual suffering

turmontid C I.2: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'tormenten' - (1.a) to inflict physical pain deliberately

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and systematically on (sb); (2.c) to distress (sb, someone's soul, etc.), disturb, trouble; vex

tutour M1 IV.1: MED: (n) 'tutour' - (1.a) a guardian, protector, defender

*tymbrer E III.13: MED: (n) 'timbre' - (1) a small drum, timbrel, or similar instrument

tymbrere M2 XII.6: MED: (n) 'timbrer(e' - a timbrel player

tymbyrs E III.5: see 'tymbrer'

tyred M1 VI.2: (ppl) of 'tiren;' see 'tire'

U

unfaylabil E III.3: MED: (adj) 'unfailable' - infallible, indubitable; reliable, unfailing

uoos C XXV.5: MED: (n) 'voice' - (a) a voice; a vocal sound or a sound made in speaking

V

vauntage M2 III.18: MED: (n) 'vauntage' - (b) benefit, a benefit; also, a favorable or desirable result

venial M1 VII.2: MED: (adj) 'venial' - (a) *theol* of sin or a sin: minor, pardonable, not damning

venyalle M2 IX.20: see 'venial'

vermyne M1 XI.14: MED: (n) 'vermin' - (a) animals regarded as dangerous, monstrous or foul or exciting fear and revulsion, such as snakes, lizards, toads and scorpions

verre M1 IV.1: MED: (adj) 'verrei' - (6.b) as an emphatic (a) actual, pure

veynglorye M2 III.25: MED: (n) 'vein-glorie' - (b) excessive pride in one's own attributes or accomplishments, self-importance

vexid M2 VI.7: MED: (v) 'vexen' - (1.a) be afflicted; be vexed (ppl), agitated or disturbed

vmbreidynge M1 VI.10, vmbraydynges M2 IV.50: MED: (ger) 'umbreidinge' - casting reproach, upbraiding

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vnavisy M1 VI.9: MED:(adj) 'unavisi' - not well advised; ill-advised, imprudent

vnccione M1 XIV.3: MED: (n) 'unctioun' - (e) a spiritual anointing, consecration; also, a virtue with which someone is so anointed

*vndeedly C IV.4: MED: (adj) 'undedli' - (a) not subject to death; undying, immortal, imperishable

vnfaillabil E VII.3: see 'unfaylabil'

vnkyndenes E IX.19: MED: (n) 'unkindenes(se' - (e) a lack of natural regard for one's fellow Christians; (f) a lack of natural reverence or love for God or Christ, an unnatural indifference to or disdain for God, impiety; also, hard-heartedness, sinfulness; also, an act of impiety, a sin

*vnnethis E I.1, M1 VII.3: MED: (adv) 'unethes' - (1.a) as an adverb of manner - with difficulty; (2.a) as an adverb of degree - hardly, scarcely, barely

vnordynate M1 VII.2, M1 X.18: MED: (adj) 'unordinat(e' - (b) in excess of what is beneficial, wholesome, permissible, etc., excessive

vnordynatly M1 VI.9: MED: (adv) 'unordinatli' - (a) in a manner lacking proper governance or restraint; excessively; also, in a misguided manner

vntoune M1 XI.4: MED: (ppl) 'untowen' - (b) lascivious, wanton; also, wicked, evil

*vnturbilde M2 IV.40: MED: (ppl) 'untroubled' - not disquieted, untroubled

vnxione M2 V.25: see 'vnccione'

vouchesaufe M2 XII.17: MED: (v phr) 'vouchen sauf' - (3.a) to deign (to do sth, that sth be done, etc.), condescend; deem it fitting (to do sth, etc.); be so kind, gracious, etc. as (to do sth, etc.)

voucheth saufe C XXIV.4: see 'vouchesaufe'

voyde C XXXIX.2: MED: (adj) 'void(e' - (1.a) without contents, empty

voyded M1 IX.6: MED: (ppl) of (v) 'voiden' - (7.d) *fig.* to dispel (fear, pain, etc.); banish (war, sin, etc.)

vmwhile M1 X.11: MED: (adv) 'um-while' - (b) sometimes, at times; ever ~, frequently, often

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vpbreydynges M1 V.1: MED: (ger) 'upbreiding(e' - (b) *pl.* reproaches, disparagements

*vpstreyghte E IV.6: MED: (v) - 'upstrecchen' - to be raised up from a prostrate position, extend upwards

*vrchyn C XI.3: MED: (n) 'irchoun' - (1.a[a]) a small, spine bearing mammal; a hedgehog

vsurers M2 III.4: MED: (n) 'usurer(e' - one who lends money at interest, a usurer

vsure M2 XII.16: MED: (n) 'usure' - (2) interest on money or goods given or received in loan

W

waftynge M2 IV.9: MED: (v) 'waften' - to move gently through the air; float on a breeze

waggith E VII.11: MED: (v) 'waggen' - (1.d) to stagger, totter, sway

walowed C XXVI.2: MED: past tense of (v) 'walwen' - (1.a) to turn oneself over and over, usually while prostate, roll on the ground

wardeyne M1 XI.6: MED: (n) 'wardein' - (1.a) a guardian, protector, rescuer, preserver; *fig.* a heavenly patron; a guardian angel

warisshed M2 VI.1: MED: past tense of (v) 'warishen' - (3.a) to make (sb, a church) strong, fortify

warshed M1 XI.6: see 'warisshed'

wauerynge M1 XIV.11: MED: (ger) 'wavering(e' - moving back and forth; also, wandering about

waxes E III.19: MED: (v) 'waxen' - (13.a) to change (into sth), turn

*wedyr E III.16: MED: (n) 'weder' - (1.a) the general condition of the atmosphere with respect to temperature, precipitation, cloudiness, wind, etc.

wellys M2 II.2: MED: (n) 'wel(le' - (2.a[b]) a cause, an originating force, or a principle of something

welnye M1 II.1, welny M2III.17: MED: (adv) 'wel-neigh' - (2) nearly, almost, just about, all but, virtually

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werysshe M2 III.26: MED: (adj) 'werish' - (a) lacking in flavor, insipid

wex C III.1, M2XIV.2: see 'waxes'

weymentacyone C XXVI.2: MED: (n) 'waimentacioun' - wailing, lamentation, mourning; a cry of sorrow; also, grief, sorrow; an affliction, a sorrow

*weymentynges E VI.9, M1 X.15: MED: (v) 'waimenten' - (b) to bewail, lament

whele C VIII.3: MED: (n) 'whel(le' - (1[2.a]) a mechanical contrivance consisting of a wheel or employing a wheel as a principal constituent; a mill wheel, a potter's wheel, spinning wheel, etc.

whilke E II.1: MED: (adj) 'which' - (3.d) as relative adjective in relative construction serving to connect clauses in loose relationships (b) with relative adjective modifying inanimate nouns: and the which, and this; also, the aforementioned

whirlinge C XXV.3: MED: (ger) 'whirling' - (a) the act or practice of turning something with a circular motion

whitnesse E IV.6: MED: (n) 'whitnes(se' - (1.a) figurative moral or spiritual whiteness, purity, freedom from the stain of sin

wightes M2 IV.3: MED: (n) 'wight' - (1.b) an individual human being, a specific man, woman or child

wikke M1 X.13: MED: (n) 'wik(ke' - (a) wickedness, evil; also, evil conduct

wisker M2 IV.9: MED: (n) 'wisker' - a fan; also, a switch or fly swatter

witerynge C XXXVII.6, M2 VIII.12: MED: 'wittering(e' - knowledge; awareness; also, learning

witte E III.2: MED: (v) 'witen' - (1[1.a]) to be certain about (sth); also, know

wode C V.1: MED: (adj) 'wod(e' - (1.a) of persons or other sentient beings: insane, mentally deranged, of unsound mind, out of one's mind

wodde M2 VI.5: MED: (adj) 'wod(e' - (2) of a person, animal: rabid

wodes C V.2: MED: (n) 'wode' - (2[2]) *pl.* a grove, a woods, a forest, etc.

*woele M1 I.2: MED: (adv) 'wel' - (1.a[b]) in a fit manner or to an appropriate end,

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rightly

wokes C V.5: MED: (n) 'wek(e' - (3[1.a]) the calendrical unit consisting of a cycle of seven successive named or numbered days, the week of the Jewish or Christian calendar

wole E VIII.16: MED: (v) 'willen - (1.a) to have desire for something; want something to occur, wish

wonte E III.19, M1 VI.12: MED: (v) 'wonten' - (b) ben ~ - to be accustomed (to do sth)

woot E VI.8, M1 III.3: past tense of 'witen' (see 'witte')

*wranges M2 IV.48: MED: (n) 'wrong' - (2[2.c(b)]) a verbal injury delivered or uttered; slanderous or malicious speech, insult, calumny, misleading or false speech

*wrangsely C XVIII.1: MED: (adv) 'wrongli' - (a) wickedly, sinfully, immorally

*wrangusly M2 V.24: see 'wrangsely'

wrappeth E III.11: MED: (v) 'wrappen' - (6.b) to roll about, revolve

wrast E III.13: MED: (n) 'wrest(e' - (2.a) a tool for tuning a stringed instrument; also, a plectrum

wrecches C XIX.6: MED: (n) 'wrecche' - (1.c) one who is poor in spirit

write C XXVII: MED: (n) 'writ' - (3.b) the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, or any part of it

writt M2 V.25: see 'write'

wrythabil C XIX.3: MED: (adj) 'writhabil' - capable of being bent or twisted

wrythed C XXVI.2: MED: past tense of (v) 'writhen' - to twist (sth) out of shape, deform, make crooked or tortuous

wrythen M1 XIV.7: see 'wrythed'

*wrooth E III.7: MED: (adj) 'wroth' - (1.a) angry, irate

wykers C XVIII.5: MED: (n) 'wiker' - a thing, pliant stalk of a plant used for weaving, thatching, etc.

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wyt C XXIV.3: see 'witte'

Y

yce C I.2: MED: (n) 'is' - (a) ice; (c) the frozen surface of a river, marshes, etc.

ydel M1 XI.9: MED: (n) 'idel' - (1.b) in phrases: (a) in ~, for nothing to no avail, uselessly, in vain, of no use; without cause, without purpose

yeed E VI.4, M1 VI.3: MED: (v) 'yede' - (1.a) of a person or creature: walked

yeerd E III.3: MED: (n) 'yerd' - (1[1.b]) the precincts of a church

*yeet C XVII.1: MED: (v) 'eten' - (2.a) to be at table, to partake of a meal; to dine or feast

yede E VII.13: MED: past tense of (v) 'yeren' - (1.c) to desire (sth), long for

yede C XXVII.1: MED: (v) 'yede' - (2.a[a]) traveled, proceeded, went

yele M2 IV.30: MED: (n) 'yeld' - (1.d) tribute

yerde M2 V.5: MED: (n) 'yerd' - (2[2.a]) a rodlike object, a scepter; also, a rod as an emblem of authority

yerde M2 VIII.3: MED: (n) 'yerd' - (4.b) a column (of smoke)

yghen M1 XIV.2, M2 III.12, M2 XIV.1: *pl.* of 'eygh'

yolden C XXIV.1: MED: (v) 'yelden' - (1.a[a]) to relinquish (sb or sth) voluntarily, give up; also, surrender

*yongelynges M1 IV.3: MED: (n) 'yongling' - (1.a[a]) a young man or woman

ypocricy M1 XII.2: MED: (n) 'ipocrisi(e' - the sin of pretending to be what one is not; false simulation or goodness of piety; trickery, sham, hypocrisy

yren C V.1: MED: (adj) 'iren' - (a) made or consisting of iron

yuel E IX.11: MED: (n) 'ivel' - (1.a) moral, evil, wickedness

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