Medieval Women and Their Objects

Jenny Adams and Nancy Mason Bradbury, Editors

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Contents

Dedication to Carolyn P. Collette vii
Arlyn Diamond

Introduction: Medieval Women and Their Objects 1
Jenny Adams and Nancy Mason Bradbury

Part 1 / Objects and Gender in a Material World

Chapter 1 / The "Thyng Wommen Loven Moost": The Wife of Bath's Fabliau Answer 15
Susanna Fein

Chapter 2 / Zenobia's Objects 39
Nancy Mason Bradbury

Chapter 3 / The Object of Miraculous Song in "The Prioress's Tale" 56
Howell Chickering

Part 2 / Buildings, Books, and Women's (Self-)Fashioning

Chapter 4 / A Gift from the Queen: The Architecture of the Collège de Navarre in Paris 71
Michael T. Davis

Chapter 5 / Anne of Bohemia and the Objects of Ricardian Kingship 97
Lynn Staley

Chapter 6 / Royal Biography as Reliquary: Christine de Pizan's *Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* 123
Nadia Margolis

Bradbury, Nancy. *Medieval Women and Their Objects.*
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Downloaded on behalf of 3.238.162.113

Chapter 7 / A Gift, a Mirror, a Memorial: The Psalter-Hours of Mary de Bohun 144
Jill C. Havens

Chapter 8 / "Parchment and Pure Flesh": Elizabeth de Vere, Countess of the Twelfth Earl of Oxford, and Her Book 171
Jocelyn Wogan-Browne

Part 3 / Bodies, Objects, and Objects in the Shape of Bodies

Chapter 9 / Objects of the Law: The Cases of Dorigen and Virginia 201
Eleanor Johnson

Chapter 10 / Galatea's Pulse: Objects, Ethics, and Jean de Meun's Conclusion 229
Robert R. Edwards

Chapter 11 / Transgender and the Chess Queen in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* 248
Jenny Adams

Chapter 12 / Statues, Bodies, and Souls: St. Cecilia and Some Medieval Attitudes toward Ancient Rome 267
C. David Benson

Contributors 289

Index 292

Bradbury, Nancy. *Medieval Women and Their Objects.*
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Dedication to Carolyn P. Collette

Arlyn Diamond

The last king of Armenia, Christine de Pizan and European humanism, Anne of Bohemia and women's political agency, writing and the public self, movies about invading aliens, Chaucer and Aristotle, Emily Davison and the battle over votes for women, the long life of Patient Griselda, medieval alchemy—a random and incomplete listing of subjects that have captured Carolyn Collette's scholarly imagination and appear in her lucid and thoughtful body of work.

This volume honors not just Carolyn's extensive scholarly corpus but also her own collaborative and communal scholarly life. Her openness to the ideas of others and her generosity in sharing her own efforts will be evident even in this brief overview of her major publications. Her collaborations with her colleagues Richard Johnson, Harold Garrett-Goodyear, and Vincent DiMarco; her team-teaching; her organization of panels and essay collections that enabled the work of younger scholars have all been sources of pleasure and profit.

When Carolyn and her late husband David bought a flat in the Northumbrian market town of Morpeth, they began their characteristically enthusiastic exploration of the area. Where most of us would have settled for a few good pubs, they found Emily Wilding Davison, the famous suffragette who died tragically at Epsom racecourse in 1913. Davison was an important figure in Morpeth, and her life has been the subject of numerous studies. Her writings, however, had been largely ignored. It took a literary scholar to notice this absence, and it took someone with Carolyn's research skills and energy to produce the definitive collection of Davison's work, *In the Thick of the Fight* (University of Michigan Press, 2013), placing it in the context of the movement to which she had devoted her life. In doing so, she restored Davison's voice: witty, passionate, politically astute.

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It may seem odd to begin a survey of the accomplishments of a distinguished medievalist with a book about a late Victorian political activist, but it illustrates Carolyn's many gifts, including her wide range of interests and her ability to notice the obvious—which is only obvious once she has noticed it. The satisfaction she finds in archival research. Her ongoing attention to women's voices and agency, a natural product of her own education and career at a women's college. A commitment to semiotics. A deep affinity for the intersection of history and complex modes of representation. All of these can be seen in her recent volumes on medieval literature and history and are to be anticipated from her current research on nineteenth-century missionaries to Armenia from Mount Holyoke College.

Carolyn's scholarship frequently reminds us that our readings of medieval works are inevitably too thin. We lack the dense web of juxtapositions, allusions, and intellectual systems that medieval readers brought to these works, and her scholarship, whatever the topic, scrupulously seeks to reconstruct that web—context in its richest sense. A useful and imaginative collection of readings for students, *The Later Middle Ages: A Sourcebook* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), coedited with her colleague Harold Garrett-Goodyear, reveals the wide interdisciplinary knowledge and critical understanding that underlie all Carolyn's work. The success of this volume is due in part to collaboration between colleagues of long standing who have different disciplinary strengths, but due also to a common willingness to rethink the meaning of "sources" and the interpretive matrices in which they are read. Thus, for example, not the static category "Peasant" but the much more thought-provoking "Producing and Exchanging: Work in Manors and Towns"; not "The Rise of English" but "The English Languages." Like her earlier collaboration with Vincent DiMarco on the "The Canon's Yeoman's Tale" for *Sources and Analogues of the* Canterbury Tales *II* (D. S. Brewer, 2009), it is a valuable resource for others and testimony to her intellectual generosity.

Her first book on a medieval topic, *Species, Phantasms, and Images: Vision and Medieval Psychology in* The Canterbury Tales (University of Michigan Press, 2001), foregrounds the theories of perception and cognition that Chaucer relied on and thus reinvigorates a body of knowledge largely unknown to modern readers. Carefully tracing the development of a science and philosophy of vision from Aristotle through writers like Avicenna and the great encyclopedists, Carolyn demonstrates how *The Canterbury Tales* presents "a drama of perception . . . vision, imagination and understanding"

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(183). The unexpectedness of her approach and her willingness to engage with texts many readers have found unsympathetic, such as *Melibee* and "The Parson's Tale," form a consistent pattern in her work.

Performing Polity: Women and Agency in the Anglo-French Tradition 1380–1620 (Brepols, 2006) can also be read under the rubric of "reconstruction" of lost contexts. The product of her long thinking and writing about medieval and early modern concepts of the relationship between individuals and political authority, it addresses a broader range of writings than do her earlier works. The scrupulous readings, always one of her strengths, shape an argument about historical change, political ideology, and the construction of gender. "Real" women—Christine de Pizan, Anne of Bohemia, Catherine of Aragon—are situated within an international literary and intellectual culture that helps define their possible roles as members of society. Court cases, chronicles, plays, records of the cult of the Virgin, political and theoretical texts like Nicole Oresme's translation of Aristotle are read against each other and against poetic texts to suggest the contexts in which women performed their roles as conscious social beings. The story of Griselda is woven throughout this study of women's roles, her story a potent vehicle for exploring the knotty problem of the rights and limits of sovereignty and the nature of the public good.

Not surprisingly for a scholar interested both in the uses Chaucer made of a sophisticated international literary culture and in that culture's depiction of women, Carolyn has found in his stories of famous women a rich field for exploration. *The Legend of Good Women: Context and Reception* (D. S. Brewer, 2006) is an important resource for students of Middle English and further evidence of Carolyn's generative scholarship. As editor, she provided the inspiration for the volume and the energy and discipline to bring it to fruition. The essays themselves vary widely in approach but all share her interest in "imagining the collaborative and social dimensions of literary production in Chaucer's world." This anthology can also be seen as a kind of companion to *Performing Polity*, demonstrating through its multiple discourses that women's lives, real or framed in seemingly stereotypical narratives, are compelling guides to the world that produced and consumed them.

Taking the *Legend* seriously as a topic for investigations informed by contemporary critical concerns, she shows in her most recent (and widely praised) book, *Re-Thinking Chaucer's Legend of Good Women* (York Medieval Press, 2014), how this problematic and somewhat neglected work can be made vibrant again for modern readers. Her bold claim, that the *Legend*

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is "a thematically and artistically sophisticated work whose veneer of transparency and narrow focus masks a vital inquiry into basic questions of value, moderation and sincerity in late medieval culture," is justified by her success in giving life again to the intellectual and cultural milieu that produced it. In taking seriously the moral issues the legends and their protagonists force us to confront, she once more makes clear her personal investment in the complex intersection of fictions, ideas, and human experience.

In emphasizing Carolyn's allegiance to the idea of an intellectual community, I do not want to neglect her role as teacher. Her first book, written with her colleague Richard Johnson, was a handbook on writing, with a telling title: *Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Personal, Professional, and Public Writing* (Longman, 1997). The claim in the introduction, that "presence implies commitment and invites conversation . . . matters of the deepest importance to anyone who writes," could be seen as the ground on which her work is formed. "Anyone who writes"—it seems characteristic that her last class at Mount Holyoke was a writing class for campus employees. Even this overview, which leaves out so many articles and reviews and presentations, demonstrates her engagement with her subject matter; her dedication to intellectual honesty; and her desire to connect with her readers, fellow scholars, and students, traits that are deeply embedded in all that she has produced.

Many of the contributors to this volume could testify to something else central to Carolyn's personal and academic life—the pleasure she takes in sharing her ideas and hospitality with friends. Arguments, recipes, jokes, resources exchanged and readings debated were often part of the genesis of her work, and they remain a source of her continuing joy in intellectual explorations.

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Introduction

Medieval Women and Their Objects

Jenny Adams and Nancy Mason Bradbury

What are *women's* objects? Had we invited Marilyn Monroe's unforgettable character, Lorelei Lee, to write for this collection, this showgirl from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* might have offered a flip answer from the film's best-known song. According to Lorelei, while women's bodies eventually lose their allure, gems "don't lose their shape / Diamonds are a girl's best friend."[1] Despite its cheekiness and its cynicism, Lorelei's song captures the complicated ways we gender objects, animating them as friends, granting them special properties, and redefining them and ourselves in terms of other objects. For Lorelei, diamonds shore up and fix female identity, perpetuating youth and keeping their value long after the wearer's body has declined as a material asset.

What are *medieval* women's objects? The gem digger in figure 1 whose gold gleams in the sunlight and outshines the rocks by her feet would undoubtedly produce an answer different from Lorelei's. Yet if we take her own objects—the gold she mines, the gems in the soil, the books on the ground—as a possible response, we see again the way material things come alive. Gold and gems burst forth with language as this woman miner strikes them.[2] The language she has forced from these rocks is also stored, it seems, in her books, the repositories of her rhetorical advice. At the same time, the gems and gold of eloquence extend the female body of the miner, herself a personification of rhetorical invention.

In crafting *Medieval Women and Their Objects*, we invited our contributors to consider the intersections of objects and gender in the cultural contexts of late medieval France and England. In so doing, we deliberately threw open a wide door, freeing them to make their own connections be-

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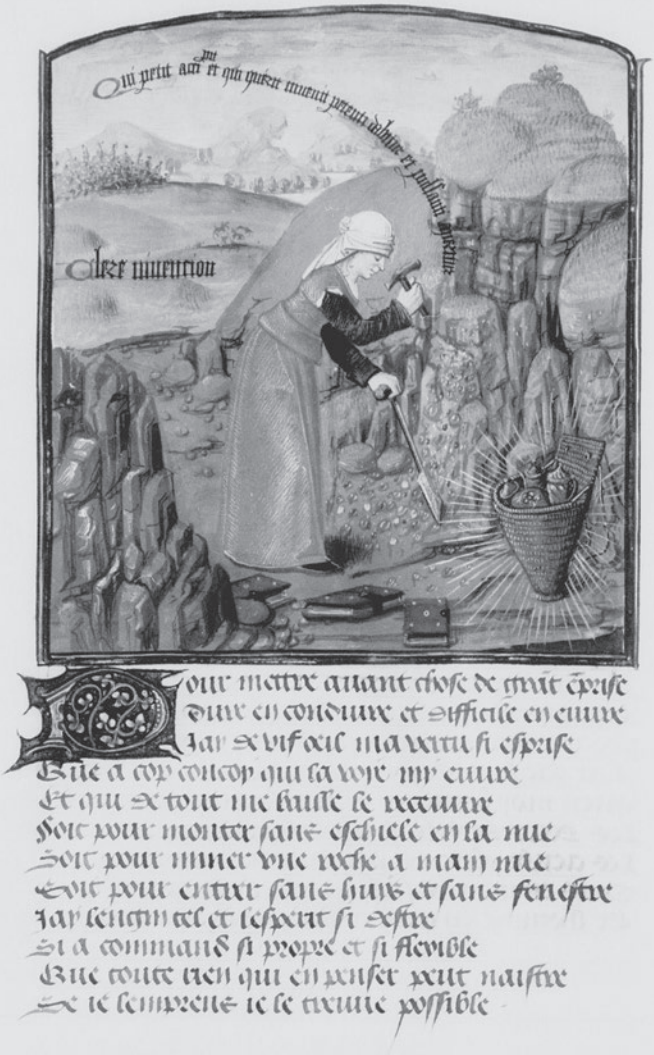

Fig. I.1. Invention, one of the twelve ladies of rhetoric, digs for gems and gold. Montferrant, *Les douze dames de rhetorique*, MS Fr. 1174, French, 15th C. (By permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

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tween objects (conceptual, material, biological) and gender. The capacious and thoughtful essays that we received demonstrate the advantages of this pluralistic approach. Some essays take a material view of objects, showing them as sites of gender negotiation and resistance: buildings, books, pictures extend women's bodies, opening spaces normally closed and making public bodies often kept private. Other essays reconsider the much-noted "objectification" of medieval women—either fictional or historical—by looking closely at their relation to gendered material objects, taken literally as women's possessions and characteristic tools, but also more figuratively as their objectives and desires relative to the material world.

Such a broad consideration is important as scholars negotiate connections between the Middle Ages and the current speculative realist movement that seeks to explore and redefine the relationship between objects and human perception, reacting against what these theorists see as a reigning modernist orthodoxy of post-Kantian metaphysics.[3] Medievalists have played a key role in this moment's debates, urging scholars of later periods to reframe their discussions of objects to take into consideration the pre-Enlightenment modes of thought prominent throughout this volume. Thus when Bruno Latour writes of "the tragedy of *modern* man considering himself as absolutely and irremediably different from all other humanities and all other naturalities" (our emphasis),[4] as scholars of premodern culture we note that medieval "man" and woman drew no such bright line between themselves as God's "creatures" and the rest of creation. Although they differ in their understandings of (and sympathies with) the various modes of new thought about objects and agency, scholars such as Kellie Robertson and Andrew Cole have made important interventions in their call for more thoughtful accounts of the past.[5] And indeed, as both Robertson and Cole demonstrate, enlarging the archive that informs the recent theorizing of objects not only changes our view of the framework for studying objects, it changes our view of the objects themselves.

At the same time, modern scholars of the medieval world continue to wrestle with that world's own complicated theorization of the *object*, a word whose fourteenth-century debut in English helps to mark medieval Europe's own speculative realist impulse. In John Trevisa's late fourteenth-century translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus's *On the Properties of Things* (*De Proprietatibus Rerum*), one of the first texts in English to distinguish "things" from "objects," Trevisa relegates "things" to an inaccessible state of being. Yet the moment a living body experiences things, they become objects: "The ob-

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ject of the eye is all that might be seen, and all that may be heard is the object of the hearing."[6] Here Trevisa captures the medieval world's increased focus on the contexts for objects and the structures that give objects their meanings in the world.

The current and now longstanding interest in medieval material culture has produced much thoughtful scholarship, including the work of Robin Fleming, who shows how objects can testify with surprising eloquence about the lives of ordinary women and children in early medieval Britain, a period in which the very few textual sources come mainly from male monastic writers interested primarily in kings, magnates, and bishops.[7] Her genius in using bits of metal, scraps of cloth, and skeletal remains to make perspicacious inferences about very early medieval women's lives sets a high bar for scholars who work in the later medieval period, the focus of this collection, when written sources become far more abundant and the surviving objects include books written or owned by women.

Another generative work of recent scholarship in a very different vein, Caroline Walker Bynum's *Christian Materiality* (2011), encourages us to think about how attitudes toward objects changed over the long span of the period we call medieval. Bynum challenges the dominant post-Cartesian narrative of ever-increasing rationalism over time, a narrative that posits an early medieval era in which people saw the material world as a site of mystery and a late medieval world that turns toward empirical thought. For Bynum, "matter was a more insistent and problematic locus of the sacred in the twelfth to sixteenth centuries than in the early medieval period."[8] In her view, the later Middle Ages and early modern period produced more, and more vivid, accounts of material agency, of "living holy matter" that included "animated statues; bleeding hosts, walls, and images" as well as "holy dust or cloth that itself mediated further transformation."[9] Bynum finds that late medieval Christians increasingly infused objects with mystery, power, and agency.

The contrastive approaches to the material world taken by Fleming and Bynum open the way for the variety of methodologies and viewpoints represented in this collection. In the first group of essays described below, the objects in question exist in the form of linguistic signs created by literary texts, while most essays in Part 2 focus on solid objects that survive to us from the Middle Ages, or resurrect objects that did not survive, as in Michael Davis's digital reconstruction of a key building from the college founded in Paris by Jeanne de Navarre. In Part 3, material objects and female bodies converge.

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Across these three groupings, some contributors embrace the nascent view of objects as potential agents and draw on current critical language to reevaluate well-studied texts. Others rearticulate a humanist focus and use objects to reground historical or literary-historical claims in a new critical context. Yet for medievalists on all points of the theoretical spectrum, the dramatic and sometimes counterintuitive claims made by advocates of new conceptions of materiality invite a dynamic reevaluation of our understanding of objects, their meanings, and their implications for the construction (and often deconstruction) of gender.

Before introducing our contributors, we note finally that this volume arises not only out of current interest in objects but also out of the ongoing effort to recover the social and material conditions under which medieval women lived. Needless to say, our collection makes no claim to comprehensive coverage of this vast topic, though some of our contributors have been key players in this effort, as has Carolyn Collette. Following the interests of our honoree, our volume tilts decidedly toward the literary, and most of the female figures represented here are social elites, whether fictional or historical: women who wrote or commissioned books or buildings, exceptional women who somehow left their marks either on the imagination of a male poet such as Chaucer or on more tangible products of medieval culture, such as ownership or authorship of books. For the convenience of the reader, we mention only a very few works that help to provide broader contexts for the particular inquiries undertaken here. Roberta Gilchrist's *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (2012) synthesizes years of research on material culture to produce a particularly comprehensive and theoretically informed study with sections specifically devoted to gender. Jennifer Ward's *Women in Medieval Europe 1200–1500* offers a one-volume historical overview of the period specified. Many useful reference works are available, including *Women in the Middle Ages, An Encyclopedia* (2004), edited by Katherina M. Wilson and Nadia Margolis, and the new *Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe* (2013), edited by Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras, in which a chapter by Katherine L. French, "Genders and Material Culture," provides a recent bibliographic survey.

To turn now to the present volume, in our opening section, Objects and Gender in a Material World, medieval authors imagine women using objects that shore up or challenge gender roles. In these essays, all of which use Chaucerian characters as the starting point, fictional or legendary women bring objects into the orbit of gender identity, using them instrumentally,

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being used by them, and yet, at the same time, taking advantage of their nonmaterial meanings.

Susanna Fein's "The 'Thyng Wommen Loven Moost': The Wife of Bath's Fabliau Answer" reconsiders the genre of "The Wife of Bath's Tale," turning from its obvious connections to medieval romance to the less obvious models offered by Anglo-French fabliaux. In these stories, the "thyng" women most desire is not "sovereynetee" but a male penis, one they use with the same type of instrumentality as the Wife's imagined men. Read against these stories, the Wife's tale becomes a complicated "hybrid" of literary traditions, and Fein's essay neatly upturns any easy answer to what and how women desire.

In "Zenobia's Objects," Nancy Mason Bradbury focuses on the interpretive consequences of the material possessions of Chaucer's Zenobia (Cenobia), the sole female protagonist of "The Monk's Tale." Zenobia's involuntary exchange of her warrior's helmet for a feminine headdress and her scepter for a distaff has been read as the Monk's final misogynist retaliation for her egregious transgression of gender norms. Yet as Bradbury argues, Zenobia's polysemous objects can also be read more positively—they connect her to a powerful discourse of "good women" in Chaucer and his immediate literary models. Read in this way, the headdress and distaff amplify other laudatory indicators in the narrative, suggesting Chaucer's interest and even pleasure in Zenobia's transcendence of gender stereotypes.

The blurred boundary between animate and inanimate objects becomes the central issue in Howell Chickering's "The Object of Miraculous Song in 'The Prioress's Tale.'" For Chickering, three intriguing objects—the Marian antiphon "Alma Redemptoris Mater," the miraculous grain on the little clergeon's tongue, and the animated corpse of the clergeon himself—all flaunt their dual ontological status as simultaneously material and immaterial. The antiphon in particular, with its suggestive rhymes that match body parts and sounds, calls attention to the ability of objects to transcend their own materiality and, at the same time, shows that immateriality is often tethered to material form. Implicit in Chickering's analysis is the idea that an object's tendency toward immateriality can obfuscate identity markers tied to embodiment.

Contributors to Part 2, Buildings, Books, and Women's (Self)-Fashioning, use texts both as objects in their own right and as mechanisms by which other objects are defined. Unlike the fictional or legendary women of the first section, the possessors of objects in these essays lived in the world, their lives documented by historical records. Yet like the female char-

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acters of Part 1, they too use objects for instrumental ends and with symbolic resonances.

Such is the case with Jeanne de Navarre (1273–1305), the subject of "A Gift from the Queen: The Architecture of the Collège de Navarre in Paris." In it, Michael T. Davis considers Jeanne's creation of the first royal college in Paris as a means to shape her own identity as queen and active ruler of France. An extraordinary object for a medieval woman to bring into being, the Collège de Navarre "redefined the purpose of a college and its architecture," and its deliberate blend of household, convent, and government fostered a climate of personal intellectual development that continues to animate higher education today. Davis expertly reconstitutes this lost object for his reader: his figures 4.8, 4.9, and 4.10 present three-dimensional digital recreations of the Collège's long-vanished chapel. Although many men participated in its construction, and even more passed through its doors as students, Davis shows that Jeanne herself conceived its lucid and original plan, thus marking her object as an extension of her own regal identity.

Also concerned with the fashioning of a queen's identity, Lynn Staley's "Anne of Bohemia and the Objects of Ricardian Kingship" examines the enigmatic queen of Richard II of England, showing how literary texts worked to shape her identity. In chronicle accounts, Anne of Bohemia (1366–94) appears mainly as an idealized feminine figure of mercy who can temper the king's masculine justice, but sources such as the *Miroir des Dames* offered roles for royal women more active and less governed by gender stereotypes. Staley also considers the ways three fourteenth-century English poets, Geoffrey Chaucer, John Clanvowe, and Richard Maidstone, sought in their fictions to offer Anne "pictures of the ways in which the queen might become less the object of Richard's kingship than a subject in her own right and with her own royal agenda." In this case, *object* carries a double meaning, simultaneously marking the aims of Anne's rule and the instruments that define these aims.

In "Royal Biography as Reliquary: Christine de Pizan's *Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*," Nadia Margolis argues that Christine (1364/65–c. 1430) crafts a new type of *speculum regis* and uses it to rewrite her subject, Charles V of France (1338–80), as a holy relic, a point driven home not only by her isolation and verbal encasement of his body parts but also by her refusal to describe his tomb. With Charles's body cast as a relic, the *Livre* in turn becomes a type of reliquary, one constructed out of other texts, and Christine herself is featured as a craftswoman, a role she empha-

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sizes through repeated architectural metaphors and through the insertion of herself into the work as author and even as participant in Charles's life.

The complicated interaction between a book and its user forms the base of Jill C. Havens's essay, "A Gift, a Mirror, a Memorial: The Psalter-Hours of Mary de Bohun." Havens reads Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4.4 as an embodiment of the relationship between Joan Fitzalan and her daughter, Mary de Bohun (c. 1369–94). The de Bohun Psalter-Hours uses both text and image to script female spirituality and chastity, a point driven home by its prominent illustration of Mary de Bohun as an unmarried virgin. Yet the presentation of the Bodleian Psalter-Hours as a marriage gift meant that it also served to remind Mary "of her obligations as a royal wife to be dutiful and fruitful." As an object passed between women, the book memorializes Mary in her pure and idealized state at the same time that it celebrates and unites this identity with her new role as married woman.

Although it too contributes to fashioning a woman's identity, a material book functions very differently in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne's "'Parchment and Pure Flesh': Elizabeth de Vere, Countess of the Twelfth Earl of Oxford, and Her Book." Here, Wogan-Browne turns her attention to Elizabeth de Vere (d. 1473/74) and her collection of French religious treatises (Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 41), looking at the ways its twenty-eight texts script "self-disgust and awareness of individual and collective debt to Christ's redemptive grace." Along with the many other French texts circulating freely across the channel, Magdalen College MS lat. 41 contributed to a "chaste matron" culture, one enabled by textual constructions and reconstructions of its female audience.

In Part 3, Bodies, Objects, and Objects in the Shape of Bodies, the contributors work in the intriguing and often disquieting realm in which women's bodies and material objects merge and overlap. Here, the objectification of women's bodies at times seems to allow for a trade in women. Yet more often than not (as these contributors show), authorial attempts to give definitive shapes and boundaries to women's bodies either complicate the very gender boundaries they are trying to contain or reduce gender into an ideological abstraction.

In "Objects of the Law: The Cases of Dorigen and Virginia," Eleanor Johnson examines the imagined legal status of two of Chaucer's heroines, Dorigen in "The Franklin's Tale" and Virginia in "The Physician's Tale." These two female protagonists meet with different ends: Dorigen is saved from her contractual double bind by the good will of men around her; Virginia

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is condemned by her lack of recourse to well-intentioned men with legal power. Chaucer thus draws his readers' attention to the ability of women to "extricate themselves from their objectified status by mobilizing precedents" at the same time showing that "precedents are not always efficacious in saving women from their objectification."

The remaining three essays engage with the overlap between female bodies and the material world by featuring inanimate materials fashioned (often imaginatively) into images of women's bodies. In "Galatea's Pulse: Objects, Ethics, and Jean de Meun's Conclusion," Robert R. Edwards rereads the infamous ending of the *Roman de la Rose*, looking closely at Jean's juxtaposition of two statues, the *ymagete* at which Venus fires a burning arrow and the *ymage de ivuire* carved by Pygmalion. Although Pygmalion's story shows Jean's Lover how desire for the beloved can infuse her with new life, incite her desire in return, and result in the creation of more life, the Lover nevertheless approaches his own statue as a depersonalized object for his use: "As desire narrows to appetite and appetite aims to gratify itself, he misses the larger lesson" inherent in the story of Pygmalion, "that the meaning of objects resides not in things themselves but in the relations they generate and signify."

Jenny Adams, too, is concerned with the fictional relations between a male lover and a material object in the shape of a woman's body. In "Transgender and the Chess Queen in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*," she argues that Chaucer adopts the chess queen or *fers* as a central metaphor for the Black Knight's beloved "Whyt" because the piece's gender ambiguities endow it with special powers of reanimation. By taking into account its earlier history as a male piece, its lingering masculinities, and the practice of promoting a male pawn to a female queen, she shows how the piece's freedom from gender fixity brings about a temporary release from mortality: from a male pawn's figurative death comes a queen's figurative rebirth. Chaucer uses his chess-derived metaphor to suspend the painful reality of Whyt's death until the poem's ending and to reanimate the Black Knight out of the torpor and passivity into which he has fallen in his deep mourning.

Finally, C. David Benson's meditative essay takes as its point of departure an important article by Carolyn Collette on Chaucer's "Second Nun's Tale." Benson applies Augustine's distinction between things (to be enjoyed or used in themselves) and signs (that stand in for things) to two marble statues in the shape of women: a statue of Venus from classical antiquity, which appears in a Latin account by Master Gregorius of his visit to Rome,

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and a statue of Saint Cecilia sculpted by Stefano Maderno for the Roman church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere. Benson's essay considers the kinds of pleasures excited by these statues and their relations to medieval attitudes about saints, relics, and physical matter as registered by Gregorius, Chaucer (in his legend of St. Cecilia), and the patron and sculptor of the Cecilia statue still visible in the Roman church for which it was designed.

The twelve essays in this book honor Carolyn P. Collette as she retires from Mount Holyoke College. As is clear from the account of her work in Arlyn Diamond's opening dedication, Collette's generative scholarship examines historical and fictional women of the late Middle Ages, carefully seeking out the kinds of knowledge and agency they managed to muster, despite the odds against them in a culture that offered women many fewer opportunities for education or intervention in public life. Thus this book's topic links Collette's longstanding interest in medieval women, especially their access to learning and power, to the present surge of interest in material culture and the status of objects. We gratefully thank our distinguished contributors who took seriously our invitation to think about women's objects in the broadest and most imaginative senses. All our essays combine to salute Carolyn Collette's scholarship and teaching as we contemplate medieval women and their objects, especially as those objects relate to agency, power, and material consequences in the world.

Notes

1. "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend," lyrics by Jule Styne, music by Leo Robin, written for the 1949 stage musical and immortalized by Marilyn Monroe in the 1953 film adaptation, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, directed by Howard Hawks.

2. The passage in the image is from Matthew 7.7, "Qui petit acceptit, et qui quærit invenit, pententi dabitur et pulsanti aperietur." (Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened to you.)

3. Seminal works for recent thought about the status of objects include the many writings of Bruno Latour, especially *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Bill Brown, "Thing Theory" (2001), reprinted in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1–21; and Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). A brief introduction to the world of object-oriented ontology (OOO) is Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology or What It's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis: Univer-

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sity of Minnesota Press, 2012). For cautions about some implications of agential objects and other postmodernisms for feminist scholarship and activism, see Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, eds., *Material Feminisms* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008). Particularly useful for medieval and early modern scholarship are Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2009) and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

4. Latour, *Never Been Modern*, 123.

5. As Robertson observes, "If the work of materialism is always a remediated one, we ought at the very least to return to the originary site from whence our modern understandings of what counts as 'materialism' have emerged." See "Medieval Materialism: A Manifesto," *Exemplaria* 22:2 (summer 2010): 99–118, at 101. Even more recently, Cole has echoed this call for contemporary theorists to acknowledge the premodern history of materialist thought, musing that a serious engagement with medieval mystical discourse might result in "a call for the reassessment" of a post-Kantian acceptance of metaphysical realism and along with it the idea of unknowable external truths inaccessible to human comprehension. Andrew Cole, "The Call of Things: A Critique of Object-Oriented Ontologies," *minnesota review* 80 n.s. (2013): 106–18, at 115.

6. In John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus (1398), a single "thing" might have many "objects": "The obiecte of þe yȝe is al þat may ben seyn, and al þat may ben herd is obiect to þe heringe, & al þat may be smellid is obiect to þe smellinge, & so of þe oþir wittis." In 1425, the anonymous *Orchard of Syon* refers to "þat obiecte, or þe cause of her deliyt." See the *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. "object(e)." Although she is more interested in Bartholomeus's emphasis on the unknowability of matter than the accessibility and plurality of objects, Robertson uses this same passage from Bartholomaeus in "Medieval Materialism," 99–100.

7. Fleming pioneers this work in *Britain After Rome: The Fall and Rise, 400–1070* (London: Allen Lane, 2010; rpt. New York: Penguin, 2011).

8. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 19.

9. Ibid., 20–21.

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PART I

Objects and Gender in a Material World

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CHAPTER 1

The "Thyng Wommen Loven Moost"
The Wife of Bath's Fabliau Answer

Susanna Fein

What do women want? The riddle set in "The Wife of Bath's Tale" poses this quintessential question: "What *thyng* is it that wommen moost desiren?"[1] Calling the object of desire a *thyng* implies something of material substance. Yet the solution proves to be wholly abstract: "sovereynetee" (III.1038). A quest for an abstract quality is in keeping with the genre of the tale, a Breton lai that takes up the ethical and moral valences that define Arthur's court. It is thus unsurprising that this answer gains universal female assent in the queen's court, a place that stages a rejection of material answers in order to embrace the knight's decidedly more abstract answer.

By contrast, the genre that defines the Wife herself, the fabliau, would have yielded a considerably more physical answer, akin to her innuendos about women's "queynte fantasye" to crave "what thyng we may nat lightly have" (516–17). Unlike lais, which habitually frame solutions in abstractions and ideals, fabliaux tend to address the dictates of desire in material terms. And, certainly, Alisoun's prologue typecasts her as the sort of wife who inhabits the realm of the physical: obsessed with sex and eager to name and use body parts. Compared to the crude linguistic register typical of such tales (e.g., *vit*, *con*), Alisoun's vocabulary seems more delightfully euphemistic (e.g., *sely instrument*, *nether purs*). Yet euphemism does nothing to decrease the materiality of her stated desires and her own focus on "things." By one of her coy terms, *bele chose* (447, 510), her female member is called a "lovely thing" in French. By another, *queynte* (332, 444), it is "something elegant," but the term conveys a blatantly low pun.[2] In the course of her prologue, Alisoun's repetitions of *thyng* may refer as readily to private parts ("oure bothe *thynges* smale" [121]) as to other sorts of desires ("gaye *thynges*

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fro the fayre" [221]), creating a buyer's sense of the world's materiality: "for al is for to selle" (414).

Yet while Alisoun's tale may shift away from the prologue's embrace of material *thynges*, it does not entirely move away from materiality. I argue here that, despite "The Wife of Bath's Tale"'s veneer of Breton lai, it slyly draws upon the fabliau genre, offering polite correctives on matters of love and sex while embracing a joyously subversive fabliau subtext. The posed riddle and chain of events invite a bawdy meaning: the fabliau *thyng* that women most desire.[3] If in her prologue the Wife amplifies the joke of what women perennially seek, the answer to which sapped the energy of her old husbands—"As help me God, I laughe whan I thynke / How pitously a-nyght I made hem swynke!" (201–2)—then in her tale she uses a hybrid genre, provocatively challenging any rewriting of love as abstract and romantic, and instead suggesting that *thynges* still form the basis of all desire.

Such a blending of the disparate registers of romance and fabliau was well known to authors before Chaucer, whose clever, well-timed allusions to a contrasting genre became a way to provoke both laughter and reflection. In the Continental French *Guillaume au faucon*, a wife's decision to take a lover—justified by lai conventions—is signaled by a register-shifting pun on *faucon/faux con*.[4] The sudden drop in tone disconcerts a reader's expectations, yet such mixing of genre fits with how fabliaux themselves tended to be preserved—not isolated but rather folded into broader collections. *Guillaume au faucon* resides in a Continental anthology, Paris, BN ms. fr. 19152 (c. 1300), that collects not just romances but also fabliaux, lyrics, and didactic works. Likewise, the handful of fabliaux that survive from medieval England crop up in trilingual anthologies of mixed content, namely the famous Oxford, MS Digby 86 (c. 1280), and London, British Library MS Harley 2253 (c. 1340).[5]

These two books reveal the kinds of ribaldry circulating in England in the wake of Marie de France's sophisticated lais but well before Chaucer's clever remaking of fabliaux in English. Digby 86 preserves in *Dame Sirith* the earliest specimen of a fabliau in English, written some hundred years before Chaucer's "Miller's Tale." In Harley 2253 there exists a second example: *The Life of Saint Marina*. Parading as hagiography, the tale's "miracles" project prurient, goliardic humor: the private parts of a secretly female monk put on display in death; a secular girl's restored sanity named as her "womones *cunde*."[6] Little else survives in English, indicating the need to look toward Anglo-French texts for other signs of indigenous models.[7]

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If authors before Chaucer played with hybrid genres, the Wife's tale demonstrates that Chaucer himself continued the tradition. In its theme of women's desire, "The Wife of Bath's Tale" converses most directly with two fabliaux found in these books: from Digby, *Les quatre souhaiz de saint Martin* (*The Four Wishes of Saint Martin*), and from Harley, *Les trois dames qui troverent un vit* (*The Three Ladies Who Found a Prick*). Also surviving in Continental versions, both Anglo-French tales exploit the fabliau's often obsessive fascination with private body parts named by shockingly blunt words, an element that spices up the Wife of Bath's performance.[8] In selecting these tales, I do not claim them as sources for Alisoun's tale.[9] I choose them, rather, for the fabliau humor centered on carnal female desire that they exemplify. Likely circulated in oral as well as written forms, their presence in England in the 1330s suggests that such French stories were available to the poet who brought the fabliau form fully into English. In both tales, women determinedly pursue the male *vit*, whether as a singular object or as a vast variety of different permutations on display. Likewise, in the Wife's prologue, in lines too scurrilous for some scribes, Alisoun chooses "the beste" men by evaluating their "nether purs" and declares a personal wealth of learning from diverse schools:

> Diverse scoles maken parfyt clerkes,
> And diverse practyk in many sondry werkes
> Maketh the werkman parfyt sekirly. (44c–44e)

These lines typify a fabliau law of womankind: the reductive premise that all women, despite their individuality, are unified in pursuing one carnal goal. Alisoun's words connect her prologue to this comic theme found in male-authored fabliaux, and they forecast how that theme will be reprised in the context of her lai.

A SURFEIT OF *VITS: LES QUATRE SOUHAIZ DE SAINT MARTIN*

A plentiful array of vibrant sexual organs, in scopic close focus, marks the fabliau of women's desire first examined here, *Les quatre souhaiz de saint Martin*. The story begins with a visual pun: a peasant plows his field. The simple man harbors a special devotion to Saint Martin, and precisely when he sets

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hand to plow, the blessed saint appears, promising to grant him four wishes. The man's humble bucolic activity imagistically foreshadows the upcoming narrative, for once the peasant involves his wife in the choices, each wish will involve *vits* and *cons*. Thus, even before Saint Martin appears, the interplay of harrow and tilled earth evokes the human instruments of copulation that will multiply and come to overpopulate the tale.

The peasant hurries home to tell his spouse of his good fortune, only to be greeted by shrewish verbal abuse, for the wife is certain he is lazily shirking his plowing duties. But he explains Saint Martin's gift to her, even stating how he would distribute the wishes for four types of material gain: for "terre, richece, or & argent" (gold and silver, land and riches, 54).[10] Faced with this, she changes tactics, relentlessly wheedling him into letting her have the first wish. The peasant eventually concedes and, hence, in a manner Alisoun might condone, he grants his wife a risky level of sovereignty. Put another way, by granting her the first wish, he has foolishly set faith in his wife before his loyalty to Saint Martin.

Before he concedes, however, there is another joke, which appears only in the Continental version. This bit of humor threatens the peasant's own embodied shape. Initially wary of his wife's intentions, the peasant fears she will transform him to a beast:

> "Ne connois pas bien voz amors?—
> se deïssiez que fusse uns ours
> ou asnes ou chievre ou jument,
> jel seroie tout esraument." (81–84)[11]
>
> ["If you should wish I was a bear
> or jackass, or a goat or mare,
> I would become one on the spot.
> I know how much you love me: not."]

And she comically answers: "en moie foi / je vous afi de mes .ii. mains / que toz jors serez vous vilains" ("I swear / in good faith with both hands raised high, / you'll stay a peasant till you die," 86–88). This cynical response seems adequate to reassure him, but, in fact, her use of the first wish *will* shift his shape, for she wants him "chargiez de vis" ([covered with] penises galore, 95). Such does occur, in a riotous *tour de force* of surreal metamorphosis and magnification:

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Quant ele ot souhaidié & dit,
du vilain saillirent li vit.
Li vit li saillent par le nez
& par le bouche de delez,
si ot vit lonc & vit quarrez,
vit gros, vit cort, vit reboulez,
vit corbe, vit agu, vit gros . . .
Sor le vilain n'ot si dur os
dont vit ne saillent merveillous.
Li vit li saillent des genous. (103–12)[12]

[Then, as soon as the woman spoke,
hundreds of pricks began to poke
out all over. Penises grew
around his nose and his mouth too.
Some pricks were thick, some oversized.
Some long, some short, some circumcised,
curved pricks, straight pricks, pointed and hardy . . .
every bone in the peasant's body
was miraculously endowed
and prickled, fully cocked and proud.]

These lines give only a sample of what is an astonishing display of proliferating plenitude, longer in the Continental version than in Digby, but clearly the gem of both texts. The wife's desire materializes before her eyes, creating a monstrously multi-endowed priapic man, a hideous sight to which she is willfully blind as she defends herself:

Quant li vilains se vit si fait,
"Suer," dist il, "ci a lait souhait!
Por qoi m'as tu si atorné?"
. . . . . .
"Sire," dist el, "je vous di bien
c'un seul vit ne me valoit rien:
sempres ert mol comme pelice,
mes or sui je de vis molt riche." (121–23, 127–30)[13]

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[Weighed down by penis upon penis,
the peasant said, "This wish was heinous!
Why give me all this finery?"
. . . . . .
"Husband," she said, "I'll tell you why.
Your prick couldn't satisfy,
just hanging limply like a fox
stole, but now I've a wealth of cocks!"]

In retaliation, the husband wishes similar deformity upon his wife, and *cons* diverse in shape, size, and age instantly materialize on every surface of her body:

con tort, con droit & con chenu
& con sanz poil & con velu
& con pucel & con estrait
& con estroit & con bien fait. (149–52)[14]

[bent cunts, straight cunts, cunts gray and hoary,
cunts without hair, cunts thick and furry,
and virgin cunts, narrow and tight,
wide gaping cunts, and cunts made right.]

The married pair is now humorously armored for lovemaking of all types and positions, but there is no joy in that. The wife reacts in horror, as did the husband:

"Sire," dist ele, "qu'as tu fait?
Por qoi m'as doné tel souhait!"
"Je te dirai," dist li bons hom.
"Je n'avoie preu en .i. con
puis que tant vit me doniiez." (157–61)[15]

["Husband, what have you done?" said she.
Why have you wished this thing on me?"
The good man said, "One cunt won't do
for all the pricks I got from you."]

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Private parts have become conspicuously public, a point made when the peasant tells his wife she'll be "bien connue" (well known / "cunted," 164). The wife then insists that the third wish must rid them of the *vits* and *cons*, and the foolish peasant again listens to his wife. The wish takes effect, but not as they expect:

> fu ele molt marie
> quant de son con ne trova mie,
> & li preudom, quant il revit
> que il n'ot mie de son vit. (173–76)[16]

> [she was anything but cheered
> to find her cunt had disappeared,
> and he too, had an awful shock
> to find himself without a cock.]

Now there is no choice but to use the fourth wish to restore their proper parts. The fabliau thus ends, the pair "n'aurons perdu noiant" (no poorer off, at any rate, 182), but with the four wishes used up.

Both extant versions of *Quatre souhaiz* end with comically misogynistic laments. The French text assails women for clouding men's judgment and bringing them to disaster: "que cil ne fet mie savoir / qui mieus croit sa fame que lui: / sovent l'en vient honte & anui" (man doesn't use his brains / when his wife's judgment sways his views. / Calamity often ensues, 188–90). The Anglo-French Digby version supplants this succinct maxim with a long rant against women and marriage, which the compiler draws invisibly from two other works, attaching them without break in the manuscript.[17] Of the Digby addition, Keith Busby remarks:

> No other fabliau, however openly edifying, has a concluding diatribe of fifty-six lines to sober up the reader or listener after the compulsive hilarity of the tale itself. . . . Yet despite all the anti-feminism, . . . we must wonder whether the overkill of the conclusion does not have the opposite effect of making us in the end laugh as much or more at the weakness of the husband.[18]

Both endings illustrate the fabliau impulse to voice a male viewpoint that all that goes awry among humans stems from women—and from men's foolishly fatal instinct to mix with them in marriage.

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While the Wife's tale obviously differs from *Quatre souhaiz*, the stories project a strikingly similar emphasis on the diversity of female desire. In the French fabliau, we see how a woman's desire for a *vit* in multiple forms starts the whole mess, making calamity of the peasant's devotion and good fortune. Indeed, an echo of Alisoun undergirds the poem's implicit underlying problem: the wife is sexually unsatisfied, either because, as she says, her husband's *vit* is worthless to her ("ne me valoit rien," 128), or because she simply craves variety, frequency, and choice. Diversity is a key element in the fabliau: there are multiple forms in the world; why should a wife (or husband) want just one?[19] Diversity marks the Wife's fabliau voice in her tale as well, when she runs through the different answers different women would give to the riddle: wealth, honor, rich array, lust abed, husbands outlived, flattery, attention, and so on (925–34). In saying women are each individually distinct, she is also affirming that *all* women would enjoy this array of diverse gifts.

The multiplicitous world, with its thingy-ness, corporeal diversity, and conflicting desires, is thus a characteristic of the fabliau outlook, and with it comes another theme shared by the Saint Martin fabliau and "The Wife of Bath's Tale": the importance and difficulty of choice. The adventure of the knight of Arthur's court comes down to a choice made wisely, as he deflects it back to the old woman. The peasant keeps peace with his wife by sharing the four wishes, allowing her to choose the first one, and then, rather as a panic response, the third one. What is perhaps the funniest likeness to Chaucer's tale is how, amid a brash plethora of *vits* and *cons* (a bewildering "many"), and then none at all (an unthinkable void), the couple reaches a point of harmony that merely brings them to where they started. Both tales have romantic endings, that is, an implied "bath of blisse" (1253), even if the Saint Martin tale predicts more nagging in the peasant's future. At least this couple has agreed that their one *vit* and one *con* represent a good state of affairs, and—however awkwardly and imperfectly—their marriage is affirmed. Transformation and shapeshifting have occurred only to confirm that neither wealthy *gentillesse* nor hideous monstrosity is to be their lot. A peasant remains a peasant, and he will plow his field.

A SCARCITY OF *VITS: LES TROIS DAMES QUI TROVERENT UN VIT*

Les trois dames qui troverent un vit is a fabliau with no male characters, only women. Where *Quatre souhaiz* brings forth a spectacular vision of *vits* in su-

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perabundance, this tale produces a comically surreal world in which there is but one *vit* among many women. Women in this fabliau freely express what they want and even call forth a judicial proceeding ruled by a woman. In this basic way, it is similar to "The Wife of Bath's Tale."

In *Trois dames*, three *dames* traveling together on pilgrimage discover an unusual object. Looking down at the ground, one of them spies a splendid *vit* wrapped in a cloth:

> vint a l'houre de tierce
> La une garda en un senter
> Si trova un vit, gros e plener,
> Envolupé en un drapel.
> N'i pit descovert qe le musel.
> La dame le prist meyntenaunt
> E de la trovure fust joyaunt. (12–18)[20]

> [it happened at the hour of terce
> That one looked down on a path
> And found a prick, thick and swollen,
> Wrapped in a piece of cloth.
> Only the tip was uncovered.
> The lady picked it up at once
> And was delighted by her find.]

The object is discovered with joy, and its alien uncanniness also provides pleasant intrigue for the reader. Here, the discovered body part, the *vit*, exists as its own discrete thing, detached and yet distinctively vital and alive. The fabliau's humor devolves from the medieval custom of going on pilgrimage to venerate holy relics taken from the *corpora* of saints. The *vit*'s potency parodies the salutary effects of coming in contact with a holy finger or toe.[21]

Dispute over who will possess a "part" of the *vit* becomes an ongoing pun as two of the three female companions argue over fair distribution of the object:

> E cele que aprés aloit
> Dit que ele avereit part.
> "Certes," fet ele, "vous le averez tart.
> Ja part de ce ne averez!"
> "Coment deble estes! Vous devez!

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Je dis al trovour, demy myen!
E si je ne le ey, ce n'est mie bien!
Dreit est qe je part eye,
Quar je su vostre compaigne verreie." (20–28)

[The one who walked behind her
Said she would have a part.
"Indeed," she says, "you'll have it later.
You'll never have a part of this one!"
"You're such a devil! You have to!
I say to the finder, it's half mine!
And if I don't have it, that's not fair at all!
It's only fair that I have a part,
For I'm your true companion."]

The woman who carries the *vit* retorts, in exasperation: "Ja n'averez part ne prow!" ("You'll never have any part at all!" 33). The second *dame* wants the matter to be judged, however, by an impartial outside authority, and they agree to take both object and dispute to a nearby convent, where "La abbesse, pur nul amour, / Ne lerra juger verité" (The abbess, having no bias, / Will never fail to judge the truth, 44–45). The phrase for the abbess's impartiality—*nul amour* (no passion in the matter)—also alludes to her vow of celibacy (she lives without *amour*). She is supposedly indifferent to sex.

The finder consents to judicial arbitration in the convent: "E je le grant, de par Dé" ("I agree to it, on God's part," 46). With her oath, the fabliau poet introduces a dose of blasphemous humor: Do the ladies seek divine justice to know who God sides with, *or* has the speaker just sworn upon a part of God's body? Here the joke resembles a goliardic pun, one that also appears in the Miller's Prologue when the Miller suggests that *Goddes pryvetee* is analogous to a wife's private parts (I.3164)—an outrageous idea that prompts Chaucer to apologize for reporting the vulgar words of this pilgrim: "Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys. / The Millere is a cherl; ye knowe wel this" (I.3181–82). A light satiric poke at the prudery, propriety, and pretensions of religion is, consequently, a key element of *Trois dames*, and it will play out in the story's outcome.

The *dames* arrive at the convent and are made to await the arrival of the abbess, who comes directly from Mass accompanied by the prioress and cellaress. The aggrieved lady now makes her complaint to the abbess:

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"Veiez si une moie compaigne
Qe doner ma part ne me deygne
De une chose qe ele ad trové.
Pur ce, qe ele ne m'en a donee
Ma part, come fere deveroit." (67–71)

["See here one of my companions
Who doesn't deign to give me my part
Of a thing she's found.
As a result, she hasn't given to me
My part, as she should do."]

The abbess orders that the object in question be displayed as evidence. The lady who found the *vit* draws it from her breast, and then the narrative focus shifts to the abbess's reaction. She

mout le garda de bon oyl.
De l'abbesse, counter voil
Qe molt le regarda volenters.
Granz suspirs fist, longz e enters. (85–88)

[gazed at it with much favor.
Regarding the abbess, I wish to report
That she looked at it very gladly.
She heaves great sighs, long and full.]

The *vit* is working its irresistible magic, its miraculous power. Not surprisingly, the abbess now orders the *vit*'s confiscation, claiming it is the convent's lost property, a door-bolt:

"C'est, de nostre porte, le verrous
Qe l'autre jour fust adyrrez.
Je comaund qu'il soit bien gardez
Come ce qu'est nostre chose demeyne." (92–95)

["It is, of our door, the bolt
Which was lost the other day.
I order that it be well guarded
As that which is our property."]

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She commands one of her companions, *dame Eleyne*, to put it back ("mis arere") where it belongs:

> E ma dame Eleyne ad pris
> Le vit, qe fust long e grant,
> E sachez qe ele meyntenaunt
> Le prist e gitta en sa maunche,
> Que molt estoit delgé e blaunche. (100–104)
>
> [And my Lady Helen has taken
> The prick, which was long and huge,
> And know that she quickly
> Took it and thrust it into her sleeve,
> Which was slender and white.]

Perhaps the abbess's command and this suggestive gesture imply that the *vit* is now to be enshrined and revered in a place where its powers will be aptly shared, with each of the nuns having a *part* of it. At any rate, its sanctity and generative potential have now been appropriated by Church officialdom; it has been authoritatively removed from the common laity. And what is the lesson? The three *dames* depart, bitterly cursing the abbess and declaring they would never again consent to "share such a thing":

> De tiele chose aprester,
> . . . . . .
> Mes cele qe la trovera
> A tous jours la tendra
> Come relyke molt desirree
> E de totes dames honoree. (113, 115–18)
>
> [But whoever shall find it
> . . . . . .
> Shall always hold onto it
> As a relic much desired
> And honored by all women.]

Satire of the Church is certainly present here, with a cynical depiction of carnal desire and promiscuity among cloistered women. The final admo-

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nition to secular women, who seem equally prone to promiscuity, is that anyone lucky enough to find a desirable *vit* will do best to keep it solely for herself.

THE DESIRED *THYNG* IN "THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE"

While the Wife of Bath openly labels her tale a Breton lai, inflections of fabliau intrude whenever the Wife's distinctive prologue-rhetoric waylays the narrative. One of these moments has already been mentioned: the listing of women's fickle responses to the central question: "Somme seyde wommen loven best richesse, / Somme seyde honour, somme seyde jolynesse" (925–26), and so on. Another is the funny digression on Midas and his wife, which Alisoun uses to illustrate how women wish to be thought discreet despite their proclivity to divulge secrets. Midas's wife is driven to blurt out "Myn housbonde hath longe asses erys two!" (976) because the secret "swal so soore aboute hir herte" (967). Notably, this story is about body parts only the wife knows about (the barber in Ovid's tale being comically effaced). It parallels the point in the prologue when Alisoun reveals her need to tell her *gossib* every embarrassing thing about her husband: how "hadde myn housbonde pissed on a wal" (534). A man's *pryvetee* is a wife's open property. Whether the secret be a hidden organ or a crime, a wife will blab it. The secret's capacity to swell her heart adds to how the man's ass-ears are like genitalia, for this "knowledge" transmitted from husband to wife creates a sort of pregnancy and expulsive birth. Like the peasant wife in *Quatre souhaiz*, Midas's wife is privy to something humiliating about her partner's body, and her action gives it public exposure.

The third blatant insertion of the Wife's fabliau voice comes in the tale's final lines:

> Jhesu Crist us sende
> Housbondes meeke, yonge, and fressh abedde,
> And grace t'overbyde hem that we wedde;
> And eek I praye Jhesu shorte hir lyves
> That noght wol be governed by hir wyves;
> And olde and angry nygardes of dispence,
> God sende hem soone verray pestilence! (1258–64)

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This epilogue expresses a carnal wish to have many young virile husbands in succession *and* to outlive them all, never having to endure an old man. This statement reflects both the Wife's own life history and the catalogue of desires given in the tale: "somme seyden lust abedde, / And oftetyme to be wydwe and wedde" (927–28). It also replays, wryly, the Breton lai just told, where these desires implicate *both* genders. The young knight is drawn to youth—the maiden he impulsively rapes, the twenty-four lovely dancing fairies—and when he finds himself married to Eld, he is physically repulsed. The fantasy ending brings him a wife of both youth and beauty. To read the lai through the eyes of the old woman (an ageless fairy): *she* has acquired a husband "meeke, yonge, and fressh abedde," and she will, most certainly, outlive him. The old woman, who is perhaps *the* Fairy Queen, can easily possess the Wife of Bath's dream—the reductive wish of fabliau women—and have it forever fulfilled.

Reading "The Wife of Bath's Tale" as a fabliau akin to *Trois dames*—that is, as a story centered on the finding of a *vit*—ushers in an abrupt shift of perspective. One may see its premise as being the entry of a lusty *vit* into the domain of all-women.[22] The knight, who embodies a self-contradiction (nobility *and* criminality), has, in a sense, poked through the gender "veil" by means of a willful, reckless act. The consequent tale turns upon how women may choose to deal judiciously with the discovery of an interesting *vit*. Left to the world of men, the knight would have died for his crime. In the world of women (natural and supernatural), the *vit* is an intriguing find, and the community may deliberate as to its proper fate and placement. It has generative potential, but in order to remain among women, its owner must answer the question, which, once the lesson has been imbibed, will redeem and tame the unruly *vit*. One may even imagine the fairy world to have orchestrated the whole affair, setting up the maid as bait (she too may be of fairy, indeed, the *same* fairy) in order to snatch his *vit* into the fairy realm. By this reading, the knight is like Marie's hero Lanval, seduced by fairy because a failure in the human world of Arthur's court has made him susceptible.[23]

In seeing Alisoun's tale as being about a man entrapped by and wed to fairy, one may recall, retrospectively, the warning with which she began, regarding the "minor" dangers posed by predatory friars compared to those faced in the former age:

> Wommen may go saufly up and doun.
> In every bussh or under every tree

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Ther is noon other incubus but he,
And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour. (878–81)

The passage introduces a memory of *incubi* who snatched women. Alisoun provides a tale wherein the genders may be reversed by sleight of hand: in a land ruled by an "elf-queene" (860), it is *men* who may not travel safely. Long-term abduction is committed by a *female* shapeshifter. In its deepest mythic roots, the tale draws from Celtic stories of the sovereignty hag (the source for the loathly lady) who possesses in serial succession whoever is the man of most virility, in order to maintain the land's fertility and the kingdom's potency.[24]

The ultimate life-lesson for the young knight with the wayward *vit* concerns lineage, the passage of time, and his own mortality. A crucial point in the old woman's sermon involves the true meaning of *heritage*:

"Crist wole we clayme of hym oure gentillesse,
Nat of oure eldres for hire old richesse.
For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
Yet may they nat biquethe for no thyng
To noon of us hir vertuous lyvyng." (1117–22)

A noble inherits noble blood but not noble virtues. Those qualities devolve solely from his own behavior, for which he is responsible. *Gentillesse* is not, therefore, something "planted" in one's offspring:

"If gentillesse were planted natureelly
Unto a certeyn lynage doun the lyne,
Pryvee and apert thanne wolde they nevere fyne
To doon of gentillesse the faire office." (1134–37)

The old woman frames this argument in terms both abstract and material, entwining high-minded lai values with carnal fabliau. The "faire office" performed "pryvee and apert" speaks both of noble deeds enacted modestly and, euphemistically, of lustful acts aristocrats might never cease to perform were *gentillesse* passed on that way.[25] The register remains courtly even as it connotes something more crass. The elegant notion of "planting" *gentillesse* "natureelly" likewise invites a sexualized interpretation. The knight has planted

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his seed indiscriminately, resulting in a reckless destruction of his *heritage*. Not only has he disgraced his line, but by wasting seed he has squandered his opportunity to sow it aptly in the future. As a consequence, he must now marry someone old and common, and he must sacrifice the hope of progeny. He has brought this consequence on himself by stupidly misdirecting his *vit*.

Possessed by the feminine fairy world, the knight is forced to understand the sex act as a signifier of his own existence marked for death. In bed with the old woman, facing Eld, he wallows and winds, and she comically asks: "Fareth every knyght thus with his wyf as ye?" (1088). Starting off in the tale "allone as he was born" (885), the pubescent youth launches himself into sexuality, which Chaucer figures as egotistically male, violent, and misogynist, and soon finds himself propelled on a mortal path.[26] The old woman's sermon teaches that a man should regard his *heritage*—his inherited lineage and future progeny—as the meaningful precondition for sex. In full control of his *vit*, a man ought to stay in bounds, wed his station, and create a legitimate bloodline. The consummation of sex, a mortal act, generates new life while the male agent progressively expires.

In the fairy world of Alisoun's tale, the female agent does not die. She lives on, enjoying *and* outlasting a male *vit* "fressh abedde." Matters of mortality chasten the male and tame the *vit*. He needs one female, youthful and faithful. But she, like God, is exempt from those rules. Chaucer sets the sexualized fabliau woman in a realm of inexhaustible pleasure, where she is the font:

> "An housbonde shal nat been inquisityf
> Of Goddes pryvetee, nor of his wyf.
> So he may fynde Goddes foyson there,
> Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere."
> ("The Miller's Prologue," I.3163–66)

Wives may be faithful or not; only they and God know. Nonetheless, they bring pleasure to men, and they endow life through progeny.

SACRED PARODY

What part does God play in "The Wife of Bath's Tale"? If the quality of *gentillesse* descends solely from God (1117, 1162), then a fabliau figuration of

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that reality might suggest God's impartation of virtue as analogous to the "faire office" of our human progenitors. In other words, the fairy woman's introduction of God as the true force in a man's *heritage* implies that supernatural parentage overshadows the meager role of one's ancestors. Alisoun's tale envisions the Progenitor of *gentillesse* working through a fairy realm of all-women to regenerate man, who, doomed by his own willfulness, has been reduced to and by his sinful *vit*. Thus, in thinly veiled fashion, the tale allows God's own *part* to be perceived in both spiritual and carnal terms.

With religious parody deeply embedded in the fabric of Chaucer's tales, this fabliauesque reading of "The Wife of Bath's Tale" may not be too far-fetched.[27] The overt depiction of Christ's *ostentatium genitalium* in Renaissance art, well delineated by Leo Steinberg, should cue us to the frequent material expression of Christ as male Lover or God as paternal Progenitor in medieval texts, pointing toward profound mysticism, irreverent parody, or both at once.[28] A little-known text in which a *vit* of both matter and spirit is prodigiously active is the thirteenth-century *Le lai d'Ignaure*, recently highlighted by Barbara Newman.[29] In it, twelve noble wives engage, individually, in private affairs with one gallant knight named Ignaure. When they learn that they all have the same lover, they are initially upset, but then they accept the situation because it is so pleasurable. When their husbands discover the affairs, however, they brutally kill and dismember the knight, and then cruelly feed his *vit* and heart to their unwitting wives. Newman reads this lai as "an obscene parody of erotically tinged [eucharistic] devotion," noting how the ladies "share the heart of a single lover" as well as "what women most desire."[30] The parody exceeds a lai's decorum by invoking the exaggerated sexual desires of fabliau women. The well-endowed lover (Christ's body) can be agreeably shared. When the ladies learn of their husbands' treachery, they choose to die together by fasting, all the while praising their lover's beauteous parts.

In like manner, the two Anglo-French/Continental French fabliaux discussed here, *Quatre souhaiz* and *Trois dames*, deploy bawdy forms of *parodia sacra*. The wishes spiritually bequeathed by Saint Martin turn instantly material: the peasant dreams of land, riches, gold, and silver, but when filtered through the wife's obsessions, the wishes comically veer toward the flesh. The final outcome confirms the wisdom of the Creator when it comes to sexual organs, a truth described lasciviously by Chaucer's Merchant as "belynaked" Adam being given Eve as his "paradys terrestre," allowing them to "lyve in unitee" ("The Merchant's Tale," IV.1326, 1332, 1334). Like the deni-

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zens of Eden, the peasant couple possesses primal complementarity, *vit* and *con*. To appreciate these gifts, they must comically lose and regain them.

Trois dames also offers a nuanced parody based on the carnal desires of fabliau women. When the *dame* who first discovered the *vit* swears on "God's part," suggestive interpretations from different registers begin to converge. Where has this potent relic come from? *Whose* is it? While it is treated in the fabliau manner, as a desirable male member sought by all women, its uncanny presence as a relic to be adored draws from the language of religious piety. The issue of its being shared is never quite settled, even as it is decisively denied to secular women and appropriated by the Church (represented here as a convent of nuns imbibing God's body in their daily Mass). The parody seems to stretch beyond the comic carnal desire of women for any fortuitously discovered male *vit*, to suggest a yearning for an all-powerful Presence, as imbued in a holy relic, figured here perhaps as the indelible phallic mark of Christ's humanation. As in "The Wife of Bath's Tale," the double register comes as an eyebrow-raising suggestion taken from the unruly world of fabliau.

It is the nature of fabliaux to celebrate the natural life-force endowed to humans by their Creator. In focusing on salacious body parts, fabliaux exaggerate and laud sexual desires acted on for greedy pleasure. Following the terms of the genre, the deed need not be condemned, even when it is transgressive, which is why "The Wife of Bath's Tale," a hybrid story that weds lai and fabliau, figures the knight's act of rape as mindless, instinctual, and violent, yet not a capital offense against womankind. Instead, the knight's manhood—baldly put, his *vit*—becomes a *thyng* for women to contemplate. Figured as more voracious than men in their sexual appetites, fabliau women value lusty men. Their comic materialism seems to enact a God-given joke on mankind: that the sex act is really about *passing on* in the double sense of leaving a trace of oneself (*heritage*) and of dying. The joke is ultimately on the fabliau man, who discovers that the generative principle—subsumed in women—will overtake *him*, not the other way around.

Notes

1. "The Wife of Bath's Tale," III.905; cf. 921, 1007, 1033. All citations of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are taken from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). Subsequent references to this tale will be noted by line number parenthetically in the body of this essay.

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2. *MED*, s.v. *queinte* (n.), sense 2. See also Laura Kendrick, *Chaucerian Play: Comedy and Control in the* Canterbury Tales (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 92–97; and Alistair Minnis, "From *Coilles* to *Bel Chose*: Discourses of Obscenity in Jean de Meun and Chaucer," in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 2008), 156–78, at 172–73.

3. Simon Gaunt is not alone among scholars in noting how, in fabliaux, "[f]emale desire is given ample narrative space" alongside "a less than complimentary view of masculinity." Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 274. On women's ingenuity and authority in fabliau, see also Lesley Johnson, "Women on Top: Antifeminism in the Fabliaux?," *Modern Language Review* 78 (1983): 298–307.

4. Joan Tasker Grimbert, "The 'Fin Humour' of *Guillaume au faucon*," in *The Old French Fabliaux: Essays on Comedy and Context*, ed. Kristin L. Burr et al. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2007), 134–46, at 144. The text of *Guillaume au faucon* appears in *NRCF* (Willem Noomen and Nico van den Boogaard, eds., *Nouveau receuil complet des fabliaux (NCRF)*, 10 vols. [Assen: Van Gorcum, 1983–98]), 8:217–45. On the generically mixed contents of BN ms. fr. 19152, see the facsimile, Edmond Faral, intro., *Le manuscrit 19152 du fonds français de la Bibliothèque nationale. Reproduction phototypique publiée avec une introduction* (Paris: Droz, 1934); and the enumeration of titles given at ARLIMA (Archives de littérature du moyen âge), accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.arlima.net/mss/france/paris/bibliotheque_nationale_de_france/francais/19152.html. Alfred Hiatt has suggested that, in Middle English studies, we might do well to "reconceptualize genre as a mode of mixing" ("Genre without System," in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], 277–94, at 291).

5. See Keith Busby, "*Esprit gaulois* for the English: The Humor of the Anglo-Norman Fabliau," in *The Old French Fabliaux*, ed. Burr et al., 160–73; and Carter Revard, "From French 'Fabliau Manuscripts' and MS Harley 2253 to the *Decameron* and the *Canterbury Tales*," *Medium Ævum* 69 (2000): 261–78. The corpus of Anglo-French fabliaux is quite small. All are printed in Ian Short and Roy Pearcy, eds., *Eighteen Anglo-Norman Fabliaux*, Plain Texts Series 14 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2000) (hereafter "Short and Pearcy"); eleven of these derive from framed collections (Petrus Alphonus's *Disciplina clericalis* and Marie de France's *Ysopet*). On how fabliaux tend to survive in mixed collections, see Keith Busby, *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narration in Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002); and Logan E. Whalen, "'Par ceste fable': Fabliaux and Marie de France's *Isopet*," in *"Li premerains vers": Essays in Honor of Keith Busby*, ed. Catherine M. Jones and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 517–32.

6. See Susanna Fein, "A Saint 'Geynest under Gore': Marina and the Love Lyrics of the Seventh Quire," in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript: The Scribes, Contents, and Social Contexts of British Library MS Harley 2253*, ed. Susanna Fein (Kalamazoo,

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MI: Medieval Institute, 2000), 351–76, at 364–65. For the text of *Marina*, see *The Complete Harley 2253 Manuscript*, ed. and trans. Susanna Fein, with David Raybin and Jan Ziolkowski, 3 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2014–15) (hereafter cited as "*Harley*"), 2:130–41 (line 217). The same English pun on *kind* (nature, kind) and *cunt* exists in *Dame Sirith*: "Wel ȝerne he him biþoute / Hou he hire gete moute / In ani *cunnes* wise" (lines 13–15); and in the Harley Lyric *Annot and John*: "Coynte ase columbine, such hire *cunde* ys, / Glad under gore, in gro ant in grys" (*Harley*, 2:122–23; lines 15–16).

7. On the dearth of the form in English, see John Hines, *The Fabliau in English* (London: Longman, 1993).

8. On this obsession in fabliaux, see R. Howard Bloch, "The Body and Its Parts," in his *The Scandal of the Fabliaux* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 59–100 (chap. 2). Regarding the Wife of Bath's love of such terms by innuendo, see Bernard S. Levy, "The Wife of Bath's *Queynte Fantasie*," *Chaucer Review* 4 (1970): 106–22.

9. For discussions of Chaucer and Anglo-French fabliaux, see Roy J. Pearcy, "Anglo-Norman Fabliaux and Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*," *Medium Ævum* 69 (2000): 227–60; and Frederick M. Biggs, "A Bared Bottom and a Basket: A New Analogue and a New Source for the *Miller's Tale*," *Notes and Queries* 254 (2009): 340–41. On Marie's lais and Chaucer, see esp. Angela Jane Weisl, *Conquering the Reign of Femenye: Gender and Genre in Chaucer's Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 85–117. On attested analogues for "The Wife of Bath's Tale," see John Withrington and P. J. C. Field, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," in *Sources and Analogues of the Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert M. Correale and Mary Hamel, 2 vols. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002–05), 2:405–48.

10. The text and translation of *Quatre souhaiz* are cited by line number from Nathaniel E. Dubin, ed. and trans., *The Fabliaux* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2013), 886–95. Based on the Continental French version found in Paris, BN ms. fr. 837, fols. 189r–190r, Dubin's lively translation captures well the tone of the original. A parallel-text edition of *Quatre souhaiz*'s four versions appears in *NRCF*, 4:191–216. The Anglo-French version in Digby 86, fols. 113r–114b, lacks the opening lines and is abridged throughout; in it, this line is similar: "Tere e richesse, or e argent" (line 12; Short and Pearcy, 33). On the two versions referenced in this chapter, see the contents enumeration of BN ms. fr. 837 given at ARLIMA, accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.arlima.net/mss/france/paris/bibliotheque_nationale_de_france/francais/00837.html; and Judith Tschann and M. B. Parkes, intro., *Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 86*, EETS s.s. 16 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

11. In the truncated Digby version, the wife merely pleads and flatters, calling her husband "moun dous amy" (line 34; Short and Pearcy, 33).

12. Cf. Digby, lines 49–58 (Short and Pearcy, 34).

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13. Cf. Digby, lines 61–69 (Short and Pearcy, 34).

14. Cf. Digby, lines 80–88 (Short and Pearcy, 34).

15. Cf. Digby, lines 88–94 (Short and Pearcy, 34).

16. Cf. Digby, lines 93–96 (Short and Pearcy, 34).

17. See Short and Pearcy, 34–35. The other works are *Le Blasme des femmes* and *Le Chastisemusart*.

18. Busby, "*Esprit gaulois*," 163–64.

19. Note Alisoun's mention of Solomon who "hadde wyves mo than oon," causing her to wish "it leveful were unto me / To be refresshed half so ofte as he!" (36–38).

20. Quotations from this fabliau (translation and text) are taken from *Harley*, 3:110–15, cited by line number. A critical edition of its two versions appears in *NCRF*, 8:271–81. The Anglo-French version appears in Harley MS 2253, fol. 110r–v; the Continental version survives in Paris, BN ms. fr. 1593, fols. 149v–150v. See the digital facsimiles: British Library Digitised Manuscripts, accessed August 11, 2015, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_2253&index=15; and Gallica (Bibliothèque nationale de France), accessed August 11, 2015, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6000803p.

21. See Barbara Nolan, "Anthologizing Ribaldry: Five Anglo-Norman Fabliaux," in *Studies in the Harley Manuscript*, ed. Fein, 289–328, at 305–9. The implied vibrancy of the *vit* reflects the way material relics were thought to be animated by spiritual presence.

22. A place that arises in Chaucer's imagination in "The Knight's Tale"'s "regne of Femenye" (I.866) and seems often to occupy his thought. On Chaucer's evolving focus on women, see Carolyn P. Collette's perceptive *Rethinking Chaucer's* Legend of Good Women (Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 2014). The Harley lyric *The Poet's Repentance* locates a poet's bliss in being the only man in the "londe of levedis alle" (line 72; *Harley*, 2:144–45).

23. Humans snatched by fairies is a frequent motif of lais and romances. Besides *Lanval* (which was rewritten in Middle English as *Sir Launfal*), abduction of a man by a woman fairy happens in *Thomas of Erceldoune's Prophecy* (*The Romances and Prophecies of Thomas of Erceldoune*, ed. J. A. H. Murray, EETS OS 61 [London, 1865], 1–46). Chaucer's Sir Thopas hopes that such a marvel will overtake him (VII.787–96).

24. See Susan Carter, "Coupling the Beastly Bride and the Hunter Hunted: What Lies behind Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 37 (2003): 329–45; John Bugge, "Fertility Myth and Female Sovereignty in *The Weddynge of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnell*," *Chaucer Review* 39 (2004): 198–218; and S. Elizabeth Passmore and Susan Carter, eds., *The English "Loathly Lady" Tales: Boundaries, Traditions, Motifs* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 2007).

25. On this passage, compare Levy, "The Wife of Bath's *Queynte Fantasie*," 119.

26. Compare Lee Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison: Uni-

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versity of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 294–96, who discusses Jean Lefèvre's *La vieille* as a suggestive precedent to "The Wife of Bath's Tale." See also my "Other Thought-Worlds," in *A Companion to Chaucer*, ed. Peter Brown (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 332–48.

27. For a somewhat analogous expression of "Goddes pryvetee" in Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale," see Kendrick, *Chaucerian Play*, 5–19.

28. Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), whose findings embrace both late medieval and Renaissance art. See esp. his "Ad Bynum" (364–89), in response to Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1996), 79–117.

29. Barbara Newman, *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular against the Sacred* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 174–81.

30. Newman, *Medieval Crossover*, 181.

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CHAPTER 2

Zenobia's Objects

Nancy Mason Bradbury

Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, sole female protagonist of the seemingly inexhaustible series of tragedies recounted by Chaucer's Monk in *The Canterbury Tales*, was an historical woman born around 240 CE. With her husband Odaenathus, she ruled an influential kingdom from the elegant colonnaded city of Palmyra, built on an oasis in the Syrian desert. As regent to the young heir after her husband's death in 267, Zenobia pursued a vigorous policy of territorial expansion at the expense of imperial Rome. Defeated by the Emperor Aurelian in 272, she was taken to Rome as a captive, and her despoiled city never regained its former splendor.[1] Ours is a poignant moment for contemplating objects associated with ancient Palmyra: bloody conflict in Syria threatens to destroy what remains of Zenobia's capital, now a UNESCO World Heritage archaeological site. As I attend in this essay to the symbolic objects possessed by Zenobia in Chaucer's version of her legend (where she appears as Cenobia), the material objects left by the ancient Palmyrenes attract deeply regrettable attention in the form of destruction of buildings and monuments and the persistent theft of antiquities from the site.[2]

Whatever causes we may assign for the current loss of life and destruction of art on the site of Zenobia's city, "The Monk's Tale" holds Fortune's treachery toward those in high places responsible for the pillaging of Palmyra in antiquity. In the final stanza of Chaucer's account, Fortune compels this once-victorious warrior queen to an exchange of highly significant objects, a textual moment that draws our attention to the vibrancy of the material world as depicted in late medieval literature. In defeat, Zenobia must exchange her battle helmet for an otherwise unknown headdress called a *vitremyte*, her scepter for that quintessential object of ancient and medieval women, a distaff. This exchange brings closure to the narrative and thus invites special scrutiny: what we make of it strongly affects our

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interpretation of the whole. As we will see, those who comment directly on Zenobia's new objects have tended to view them in a wholly negative light, as instruments of punishment and gender-based humiliation, in keeping with a negative view of Chaucer's Monk as a mordant and misogynistic narrator. But like words, objects wield multiple significations, and I will argue that Zenobia's new objects serve wider and more positive ends than illustrating the punitively misogynistic impulses of the fictional Monk. Indeed, in combination with the affirmative traits featured in her narrative, Zenobia's gendered (and gendering) objects connect her to a powerful discourse of feminine virtue in Chaucer and in his immediate literary models for this portrait. Rather than punishing her for gender transgression, her exchange of objects demonstrates both what Helen Phillips has called Chaucer's "pleasure in crossing stereotypical gender images"[3] and his move away from representing human lives, especially women's lives, as relentless instances of *tragedie*. As Carolyn Collette has recently reminded us, these tendencies—toward turning gender stereotypes inside out and toward imagining more varied and more often positive outcomes for his characters—are major artistic directions that help to distinguish *The Canterbury Tales* from the poet's earlier work.[4] Plentiful as they are, scholarly discussions of Chaucer's female characters have taken comparatively little notice of Zenobia, yet surely this learned warrior queen in a companionate marriage to a likeminded husband merits more attention than she has yet received.

The exceptional length of Zenobia's story and the liveliness of its verse testify to Chaucer's special interest in the Monk's only female protagonist. Nearly half the Monk's narratives occupy five or fewer stanzas; Zenobia's runs to sixteen, longer by five than any other. Undeniably, in the penultimate stanza of her narrative she appears as an object paraded in triumph:

> Amonges othere thynges that he wan,
> Hir chaar, that was with gold wroght and perree,
> This grete Romayn, this Aurelian,
> Hath with hym lad, for that men sholde it see.
> Biforen his triumphe walketh shee,
> With gilte cheynes on hire nekke hangynge.
> Coroned was she, as after hir degree,
> And ful of perree charged hire clothynge. (VII.2359–66)[5]

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In its parallel presentation of chariot and queen, the stanza structurally replicates Aurelian's reduction of Zenobia to one of the "thynges" (2359) that he won in battle. Her gilded and gem-studded war chariot occupies the first half of the stanza ("with gold wroght and perree"); the conquered queen occupies the second, with "gilte cheynes" and clothing "ful of perree." Just as the chariot is paraded in triumph "for that men sholde it see," so "al the peple gaureth" ("stare") at the conquered queen (2369). In this stanza, both the emperor and the verse form objectify this victorious woman warrior who meets her match only in the supreme power of Rome. Walking before Aurelian's chariot, she has indeed "yfallen out of heigh degree / Into myserie, and endeth wrecchedly," in full compliance with the Monk's rigid generic formula for *tragedie* (1976–77).

Chaucer has something more to say about Zenobia, however, since he gives her narrative another stanza in which she becomes an agent who wears and bears her objects, though she is forced to relinquish an old set and take up a new:

> Allas, Fortune! She that whilom was
> Dredeful to kynges and to emperoures,
> Now gaureth al the peple on hire, allas!
> And she that helmed was in starke stoures
> And wan by force townes stronge and toures,
> Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;
> And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures
> Shal bere a distaf, hire cost for to quyte. (2367–74)

As I have noted, Zenobia's new objects have been interpreted as a punitive response by Chaucer's fictional Monk to her transgression of normative gender roles, her "brash attempt to arrogate a man's privileges."[6] According to this view, by forcing her to trade her battle helmet for a feminine headdress and her scepter for a distaff, the Monk "humiliates and punishes" her.[7] Thus a recent edition of *The Canterbury Tales* glosses the probable meaning of Zenobia's otherwise unknown *vitremyte* as some type of "humiliating head gear," and her distaff has been read as the punitive "instrument of Eve's enforced labor after the Fall."[8]

A closer look at Zenobia's newly acquired objects suggests that their significations may be less harsh. Instead of the warrior's helmet she once

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wore (2370) or the crown she wears in Aurelian's triumph (2365), she "shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte" (2372). Walter W. Skeat called Zenobia's mysterious *vitremyte* "perhaps the greatest 'crux' in Chaucer."[9] The word has been found nowhere else, and Chaucer's specification that she wore it "on hir heed" suggests that perhaps even his original readers might have profited from a hint about its meaning. Early Chaucer editor Thomas Tyrwhitt included *vitremyte* in his list of "Words and Phrases Not Understood"; the *Oxford English Dictionary* offers only the terse nondefinition, "Of obscure meaning." The *Middle English Dictionary* lists the many variant spellings offered in the manuscripts and follows Skeat's etymological conjecture (in his own words "a mere guess") that the word derives from Latin *vitrea mitra* and thus means a "glass and therefore fragile headdress," as opposed to the sturdy battle helmet implied by the phrase "she that helmed was" (2370). Karl Young extended Skeat's speculation about *vitrea* by citing expressions in which a hood or head of glass indicates not just fragility but vulnerability to deception—in Young's view Zenobia's *vitremyte* signifies that she has been deceived by Fortune.[10]

Skeat's derivation of *-myte* from Old French *mite* (a variant of *mitre*, from Latin *mitra*), "a head-dress," remains undisputed, but alternate etymologies for *vitre-* include Old French *vite* (Latin *vitta*), well attested in the meaning "a fillet or headband," or else the place name Vitré, a cloth-exporting town in Brittany.[11] Whatever the word's etymology, the context supports the inference that *vitremyte* denotes a soft feminine head covering, and further support for this view comes from the passage in Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* on which Chaucer's stanza is closely modeled. As Skeat noted, Boccaccio describes the captive Zenobia as Fortune's victim: formerly helmeted (*galeata*) she consorted with her soldiers, but now veiled or with her head covered (*velata*) she listens to the tales of her serving women (*mulierculae*); formerly she presided in the East with a scepter, and now at Rome she spins with a distaff like other women.[12] After citing examples of each element of Chaucer's apparent compound as applied to ancient and medieval women's headwear, T. Atkinson Jenkins offered his own conjecture, that Chaucer envisioned Zenobia's *vitremyte* as a kind of hood comprised of a light and transparent veil draped over two supports or "horns" (*cornes*).[13]

Thus far, no evidence indicates that a *vitremyte* implies anything more demeaning than the modest head covering then deemed appropriate to ordinary private life in the secondary status accorded to the feminine; we have no reason to associate it with special shame or punishment. The evidence that

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connects a *mitra* and distaff to deliberate and punitive humiliation of a heroic figure derives from an intriguing parallel passage identified by Vincent DiMarco. In Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*, as punishment for the death of an enemy, Hercules undergoes a loss of status that, like Zenobia's, is indicated by a change of headwear and imposition of a distaff. In place of his masculine *pilleus*, in his case the lion's skin he wore on his head and shoulders, Hercules is made to wear a *meonia mitra*—the same sort of effeminate Eastern headgear that Iarbus, Aeneas's rival in Virgil's epic, accuses Paris and Aeneas of wearing on their perfumed locks. DiMarco argues that Chaucer would associate Zenobia's *vitremyte* with this Eastern, non-Roman, and by implication unmanly *mitra*, "a cloth cap covering the head tied with strings or lappets under the chin" (16). He is surely right to emphasize the gendered implications of a *mitra*, a point further supported by Isidore of Seville's distinction between the masculine *pilleus* made from animal hide and the feminine *mitra* made from wool.[14]

Objects that humiliate a male hero because they are feminine need not afflict a woman so severely, however, not even a former woman warrior; in Chaucer's society it was not at all unusual for a married or widowed woman to cover her head and spin with a distaff.[15] Thus the Hercules parallel does not require us to conclude that a *vitremyte* is a garment of shame for Zenobia, but the passage does have a striking and perhaps hitherto unnoticed echo in "The Monk's Prologue." Boccaccio's Hercules gives up his weapon for a distaff, not because he is vanquished in battle like Zenobia, but because he has fallen prey to the emasculating powers of a woman. Boccaccio identifies her as Iole, though in classical mythology it is the Lydian queen Omphale who degrades Hercules in this manner. Boccaccio's account of Hercules thus shares its underlying structure with the moment in "The Monk's Prologue" in which the Host bewails his treatment by his domineering wife. When displeased by his failure to defend her dignity, Goodelief waves her fist in his face, calls him a milksop and a coward ape, and cries, "I wol have thy knyf, / And thou shalt have my distaf and go spynne!" (VII.1906–7). Goodelief thus plays a comic Iole-Omphale to Harry Bailey's rueful Hercules, symbolically deprived of his weapon and compelled to spin with a distaff. The meaning of this threatened exchange of objects seems transparent: to take a man's knife (or his club) is to emasculate him. To replace it with a distaff is to add insult to symbolic bodily injury, substituting for his lost member a quintessentially feminine object in the shape of a pointed stick, sometimes held between the knees of a seated woman, and thus a parodic and effemi-

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nate mock-phallus. Unlike Goodelief, Zenobia never threatens to appropriate her husband's weapons, but rather fights beside him with weapons of her own, and unlike Harry Bailey, she can exchange her scepter for a distaff without the implication that she has lost a gender-defining member.

For Hercules and for Harry Bailey, spinning with a distaff necessarily signifies a humiliating emasculation. But Zenobia's distaff links her to a discourse of feminine virtue as old as the archetypal "good woman" of Proverbs 31, who does not eat the bread of idleness but works industriously into the night, spinning and weaving textiles with which to clothe her family. In classical antiquity, spinning and weaving as signs of feminine virtue and wifely constancy go back to Penelope in the *Odyssey*, and legends and visual images of Eve's sinless opposite, the Virgin Mary, depict her with a distaff.[16] Spinning represents virtuous feminine industry in Chaucer's "Clerk's Tale": before her marriage the impoverished Griselda "knew wel labour but noon ydel ese" (IV.217), maintaining herself and her father by "spynnynge" while tending her few sheep (223). But the seminal example in the Latin humanist milieu from which Chaucer drew his portrait of Zenobia is the Roman matron Lucretia, "the verray wif, the verray trewe Lucresse" of Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. Her spinning signifies "wifly chastite" and virtuous industry in her husband's absence: "softe wolle oure bok seith that she wroughte / To kepen hire from slouthe and idelnesse" (*LGW* 1686, 1737, 1721–22). Lucretia's spinning is one of the images the heinous Tarquin cannot put out of his mind after seeing her: "thus fresh was hyre hewe; / Thus sat, thus spak, thus span" (1761–62). The hetero-normative "good woman" characterized by spinning and self-sacrifice holds considerably less appeal today—modern readers are more often drawn to Chaucer's combative Wife who leverages her cloth-making into a modicum of independence—but this ideal of feminine virtue ran deeply in Chaucer's culture and widely through his literary models.

Before taking this expanded contextualization of Zenobia's objects back to the larger narrative to which it provides closure, it is worth asking how a more positive reading of these objects squares with Chaucer's characterization of the Monk as narrator. Separating the aims of the Monk, or any fictional pilgrim, from the aims of the larger work is always challenging in *The Canterbury Tales*, but what is certain is that, like all the figures in the Monk's lockstep series of *de casibus* tales, Zenobia must eventually "fall" and thereby serve as a warning to others against trusting in Fortune. It is equally

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clear that Chaucer dissociates himself from the Monk's generically monotonous performance by having both Knight and Host deplore it from their contrastive social perspectives. The Knight finds these unvaried falls from high degree too sorrowful while the Host finds them soporific, but both agree in demanding that they end (2767–99). As has often been noted, the minimal framing of "The Monk's Tale" and its repetition of a single genre and plot structure allow Chaucer to point up by contrast the variety and surprise achieved by the larger work, the great experiment in narrative framing and generic variety that is *The Canterbury Tales*. The Monk's plots lack variety, but, just as the earlier hypothesis that *Melibee* is a deliberate failure holds little sway now, many scholars have moved away from the idea that the Monk's narratives are deliberately and uniformly the failed products of an incompetent and malicious narrator, seeing them rather as Chaucer's uneven experiments in a genre alien to modern sensibilities, but useful to medieval writers in exploring significant political ideas.[17] One of these political ideas, I will suggest, is the possibility raised by the Zenobia story that women might possess qualities useful in civic as well as domestic life.

Chaucer explicitly identifies generic monotony as a particular inadequacy of the Monk's approach to storytelling, but we need not otherwise take the details of these received narratives, many of them derived quite directly from Boccaccio and other sources, as indications of the fictional Monk's personal traits, including his attitude toward women. The dating of "The Monk's Tale" remains highly uncertain, but if, as many have argued, some version or part of it was drafted in the 1370s,[18] prior to Chaucer's full working out of his plan for fictional tellers, it would help to explain the tale's relative lack of an individualized narrator, apart from his dogged commitment to genre as straightjacket.[19] The Monk's attitude toward women is particularly difficult to tease apart from the ambivalent play that so frequently characterizes Chaucer's treatment of his culture's gender stereotypes. The Monk's narratives certainly include antifeminist chestnuts already standard in the *de casibus* tradition, such as the ruin brought upon Samson by Delilah (2061–94) and upon Hercules by Deianira (2119–28). The Monk dutifully (or grudgingly) notes that "somme clerkes" excuse Deianira by claiming that not she but the centaur Nessus provided Hercules with the poisoned shirt (2127–29); his assurance that he "wol hire noght accusen" anticipates the playful or mocking tone that the Nun's Priest takes up in the next tale when he assures us after a similar rehearsal of antifeminist chestnuts that "I kan

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noon harm of no womman divyne" (VII.3266). Such ambivalent "defenses" of women run throughout *The Canterbury Tales* and thus offer uncertain grounds for singling out the Monk as a dramatized misogynist.

Like all the Monk's protagonists, Zenobia falls from *prosperitee* to *myserie*, but the tale makes an important distinction between figures who deserve their fall—such as Nero, "as vicius / As any feend" (2463–64) or Holofernes, "pompous in heigh presumpcioun" (2555)—and, on the other hand, those who are betrayed by "False Fortune" (2669) even though they deserve better. Ample application of the interjection "allas!" serves as an unsubtle marker for this second, Fortune-blaming, category, which includes Zenobia, as well as Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, venerated as two of the "Nine Worthies," despite their shortcomings. The story of another hero, the "worthy, myghty Hercules" (2135–42), ends with a full stanza upbraiding Fortune for his fall. Like Alexander, Caesar, and Hercules, Zenobia too is "worthy" (2249); her narrative grants her all the requisite qualities of a warrior-monarch—*noblesse*, *hardynesse*, *lynage*, *gentilesse*—and it too upbraids the treachery of Fortune:

> But ay Fortune hath in hire hony galle;
> This myghty queene may no while endure.
> Fortune out of hir regne made hire falle
> To wretcchednesse and to mysaventure. (2347–50).

The final stanza of Zenobia's narrative begins "Allas, Fortune!" and laments her exposure to the bold gaze of the spectators at Aurelian's triumphal procession (2369). Cruelly betrayed by Fortune, she suffers the *wretcchednesse* and *mysaventure* of Aurelian's triumph. Rather than punishing her for individual transgression of the limitations of her gender, however, Zenobia's fall represents Fortune's invariable treatment of those in high places: Fortune "ay" ("always") "hath in hire hony galle" (2347). Unlike many of the Monk's protagonists, Zenobia does not bring additional torment on herself by defying Fortune's reversal when it comes. Donning a *vitremyte* and bearing a distaff is a mild fate when weighed against the grisly ends met by many of her male counterparts, such as Hercules, to whom Fortune sends as a final material object the poisoned shirt that "made his flessh al from his bones falle" (2126) or Antiochus, whose final object is a chariot, a fall from which "his limes and his skyn totar" and "in this stynk and this horrible peyne, / He starf ful wrecchedly" (2611, 2626–27).

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The poetic energy Chaucer invests in the details of Zenobia's exertions and successes prior to her fall suggests keen interest in, and even admiration for, the transgression of gender boundaries symbolized by her former objects: her golden war chariot, helmet, crown, and scepter. Some of the liveliest verse of the Monk's entire tale recounts Zenobia's girlhood freedom with its Amazon-like joy in hunting wild beasts, running in the mountains at night, and sleeping outdoors (2255–65). In these pleasures and in her resistance to marriage and sexual relations with men, she resembles Emelye of "The Knight's Tale," the Amazon maiden who also loves "huntynge and venerye" and wants similarly "to walken in the wodes wilde, / And noght to ben a wyf and be with childe" (I.2308–10). The youthful and physically vigorous Zenobia evades the conventional duties or "office of wommen" (2256); instead she takes to the woods to hunt wild beasts with arrows. Rather than engage in sexual relations, her preferred form of contact with men's bodies is to "Wrastlen . . . / With any yong man, were he never so wight" (2266–67).

Zenobia desires an outdoor life unconstrained by marriage or childbearing, but as with Emelye, when the time comes her wishes are simply overruled by her guardians: "atte laste hir freendes han hire maried" (2271). Both Emelye and Zenobia make the best of marital arrangements they cannot avoid; neither indulges in the self-deception that in "The Knight's Tale" leads Theseus to imagine that he controls his own and his subjects' destinies. Zenobia does, however, lay down stringent rules by which she will permit her husband to "doon his fantasye" (2285), depending on the possibility of her pregnancy. To those who regard her new objects as punishments inflicted on her by the Monk for gender transgression, this is one of her major infractions: she "mannishly dictated to her husband the condition of their sexual relations."[20]

These intimate details of the marriage bed derive quite directly from Boccaccio's account of Zenobia in *De mulieribus claris* and may also be influenced by Boccaccio's description earlier in the same work of the Amazonian practice of strictly regulated relations with men for purposes of procreation.[21] In Chaucer's version, the narrating voice expresses some sympathy for Zenobia's husband: "And if she were with childe . . . / Al were this Odenake wilde or tame, / He gat namoore of hire" (2287–92). But earlier, the narrator also promises that the reader or hearer "shul understonde" (presumably later in the narrative) that the man Zenobia marries "hadde swiche fantasies as hadde she" (2274–75). This may be meant to imply that her husband accepts or condones the restrictions placed on his freedom to "doon

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his fantasye" in marriage. This at least is Christine de Pizan's understanding of the passage in which Boccaccio states that Zenobia toughens her body, places great value on virginity, and then marries "a young man toughened by similar pursuits."[22] In adapting the same passage for *The City of Ladies*, Christine describes Zenobia's commitment to hard physical training and sexual abstinence and then comments that Fortune was kind to give her a husband "assez courespondant a ses meurs," that is, "of a similar bent to herself" or "of similar mores."[23] In emphasizing Zenobia's good fortune in being married to a man who shares her enthusiasm for exercise and sexual restraint, Christine's comment has a wry edge, but she does take from her source the impression that Zenobia's ascetic preferences were in harmony with those of her husband, and Chaucer may have made the same inference.

More so than either Boccaccio or Christine, Chaucer uses language that connects the pagan Zenobia's marital scruples to standard Christian teachings on sexuality in marriage. In permitting relations with her husband, it was Zenobia's "pleyn entente / To have a child, the world to multiplye" (2281–82). As the Wife of Bath reminds her critics, God commanded humans to "wexe and multiplye" (III.28), and the phrase "the world to multiplye" recurs in the tale that follows the Monk's, where, unlike Zenobia, the less scrupulous rooster Chauntecleer seeks sexual relations "Moore for delit than world to multiplye" (VII.3345). Zenobia's "pleyn entente" to permit marital relations only for procreation puts her in doctrinal harmony with "The Parson's Tale," where "entente of engendrure of children" serves as the "cause final of matrimoyne"; another of marriage's "causes" is "to eschewe leccherye and vileynye" (X.938–40). Dialogue is rare in the Monk's narratives, and only one indirect quotation is attributed to Zenobia herself, the statement that permitting marital relations for purposes other than procreation implicates wives in "lecherie and shame" (2293).

The Christian orthodoxy of Zenobia's *entente* to limit marital sexuality to the engendering of children, "the world to multiplye," and her resolution to avoid the deadly sin of *lecherie* also connect her to Christian saintly women such as Cecilia in "The Second Nun's Tale." Cecilia's wedding-night demand for a chaste marriage on pain of the groom's death (VIII.141–58) leaves Zenobia's scruples moderate by comparison. Chaucer's adaptation of nearly the full account of Zenobia's sexual strictures from Boccaccio's longer narrative in *De mulieribus claris* admittedly creates an odd overemphasis in Chaucer's otherwise compressed version of her story, but his placement of Zenobia's chaste *entente* firmly within a discourse of Christian orthodoxy

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indicates that we need not read these stanzas as the Monk's censure of a culpable transgression of gender boundaries.

Whatever the precise meaning of the statement that Zenobia's husband "hadde swiche fantasies as hadde she" (2275), it foreshadows the couple's future compatibility until their separation by his death. Genuinely happy marriages in which both members of a couple share the same "fantasies" from the beginning are a scarce and sought-after goal in *The Canterbury Tales*, and thus it is striking that these two were equally matched and worked successfully together: "So doghty was hir housbonde and eek she, / That they conquered manye regnes grete / . . . and with strong hond held hem ful faste" (2312–16). Although in her youth, "To no man deigned hire for to be bonde" (2270), once married Zenobia "natheless" lives with her husband "in joye and felicitee" (2276–77). Aside from the asymmetrical restraint that Zenobia puts on their sexual relations, their love is mutual, "ech of hem hadde oother lief and deere" (2278). Only after "Odenake" dies does Zenobia alone hold "myghtily / The regnes" until overpowered by Aurelian's imperial forces (2327–28). A modern scholar affirms the reality of the historical queen's remarkable military success: "in the course of the years 270 to 271 Zenobia gained control of approximately the eastern third of the Roman Empire."[24]

Whether Chaucer first composed his account of Zenobia prior to or in the course of his work on *The Canterbury Tales*, her striking narrative raises in small at least two of the major concerns of his last great project: compatibility in marriage, as we have just seen, and the relation of women to learned culture and public life. In her commitment to learning, Zenobia embodies what Carolyn P. Collette has usefully called Chaucer's "early humanist" values.[25] She raises her two sons "in vertu and in lettrure" (2296) and becomes fluent in "sondry tonges" (2307). Unlike the lovelorn female figures in *The Legend of Good Women* who are undone by their overgenerosity toward men, Zenobia understands the key civic and domestic virtue of *mesure*: she is *wys* and *large* ("generous"), but "large with mesure" (2299).[26] In *De mulieribus claris*, Boccaccio writes that Zenobia read zealously; memorized Greek, Latin, and barbarian histories; and presented them in brief "epitomes," thereby assigning her a humanist project very much like his own in *De casibus* and *De mulieribus claris*. Following Boccaccio, Christine de Pizan reports that Zenobia "knew Latin as well as Greek, through the aid of which she organized and arranged all historical works in concise and very careful form."[27] Like her creator, Chaucer's Zenobia goes beyond the scholarly organizing and epitomizing attributed to her by Boccaccio and Christine:

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she seeks to put her knowledge of "sondry tonges" and her avid reading to a further use as moral guidance in living: "for to entende / To lerne bookes was al hire likyng, / How she in vertu myghte hir lyf dispende" (2308–10).

With this view of the civic and domestic virtues recounted in her narrative, we arrive back at the final stanza with Zenobia's exchange of objects. About the visually appealing "ceptre ful of floures" that she must now give up, Albert C. Baugh made the plausible suggestion that Chaucer had in mind a golden scepter embossed with floral decorations,[28] presumably an instance of fine Middle Eastern metalwork. The apparent beauty of this emblem of Zenobia's now-ended reign offers another positive image of its combination of martial and humanistic values. Zenobia's imperial "ceptre ful of floures" completes the stanza's series of four b-rhymes, a powerful rhyming sequence that reviews her outstanding successes: "*kings and emperoures*" (conquered by her), "*starke stoures*" (fierce battles fought by her), "*townes stronge and toures*" (won by her), and finally the "*ceptre ful of floures*" that signified her reign. This brings us to the last line, where the poet introduces the *distaf* with which, for the time that remains to her, Zenobia will spin, "hire cost for to quyte."

Ancient sources differ in their accounts of the final fate of the historical Palmyrene queen. One tradition reports that she fell ill or starved herself on the way to Rome, with the possible implication that she committed suicide as a way of avoiding Aurelian's victory celebration. Mary Beard discounts this possibility, on the grounds that it most probably represents assimilation of Zenobia's story to that of "the most famous of all triumphal *refusniks*, Cleopatra," and favors instead the versions in which Zenobia survives Aurelian's triumph to live out her life as "quite the Roman *matrona*, we may perhaps imagine—in a comfortable villa near Tibur."[29] In *De mulieribus claris*, Boccaccio adopts this same tranquil ending from the *Historia Augusta*, describing Zenobia as living a retired life, first with her children among respectable Roman women (*inter romanas matronas*) and then in old age on an estate granted to her by the Roman Senate, located near Hadrian's villa in Tibur, now Tivoli (C.22.436).

In keeping with the Monk's commitment to unrelenting *tragedie*, Chaucer takes his ending from Boccaccio's *De casibus*, in which Zenobia loses her warrior-queen's helmet and scepter and acquires her womanly headdress and distaff. The distaff may link her to Eve's sin but also, as we have seen, to the feminine virtue displayed by Lucretia and Griselda, as well as the exemplary woman of Proverbs and the Virgin Mary. It links her also to the comic "Malkyn, with a dystaf in hir hand" in the tale that follows, who dashes out

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to join in raucous pursuit of Chauntecleer and the fox (VII.3384). There, the Nun's Priest demonstrates that "the latter ende of joye" is *not* always "wo" (VII.3205). He answers the Monk's unvaried accounts of the falls of illustrious men (and one woman) with his uproarious tale of an illustrious rooster, who manages, however narrowly, to escape *tragedie*. The Nun's Priest's high-spirited contradiction of the Monk's invariant dark vision draws our attention to the trajectory of the larger framing tale in which Chaucer moves away from representing human lives as nearly inevitable instances of *tragedie*, such as he depicted in *Troilus* and the *Legend of Good Women*, and toward the more varied, more often positive outcomes imagined within the mature comic vision of his last work.[30]

For his portrait of Zenobia, Chaucer drew on accounts found in two different works by Boccaccio, and thus he had a choice of two endings, one relatively tranquil and one more dire. We might describe Chaucer's Zenobia as caught between two narratives: from *De mulieribus claris* comes the story of her companionable marriage, extraordinary victories, eventual defeat, and afterlife as a comfortably situated Roman matron, and from *De casibus*, the rhetorical emphasis on her catastrophic fall and resultant involuntary object exchange. Despite her inevitable fall, generically mandated by inclusion in the Monk's unrelenting sequence of *tragedies*, Chaucer's very last words about Zenobia may nevertheless preserve just a little of that quiet retirement among Roman matrons and subsequent retreat to a Senate-sponsored villa in pastoral Tivoli. That Zenobia "shal bere a distaff, hire cost for to quyte" does not compel the reader to the literal (and historically improbable) reading that this foreign queen and military conqueror was forced to spin in order to reimburse Aurelian's empire for the daily expenses of keeping her captive at Rome. Leaving Zenobia to *quyte* her *cost* by spinning with her distaff may be the gentlest ending possible within the generic strictures of *tragedie*, a way of saying that, with her reign irrevocably lost, Zenobia will not eat the bread of idleness, but live out her days in laudable industry and end on even terms with the world.

Notes

1. Mary Beard reviews briefly the ancient sources for Zenobia's career in *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 321–22; a more detailed account is Richard Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire: Zenobia's Revolt against Rome* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

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2. The UNESCO World Heritage website records the ongoing damage to Palmyra on its list of endangered sites, http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23, last accessed October 1, 2015.

3. Helen Phillips, *An Introduction to the* Canterbury Tales: *Reading, Fiction, Context*. Basingstoke and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000, 185. Phillips does not however apply the expression to the story of Zenobia; see note 7 below.

4. Carolyn P. Collette, *Rethinking Chaucer's* Legend of Good Women (Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 2014), chap. 6.

5. All quotations from Chaucer are from Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). Quotations from "The Monk's Tale" will be noted by line number parenthetically in the body of the text; where useful for clarification, I cite *The Canterbury Tales* by fragment and line number, separated by a period.

6. Vincent DiMarco, "Wearing the *Vitremyte*: A Note on Chaucer and Boccaccio," *English Language Notes* 25 (1988): 15–19, at 17. Although I argue for a different view of Zenobia's objects, I gratefully acknowledge the indebtedness of my piece to the considerable learning compressed into DiMarco's influential "Note."

7. Keiko Hamaguchi, "Transgressing the Borderline of Gender: Zenobia in *The Monk's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 40.2 (2005): 183–205, at 183. Even Phillips, cited above for her appreciation of Chaucer's play with gender stereotypes, suggests that Zenobia's successes in traditionally male activities may exemplify "hubristic boundary-infringment," *Introduction to the* Canterbury Tales, 182.

8. Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor, eds., *Geoffrey Chaucer,* The Canterbury Tales (Peterborough, ON and Buffalo, NY: Broadview, 2008), 331; DiMarco, "Wearing the *Vitremyte*," 18.

9. Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 5:237.

10. Karl Young, "Chaucer's 'Vitremyte,'" *Studies in Philology* 40.4 (1943): 494–501.

11. The former was suggested by T. Atkinson Jenkins, "*Vitremyte*: Mot Latin-Français employé par Chaucer" in *Mélanges de linguistique et de littérature offerts à M. Alfred Jeanroy par ses élèves et ses amis* (Paris: Droz, 1928), 141–47; the latter is a previously unpublished suggestion from Robert Pratt cited by the *Riverside Chaucer*, n. to VII.2372.

12. "Hec nuper galeata continionari militibus assueta, nunc velata cogitur muliercularum audire fabellas; hec nuper Orienti presidens sceptra gestabat, nunc Rome subiacens colum sicut cetere baiulat." *De casibus virorum illustrium* VIII.vi.14, in *Tutte Le Opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, ed. Vittore Branca (Milano: Mondadori, 1983), 12 vols., 9:682.

13. T. Atkinson Jenkins, "*Vitremyte*": "une coiffe (anglais 'hood') à deux cornes, avec un voile attaché,""un voile de gaze ou d'étoffe très légère et transparente" (146–47).

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14. *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), vol. 2, 19.31.4–5, as cited by DiMarco, "Wearing the *Vitremyte*," 18.

15. For women's domestic contribution to cloth-making in this period and the use of the distaff, see David Jenkins, ed., *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), I.179–391. Indeed, a widespread antifeminist proverb cited by Chaucer's Wife of Bath holds that, along with deceit and weeping, "spynnyng God hath yive / To wommen kyndely" (that is, "God has given spinning to women by nature," III.401–2). Observers were so accustomed to seeing women spin that they could think of it as innate to their gender, despite their not being born clutching a distaff. We would not make this essentialist mistake, in part because modern thought thoroughly dichotomizes a conscious human agent and an "inert" object like the distaff. Yet the view reflected in the proverb partially anticipates current theories in cognitive science. According to one theory, a woman who spent many of her waking hours spinning with a distaff would have taken part in "a dynamic coupling between mind and matter" or a "dance of agency" back and forth between the conscious dictates of her brain and the feel and pull of the forming thread. The thread in her hands conditions her brain, helping to create "skill memory," and thus a life of spinning permeates her biological "nature" more deeply than one might have thought. Lambros Malafouris makes this argument about the interactions among a potter's brain, his fingers, and the responsive clay that forms the developing pot: "At the Potter's Wheel: An Argument *for* Material Agency," in *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric View*, ed. Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris (New York: Springer, 2008), 19–36, at 24, 33–35. The medieval proverb's failure to draw the requisite bright line between a woman and her distaff reminds us that the current "material turn" is in some ways a "material return," a return to a less dichotomous view of humanity and the material world.

16. For examples both visual and textual, see Gail McMurray Gibson, "The Thread of Life in the Hand of the Virgin," in *Equally in God's Image: Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Julia Bolton Holloway et al. (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 46–54.

17. For a sampling of critical thought, see the Colloquium on "The Monk's Tale," ed. Larry Scanlon, in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 22 (2000): 381–440.

18. Benson, ed., *Riverside Chaucer*, 929, explanatory note by Susan H. Cavanaugh.

19. Many of course would disagree with this assessment of the Monk as narrator; see for example Jahan Ramazani, "Chaucer's Monk: The Poetics of Abbreviation, Aggression, and Tragedy," *Chaucer Review* 27.3 (1993): 260–76. Ramazani sees in the tale not just an over-insistence on a formulaic view of tragedy but also a portrait of the Monk's "worldliness and aggression" (272).

20. DiMarco, "Wearing the *Vitremyte*," 17; cf. Hamaguchi, "Transgressing the Borderline," who holds that Zenobia's moral and religious strictures represent "a collapse in the husband's authority and . . . a relative suspension of the gender hierarchy," 191.

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21. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, ed. and trans. Virginia Brown (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). All quotations from *De mulieribus claris* (*Famous Women*) are cited from Brown's Latin text and parallel translation by chapter, section, and page number separated by periods. For the marriage bed details, see C.11.432–33; for the Amazonian custom, XI-XII.5.52–53.

22. "Iuveni equis studiis durato et longe," *Famous Women*, C.5.428–29.

23. Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Rosalind Brown-Grant (New York: Penguin 1999), 47; *The* Livre de la Cité des Dames *of Christine de Pisan: A Critical Edition*, 2 vols., ed. Maureen Cheney Curnow (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1975), 2:702. The quoted English translation is Brown-Grant's.

24. Stoneman, *Palmyra and Its Empire*, 160.

25. Collette, *Rethinking Chaucer's* Legend, 4.

26. For the importance of *mesure* in Chaucer's works, see *Chaucer Review* 43.4 (2009), a special issue on "Time, Measure, and Value in Chaucer's Art and Chaucer's World," ed. Carolyn P. Collette and Nancy Mason Bradbury.

27. Brown, *Famous Women*, C.14.434–35; Brown-Grant, *City of Ladies*, 55; *Cité des dames*, ed. Curnow: "Sce[u]t le latin et les lettres grecques, par l'ayde desquelles elle meismes toutes les hystoires soubz briesves parolles ordena et mist moult curieusement" (2:706).

28. Albert C. Baugh, ed., *Chaucer's Major Poetry* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 362, n. to line 3563.

29. Beard, *Roman Triumph*, 114, 116, 130.

30. Collette, *Rethinking Chaucer's* Legend, chap. 5 and Epilogue.

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CHAPTER 3

The Object of Miraculous Song in "The Prioress's Tale"

Howell Chickering

Following her long-standing interest in "The Prioress's Tale" and her work on women's roles in fourteenth-century ecclesiastical culture, I offer this essay to Carolyn Collette in gratitude for her long friendship and in admiration for her prodigious scholarship and warm humanity.[1] My aim in this essay is to offer a fresh analysis of the tale's three central objects: the animated corpse of the little clergeon; the Marian antiphon "Alma Redemptoris Mater" he sings in life and in death; and the mysterious "greyn" the Virgin places upon the clergeon's tongue after he is murdered. As Caroline Walker Bynum demonstrates in *Christian Materiality*, for medieval Christians, at moments of miraculous change, material objects were thought to hold a dual and paradoxical ontological status: they exist as physical entities within the natural order and at the same time they transcend that order.[2] It is with Bynum in mind that I consider the paradoxical materiality and transcendence of the miraculous objects in the tale. This transcendence makes itself felt in the tale's long-standing dual status in Chaucer criticism, as both a satire on the flaws of a materialistic and worldly nun and a devout and moving expression of the Prioress's spiritual piety. I end by suggesting a parallel between the "greyn" placed in the mouth of the little clergeon and Chaucer's placement of the tale in the mouth of a fictional medieval woman, his enigmatic Prioress.

Bynum writes that "the eruption of the holy in matter was more than mere change. Whether in statues that spoke, hosts that turned suddenly to blood, or relics and images that induced fertility or health, the bursting forth of life could be understood as matter triumphing over exactly the change it represented. A miracle was, after all, a miracle, as Caesarius of Heisterbach underlined. At the moment of miraculous change, objects bodied forth tran-

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scendence and eternity as well as materiality."[3] The miracle the Prioress envisions in her tale is a clear instance of Bynum's point: although gruesomely murdered, the little boy sings and speaks as if he were still alive. The material object of his corpse has an audible spiritual life. It is *contra naturam* as we know nature, but holy in its own nature. It thus has a dual ontological status, existing within the natural order and at the same time beyond it.

An extension of the boy's body is the mysterious "greyn." At least partly a physical object, it is also a nonmaterial or spiritual object as well. Because its removal causes the boy's supernatural singing to cease, it appears to function as a magical on-off switch within the natural order of things.[4] As for the antiphon "Alma," it is reasonable to say that singing—with or without words—is, in performance, more an activity than an object. In "The Prioress's Tale," however, "Alma" has a text as well as a tune, and a material and agential presence throughout.[5] It is part of the narrative. To the little clergeon as he hears it, the song is only a lovely succession of pitches, the notes of a Gregorian chant transposed in the Sarum practice to the fifth mode of C.[6] They can only be sounds to him since he does not know the meaning of its Latin words. For him in his innocence, the hymn is entirely a sonorous object, by which he honors the Virgin. As performed over and over in the tale, however, when performed for those who understand its words, the song becomes heavily loaded, either positively or negatively depending on who is listening. Christians in and out of the story hear its words praising the Virgin prayerfully and piously, but those same words offend the Jews of the quarter grievously, inciting them (with Satan's help) to murder.

This aspect of interpreting "The Prioress's Tale," in which our perception of the text depends essentially on where we stand, has been wittily described by Helen Barr in her 2010 "Rabbit and/or Duck?" essay on the tale, which convincingly shows how the historical context that a modern reader chooses to use determines the implications of the text itself.[7] She takes orthodoxy and its Wycliffite criticism as her illustration of "oppositional inferencing" and notes that "One reader's duck is another reader's rabbit. But even to polarize thus is an oversimplification. For a reader possessed of both gestalts, the image shifts from one to the other, so much that the defining lines disappear altogether, leaving perhaps just an area shaded gray."[8]

Let us look more closely at Chaucer's poetic text to see how the dual status of "Alma" and the "greyn" fits with the other features of the tale that have been read with oppositional inferencing. While "Ave Maria" or "Salve Regina" are more familiar to worshipers today, Audrey Ekdahl Davidson

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has shown that "Alma Redemptoris Mater" was widely used in the liturgy of the Sarum Rite in Chaucer's day, though not prescribed for the Mass of the Holy Innocents (December 28). Her recovery of its music following the Sarum rite is accepted by the Variorum Edition of "The Prioress's Tale."[9] I reproduce her score as figure 3.1, and I quote and translate the text here:

> Alma redemptoris mater, quae pervia caeli
> Porta manes et stella maris, succurre cadenti,
> Surgere qui curat populo, tu quae genuisti
> Natura mirante tuum sanctum genitorem,
> Virgo prius ac posterius, Gabrielis ab ore
> Sumens illud Ave, peccatorum miserere.
>
> [Kind mother of the Redeemer, who the open door of heaven
> Remainest, and the star of the sea, help [your] fallen
> People who try to rise: thou who gave birth,
> While nature marvelled, to your own Begetter,
> Virgin both before and afterwards, from the mouth of Gabriel
> Receiving that "Ave," have mercy on [us] sinners.]
> (Latin text from Davidson, 459; my translation)

For Chaucer's audience, this antiphon would have registered as beautiful and well-suited to the tale. The opening fourteen-note melisma on "Al-," with its soothing motherly crooning, reinforces the meaning of "Alma" as "kind, nourishing" and the entire opening phrase, complete in itself as an invocation, is carefully crafted.[10] The text of the antiphon is a petitionary prayer very like the "Ave Maria," but it also emphasizes the paradoxical miracle of the Virgin Birth, both by the phrase "Virgo prius ac posterius" and musically in the wordplay of "tu quae genuisti . . . tuum sanctum genitorem" with its surprising B-flat in "geni-**to**-rem."[11] We cannot know if Chaucer chose "Alma" instead of "Gaude Maria," the most frequently sung antiphon in other versions of the miracle, to avoid the latter's pugnacious anti-Semitic conclusion, or to exculpate the little clergeon and his narrator the Prioress, or for some other reason.[12] Indeed, as Andrew Albin writes, "the tale's refusal to supply more than the *Alma*'s first three words suggests that we be wary of granting its text too much explanatory power, especially in a tale where few if any of its characters are capable of construing the song's Latin to begin

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Alma redemptoris mater

Al — ma re- demp-to-ris
ma — ter, quae per — vi — a cae-li Por — ta
ma — nes, Et stel — la ma — ris,
su — cur — re ca — den — ti sur-ge-re qui cu — rat
po — pu — lo: Tu — quae gen-u — is — ti
Na — tu — ra mi — ran — te, tu — um sanc-tum
gen — ni — to — rem: Vir — go pri — us
ac pos — te — ri — us, Ga-bri — e — lis ab o — re
su — mens il — lud A — ve, pec-ca-to — rum mi — se-re — re.

"Alma Redemptoris Mater," reconstructed score by Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, reprinted with permission from her *Substance and Manner: Studies in Music and the Other Arts* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Hiawatha Press, 1977).

Fig. 3.1. Audrey Ekdahl Davidson, "*Alma Redemptoris Mater*: The Little Clergeon's Song," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 4, no. 3 (1974), p. 466. Reprinted with permission.

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with. . . . Instead, the tale repeatedly emphasizes that it is the aural quality of the song, not its semantic content, that entrances and overpowers."[13]

The aural qualities of the "Tale" itself have features similar to the antiphon. The Prioress in fact concludes her Prologue by praying to the Virgin, "Gydeth my ***song*** that I shal of yow seye" (487).[14] The poetic texture of the twenty-nine stanzas of the narrative is not musical, of course, but its repetitions and vocalic smoothings are features common to prayer, especially the Psalms. Chaucer's repetition of simple little words (like "litel") and rhyme-sounds, especially in the three *b*-rhymes of the rhyme royal form, occurs with unusual frequency and intensity. For an ample illustration, too lengthy to quote, see particularly lines 495–529. Notably, the *b*-rhymes of those five stanzas are limited to the rhyme sounds of "-ere" and "-age," a stunning poetic choice that cannot be accidental. These reduplicative strategies go hand in hand with the overuse of doublets of clichéd diction like "day to day" or "yonge and tendre" and redundantly doubled verbs of expression like "singen and to rede" (450), "sing and crie" (553), or "construe and declare" (528). Barr calls these and similar effects "Marian 'overwording,'" in which "a dense cluster of vocabulary returns again and again to a single issue above the strict demands of the events of the story." She goes on to say, "This Marian devotion is bolstered with liturgical reference . . . the tale appears overwhelmingly orthodox. Worship of Mary is reinforced through a narrative poetics that foregrounds affective devotional piety."[15] It is a tour de force of expressive form, as Carolyn Collette emphasized in 1980.[16]

One effect of this overwording style of piety, however, is a dilution of meaning. A single example must suffice:

> His felawe taughte hym homward prively,
> Fro day to day, til he koude it *by rote*,
> And thanne he song it wel and boldely,
> From word to word, acordynge *with the note*.
> Twies a day it passed *thurgh his throte*,
> To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
> On Cristes mooder set was his entente. (544–50, my emphases)

In the *b*-rhymes here the "note" goes through his "throte" by "rote." If we say only those *b*-lines, they will make sense on their own with just one omission and substitution in the first line:

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Fro day to day he koude it [all] by rote
From word to word acordynge with the note
Twies a day it passed thurgh his throte

This gives the narrative sense of the whole stanza, and even in this reduction there are doublings in each of the three lines. Such an emphasis of sound over sense can be seen as positive or negative depending on what context we use as our vantage point.

The hymn itself is balanced in sound and sense, so that music and meaning reinforce each other. Davidson points out that the triple notes on G in "surgere" and "Gabrielis" produce musical balance and support the idea that we fallen people may rise upon Gabriel's "Ave." The melodic line at "manes" echoes "Porta" almost exactly, for emphasis: You, Mary, remain our door to heaven. There is a subtler sense in the quite exact musical repetition of "cadenti" and "mirante": We, in our fallen nature, marvel at the Incarnation. The falling phrase at "cadenti" also mirrors the sense of its text, then tries to rise at the repeated G of "surgere," only to fall again at "curat populo." It is a thrillingly lyrical piece of orthodox devotion.

However, when we examine how "The Prioress's Tale" presents the hymn, the rabbit begins to look like a duck. We never hear more of the text of the hymn than its "firste vers," which the little clergeon gets "al by rote" (522). Twice it serves as the identifying title (528, 612), and three times it is quoted as the words he actually sings (554, 641, 655).[17] In the three latter instances, it is prefaced by "O," which does not occur in the actual antiphon. This usage aligns the first phrase of the boy's song with the three famous apostrophes uttered by the Prioress as narrator (579, 606, 684). Within the context of devotional piety, both the "O" and the "Al-" signal "reuerente marueylynge and meke praysynge" as described in *The Myroure of our Ladye*, written for the nuns of Syon in the early 1400s. There, we learn that the attributes of the Virgin described in the hymn "O Trinitatis gloria" are such that we cannot really think them in our hearts nor fully express them with our tongue: "Therfore with reuerente marueylynge and meke praysynge ye begynne and say O."[18] Thus, while neither "O" nor "Al-" contains any semantic meaning, if we see a devotional purpose in their sonorous utterance, then both vocables convey genuine religious awe.

At the same time, the *Myroure*, which echoes Wycliffite strictures against liturgical excesses, follows St. Augustine in decrying the singing of the divine service for the wrong reasons:

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> There ys neyther syngynge, ne redynge that may please god of it selfe, but after the disposycyon of the reder or synger . . . they that reioyse them by vayne glory, or delyte them in the swetnes or pleasaunce of theyr owne voyce, they please not god wyth theyr syngynge, but they offend hym, and please the fende. . . . Therfore the more pleasaunte and fayrer that eny bodyes voyce ys, the more besy ought they to be aboute the kepynge of the harte in mekenes & in deuocyon, that yt may please in goddes syghte. . . . Hereby ye may se how perylous yt ys to eny body to delyte hym other to hys owne voyce, or in the outwarde songe. For saynte Augustyne sayth in his confessyons, that as often as the songe delyteth hym more than the inward Sentence of the thynge that was songe, so often he knowledged that he synneth greuosly.[19]

"Alma" in and of itself, with its well-established place in the liturgy, is not to be criticized, any more than is the devout spirit of the clergeoun that moves him to sing it while alive nor the miracle that enables him to continue singing in death. But if intention is everything, as Augustine says, then the way the Prioress presents the antiphon, adding her own orotund "O's," and the way she stages its repetition in the development of the narrative, suggest that, from one contemporary angle of vision at least, the first musical phrase of the hymn could be seen to have only an empty beauty. To the degree that Chaucer makes the Prioress align it with her own apostrophic performances, there are grounds for seeing at least some criticism of her sensibility intended by Chaucer.[20] From this angle of vision, her liturgical preoccupation appears to be mainly with the beauty of the song as she invokes it.

While Wycliffites might criticize this preoccupation as an empty vanity, poetry lovers and ontologists alike may be grateful that Chaucer wrote the two apostrophic stanzas that move the narrative to a higher religious plane where miracles occur:

> O martir, sowded to virginitee,
> Now maystow syngen, folwynge evere in oon
> The white Lamb celestial—quod she–
> Of which the grete evaungelist, Seint John,
> In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
> Biforn this Lamb and synge a song al newe,
> That nevere, flesshly, wommen they ne knewe. (579–85)
> . . . . .

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O grete God, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocentz, lo, heere thy myght!
This gemme of chastite, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he with throte ykorven lay upright,
He *Alma redemptoris* gan to synge
So loude that al the place gan to rynge. (607–13)

The intensity of the imagery and the depth of feeling that generate these stanzas are interrupted by Chaucer's calling attention to who speaks them: "quod she." While that disruption distances us from the initial exclamation of line 607, the rest of that stanza hyperbolically reassures us that innocent blood crying out from a filthy privy (578) can be *immediately* converted to a pure song of praise in the procession of the "white Lamb celestial" in Apocalypse 14:1–5.

With this extended allusion, the narrative moves into an ontological hyperspace that combines the natural and the miraculous. The first two lines of the second stanza echo the opening of the Prioress's prologue but with an important difference. Now it is God, addressed directly, who "parfournest" His own praise through the mouth of the innocent martyr, rather than it being "parfourned" by men of dignity and suckling babes. If "heere" in "lo, heere thy myght!" means "hear," then God not only performs His own praise through the agency of the miracle, but He is also His own audience. In that case, the line points to the self-contained reality of the Godhead, a medieval notion dating back at least to *The Consolation of Philosophy* of Boethius. However, "heere" can easily be parsed as "here," with "is" understood, in which case the lines draw a parallel between Psalm 8's suckling babes and the miraculous song that concludes the stanza. Surely both meanings are present.

After the first exclamation, the rest of the stanza is all one sentence. First the lengthy appositives of the emerald of chastity and the bright ruby of martyrdom define the miracle not as a vile body but as the singing child's spiritual qualities.[21] Then comes the forceful word-order of line 611: "Ther he with throte ykorven lay upright." The adverbial conjunction "Ther" locates him where he lies: not in heaven but still in the pit of the latrine. His "ykorven" throat takes on new significance coming right after the blood-red image of "the ruby bright." The association of the two makes a single shocking image in the reader's mind that expresses the paradoxical beauty of the child's

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martyrdom. This amalgamated image, typical of miracles that emphasize holy suffering of the body, is reinforced by the child lying face up, which appears to remain his position for the rest of the poem.[22] Only in the next-to-last line of the stanza do we encounter the main clause of the sentence, "He *Alma redemptoris* gan to synge." Because of the propinquity of lines 610–11, we can't be sure if he sings through his mouth or through the fatal gash across his throat. That he can sing at all is such a miracle that, spiritually, the gash becomes a mouth, in effect.

The doubled apertures through which he may sing, like the double meanings of "heere," suit the dual ontological status of the miracle. Although Chaucer draws extensively on the tropes of female devotional piety throughout the "Tale," it is impossible for language to represent this miracle fully. Even the abbot, a close witness and auditor of the boy's song in death, asks how he can sing "Sith that thy throte is kut *to my semynge*" (648, my emphasis), a line that expresses the uncertainty of human perception when confronted with transcendence. A miracle cannot be fully understood without full faith, and perhaps not even then.

However, with only a slight shift in perspective, the language here can also seem self-parodic:

> And whan they hooly water on hym caste,
> Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was hooly water,
> And song *O Alma redemptoris mater!* (639–41)

The repetition of the *when*-clause could be regarded as a deliberately vacuous example of "Marian overwording," and the close rhyme of "water" / "*mater*" can have an unfortunate jingling sound at odds with the wonder of the miracle. Yet miracles are by definition inexplicable by rational means and occur in a reality beyond our comprehension. So if one reads these three lines with a skeptical intention, of course they will sound slightly silly, and might have reminded a Wycliffite of the *Myroure*'s stricture on placing song above sense.

The rabbit/duck metaphor also applies when we consider the object of such a miracle in the eyes of the devout. Shannon Gayk has argued, from a modified thing-theory position, that the purpose of "The Prioress's Tale" is to create wonder in its fictional and reading audiences, and she rightly emphasizes the ultimate unintelligibility of the miracle.[23] Her argument leaves the purpose of wonder itself undefined. She notes with Bynum that many

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collections of Marian miracles are didactic, and perhaps we could presume that the purpose of this particular Marian miracle is to increase faith and a commitment to a Christian life.[24] Yet a Lollard rabbit (or is it duck) might just as well argue, as many Chaucerians have, that the purpose of "The Prioress's Tale" is to create a strong affective response in which readers indulge in pious feelings for their own sake, as late medieval people sometimes did when dwelling excessively on the human aspects of Christ's suffering. Again, we are left to choose, if we feel we must, between oppositional inferencings.

Gayk and Barr approach the text from different perspectives, but I concur with the conclusion they both reach: it is essentially impossible to arrive at a single definitive interpretation of the tale. This feature of the poem is especially well symbolized by the "greyn," which, because it can mean so many things, remains opaque and itself perhaps not a symbol at all. It is the quintessential example of Barr's gray area between the duck and the rabbit gestalts. The dead little martyr tells the abbot that he has been kept alive by the "welle of mercy, Cristes mooder sweete" (656) who bade him sing her anthem, which he does continually, thanks to the "greyn" she placed upon his tongue. Its ontological status as part of the miracle puts its identification beyond our understanding, but Chaucer could not have picked a more resonant or many-meaninged object to use in this context.[25] As an agential object of holy ontology, however, it functions mainly as an on-off switch, as Gayk has said, connecting and disconnecting the human world as imagined in the "Tale" and the holy realm controlled by the Virgin.

Readers of the Canterbury frame-tale may find a parallel between the "greyn" placed in the mouth of the little clergeon and the placement of "The Prioress's Tale" in the mouth of the Prioress. If so, a further critical question arises. We know that the tale was read by itself in other devotional manuscripts, without the Prioress's Prologue or the two speaker-cues of "quod she." It is possible that Chaucer composed it earlier as a separate poem before he added those cues and her Prologue, and before he wrote her portrait in the General Prologue.[26] If first composed as a stand-alone poem, this might account for its availability for extensive oppositional inferencing. Once Chaucer has placed the tale in the unique context of the frame-tale pilgrimage, however, the three texts concerning the Prioress seem best understood as a male author ventriloquizing the language of female devotional piety, be it piously or satirically. The late Richard Osberg thoroughly documented the historical grounds for this view, and the idea of ventriloquism fits well with Chaucer's frequent method of adapting the style of a tale to

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the character of its teller.[27] Whether the ventriloquizing is meant to invite Lollard criticism, or an assessment of the tale and its teller at once sympathetic and critical, must remain speculation. Perhaps all we can conclude is that Chaucer's own object in the Prioress's sequence is as indeterminate and elusive as in *The Canterbury Tales* as a whole.

Notes

1. See Carolyn P. Collette, "Sense and Sensibility in the *Prioress's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 15.2 (fall 1980): 138–50; "Chaucer's Discourse of Mariology: Gaining the Right to Speak," in *Art and Context in Late Medieval Narrative: Essays in Honor of Robert Worth Frank, Jr.*, ed. Robert R. Edwards (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 127–47.

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2. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), especially her fourth chapter, "Matter and Miracles," 217–65.

3. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 256–57.

4. Shannon Gayk discusses the "greyn" in "'To wondre upon this thyng': Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*," *Exemplaria* 22.2 (2010): 144–49. Her apt metaphor of it as an on-off switch appears at 148.

5. For an extended discussion of the song as Chaucer deploys it in the "Tale," see Andrew Albin, "The *Prioress's Tale*, Sonorous and Silent," *Chaucer Review* 48.1 (2013): 91–112.

6. Audrey [Ekdahl] Davidson, "*Alma Redemptoris Mater*: The Little Clergeon's Song," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 5 (1974): 456–66, at 460.

7. Helen Barr, "Religious Practices in Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*: Rabbit and/or Duck?," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 32 (2010): 39–65.

8. Barr, "Religious Practices in Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*," 41–43.

9. Davidson, "*Alma Redemptoris Mater*," passim. I print her text and music from Beverly Boyd, ed., *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, Vol II, Part 20, The Prioress's Tale* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 15–16. While Boyd calls Davidson's text and music a reconstruction, it actually follows Cambridge University Library MS Mm Iig, fol. 14, very closely, and Davidson compares it against two other contemporary MSS that follow the Sarum Use. See Davidson, 460–66.

10. Davidson, "*Alma Redemptoris Mater*," 465, notes that it is the only Marian antiphon that rises to the octave at the beginning.

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11. Surprising because the flatted seventh is a tone "not proper to the mode." Davidson, 461.

12. Boyd, ed., *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 10–11, prints the text of "Gaude Maria," which ends with the line "Erubescat Judaeus infelix, qui dicit Christum Joseph semine esse natum" ("Let the miserable Jew be ashamed who says that Christ was born of the seed of Joseph").

13. Albin, "The *Prioress's Tale*, Sonorous and Silent," 93, 94.

14. All citations of "The Prioress's Tale" are from *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). I cite the tale by line number parenthetically in the body of the essay.

15. Barr, "Religious Practices in Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*," 44–47, at 45, 46.

16. Collette, "Sense and Sensibility," 145.

17. Line 655 could also be a reference to the title. More likely, it serves both purposes.

18. John Henry Blunt, ed., *The Myroure of oure Ladye, containing a Devotional Treatise on Divine Service, with a translation of the Offices Used by the Sisters of the Brigittine Monastery of Sion, at Isleworth, during the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (London: Trübner, 1873), EETS, e.s., 19:91–92.

19. Ibid. 57–58.

20. In "Apostrophe, Prayer, and the Structure of Satire in *The Man of Law's Tale*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 13 (1991): 81–97, Ann W. Astell points out that the Prioress turns prayer into apostrophe, "one figure merging into its converse," so that "blessing and curse mingle in her discourse" (89).

21. Of course such metaphoric epithets can also be read from the Lollard perspective as ornate luxuries, comparable to the Prioress's beads and brooch.

22. A familiar example is the intermingling of jewels and Christ's blood on the Cross in lines 1–23 of *The Dream of the Rood*.

23. Gayk "'To wondre upon this thyng,'" passim.

24. Gayk, "'To wondre upon this thyng,'" 154, n. 9; Bynum, "Wonder," *American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 1–26, at 17.

25. For possible identifications of the "greyn," see Boyd, ed., *A Variorum Edition of the Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 160–61, and Gayk, "'To wondre upon this thyng,'" 144–49.

26. This possibility is cogently argued by Carol M. Meale in "Women's Piety and Women's Power," *Essays on Ricardian Literature in Honour of J. A. Burrow*, ed. A. J. Minnis et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 57–60. Meale, 58, n. 54, lists the MSS where "The Prioress's Tale" appears in non-*Canterbury Tales* collections. For a full description of these MSS see Mary F. Godfrey, "The Fifteenth-Century *Prioress's Tale* and the Problem of Anti-Semitism," in *Rewriting Chaucer: Culture, Authority, and the Idea of an Authentic Text, 1400-1602*, ed. Thomas A. Prendergast and Barbara Kline (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999), 93–115.

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27. Richard H. Osberg, "A Voice for the Prioress: The Context of English Devotional Prose," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 18 (1996): 25–54.

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PART 2

Buildings, Books, and Women's (Self-)Fashioning

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CHAPTER 4

A Gift from the Queen

The Architecture of the Collège de Navarre in Paris

Michael T. Davis

> "(W)e, Jeanne, by the grace of God Queen of France and Navarre and Countess Palatine of Champagne . . . make and direct our testament and our last will in the form that follows . . . So that the holy Church is founded on solid rock, which is Jesus Christ, be safeguarded henceforth and supported more firmly by wise instruction and masters and doctors . . . we give, leave, command, and delegate our house of Navarre that we have in Paris near the Porte S. Germain des Prés . . . to make, arrange, and establish by our executors the most suitable house that one can with our possessions.
>
> In this (house) three types of students from the kingdom of France can live properly. There will be 20 young students in Grammar and 30 in Logic and Philosophy and 20 in Theology or Divinity."[1]

Written on March 25, 1305, a week before her death, the testament of Jeanne de Navarre, queen of France and wife of Philip IV the Fair, founded the first royal college in Paris. Bringing together three communities—grammar, liberal arts, and theology—it embraced students ranging in age from ten to around thirty, in effect sheltering within its walls the equivalent of a secondary school, an undergraduate college, and a specialized graduate program.[2] The queen's will and statutes spelled out the institution's administrative, financial, curricular, and physical arrangements; although the first students would not matriculate for a decade, Jeanne had a comprehensive blueprint in mind for the Collège de Navarre.[3] Most surprising,

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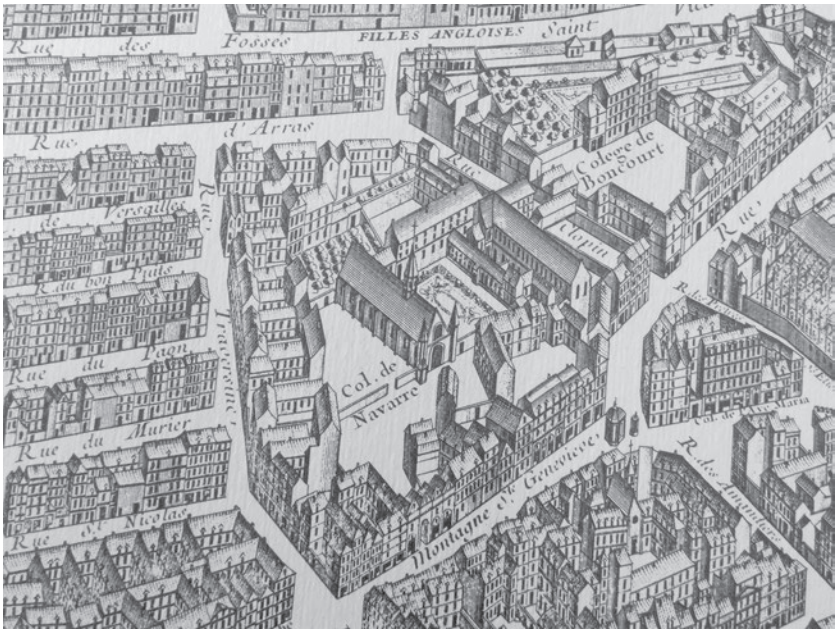

Fig. 4.1. Collège de Navarre, general view from Turgot plan of Paris, 1739. (Photo: Davis.)

Fig. 4.2. Collège de Navarre, façade on rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Estampes, Topo. Fr. Va 256a.)

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Fig. 4.3. Collège de Navarre, chapel façade, aquatint by I. Hill and J. C. Nattes (Paris, Musée Carnavelet, Estampes, Topo, PC 085 C.)

the college was the project of a woman at a time when females had no access to university instruction.

This essay focuses on the architecture of Jeanne's foundation that was the equal to her innovative ideas (fig. 4.1). The Collège de Navarre has disappeared, replaced in the nineteenth century by the École Polytechnique, and now occupied by the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche, a tranquil space in the heart of the Left Bank.[4] Nevertheless, drawings and prints record a picture, albeit incomplete, of the fourteenth-century buildings of the college (figs. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). Modest in scale, demanding none of the structural complexities of the cathedral of Notre-Dame and eschewing the ornamental fireworks of the Sainte-Chapelle, Navarre's inventiveness has escaped attention. Its originality arises out of the studied synthesis of secular, ecclesiastical, domestic, and monastic architectural components that responded to the special patterns of scholastic life, while its judicious use of prestige features within an overall context of comfortable austerity created an ensemble purpose—built for and expressive of new values of higher education. The Collège de Navarre was, in effect, the first distinctive academic campus.

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JEANNE DE NAVARRE'S VISION

In founding this "Maison des Escholiers," Queen Jeanne, guided by the example of the Queen of Sheba, aimed to bring "the wisdom of King Solomon" to the Church to strengthen its intellectual foundations.[5] In addition, the college was an act of charity, its students recruited from poor but serious scholars throughout the kingdom who, in return, acted as the queen's intercessors by celebrating anniversary masses "for our soul, for our dear and much loved father and mother, and for all of our other friends."[6]

To realize the goals of the Collège de Navarre, Queen Jeanne combined ideas from earlier foundations. Already, the Collège du Trésorier (1268), the Collège d'Harcourt (1280), the Collège des Cholets (1311), and the Collége du Cardinal Lemoine (1302) included both liberal arts and theology students, while the disciplinary statutes echo regulations that governed monastic colleges as well as the Sorbonne.[7] To the mix of students, Jeanne added grammarians, a step described as "revolutionary," and her concerns went beyond the scholastic to encompass moral instruction.[8] Further, she imagined that some if not all courses would be offered within the walls of the college to deliver instruction to small groups of students in the manner of mendicant *studia*.[9]

There is every indication that Jeanne was the prime mover in the foundation of the Collège de Navarre rather than a passive intermediary for a project masterminded by Philip IV.[10] The royal couple's roles find apt visual expression at the entrance on the rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, where the queen's statue holds a model that resembles the chapel to advertise that "she founded this building," whereas the inscription accompanying the figure of Philip the Fair identifies him as the "husband of the founder of this house." She is the star of the panegyric of the chapel's slab that sings her praises as it outlines the creation of the college. (figs. 4.2, 4.4)[11] To be sure, the king, as witness to his wife's testament, was fully informed and approved of the endeavor. Jeanne may been effectively absent from the kingdom's politics, but she maintained her presence as sovereign countess in Champagne, frequently visiting her lands and, according to report, personally leading an army that crushed a rebellion of the Count of Bar.[12] That the queen was more than a court ornament, but rather a figure whose attention to education had political consequences, emerges in Philip's 1294 order that names her as regent in event of his death, entrusting to her the government and the tutelage of the new king until his majority.[13] Jeanne, along with such

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Fig. 4.4. Collège de Navarre, figure of Jeanne de Navarre at entrance. (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Collection Gaignières, Estampes, Réserves, MS Oa, fol. 46.)

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contemporaries as Marie de Brabant, was an energetic patron of literature, commissioning Jean de Joinville's *Vie de Saint Louis*, a Latin translation of the tales of *Kalila wa Dimna*, and French translations of Raymond Llull's *Arbor philosophiae amoris*, and Durand de Champagne's *Speculum Dominarum* for which she was muse and model of the learned, cultivated queen. Her interests reflect the role that late Capetian noblewomen assumed in the schooling of their children, and Jeanne seems to have been at the intersection of progressive ideas of pedagogy, likely crossing paths with Raymond Llull, whose *Doctrine d'enfant* (*Libre de doctrine pueril*) proposed principles of education that echo in the college project.[14]

In her testament and statutes, Queen Jeanne outlined the building blocks of the college complex: the three student groups and their masters were provided with their own residences; the governor or rector was given a private dwelling, as were the priests and clerics of the chapel; an infirmary was planned "pour les malades"; and a chapel, where "two masters of Grammar and the Arts and all of the students of the House will be together," constituted the heart of the ensemble.[15] Although funds remaining from the two thousand pounds allocated annually to the college were to be used to buy books, there is no mention of a dedicated library space.[16] Even at this early stage, the concept of the college suggests translation into a hybrid architecture to accommodate its organizational structure and the varied activities of academic life. Student housing was clearly imagined in domestic terms. Inclusion of a great room (*aula*), a kitchen, and workroom (*officina*) recalls the interior spaces recorded for houses of artisans and merchants, but the dormitory arrangement of sleeping quarters borrows from monastic design.[17] Navarre's prominent chapel follows a template set by regular colleges including the Bernardins and the Collège de Cluny.[18]

CONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

Jeanne bequeathed the hôtel de Navarre for the realization of the college, but it is unlikely that she intended to convert her palace into a house of education.[19] The precision with which it was conceived demanded a tailor-made design. In the statutes, the queen made provisions for funding if construction began in her lifetime, hardly a move she would make if her residence were in play.[20] The location of the hôtel of Simon Festu, treasurer of the king, from 1308 bishop of Meaux, one of the queen's executors and, along

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with the abbot of Saint-Denis, Gilles de Pontoise, Navarre's first governor, apparently determined the site of the college. Valued at five thousand pounds, it was ceded to the king in October 1308. Further purchases in 1308 constituted the campus that formed a large trapezoidal precinct bounded by the rues Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, Bordet, Clopin, Bon Puits, and Traversine (fig. 4.1). In March 1309, a house was expropriated "without which the college already begun according to the testament of Queen Jeanne cannot be completed."[21]

On Saturday April 12, 1309, Bishop Simon laid the first stone of the chapel assisted by Miles, chancellor of Paris; Guillaume de Ferrières, an official of the chapter of Meaux; Raoul de Presles; and Pierre de Varinfroy, "latomo," that is, the master mason of the project.[22] In April 1315, amended statues add detail to Jeanne's outline that reflect the construction of the college in anticipation of the first entering class that year. Chaplains and clerics serving the chapel were doubled to eight (four each) and required to live in the houses provided for them within the precinct of the college.[23] In addition to these residences, a chapter house now figures as a frequent setting for events. The statutes were to be read to the entire community four times a year "in the chapter of the said house."[24] Theologians were invited to present sermons in the chapel or the chapter house to all interested scholars and colleagues.[25] And following anniversary masses for Philip IV on November 29, Jeanne on April 3, and Jeanne's parents, Henry III of Champagne (Henry I of Navarre) and Blanche d'Artois, as well as the feast days of the Virgin, John the Baptist, Saint Nicholas, and Saint Louis, the entire Navarre community shared a common meal. Although the location is not specified, the chapter house must have been one of the few spaces large enough to accommodate at least eighty diners.[26] A cloister, demolished in 1738, knit together the atoms of the ensemble.[27]

Inserted into the Left Bank's irregular fabric, the plan of the Collège de Navarre does not appear to obey a controlling logic and the frequent alterations, especially in the eighteenth century, further complicate determination of the disposition of the original buildings and spaces (figs. 4.1, 4.5).[28] But given the geometric basis of architectural design and Jeanne's lucidly structured conception of the college, a random approach to the site plan would be surprising. In general, the plan orchestrates a measured retreat from the bustle of the city in concentric zones beginning with the public façade of houses. Four handsome three-story stone structures, whose uniform gables identify the college in early maps, composed the urban front along the rue de

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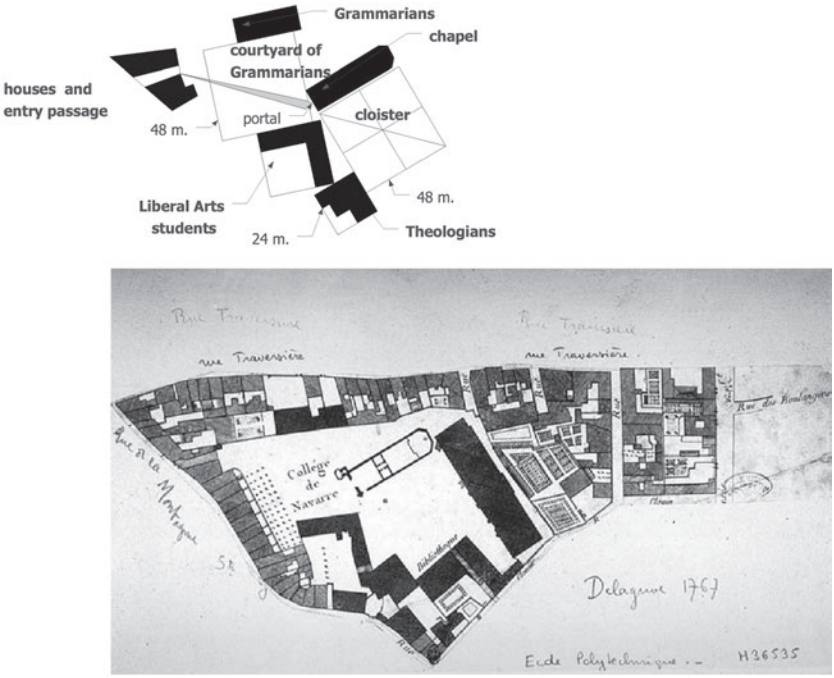

Fig. 4.5. Collège de Navarre, Delagrive plan of ensemble in 1767 with conjectural ideal scheme. (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Estampes, Topo, Fr. Va 256a; drawing by Davis.)

la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève (fig. 4.2). The main entrance, framed by an ogee arch enclosing a tympanum sown with fleur-de-lis and flanked by statues of Jeanne de Navarre to the left and Philip the Fair to the right, opened through the second house from the left.[29] Shops equipped with stone counters were arranged at street level in the three contiguous houses while the large windows imply residential units on the floors above. These commercial spaces suggest that this quadruple block furnished income-generating rental space, a practice common among contemporary Parisian colleges.[30]

The entrance passage opened into an intermediate zone of student residences buffered by their courtyards and, finally, to an inner, central node of the cloister and chapel (figs. 4.1, 4.5). This layered organization brings to mind strategies of monastic planning that reflect Jeanne's insistence on a cloistered style of life within the college and restricted contact with the outside world.[31] At the same time, the mix of commerce, dwelling, and wor-

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ship, the use of courtyards to define distinct functional spheres, and the layered arrangement of space parallel design tactics applied to Philip the Fair's renovation and expansion of the Palais de la Cité. That project knit a similarly heterogeneous collection of buildings into the coherent seat of royal government whose courtyards orbited about the internal focal point of the Sainte-Chapelle.[32]

An ideal geometric scheme may be mapped onto the ensemble, one admittedly deformed by the push and pull of terrain, streets, and surrounding structures (fig. 4.5). The site was arranged around two equivalent open spaces. First, the cloister, about 48 meters square, fixes the location and orientation of the chapel to the north, likely the chapter house, and perhaps other annexes such as the library.[33] The house of the theologians abuts the southwest corner of the cloister. To the northwest, the "Cour des Grammairiens" nearly replicates the area of the cloister and is bookended by the house and "Cour des Artiens" on the south and to the north by the building that I identify as the probable residence of the grammar students. This ground plan geometry combined with a scenographic arrangement that placed the chapel and its founders' portal within sightlines from the interior threshold of the entrance passage. That portal becomes the notional center of attention of the college, the pivot around which the interior space of the campus revolves.[34] Whether or not this specific formula recreates Pierre de Varinfroy's design strategy, it suggests that the campus was governed by an overall organizational logic.

THE CHAPEL

Whereas most of the buildings of the Collège de Navarre remain enigmatic or are documented only as exterior surfaces, the chapel is recorded in detailed drawings made around 1844 by Albert Lenoir: plans, longitudinal exterior and interior sections, elevations of the west front, and selected details (figs. 4.3, 4.6, 4.7).[35] Supplemented by graphic representations, they fit together in a three-dimensional image of the chapel, dedicated to the Trinity, the victorious cross of Christ, the Virgin Mary, Saint Louis, and Saint Catherine.[36] The exterior length of the eight-bay plan, terminated by a three-sided apse, was 47.70 meters long, a generous footprint relative to contemporary oratories that seems to anticipate the large congregations present for public sermons.[37] In comparison, the Sainte-Chapelle measures

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31.70 by around 10 meters, the chapel of the Collège de Cluny approximately 30 by 10 meters.[38] Cubic bay units, each about 5.30 meters in length with an interior span of 9.50 meters and exterior breadth of 12.50 meters, capped by a wooden vault rising approximately 12.20 meters above the pavement, replaced vertical drama with an air of balanced regularity. Simplicity and economy ruled the building's fabric fashioned from local Cliquart limestone: wall shafts and moldings are eliminated; tracery is deleted; the small foliate capitals that enrich the shafts of the window jambs sound the only decorative note of the interior (figs. 4.8, 4.9, 4.10).[39]

While the reconstruction of the body of the building is straightforward, thanks to Lenoir's documentation, anomalies emerge in the representations of the façade. Lenoir's plan and the aquatint by Hill and Nattes depict an emphatic difference between the two façade towers: the left an octagonal stair turret crowned by a spire; that on the right a configuration of buttress salients terminated by a smaller pinnacle of indeterminate geometry (fig. 4.6). However, other engravings of the south flank of the chapel suggest that the façade was bracketed by two similar polygonal units, and Troche's eyewitness description is quite clear about the symmetry of the towers: "at the angles of the portal, two octagonal turrets are attached crowned by stone roofs or pinnacles . . . They enclose a spiral staircase that opens out onto a two-sided stone stair projecting from the field of the gable and protected by an iron railing."[40] Lenoir struggled with the details of the façade, lightly penciling in rough outlines of the portal and window as well as an alternative version of the right corner (figs. 4.6, 4.7). An addition in 1830 to the library, moved into the western half of the chapel at the arrival of the École Polytechnique, masked the portal and a portion of the right turret; plaster filled the tracery window. Troche describes the façade window as "divided into five pointed arches of a later style," but such a design would have produced extremely narrow lights.[41] More credible is the rayonnant tracery depicted in the aquatint consisting of a pair of cusped lancets with an inscribed quatrefoil above (fig. 4.3), a pattern that appears with minor variations in the contemporary church of Notre-Dame-des-Menus in nearby Boulogne-sur-Seine and the choir chapels at the cathedral of Paris.[42] In the end, the verbal and visual clues for the façade of the chapel of the Collège de Navarre are incompatible. My reconstruction adopts a design with two symmetrical towers flanking a two-light window, a scheme commensurate with the careful planning, rapid construction, and formal context in which the chapel was realized (fig. 4.9).

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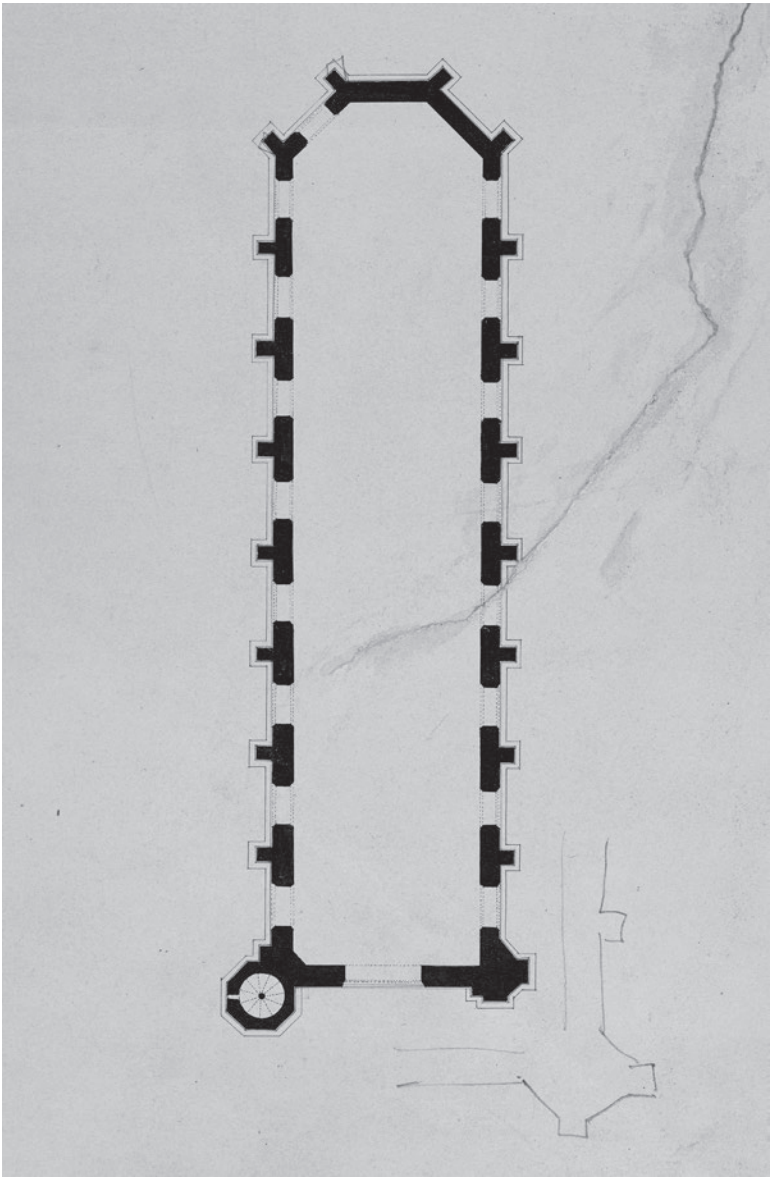

Fig. 4.6. Collège de Navarre, plan of chapel by Albert Lenoir. (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art [INHA], collections Jacques Doucet in Paris, côte OA 716 [11, 115] RMN Art Resource NY.)

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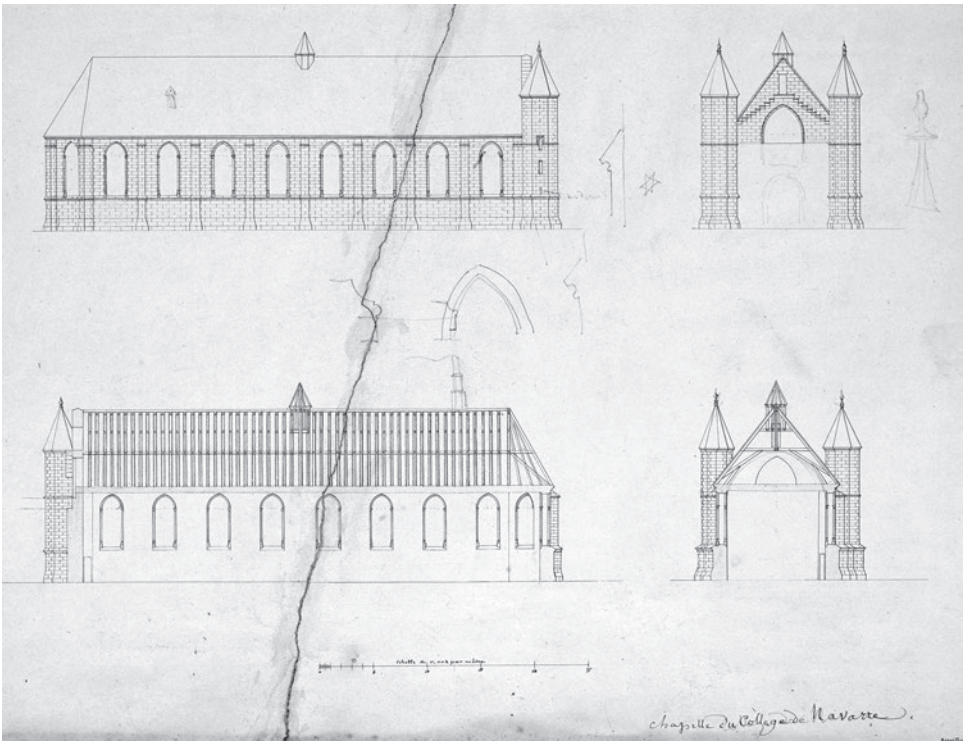

Fig. 4.7. Collège de Navarre, longitudinal elevations of interior and exterior, interior and exterior sections of façade by Albert Lenoir. (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art [INHA], collections Jacques Doucet in Paris, côte OA 716 [11, 115] RMN Art Resource NY.)

MESSAGES

Invoking the royal figures Solomon and Sheba, Jeanne de Navarre's will and statutes located the Collège de Navarre and its founder within a resonant nexus of associations. On the commemorative tablet displayed in the chapel, her gift of the college to Saint Louis (to whom the oratory is dedicated) is likened to the presents Sheba gave to Solomon, and the poem describes the queen as "beautiful, prudent, constant, just, pious, and charitable," in essence the incarnation of Wisdom.[43] The Old Testament queen, celebrated for her intellect that tested Solomon with "hard questions" (3 Kings 10:1–13), of-

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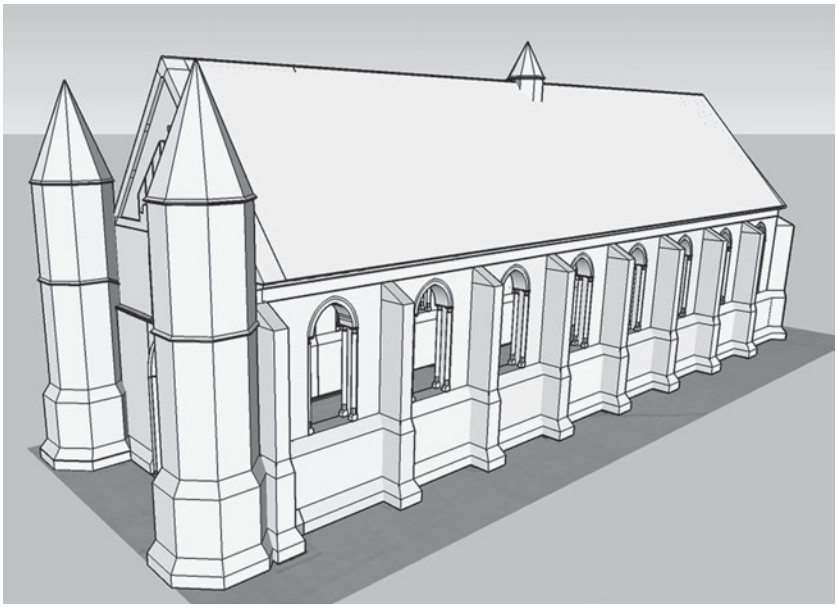

Fig. 4.8. Collège de Navarre, reconstruction of chapel, general view from southwest. (Model: Davis.)

fered a worthy model for Jeanne's foundation of an educational institution. Further, exegetes, such as Isidore of Seville, understood "the queen from the south who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon . . . as the Church, which assembles . . . to hear the voice of God," and thus a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary, Bride of Christ, Throne of Wisdom, and Queen of Heaven.[44] Jeanne herself is aligned with the Virgin through the visible proximity of their statues on the street façade. Her figure and the college that she presents, "a fountain of life overflowing like the Euphrates" . . . "another Jordan River watering the whole earth with true doctrine," bring these historical typologies into the present to affirm Paris as a new Jerusalem and France as a Holy Land.[45]

It was on this conceptual plane, rather than through historical citation or reference to transcendental models such as the Heavenly Jerusalem, that the architecture composed an iconography expressing the college's complex identity.[46] Translating the queen's ideas into built form relied on a composition of building types that accommodated spaces for residence, study, assembly, and worship in combination with the careful orchestra-

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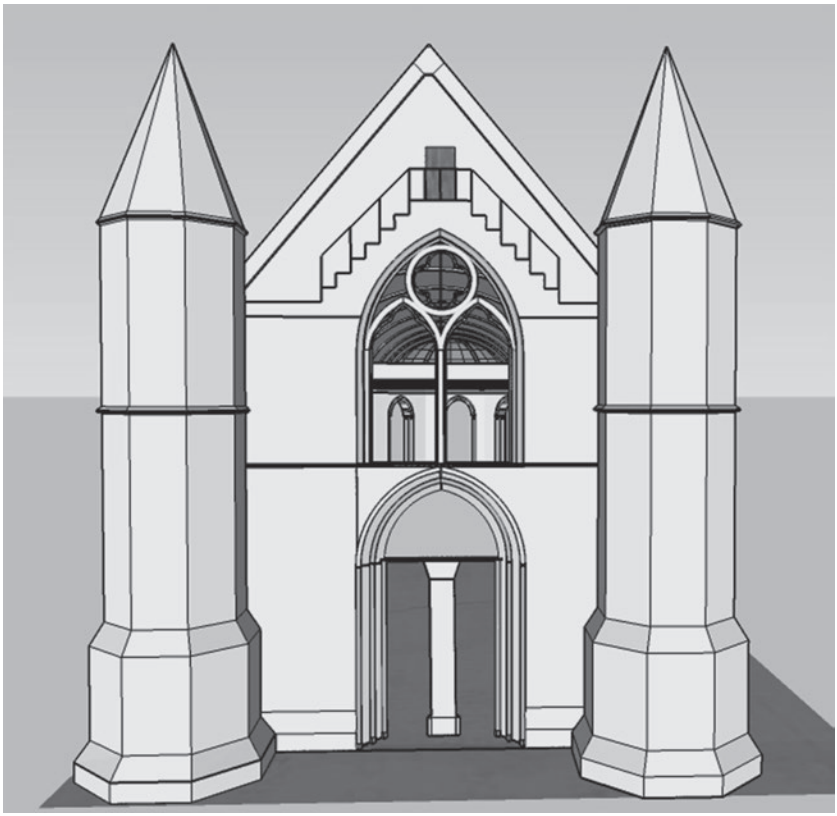

Fig. 4.9. Collège de Navarre, chapel, reconstruction of west façade. (Model: Davis.)

tion of decoration. Stone houses announced the college along the rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, a major artery of the Left Bank that climbed the hill from the Place Maubert (fig. 4.2). This "domestic" façade immediately distinguished Navarre from the Dominican and Franciscan houses that featured monumental churches and monastic colleges where chapels were placed prominently on the perimeter of their complexes. Instead, it recalled secular foundations, for example the Collège de Sorbonne, founded in 1257 by Robert de Sorbon and supported by Louis IX, originally located in a suite of houses. But Navarre's houses were made special by the addition of the Virgin and Child above the entrance, a note of the sacred implanted into a mundane framework, and the royal character of the college advertised by the statues of Jeanne and Philip IV posted beside a portal with fleur de lis.[47]

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Fig. 4.10. Collège de Navarre, chapel, reconstruction of interior. (Model: Davis.)

Stepping through the passage, one's view was pulled across the courtyard of the grammarians to the portal of the chapel that again featured Jeanne de Navarre and Philip the Fair, this time flanking the statue of Louis IX, patron of the chapel, on the trumeau (figs. 4.3, 4.8).[48] From the front, the chapel displayed all of the signs of a deluxe building: towers, a sculpted portal, and a tracery window. However, the interior, despite its size, presented architecture of the utmost simplicity with smooth walls, plain window openings, and a wooden ceiling. A filiation with the Sainte-Chapelle has been read into the chapel of the Collège de Navarre as a sign of Philip's aim to transfer the saintly king's prestige to this new foundation.[49] However, similarities between the chapels are limited to their single vessel plans with polygonal apses. Nevertheless, comparison of these two royal works is instructive. Navarre systematically deletes the attributes—two-story disposition, impressive height, the intense ornamentation of elaborate tracery, perforated gables, and pinnacles—that made the palace chapel appear as "one of the most beautiful rooms of paradise" and an otherworldly expression of sacral kingship.[50] The college chapel is fundamentally an "anti-Sainte-Chapelle." As has long been recognized, its closest architectural kin are to be found in the mendicant and monastic sphere of Parisian projects and this is usually explained by the influence of Jeanne's Franciscan confessor Durand de Champagne.[51] To be sure, the chapel of Saint-Louis adopts an ascetic tone

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comparable to the Franciscan and Dominican churches in Paris but shares no specific formal elements with them.

Another group of smaller monastic houses, all of them associated with Louis IX, offer more comprehensive parallels. Sainte-Croix-de-la-Bretonnerie and the Blancs-Manteaux, both established on the Right Bank by the king in 1258, and the Carthusians, settled on the southern outskirts of Paris in 1257 and whose church was constructed between 1276 and 1325, all rose from a single vessel envelope closed by a polygonal apse. Severe vertical salient buttresses framed simple lancets. A wooden vault covered the Carthusian oratory, but like the Collège de Navarre chapel a tracery window embellished its west façade.[52] Whether or not the association of these three monastic houses with the saintly king consciously informed the design of the college chapel, its austerity in tandem with the adjacent cloister spoke of a disciplined and virtuous community, one whose masters and students, in the words of Jean de Jandun, "exhaust themselves by their labors . . . reflective men whose vision is not obscured by the cloud of earthly passions (who) wage intellectual combat for the discovery of the truth."[53]

That the architecture of the Collège de Navarre represents a calculated choice becomes evident when considering the major players in the building project, Jeanne de Navarre; Simon Festu, bishop of Meaux; and the master mason, Pierre de Varinfroy. At the same moment that the plans for the college were being developed, Pierre was engaged on the north transept at Saint-Étienne, the cathedral of Meaux, a multitiered confection of gables, tracery, and glass. Meaux lay within Jeanne's lands as countess of Brie, and she has been regarded as a principal benefactor of cathedral construction.[54] No doubt bishop Simon understood Jeanne's intentions for Navarre when he brought his master mason into the construction team and Pierre responded by working in a register distinct from the opulent mode of elite ecclesiastical edifices. Pragmatically, his architecture answered the requirements of the college's agenda. At a deeper level the unusual combination of building types—houses, chapel, cloister—and the mix of plain effects with the fancy details of tracery and sculpture articulated the identity of an institution that was royal, secular, carefully supervised, highly regulated, and energetically pious.

Just as Saint-Denis is inconceivable without the guiding hand of Suger, the Collège de Navarre was the child of an extraordinary patron, her personal sensibilities, life experiences, and public personae. A blend of household, convent, and government, the college reflected Jeanne's involvement in the

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education of her children, her interest in learning and literature cultivated in court circles, her concern for salvation, her charity, and her roles as queen and active ruler.[55] Jeanne de Navarre's vision was materialized after her death by men—Durand of Champagne, Simon Festu, Pierre de Varinfroy, and Philip the Fair—in her service and who knew her intimately. Her foundation redefined the purpose of a college and its architecture; its influence continues to reverberate in the spirit of community and personal intellectual growth that animates higher education and in the quadrangles, dormitories, classrooms, libraries, and chapels of our contemporary campuses.

Notes

This study of the Collège de Navarre was made possible by a Mount Holyoke College faculty grant. Thanks to colleagues Nick Baker and M. Naomi Darling for advice in making the chapel model, to Fabienne Queyroux and Jérôme Delatour at the Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris, who made the Lenoir drawings available, and to Susan Halpert at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, who facilitated access to key sources.

1. Jeanne de Navarre's will, Paris, Archives Nationales, J 403, nos. 15 and 16, was published by César E. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, 6 vols. (Paris: De Bresche, 1665–73), IV, 74–82. The excerpts quoted are found on 74 and 76. It is discussed by Nathalie Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre de sa fondation (1305) au début du XVe siècle (1418). Histoire de l'institution, de sa vie intellectuelle et de son recrutement* (Paris: H. Champion, 1997), 130–50. Also Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "La mort, les testaments et les fondations de Jeanne de Navarre, reine de France (1273–1305)," in *Une histoire pour un royaume (XIIe-XVe siècle). Actes du colloque Corpus Regni organisé en hommage à Colette Beaune*, ed. Anne-Hélène Allirot et al. (Paris: Perrin, 2010), 124–41, 508–10.

2. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 188–89, for the ages of students in the early fourteenth century. For a history of the college, Jean de Launoy, *Regii Navarrae Gymnasii Parisiensis Historia*, 2 vols. (Paris: Edmund Martin, 1677).

3. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 143, calls Jeanne the "véritable architecte" of the institution. For the 1305 statutes of the college, Paris, Archives Nationales, J 155, no. 3, published by Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 82–85. These regulations were elaborated in the 1315 statutes, Paris, Archives Nationales, J 155, no. 4, and Du Boulay, IV, 87–96.

4. The architecture of the Collège de Navarre has been studied by Nicolas-Michel Troche, "Ancienne Chapelle du Collège de Navarre," *Revue archéologique* 1 (1844): 192–200; Michael Kiene, "Die Grundlagen der europäischen Universitätsbaukunst," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 46 (1983): 63–114, at 66. The work of

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Aurélie Perraut, "Recherches sur le monde universitaire Parisien au XIVe siècle: L'Architecture des collèges," Thèse de doctorat, Université de Paris IV—Sorbonne, 2007), 5 vols., esp. III, 885–903; and Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges parisiens au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Presses de l'université Paris—Sorbonne, 2009) is indispensable. For the installation of the École Polytechnique, Gaston Pinet, *L'École Polytechnique* (Paris: Baudry, 1887), 333–48; Harold Tarry, "L'École Polytechnique. Son installation au Collège de Navarre," *Bulletin de la Montagne Ste.-Geneviève* 1 (1895–96): 150–60.

5. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 82.

6. Ibid., IV, 77. Jeanne required the celebration of the eight canonical hours on Sunday, increased to a daily performance in the 1315 statutes. Consult Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 159–61, for the density of religious offices.

7. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 128, 130. The regulations of the Collège du Trésorier have been published in part by Lynn Thorndike, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York: Norton, 1975), 75–78.

8. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 136–41.

9. Ibid., 138–39, 574. Teaching within the college was not fully realized until the late fourteenth century as discussed by Gorochov, 261–63, 455–59, 575–76.

10. Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 59, 175–77.

11. Jeanne's inscription reads, "Joanna Franciae et Navarrae Regina Campaniae Brieque Comes Palatina has aedes fundavit 1304," while Philip is described as "Philippus Pulcher Francorum Rex Christianissimus Joannae maritus huius domus fundator." For the image of the queen and king, drawn for Roger de Gaignières, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Collection Gaignières, Réserve des estampes, MS Oa, fol. 46 and Pe 11a, fol. 148, respectively. For alternative versions of the inscriptions, Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "The Case of Philip the Fair," *Viator* 19 (1988): 224–25.

12. For Jeanne's political role in France, Champagne, and Navarre, see Elisabeth Lalou, "Le gouvernement de la reine Jeanne, 1285–1304," *Cahiers Haut-Marnais* 167 (1986): 16–30; Elena Woodacre, *The Queens Regnant of Navarre: Succession, Politics, and Partnership, 1274–1512* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 21–49; André Poulet, "Capetian Women and the Regency: The Genesis of a Vocation," in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John Carmi Parsons (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 96–116; and Joseph Strayer, *The Reign of Philip the Fair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 9, 17.

13. Poulet, "Capetian Women and the Regency," 110–11. The document of this order is Paris, Archives nationales J 401, nos. 4 and 5.

14. For Jeanne's literary commissions, Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 146–49; Dorothy Gillerman, *Enguerran de Marigny and the Church of Notre-Dame at Ecouis: Art and Patronage in the Reign of Philip the Fair* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1994), 13–15; and Amanda Luyster, "Political Moves: Jeanne de Navarre, Queenship, and *Kalila and Dimna*, BNF MS Latin 8504," in *Moving Women, Mov-*

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ing Objects: 300–1500, ed. Tracy Chapman Hamilton and Mariah Proctor-Tiffany (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). I am grateful to Professor Luyster for sharing her work prior to publication. The literary culture promoted by women has been studied by Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 149–87; and at the Capetian court by Tracy Chapman Hamilton, "Pleasure, Politics, and Piety: The Artistic Patronage of Marie de Brabant," PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2004, especially chapter 4. Also Hamilton, "Sur la route . . . Topographic Patronage and the Genealogy of Location in Late Capetian France," *Peregrinations: International Society for the Study of Pilgrimage Art* 2 (2009): 77–117, (http://peregrinations.kenyon.edu/vol2_3_and_4.pdf) includes remarks on the Collège de Navarre.

15. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 77–78; Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 143–44.

16. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 78, 84. The books were to "be placed in the house for the common use of the scholars." A library must have existed by 1418 when it was spared during the pillage of the college by the Burgundians, as in Launoy, *Regii Navarrae*, I, 126. A monumental library building, erected in the late fifteenth century by headmaster Jean Raulin with funds donated by Charles VIII, survived until 1876 and is discussed in Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 144–45.

17. Philippe Contamine, "Peasant Hearth to Papal Palace: The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *A History of Private Life. II. Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. Georges Duby, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1988), 460–70; Simone Roux, *La Maison dans l'histoire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1976), 144–66; Roux, *Paris in the Middle Ages*, trans. Jo Ann McNamara (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 167–73.

18. College chapels are discussed by Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 121–34.

19. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 131, 154. Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 118, recognizes that "il est possible que son hôtel ne se soit prêté aux modifications necessaires."

20. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 84.

21. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 154, for the real estate transactions related to the college; also Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 118–19, citing Paris, Archives nationales, JJ 40, no 178, for the 1309 expropriation. She suggests that the acquisition of the house cleared the way for the construction of the chapel. A 1552 document mentions that the campus covered eight arpents, which is about 6.8 acres, for which see Perraut, "Le monde universitaire," III, 889–90.

22. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 84, for the inscription on the left side of the chapel's nave; also Launoy, *Regii Navarrae*, I, 39–40. For the identification of Pierre de Varinfroy, master mason at Saint-Etienne, cathedral of Meaux, see Pe-

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ter Kurmann, *La Cathédrale Saint-Etienne de Meaux: étude architecturale* (Geneva: Droz, 1971), 88–89; also Gillerman, *Enguerran de Marigny*, 66–67. Pierre's presence at the ceremony and the relation of the chapel to the complex as a whole may point to his role as planner and builder of the entire ensemble.

23. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 89.

24. Ibid., IV, 95.

25. Ibid., IV, 94. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 181, estimates that these sermons may have drawn an audience of several hundred listeners.

26. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 160.

27. The cloister is not represented in any plan or view of the college. It is mentioned in a 1552 inventory of structures, Paris, Archives nationales, S6546, for which see, Perraut, "Le monde universitaire," III, 889–90. Also Pinet, *L'École Polytechnique*, 338; Pinet, "Le Collège de Navarre et l'École Polytechnique," *La Grande Revue* 56 (1909): 75, 80.

28. Perraut, "Le monde universitaire," 889–91, 898–99, documents the changes and new construction between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.

29. The ogee arch may reflect repairs after the Burgundian sack of the college in 1418. Fragments of a late fifteenth-century pillar were found at 37 rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève in 1936 as reported by Jean-Pierre Willesme, *Sculptures médiévales (XIIe-début XVIe siècle) du Musée Carnavalet* (Paris: s.n., 1979), 176–77. Absent from the documentary record, the architectural history of the stone houses is enigmatic.

30. In 1446, Gieffroy Le Normand, curate of Saint-Benoît-le-Bestourné and by 1450 master of the Navarre grammarians, rented two dwellings, the "Écu de Boulogne" and "Aux Deux Lions" immediately adjacent to the college's houses to lodge, feed, and tutor in "his hôtel or school" the son of Robert de Buymont and Agnès d'Auvergne who lived nearby. See Simone Roux, *La Rive Gauche des Escholiers (XVe siècle)* (Paris: Éditions Christian, 1992), 68–69. For the real estate maneuvers required to assemble a coherent parcel and the importance of rental property, Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 110–18.

31. Aurélie Perraut, "L'implication royal dans les chantiers des collèges parisiens au Moyen Âge," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France* 132 (2005): 1–17, at 12. Regulations on the comings and goings of students were spelled out in the 1315 statutes, for which see Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 91–92.

32. The most comprehensive study of the Palais de la Cité remains Jean Guérout, "Le Palais de la Cité des origines à 1417: essai topographique et archéologique," *Paris et l'Île de France: Mémoires*, I (1949), 57–212; 2 (1950), 21–204; 3 (1951), 7–101. The shops along the eastern wall of the palace appear to have been an integral feature of the project, for which consult Guérout, 2 (1950), 25–26, 49, 84. Also Herveline Delhumeau, *Le Palais de la Cité du Palais des rois de France au Palais de Justice* (Arles: Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine/MMF/Aristeas/Actes Sud, 2011). The connection of the college and palace was suggested by Michael T. Davis,

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"Les Visages du roi: les projets d'architecture de Philippe le Bel," in *1300 . . . L'Art au temps de Philippe le Bel*, ed. Danielle Gaborit-Chopin and François Avril (Paris: École du Louvre, 2001), 191–99.

33. Although the location of the *capitulum* is never specified, statutes of 1459 forbade students to play in the cloister to avoid damaging that space as well as the chapter house. See Perraut, "Le monde universitaire," III, 889, 896–97. Based on analogies to the Franciscan convent, the Collège de Cluny, and the Collège des Bernardins, the chapter house may have opened onto the east gallery of the cloister at right angles to the chapel. A sacristy would have been required and logically would also occupy a room on the cloister's east side contiguous to the chapel. This is suggested by 1693 repairs to the cloister "on the side of church at the end of the sacristy" ("du costé de l'église au bou [sic] du pavillon de la sacristie . . ."), as in Perraut, "Le monde universitaire," V, 1575.

34. The interaction of planning, building, site, and sight has been explored by Marvin Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye: Urbanism, Art, and Power in Early Modern Florence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), especially 92–147.

35. Lenoir's drawings are in the Bibliothèque de l'Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), collections Jacques Doucet in Paris, côtes OA 716 (11, 114–19).

36. This dedication took place on October 16, 1373, as in Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 96. The reconstruction presented here was made using SketchUp.

37. Troche, "Ancienne Chapelle," 197. The chapel's plan, according to Lenoir's drawing, Bibliothèque de l'INHA OA 716 (11, 115), narrowed approximately forty centimeters from east to west.

38. For dimensions of the Sainte-Chapelle, Stephen Murray, "The Architectural Envelope of the Sainte-Chapelle, Form and Meaning," *Avista Forum Journal* 10 (1996–97), 21–25; also Meredith Cohen, *The Sainte-Chapelle and the Construction of Sacral Monarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 77–81. I thank Professor Cohen for sharing her manuscript prior to its publication.

39. Troche, "Ancienne Chapelle," 196–97. A sketch of one capital was made by Lenoir, Bibliothèque de l'INHA, OA 716 (11, 118).

40. Troche, "Ancienne chapelle," 197. The image on page 196 depicts these two octagonal towers.

41. Ibid., 198.

42. For Boulogne and its relationship to early fourteenth-century Parisian architecture, see Michael T. Davis, "Splendor and Peril: The Cathedral of Paris, 1290–1350," *Art Bulletin* 80 (1998): 54–55.

43. The inscription is published by Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 85–87. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 145, draws the comparison between Jeanne and Wisdom.

44. Paul F. Watson, "The Queen of Sheba in Christian Tradition," in *Solomon and Sheba*, ed. James B. Pritchard (London: Phaidon Press, 1974), 115–21.

45. Du Boulay, *Historia Universitatis*, IV, 82: "Ad quam sapientiam videlicet veri

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Regis Salomonis in sancta Ecclesia Catholica Filii Dei typum tenentis. Nos ductae salubri Sabbae Reginae et laudabili consilio dirigentes intimi voti nostril . . . (P)er continuam studi disciplinam quaesito fons exeat aquae vivae, quae velut Euphrates uberrimus filios Deo pariat adoptivos. Et sicut alter Jordanis fluvios ad rigandum totius orbis superficiem tam per vitae mundiciam quam per veram doctrinam valeat derivare." See also Joseph Strayer, "France: The Holy Land, the Chosen People, and the Most Christian King," in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison*, ed. Theodore K. Rabb and Jerrold E. Seigel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 3–19.

46. Richard Krautheimer, "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Medieval Architecture,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33; also Paul Crossley, "Medieval Architecture and Meaning: The Limits of Iconography," *Burlington Magazine* 130 (1988): 116–21.

47. Gillerman, *Enguerran de Marigny*, 139–42, ventures the idea that the statue may be posthumous. For a broader discussion of founders' portals, Dorothy Gillerman, "The Portal of St.-Thibault-en-Auxois: A Problem of Thirteenth-Century Burgundian Patronage and Founder Imagery," *Art Bulletin* 68 (1986): 567–80.

48. Louis IX is identified by an inscription recorded by Launoy, *Regii Navarrae Historia*, I, 40 as "decus regnantium," that is, "the glory of rulers." Jacques DuBreul, *Théâtre des antiquitez de Paris* (Paris: Claude de la Tour, 1612), 660–61, reports inscriptions under the statues of the king and queen whose figures were "painted with gold and azure." See also Brown, "The Case of Philip the Fair," 224–25. The statue is not that of Louis X ("Ludovicus decem") the reigning monarch in 1315 as in Gillerman, *Enguerran de Marigny*, 139–40, and Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 192–93.

49. Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 236–40.

50. Robert Branner, *Saint Louis and the Court Style in Gothic Architecture* (London: Zwemmer, 1965), 56–65 and now Cohen, *The Sainte-Chapelle*. The evocative phrase ". . . ut in eam subingrediens quasi raptus ad celum, se non immerito unam de Paradisi potissimis cameris putet intrare" was penned by Jean de Jandun, *Tractatus de laudibus Parisius* (Traité des louanges de Paris) in *Paris et ses historiens aux XIVe et XVe siècles*, ed. Le Roux de Lincy and L. M. Tisserand (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1867), 47–48.

51. Perraut, *L'Architecture des collèges*, 176–77, 238.

52. Information on Sainte-Croix, the house of the Brothers of the Holy Cross affiliated with the Augustinians, can be found in DuBreul, *Théâtre des antiquitez*, 898–900; and Émile Raunié, *Épitaphier du vieux Paris: recueil général des inscriptions funéraires des églises, couvents, collèges, hospices, cimetières et charniers, depuis le moyen âge jusqu'à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, 4 vols. (Paris: Imprimérie nationale, 1890–1901) III, 419–30, who notes that the church was vaulted but does not specify whether it was of wood or stone. For the Blancs-Manteaux, Du Breul, 895–98; Raunié, *Épitaphier*, II, 25–34; and A. Grimault, "Rapport présenté par M. Grimault au nom

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de la 2e Sous-commission sur les premières fouilles faites sur l'emplacement du monastère des Blancs-Manteaux, rue des Guillemites," *Procès-verbaux de la Commission du Vieux Paris* (21 décembre 1929): 130–35. Grimault reports that the thirteenth-century church was forty-seven meters long and twelve meters wide, nearly identical dimensions to the Navarre chapel. The Carthusian chapel is discussed by Du Breul, 453–85; Yvan Christ, *Églises parisiennes actuelles et disparues* (Paris: Éditions Tel, 1947), 46; P. Raoul de Sceaux, "Étude sur la Chartreuse de Vauvert-les-Paris," *Amis de St. François* 71 (1955): 14–32; and Jean-Pierre Aniel, *Les Maisons de Chartreux des origines à la Chartreuse de Pavie* (Paris: Arts et Métiers graphiques, 1983), 58–59.

53. Jean de Jandun (Johannes de Gendino) was the first Master of Arts at the Collège de Navarre in 1315. The quotation is drawn from his *Tractatus de laudibus Parisius*, in *Paris et ses historiens*, 38–39.

54. For Bishop Simon's projects and the work of Pierre de Varinfroy at Meaux, Kurmann, *Saint-Etienne de Meaux*, 88–95. Presumably, Pierre was related to Gautier de Varinfroy, master mason of Meaux beginning in 1253, and Vendôme Cathedral. For more on Gautier, see Peter Kurmann and Dethard von Winterfeld, "Gautier de Varinfroy, ein 'Denkmalpfleger' im 13. Jahrhundert," *Festschrift für Otto von Simson zum 65. Gerburtstag*, ed. Lucius Grisebach and Konrad Renger (Frankfurt-am-Main: Propyläen Verlag, 1977), 101–59. Images of the cathedral may be accessed through Columbia University's Mapping Gothic website: http://mappinggothic.org/building/1030/images/page/1

55. Gorochov, *Le Collège de Navarre*, 140, signals that the title "gouveneur de l'hôtel," director of the community, is drawn from political vocabulary.

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CHAPTER 5

Anne of Bohemia and the Objects of Ricardian Kingship

Lynn Staley

Anne of Bohemia, born in 1366, was queen of England for twelve years, from 1382 to 1394. For this period, there are some contemporary chronicle accounts of her and some traces in official records, as well as hints in literary texts either about her or addressed to her. Her death was mourned by Richard, whose affection for her was noted throughout their marriage, and marked by Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, who preached her eulogy, and, as Michael van Dussen has recently pointed out, by Czech travelers to England who sent or carried back their own records of her eulogies.[1] Caroline Barron, Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Strohm, Nigel Saul, David Wallace, Alfred Thomas, and, of course, Carolyn Collette have explored the few facts we have about Anne.[2] Their studies, like the fourteenth-century chronicle accounts, are readings of Anne, attempts to locate her in relation to the ideals of late medieval queenship, particularly the queen's idealized role as figure for mercy or equity before the king, thus as mediatrix between the people and the king's justice.

Here, I would like to review what we know of Anne and add some new considerations relating to Anne herself and to what ideas were available to royal women about their own relationships to power. It is important to recognize that there is no clearly defined picture of Anne. I suggest that both medieval and modern readings of Anne fictionalize her to some extent and thus point up the fraught nature of Richard's own understanding of royal power and contemporary efforts to come to terms with and to educate the king. The chronicle accounts employ Anne as a sign for King Richard and for the nature of the royal power he exercised or sought to exercise. The poets Geoffrey Chaucer, John Clanvowe, and Richard Maidstone give her a

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more complex and agential role as an advisor to the king. However, Chaucer, Clanvowe, and Maidstone write another sort of fiction in their attempts to educate the queen in the true scope of the role a royal woman might play, a role that Anne seems to have understood only partially. Anne was and is objectified by all who attempt to describe or understand her, but only the poets offer pictures of the ways in which the queen might become less the object of Richard's kingship than a subject in her own right and with her own royal agenda.

THE CONTEMPORARY RECORD

Thomas Walsingham's eulogy for Anne suggests something of the contemporary confusion about the queen. He praises her for her dedication to God, for her almsgiving, her support for the poor and the Church, for her devotion to "true" faith and justice, and for carrying out secret acts of penance, but then he remarks that by many Anne was defamed. He goes on to say that her funeral was famous because it cost more than "all others of our time." Since Walsingham's remarks about Anne follow his notices of the deaths of Constance, Duchess of Lancaster, and Mary, Countess of Derby, his accounts of slander and expense oddly punctuate what is otherwise a memorial to three of England's great ladies.[3] The remainder of his entry on Anne's funeral recounts Richard's rage and violence at the disrespect he perceived in the behavior of the Earl of Arundel for what Walsingham refers to as nothing. Walsingham's account of a funeral that ended at night in a turbulence and confusion caused by Arundel's rudeness and Richard's lack of control locates Anne within a set of Ricardian political constrictions and tensions, just as he sets her piety and charity within the ambit of the derogatory remarks of the people.

Throughout Anne's reign, Walsingham and other chroniclers do not so much criticize the queen as use her as a sign for their distrust of Richard's understanding of his kingship. In these accounts, the marriage was unpopular before it was even celebrated. Anne not only came to Richard with no dowry, but Richard contracted to loan her impoverished brother, Wenzel, king of the Romans, £12,000 and went on to grant annuities and rewards to others in her train.[4] Walsingham, the monk of Westminster, and Adam Usk (writing from hindsight) all refer to the marriage as a purchase and comment upon Richard's excessive generosity to the Bohemians, whom Wals-

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ingham refers to as greedy.[5] The monk of Westminster reports that some of Anne's chamber women were attractive to the English (as well as fashionable). His story of Robert de Vere's repudiation of his noble wife, Phillipa de Coucy, granddaughter of Edward III, for the commoner Agnes Lancecron is freighted with social outrage, communicating the political tension generated by a dislike of Richard's favorite, Robert de Vere.[6]

There is certainly evidence that Anne functioned as an intercessor. Knighton reports that in 1382 a general pardon for the rebels was issued at the request of Anne and other magnates, especially John of Gaunt.[7] In 1384, the monk of Westminster describes her interceding successfully for John Northampton, vassal of John of Gaunt, in the face of Richard's anger. In 1388, she pled for the lives of six condemned judges and, unsuccessfully, for the life of Sir Simon Burley.[8] The monk of Westminster credits her during the crisis in 1392 for pleading to the king for mercy for the city of London, but Walsingham credits Gloucester and Gaunt, rather than Anne, for bringing peace between Richard and London.[9] Throughout her reign, Anne asked for pardons not only for the rebels of 1381 but for male and female felons (including murderers and "ravishers") and, in 1384, for protection for the scholars of Queen's Hall at Oxford.[10] Despite her intercessory activities, the chroniclers do not use her role as merciful intercessor to characterize her reign but subordinate her actions to their pictures of the king.

The few letters from Anne that are known to exist are equally ambiguous about her readiness to assume an agential role.[11] One, as both Eduard Perroy and Kristen Geaman have noted, offers a glimpse of Anne's understanding of the demands of her public identity as a figure for mercy, as well as a brief look into her household. Perroy dated the letter before 1389; Geaman suggests 1384–85, early in Anne's marriage. In the letter, Anne congratulates Wenzel on his successes in Hungary and Poland, reports that a Lord Nicholas has been retained by Richard, says that two of her women have died and hopes her brother will send three others, whom she designates by initials, to her for her solace. She then reports that since the time of her entry into the country there has been peace between people and magnates, among the people, and among the magnates, using *pax*, *tranquillitas*, *contenti*, and *mutue caritatis* to describe the state of things in England. She closes by saying that the one point of sorrow is that they are not rejoicing in childbirth but have hopes for the future with good health, God permitting. She ends, as she began, with the florid address Richard also used when writing Anne's brother, Wenzel, and her mother, Elizabeth. This letter, like the gift of cloth

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(two cloths of "worstede" and a piece of cloth of "Reynes") that Anne sent her mother in 1389, suggests her sense of duty to her family, just as Richard's letters to Bohemia underline his regard for their position.[12]

These letters, the one from Anne and the several from Richard from about the same time, though directed to individual family members, are formally written in—or translated into—the elaborately complimentary Latin of diplomacy, opening with "Magne celsitudinis . . . ," "Serenissima et excellentissima . . . ," "Excellentissimo et serenissimo. . . ." The letters themselves, while friendly and, in some cases, affectionate, also seem designed to cement the relationship between the English crown and the imperial court, or to arrange for business like the purchase of horses in Bohemia and thus for safe passage for English knights, or to describe the happiness between Richard and Anne and thus the happy state of the English court. In other words, the letters are fond, but officially fond, and do real work in that they serve as cameos of the stability and prosperity of Richard's own status and Anne's share in it. Anne's statement that since her entrance ("a tempore nostri introitus") there has been peace in England serves as a report that she is doing the job as queen she is supposed to do. The period 1384–85 was peaceful compared to 1381 or 1388/89, but it was not without tension between Richard and his magnates or Richard and the Commons concerning his fiscal irresponsibility or the war with France. The letters describe a complicated situation in the simple terms of domestic and political harmony and serve as official records of the success of the young king or possibly of the naiveté of his political understanding.[13]

Other records underline the ways in which Anne was linked or linked herself to concerns associated with the prestige of the English crown. One comes from the author of the *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, who notes that Anne's funeral took place in Westminster the day following the feast of St. Anne, a feast celebrated in England because the queen had requested the pope to grant it.[14] There are five other letters suggesting Anne's involvement in matters of state that especially pertain to issues Richard considered important to his own royal status.[15] In 1387, Anne seconded Richard's presentation of John Stacy to the prebend of Masham with her own petition to the cardinal of Alençon, though the cardinal continued to obstruct the appointment. More significant (and far more irascible) is the letter Richard sent to an official at the Roman court in late summer 1387 when he sought to chasten the baronial opposition to his own power. In his salutation he joins the queen's name to his own ("regine consortis nostre carissime") in

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his greeting, going on to offer his correspondent "information" about certain ministers who, against the justice of regality and liberty, malign "our" person, asking that Rome impose its own spiritual powers upon those who promulgate the scandal. Richard's attempt to assert royal prerogative was, in a few months, to be checked by the Appellants and the subsequent parliament of 1388/89. Richard invokes Anne's name ("dilectissime consortis nostre Regine") in another letter to Rome, this one to Urban VI, written before May 1389, in which Richard praises John Trefnant, who was on May 5, 1389, named preferred bishop of Hereford. In 1393, Anne was drawn into a longstanding dispute between England and Aragon, which involved claims and hostages, when Violante of Aragon wrote to her.[16] Also in 1393, a quarrel between John Waltham, bishop of Salisbury, and his chapter went to the Curia for settlement. Richard wrote a number of letters to Boniface IX asking that he silence the chapter and rule to preserve the bishop's rights and that he take into account that the bishop is treasurer of England and a faithful servant of the king. The same manuscript containing this series of letters, which is Gilbert Stone's *Letterbook*, Oxford, MS Bodley 859, has a letter to the pope from Anne, as well as a letter from Stone to Waltham sending him a copy of Anne's letter.[17] On June 12, 1393, an accord was made, with the entry in the papal register noting the intervention of King Richard.[18]

Each of these instances bears some relation to the prestige of the English crown—its right to name churchmen for offices or to privilege certain churchmen, its international status, or its own inherent regal power. While Anne certainly could not (and probably did not want to) prevent Richard from invoking her name, it is nonetheless interesting to consider those instances when he did invoke it. Walsingham reported that Richard rarely allowed Anne to leave his side, a remark that underlines just how companionate their marriage was. But their closeness also provided grist for complaints against Anne and her household since she then drew from the Wardrobe, as well as adding to expenses when Richard was on progress and staying at abbeys or estates where the cost of providing for two royal households would have been considerable.[19] Cost is, however, not my point, but the shadowy record that Anne leaves, a record frequently not her own but Richard's, and the contemporary use of it as commentary about the king rather than the queen. Thus, Walsingham follows up his complaint about the expenses of having to entertain both households, especially the "grasping" Bohemians, by quoting Ecclesiastes 10:16, "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child."

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ANNE AND THE POETS

The poets' Queen Anne is not simply more active; she is distinct from Richard. John Clanvowe's *The Boke of Cupid*, Richard Maidstone's *Concordia*, and the F Prologue to Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, all of which relate to one another chronologically, thematically, and politically, present an Anne who is far more than a reflection of Richard's sovereignty. Clanvowe's poem is dated from 1386 (or after the F Prologue) to 1391 when Clanvowe died, Chaucer's F Prologue from 1386 to 1388, and Maidstone's *Concordia* in late 1392.[20] Each poem contains a "portrait" of the queen. The portraits in the F Prologue and the *Concordia* link female merciful intercession to male judgmental power.[21] Thus Alceste interposes her sense of Chaucer's haplessness and hopes for his amendment in the face of Cupid's anger at Chaucer's translation of the "heretical" *Roman de la Rose* and unsympathetic rendering of Criseyde (*LGW*, F:329–34). Maidstone's *Concordia* is one of several texts that describe the civic pageant celebrating the resolution of the quarrel between Richard II and London in August 1392; in some points it differs from accounts that are intended to be factual and should be seen as less a description of what happened than a reading and application of the event.[22] In it, as Strohm has argued, Anne serves as the intercessor between Richard and London, his true wife, who has strayed from his side; she urges his acceptance of the city's penance that has been demonstrated by the lavish pageant and tributes they have prepared for his return.

There are elements in all three texts that suggest for Anne a role whose intercessory function is focused by an understanding of female agency aligned to a concept of the common good, and hence of concord and equity.[23] These texts portray Anne as capable of rational, ethical judgment that, when expressed, can bring harmony out of discord. The argument Clanvowe stages between the nightingale's espousal of love language and servitude to Cupid and the cuckoo's preference for plain talk and refusal to serve a blind god, which the narrator ends by throwing a stone at the mocking cuckoo, ends by having one bird call for a parliament presided over by the eagle and other peers at which they will make a judgment.[24] Here, Clanvowe defers to the queen, not the peers, specifying that the parliament shall be held on St. Valentine's Day at Woodstock under the maple that stands before the queen's chamber. Like Chaucer in *The Parliament of Fowls*, he defers to female judgment at a future date, specifically to Anne's judgment whether to privilege the double language of lovers who are motivated by

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desire or the plain speech of those who avow a "trouthe" which seldom avails at "this courte" (204). The compliment to the queen, itself a piece of courtly speaking, nonetheless places the poem before her for more than her pleasure and suggests that the debate, in which judgment is inherent, is one she can follow and use to make a decision that can have an impact on the courtly community.

The greater concerns that Clanvowe casts in terms of love language—flattery and false speech—Chaucer casts as issues pertaining to discriminating kingship. In Alceste's intervention into Cupid's quarrel with the hapless poet/daisy worshiper, Chaucer (*LGW*, F Prologue, 342–441), she points out some crucial subjects for Cupid's consideration: the number of flatterers and slanderers at court who drum (*tabouren*, 354) their false speech into his ear, Chaucer's lack of malice, his possible ties to patrons who might have asked him to translate what "olde clerkes writen" (370), and his past record as a poet. She also raises a more pressing topic, the duties of the prince to "kepe his liges in justice," to "kepe his lordes hire degree," but also to "doon bothe ryght, to poore and ryche," and "han of poore folk compassyoun," emphasizing that "yt is no maistrye for a lord / To dampne a man without answere of word," especially if that man has asked for mercy (382–401). This advice, which she attributes to the "Philosophre," is a synopsis of Aristotelian political theory, which undergirded the many books of princely advice that proliferated throughout the later Middle Ages, as well as Brunetto Latini's manual of civic advice, the *Tresor,* and is predicated upon the concept of a common good.[25] The advice Alceste gives Cupid is elaborated in the *Melibee*, where Prudence intercedes between her husband (and his anger) and his enemies and associates but does so by giving him explicit princely advice.

In *The Concordia*, Maidstone uses Queen Anne's speech to Richard to remind him of their mortality, saying that with great honor goes humility (467–92, esp. 473–76). In so doing she says, "We, too, like these, are mortal" ("Nos quoque mortales et, ut hii, velud umbra caduci . . ."). She thus reminds the king, not simply of his human nature, as unsteady as a shadow, but that he shares it with the citizens who come before him to beseech him for mercy. And from this recognition, she urges him to restore London's ancient rights and give it back its liberties, "Et placeat veteri nunc urbem reddere iuri / Ac libertates restituisse suas" (491–92). Anne underlines the covenanted relationship between king and people—even as they restore, so shall the king. While Anne notes the rich gifts and the splendor of the day, her emphasis is not upon London's tribute but upon Richard's restoration of the city's

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liberties. It is her emphasis upon Richard's need to recognize the humanity that links king to commoner, the death that waits for all, that establishes the terms of the covenant between king and people. Like the statements of the chroniclers, those of Chaucer, Clanvowe, and Maidstone are evidence for contemporary scrutiny of her in relation to particular ways of conceiving of a queen's duties, but in depicting Anne the poets give her what the chroniclers do not—a voice that is the sign of her agency.

THE QUEEN'S AGENCY

The literature composed for French royal women provides evidence for the education of royal women and thus offers a means of gauging the potential scope of female agency within a hierarchical political culture. Near the end of the thirteenth century, Durand de Champagne wrote for Jeanne de Navarre, the wife of Philip IV of France, the *Speculum Dominarum*, which was translated a few years later as the *Miroir des Dames*, possibly for Jeanne d'Evreux, the second wife of Charles IV, the son of Philip IV. In 1969, Catherine L. Mastny studied the Latin treatise for her Columbia University dissertation, in which she established its addressee and suggested for whom the French translation was probably made. Anne Dubrulle edited the *Speculum* in 1988 for her doctorate at the Sorbonne. Her edition has received recent attention from Constant J. Mews and Karen Green, who have linked the text to the concerns and perspective of Christine de Pizan.[26] For those used to thinking of Christine as the beginning of a tradition, a reading of the *Speculum Dominarum* in relation to *The Book of the Three Virtues* places her near the end of a tradition in which women were considered as subjects in their own right and thus as capable of moral instruction and hence of judgment linked to private devotion but operative in the public as well as the private realm. Recent work in French women's reading circles demonstrates that noble and royal women collected and read books, including didactic works. Among those books traced to powerful women is the *Miroir des Dames*, a book whose influence extended to men. Philip IV had it adapted for his sons at the beginning of the fourteenth century as *Liber de informatione principum* and, at the request of Charles V, the *Liber* was translated into French by Jean Golein. The *Miroir* was also in the libraries of the Duke de Berry and of Charles V.[27]

Though the *Miroir* was not influential outside of elite court circles and was not translated into other European languages, for the hundred-plus

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years of its popularity among those associated with sophisticated French culture it offers a model of queenship that is quietly radical. Writers like Philippe de Mézières in *Le Songe du Vieil Pèlerin*, dedicated to Charles VI, advise queens to lead simple, pious, humble lives like Queen Esther, to moderate anger with prayer and intercession, but not to be over-occupied with the many requests for privilege; instead, they should regulate their households, sustain the poor, devote themselves to works of mercy, and guard the king from anger, pride and avarice.[28] While Durand includes such advice in the *Speculum*, he also includes a section on the wisdom of women and a long section on the types of justice (chapters 22–29), without which "a republic cannot stand," under the heading of the Cardinal Virtues, each of which he analyzes; he also includes much advice on the pursuit of wisdom through reading because it heightens discrimination in both private and public matters.[29] Seeming to look ahead to Christine de Pizan, Durand begins the first chapter with Proverbs 14:1, "Sapiens mulier edificat domum suam," a trope that he embroiders throughout the book with descriptions of the interior and exterior house, the decorations of the house, the garden belonging to the house, and finally the inferior house, which is hell, and the superior one, or paradise. The *Speculum* exists in a unique copy made for the bishop of Nevers, who received it in 1450. The miniature on folio 1r depicts a queen supervising the construction of a castle, a picture that certainly links the treatise to the later author Christine de Pizan.[30] This is by no means a feminist treatise, but it does, like Christine in the *Book of the City of Ladies* and *Book of the Three Virtues* (*Treasure of the City of Ladies*), assume that royal women are capable of moral argument and that queenship itself should be considered a moral office. Neither Durand nor Christine denies the importance of a woman's spiritual life, but neither do they flinch from urging her to be an active participant in the moral life of the household and of the realm, and Christine's Lady Reason gives women a mirror of self-knowledge, not of vanity (*Book of the City of Ladies* 1.3.2), probably in recognition of the *miroir* Durand holds out to royal women. The very metaphor of building a house or a city implies active engagement, or work, in subtle distinction to the Chevalier de Tour Landry and the Menagier de Paris, who describe how a wife should rule her husband's house, not build her own.

Though different, the prefaces for the *Speculum* and the *Miroir* address a royal woman reader whose education in wisdom is critical to her assumption of her office. The *Speculum* is addressed to Jeanne, queen of France and Navarre, for whose erudition the book has been compiled, a compilation

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also useful to "all women," in order that they learn how to ordain themselves before God, rule themselves prudently and usefully, and speak with all blamelessly (1). The preface to the *Miroir* links the book to Vegetius, stating that the study of the ancients enhances the study of chivalry; it cites the Romans who ruled "not simply by arms but by their ability to speak well and wisely." The author then links ancient wisdom and power to France through Charlemagne, who loved both wisdom and study, noting that princes who govern need to be illuminated by wisdom. Though not heavily illuminated, manuscripts of the *Miroir* suggest their royal provenance in their careful workmanship. The initial miniature of Cambridge MS Corpus Christi 324, which was in the library of Charles V, depicts a queen and behind her a small white dog; she stands to receive the book from a kneeling Franciscan. The initial miniature of a copy owned by the Duke of Berry (London, British Library MS Additional 29986) is similarly royal but subtly different in that there is no dog by the queen but the king crowned and with a scepter standing behind the seated queen as the Franciscan presents the book. The present regime, represented by Philip IV and Jeanne of Navarre, thus participates in the histories of Rome and Carolingian France and, by extension, the France of Charles V or the Burgundy of John of Berry, whose stamps in the volumes verify the ongoing relevance of such wisdom—wisdom profitable to both rulers and subjects, reflecting glory on the honor of the present generation of rulers.

As the preface states, the book is a rule for the queen's conscience, helping her to govern herself and her subjects. In other words, the education of the queen's conscience is the first step in a process whose end is not a role but an office conceived of as having a public dimension sanctioned by the king himself. When the *Speculum* was retranslated into French in the sixteenth century by Ysambert de Saint-Léger for Marguerite de Navarre, it was a far less daring book, abridged, heavily weighted toward moral and spiritual advice, thus lacking the implicit recognition of the original work that a woman might be capable of thinking philosophically and historically—though it begins with praise for Marguerite's own knowledge of the translation of learning to the kingdom of France.[31] Durand's book in its medieval translation had only a fairly brief period during which its assumptions about queenship might have been passed back and forth in court circles with ties to the French royalty. What does all this mean for the contemporary English perspective on Anne of Bohemia?

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ANNE OF BOHEMIA AND ENGLAND'S QUEENS

The circulation of Durand's book among royal European women suggests that they learned to see themselves as having active roles that necessitated their education in political ethics. With the exception of Anne of Bohemia, England's queens during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were either French or brought with them the French cult of pious kingship embodied in St. Louis, which was tended by such powerful royal women as Blanche of Castile, Louis's mother, and Margaret, his wife, and his sister Isabelle.[32] Isabella, wife of Edward II, was the daughter of Philip IV, for whom the *De Regimine Principium* was composed by Giles of Rome, and Jeanne of Navarre, for whom the *Speculum Dominarum* was written. Isabella's brother was Charles IV, her sister-in-law Jeanne d'Evreux, for whom the *Miroir* was probably translated. Philippa, wife of Edward III, from the cultured court of Hainault in Flanders, was connected to the Capetian dynasty through her mother, who was a granddaughter of Philip III. Joan of Kent, Richard's mother, though never queen, grew up at the court of Edward III and Philippa. Richard II's second wife, Isabella of Valois; Henry IV's second wife, Joan of Navarre; and Henry V's queen Katherine of Valois were all French, as was Henry VI's very active queen, Margaret of Anjou.

The fourteenth-century queens Isabella and Philippa were noteworthy examples of foreign queens who understood the importance of their engagement with the political and cultural affairs of England. Isabella was extremely active, first as Edward II's queen, then as regent after Edward's death. After her disgrace and "banishment" to Castle Rising, she became a valuable diplomatic presence for her son Edward III when he needed an intermediary either for French prisoners like King Jean of France or visiting French noblemen. Michael Bennett's recent work on Isabella underlines just how close she remained to Edward and to Queen Philippa, whose marriage she had arranged, as well as the degree of her cultural interests, both loaning French texts from her impressive library to Frenchmen in England and sponsoring musicians, minstrels, and entertainments for visitors.

Both Isabella and Philippa have been linked to the production of manuscripts.[33] At least three illuminated manuscripts may be linked to Philippa, the elaborate Taymouth Hours (London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13), which Kathryn A. Smith has argued was commissioned by Philippa as a gift for Edward's sister Eleanor of Woodstock on the occasion of her be-

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trothal, and two psalters.[34] Smith's reading of Philippa as "a canny manipulator of images and ceremonial" supports the work of Veronica Sekules and Caroline Shenton, as well as William Ormrod's study of the queen and her close companions, like Marie de St. Pol, as producers of their own and others' funeral art.[35] The two other extant illuminated manuscripts associated with Philippa are Dr. Williams Library MS Ancient 6, which is dated c. 1328 and is smaller and less ornate than London, BL Harley 2899, dated between 1328 and 1340.[36] The programs of both psalters are focused on the themes of kingship, with depictions of David, the supposed author of the Psalms, dressed as a contemporary king playing various musical instruments, killing Goliath, or imploring God. Harley 2899 has a more pronounced emphasis upon regality, containing on the Beatus page the arms of England, the arms of England and France, a series of kings, and a picture of a king in council, as well as many crowned figures, and on fol. 34v a picture of a king being anointed and crowned. There are also small women's heads with fashionable hair styles decorating some initials. Given the very fashionable pictures of Philippa and her daughters that were painted on the walls of the St. Stephen's Chapel in Westminster, it is no surprise to find well-coifed heads decorating a psalter that might well have been commissioned by Philippa for her husband.[37]

Later royal women were similarly engaged with cultural and political activities. There is much evidence for Margaret of Anjou's vigorous championship of the Lancastrian cause in the field, but also on the page, as Rosemarie McGerr has recently argued.[38] Henry IV's first wife, Mary de Bohun, was the daughter of Humphrey and Joan, both deeply involved with the production of manuscripts whose political imagery at once magnified their own status as advisors with special access to the crown and their concern for the realm.[39] Joan of Kent presided over Edward's court in Aquitaine during their nine years there and, after the Black Prince returned to England incapacitated, performed public functions in his name. Before her death in 1385 she had great influence with her son, Richard II, both in the granting of pardons and as a peacemaker between Richard and John of Gaunt, who was a close associate of Joan's. Her court was a center for the group of "Lollard knights," many of whom were also affiliates of Chaucer.[40]

Though it is clear from Anne's early letter to her brother that she was cognizant of a queen's intercessory function, it is less clear how she understood either the nature of royal authority or a queen's relation to it. Her father, Charles IV (1316–78), was the son of John of Luxembourg, who sent

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Charles at an early age to the French court where he came of age, learning a good deal from the intrigues of French courtly culture and much about the ideals, ceremonies, and symbols of kingship as practiced in France, particularly the official piety linked to the cult of St. Louis.[41] Charles's piety was manifest in his devotion to saints and relics: he wrote a life of St. Wenceslas and was known to venerate relics wherever he was, to gather relics from all over Europe and deposit them in Prague's churches and monasteries, giving the city a reputation for relics surpassed only by Rome.[42] Charles's determination to stamp his country with the iconography of pious kingship in the tradition of St. Louis can be seen in the St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague with its program of decorative and jewel-encrusted wall paintings, but most especially in Karlstein Castle, which he constructed to link his own genealogy to both Charlemagne (through his father) and to the national saint St. Wenceslas (through his mother, Elizabeth). With its relics (including a thorn from the Crown of Thorns from the Sainte Chapelle given to him by Charles V), Karlstein Castle rises in stages. The movement from the Great Hall with its genealogies, through the painted stairwells, to the Chapel of Our Lady and St. Catherine, where Charles V is depicted presenting the holy thorn to Charles IV, and finally to the high and secluded Chapel of the Holy Cross, its walls and ceiling covered in gold and gems and meant to suggest Paradise, offers a physical experience that proclaims the progressively refined and elite plan of the castle, whose end is the exclusive and dazzling chapel at its very top.[43]

Though Anne and Richard corresponded with Anne's half-brother Wenzel and with her mother Elizabeth of Pomerania, it is unclear how she saw her position in England in relation to the ideology of the realm she had left. For example, Clemence of Hungary (d. 1328) owned a *Miroir des Dames*, but she was the daughter of the Angevin Charles Martel, who was the titular king of Hungary, and was raised in Naples and married to Louis X, the first son of Philip IV of France. She was deeply involved in French politics and belonged to the cultural world of royal women whose reading habits and libraries provided Christine de Pizan with her audience, perhaps with books. Though Anne's father was a product of French courtly culture, Anne's mother was Pomeranian, with maternal ties to Poland and Lithuania. Wenzel, whose mother was Charles' third wife, seems to have taken little away from his father's program of kingship.[44] Wenzel was less interested in Western Europe and England than Charles, disliked and avoided Karlstein Castle, and was not interested in saints or relics. His piety took a

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more heterodox turn; he defended Jan Hus, patronized translations of scripture into German, which were forbidden by his father, and opposed the ban on Wyclif's works in Bohemia. (Possibly the statement that Anne had the Gospels in English that was interpolated in Arundel's funeral sermon for her reflects an awareness of her brother's views.) Given Richard's interest in iconic rule displayed in such objects as the portable altar, the Wilton Diptych, or the Westminster portrait, in the regalia of kingship, and in visits to holy places, it is hard to argue for Anne's disdain for the cult of saints and relics. Moreover, the existing correspondence that invokes her name when the subject of regal status is at issue suggests her position in a court whose king was very much aware of his own regality and, in fact, sought out the symbols and ceremonies of monarchy.[45]

CONCLUSION

Even as royal women passed on the manuscripts integral to French sacral kingship, they passed on those that detailed their own roles as advisors to princes. I suggest that the English texts that present Anne as more than an intercessor, in fact as a teacher, are meant to urge Anne toward a recognition of her own desired role in England's political culture, a role inhabited with real skill by earlier English royal women educated in those traditions adumbrated in the *Speculum* and *Miroir*. These English texts are not snapshots of what happened; they are pictures of what should happen within a political community whose leaders recognize that there can be no concept of ethics without a concept of the common good. Such texts were designed to offer Anne a role as the ethical advisor she had yet to realize.

As to how those ideas passed into England and to writers like Chaucer and Maidstone we should look, first, to Edward III's mother, Isabelle, and her circle of friends. Bennett examines Isabelle's cultural significance as a collector and lender of books, as a diplomatic bridge between the English crown and French captives or emissaries in England, even as a possible link and neighbor to the mysterious John Mandeville, author of the *Travels*.[46] Marie de St. Pol and Elizabeth de Burgh, Isabelle's closest friends, are equally significant power women and cultural patrons. Both had impressive libraries; both founded Franciscan convents (Denny and the London Minoresses, which Martha Carlin has reconstructed and about which I have written in relation to *Pearl*), under the Longchamps Rule. Elizabeth de Burgh, Count-

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ess of Clare, was grandmother (and close to) Elizabeth de Burgh, Duchess of Clarence and Chaucer's first employer, as well as close to Henry of Lancaster, father-in-law of John of Gaunt.[47] These three women, alone, are the centers of the many interwoven threads of late medieval English culture.

Despite such examples of women who understood and availed themselves of the terms of a cultural politics of female agency, the most important evidence for Anne's willingness to offer the sort of prudent and ethical advice advocated by Durand comes from Chaucer and Maidstone. Alceste reminds Cupid of the consequences of autocratic rule. Anne's argument in Maidstone's *Concordia* presents mercy as a manifestation of humility and humility as a response to the acknowledgment of humanity. In giving Anne a speech that affirms her love, that reminds the king of the honor done him by the citizens and of his shared humanity with those citizens, Maidstone provides a path from wrath and abjection to mercy and gratitude. Maidstone thus invites Richard to forego his almighty anger in favor of something more suitable to a king who is also a man. Maidstone thereby offers Richard through the speech he writes for Anne a picture of sacral kingship that is not woven together from royal trappings, but is an expression of penitence and thus emanates from the spirit of the true king by the grace of God.[48] Durand de Champagne, as Christine de Pizan would later, sees the queen as the voice of the common good by means of her ethical, historical, rhetorical, and spiritual training and discipline.

However, to whom did the poets speak? Anne could read German, Czech, and Latin but may not have been able to appreciate English poetry, unlike her early fourteenth-century predecessor who patronized English buskers.[49] Joan, who did see herself as having a diplomatic function, died in 1385.[50] John of Gaunt would certainly have understood the ways in which a queen might employ her agency.[51] Both might well have encouraged or patronized Clanvowe, Chaucer, and Maidstone, who was Gaunt's confessor during the 1390s until his death in 1396. The pictures of Anne as a forceful and moderating presence embedded within these poems are not those we find in the chronicles, which present her far more tamely as a supplicant before Richard, just as the eulogies for Anne offer praise in fairly conventional terms. My speculations raise important questions about the degree to which poets "produce" history or embellish what we think of as the historical record in ways that channel our own readings of chronicle accounts. But, in a sense, poets do make history because they see themselves as agents having voices. Thus Christine de Pizan offered Isabeau of Bavaria a role as

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adjudicator, mediator, and canny advisor in a language she could certainly understand; that role was, in turn, very like the self-portraits both Christine and Chaucer provide of themselves as advisors to princes. Chaucer and his fellow poets perhaps invented an agency for Anne in order to make a new history for England and in so doing shaped our readings of historical documents.

Notes

1. Michael Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia: Heresy and Communication in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

2. Caroline Barron, "The Quarrel of Richard II with London, 1392–97," in *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack*, ed. F. R. H. DuBoulay and C. M. Barron (London: Athlone Press, 1971), 173–217; Chris Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England, 1360–1413*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 36, 93; Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 95–119; Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 93–94, 455–57, 455–56; David Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 357–70; Alfred Thomas, *A Blessed Shore: England and Bohemia from Chaucer to Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 12–29; Carolyn P. Collette, *Performing Polity: Women and Agency in the Anglo-French Tradition, 1385–1620* (Turnholt, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 99–121.

3. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, eds., *The St. Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003–11), 1:960–62.

4. Saul, *Richard II*, 86–91; *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1377–1399*, 6 vols. (London, 1895–1909), 2:4, 365; 5:286; *Fœdera: conventiones, literæ, et cujuscunque generis acta publica, inter reges Angliæ et alios quo* (Farnborough [Hants.]: Gregg P., 1967), 3:3, 110.

5. Taylor, Childs, and Watkiss, *The St. Albans Chronicle*, 1:572–74, 688; L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, ed. and trans., *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 24; Chris Given-Wilson, ed. and trans., *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk, 1377–1421* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 4–6.

6. Hector and Harvey, *Westminster Chronicle*, 188, 190.

7. G. H. Martin, ed. and trans., *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337–1396* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 242; *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1381–1385*, 104–5, 109; *Foedera* 3:3, 134. As Strohm also notes (*Hochon's Arrow*, 106), even before her arrival at the par-

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liament of November and December 1381, most of the rebels were pardoned in her name. See *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, Chris Given-Wilson, General Editor (Scholarly Digital Editions and The National Archives, Leicester, 2005), 3:103, art. 32.

8. Martin, *Knighton's Chronicle*, 502; Hector and Harvey, *Westminster Chronicle*, 330; Benjamin Williams, ed. and trans., *Chronique de la Traïson et Mort de Richart Deux Roy Dengleterre* (London: S. & J. Bentley, Wilson, and Fley, 1846), 9–10; Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow*, 106–7; Saul, *Richard II*, 455. Saul (Pl. 15) also includes the only extant manuscript depiction of Anne in the decorated initial of the Shrewsbuy borough charter. She kneels before Richard. For a discussion of the incident with John of Northampton in relation to Richard's excessive anger, see Nancy Mason Bradbury, "Beyond the Kick: Women's Agency in *Athelston*," in *Cultural Encounters in the Romance of Medieval England*, ed. Corinne Saunders (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 149–58.

9. Hector and Harvey, *Westminster Chronicle*, 510; Taylor, Childs, and Watkiss, *St. Albans Chronicle* 1:928–30.

10. *CPR*, 2:103, 114, 159, 203, 206, 211, 215, 223, 236, 243, 297, 399, 401, 411, 433, 440, 448; *CPR*, 3: 32, 298, 299, 311, 359, 368, 462.

11. See Anne Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England 1100–1547* (Dover, NH: Alan Sutton, 1994), 105–6. Anne's letter to her brother was mentioned by Edouard Perroy in *The Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*, Camden third series, 48 (London: RHS, 1933), 193. It has recently been discussed and edited by Kristan L. Geaman, "A Personal Letter Written by Anne of Bohemia," *EHR* 128 (2013): 1086–94.

12. The letter was copied into British Library Additional MS 6159, the estate book of Christ Church Cathedral Priory, Canterbury, during the fifteenth century. For Richard's letters, see Perroy, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*, #35–39, 46, and 139, which Perroy dates to 1391, recommending Robert de Vere, in exile from England, to Wenzel.

13. Perhaps the most personal letter is the one Richard wrote to Anne's mother, the Empress Elizabeth on the death of his own mother, Joan in 1385. Perroy, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*, #57. Compare the official announcement, *Foedera* 3:3, 184.

14. George B. Stow, ed., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secondi* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 134.

15. See Perroy, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*, # 74 (early 1387), #80 (c. 1387), #97 (1389), #173 (1393), and #182 (1391–93). See Perroy's notes to each letter.

16. Here, see the complicated series of notes Perroy provides for letters #141, #149, #160, #173, #200.

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17. See Perroy, *Diplomatic Correspondence of Richard II*, #182A-D.

18. W. H. Bliss and J. A. Twemlow, eds., *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (London: HMSO, 1902), IV:457.

19. Taylor, Childs, and Watkiss, *St. Albans Chronicle*, 1:736. Walsingham makes this latter point in regard to the progress of 1383, 1:688–90. On the queen's scant contributions to the wardrobe, see Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity*, 165.

20. For these texts, see V. J. Scattergood, ed., *The Works of Sir John Clanvowe* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1975); David R. Carlson, ed., *Richard Maidstone. Concordia, with a Verse Translation by A. G. Rigg* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2003); Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

21. This is Susan Crane's remark cited by Strohm in *Hochon's Arrow*, 104, n. 9.

22. The only copy of the poem survives in a fragment of a manuscript that was probably a collection of Maidstone's works; as Carlson suggests (*Concordia*, 31–32), the version we have of the *Concordia* is at some remove from what may have been a presentation copy. The manuscript is Oxford, Bodleian Library MS e Musaeo 94. There is no evidence Richard ever saw it.

23. On the subject of equity as it relates to Anne, see Collette, *Performing Polity*, 112–14.

24. See Scattergood, ed., *Works of Sir John Clanvowe*, 9–14; Lee Patterson, "Court Politics and the Invention of Literature: The Case of Sir John Clanvowe," in *Culture and History, 1380–1450*, ed. David Aers (London: Harvester, 1992), 7–41; Lynn Staley, *Languages of Power in the Age of Richard II* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 18–20.

25. This is a vast subject, but begin with Margaret Schlauch, "Chaucer's Doctrine of Kings and Tyrants," *Speculum* 20 (1945): 133–56; Quentin Skinner, "Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 72 (1986): 1–56; Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's "De Regimine Principium": Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275–1525* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For my discussion of some works of late fourteenth-century English political literature in relation to Aristotelian thought, see Staley, *Languages of Power*, 32–36.

26. The manuscript is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale ms. lat. 6784 and has been digitized. See Anne Debrulle, "'Le Speculum dominarum' de Durand de Champagne," 2 vols., France, National Archives 1987–88; Catherine Louise Mastny, "Durand of Champagne and the 'Mirror of the Queen': A Study in Medieval Didactic Literature," PhD diss., Columbia University, 1969; I thank DuBrulle for giving me permission to read her thesis in the French Archives; I thank also those in the Archives at Pierrefitte-sur-Seine who made this possible. For recent discussions, see Karen Green and C. J. Mews, *Virtue Ethics for Women: 1250–1500* (London: Spring-

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er, 2011); Karen Green, "Christine de Pizan: Isolated Individual or Member of a Feminine Community of Learning?" in *Communities of Learning: Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1100–1500,* ed. Constant J. Mews and John N. Crossley (Turnhold: Brepols, 2011), 229–44. See Collette, *Performing Polity*, 5, 21–39, 107, for remarks about Christine and her understanding of female agency.

27. There are eighteen extant manuscripts of the *Miroir*. The adaptation for young men was incorrectly assigned to Giles of Rome and printed in 1517 as *Le Mirouer exemplaire et tres fructueuse instruction selon la compilation de Gilles de Rome*. See Mastny, "Durand of Champagne," 122. I thank the library of Sainte-Genevieve for its hospitality while I read it. For studies of the books royal women owned and passed on as gifts or in their wills, see Mastny, "Durand of Champagne," 131–33; Joan Holladay, "Fourteenth-Century French Queens as Collectors and Readers of Books: Jeanne d'Evreux and Her Contemporaries," *Journal of Medieval History* 32 (2006): 69–100; Green, "Christine de Pizan: Isolated Individual or Member of a Feminist Community of Learning?"

28. George Coopland, ed., *Philippe de Mézières. Le songe du vieil pèlerin*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 348–50.

29. Citation from Dubrulle, *Speculum Dominarum*, 282.

30. For the provenance of the manuscript, see Mastny, "Durand of Champagne," 40–47.

31. Camillo Marazza, ed., *Le Miroir des dames: manuscrit français 1189 de la Bibliothèque nationale de Paris. Ysambert de Saint-Leger; Durand de Champagne* (Paris: Milella, 1978).

32. See Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "The Chapels and Cult of St. Louis at St. Denis," *Medievalia* 10 (1984): 279–331, at 320; Sean L. Field, *Isabelle of France: Capetian Sanctity and Franciscan Identity in the Thirteenth Century* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

33. Michael Bennett, "Isabella of France, Anglo-French Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange in the Late 1350s," in *The Age of Edward III*, ed. J. S. Bothwell (Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 2001), 215–26. For further remarks about Isabella as cultural patron, see Niamh Pattwell, "Reinterpreting the Later Life of Isabella of France (c. 1295–1358)," in *Transmission and Generation in Medieval and Renaissance Literature. Essays in Honour of John Scattergood*, ed. Karen Hodder and Brendan O'Conner (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 78–88. See Lucy Freeman Sandler, "Political Imagery in the Bohun Manuscripts," in *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700*, vol. 10, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2002), 114–53; Lynn Staley, *The Island Garden: England's Language of Nation from Gildas to Marvell* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 121–25, 131, on texts given to Edward III. On French influence, see Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066–1530* (London: Methuen, 1984), 90.

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34. See Kathryn A. Smith, *The Taymouth Hours* (London: British Library, 2012), 16–18, including the notes for those pages, for a discussion of both Isabella and Philippa and manuscripts.

35. Veronica Sekules, "Dynasty and Patrimony in the Self-Construction of an English Queen: Philippa of Hainault and Her Images," in *England and the Continent in the Middle Ages: Studies in Memory of Andrew Martindale*, ed. John Mitchell (Stamford, UK: Shaun Tyas, 2000),157–74; Caroline Shenton, "Philippa of Hainault's Churchings: The Politics of Motherhood at the Court of Edward III," in *Family and Dynasty in Late Medieval England, Proceedings of the 1997 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. Richard Eales (Donington, UK: Shaun Tyas, 2003), 105–21. William Ormrod, "Queenship, Death and Agency: The Commemorations of Isabella of France and Philippa of Hainault," in *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England*, ed. Caroline M. Barron (Donington, UK: Shaun Tyas, 2010), 87–103.

36. Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385* (London: H. Miller Publishing, 1986), 81, 122–23. See M. A. Michael, "A Manuscript Wedding Gift from Philippa of Hainault to Edward III," *The Burlington Magazine* 127 (1985): 583–98; Lynda Dennison, "An Illuminator of the Queen Mary Psalter Group: The Ancient 6 Master," *The Antiquaries Journal* 66, part II (1986): 287–314. Dennison (298) dates it to 1328 and speculates it was a wedding gift.

37. See Staley, *Island Garden*, 164–69, for discussion and further citations regarding the St. Stephen's Chapel.

38. Rosemarie McGerr, *A Lancastrian Mirror for Princes: The Yale Law School "New Statutes of England"* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

39. Sandler, "Political Imagery in the Bohun Manuscripts."

40. See *Foedera* 3, 184, for those around Joan's body at her funeral (Louis Clifford, Richard Stury, John of Worth, Thomas Latimer, Thomas Marvell) and CPR 3: 65 for her executors. David Green, *Edward the Black Prince: Power in Medieval Europe* (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007), 178–82, notes that four of the sixteen executors of her will were supposed Lollard sympathizers: John Clanvowe, Lewis Clifford, William Neville, and Richard Stury.

41. For a detailed account of Charles IV as young man and king, see S. Harrison Thomson, "Learning at the Court of Charles IV," *Speculum* 25 (1950): 1–20. See also Jiri Fajt, ed., *Magister Theodoricus: Court Painter to Emperor Charles IV* (Prague: National Gallery in Prague, 1998), 123–24.

42. Barbara Drake Boehm, "Charles IV. The Realm of Faith," in *Prague, the Crown of Bohemia 1347–1437*, ed. Barbara Drake Boehm and Jiri Fajt (New York, 2005), 23–33.

43. These are my observations gained from a visit Theresa Coletti and I made in May of 2012. For discussion of the castle, see V. Dvorakova et al., *Gothic Mural Painting in Bohemia and Moravia 1300–1378* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 41–65; Milada Studnickova, "Karlstein Castle as a Theological Metaphor," in

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Zoë Opačić, *Prague and Bohemia: Medieval Art, Architecture and Cultural Exchange in Central Europe*, *British Archaeological Association Transactions* 32 (2009): 168–82. See also Saul, *Richard II*, 347.

44. Barbara Drake Boehm and Jiri Fajt, "Wenceslas IV," in Boehm, *Prague, the Crown of Bohemia*, 91–103; Richard Tuck, "Richard II and the House of Luxemburg," in *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, ed. Anthony Goodman and James Gillespie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 205–29.

45. For Richard's ideas about himself, see Saul, *Richard II*, 346–65. See particularly 346–48 for Saul's discussion of Gervase Mathew's argument about the importance of Prague to Richard. Like Amanda Simpson in *The Connections Between English and Bohemian Painting during the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Garland, 1984), Saul sees Bohemian influence as less important than French.

46. Michael Bennett, "*Mandeville's Travels* and the Anglo-French Moment," *Medium Ævum* 75 (2006): 272–92.

47. See F. D. Blackley, "Isabelle of France, Queen of England 1308–58, and the Late Medieval Cult of the Dead," *Canadian Journal of History* 15 (1980): 23–49; Edward A. Bond, "Notices of the Last Days of Isabella, Queen of Edward II," *Archaeologia* 35 (1854): 453–69; Martha Carlin, "Holy Trinity Minories: Abbey of St. Clare, 1293/94–1539," unpublished manuscript, Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 1987; Loveday Lewes Gee, *Women, Art and Patronage from Henry III to Edward III, 1216–1377* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2002), 17, 83, 98–114; H. Jenkinson, "Mary de Sancto Paulo, Foundress of Pembroke College, Cambridge," *Archaeologia*, 2nd series, 16 (1915): 401–46; Niamh Pattwell, "Reinterpreting the Later Life of Isabelle of France (c. 1295–1358)," in *Transmission and Generation in Medieval and Renaissance Literature: Essays in Honour of John Scattergood*, ed. Karen Hodder and Brendan O'Connell (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012), 78–88; Staley, *Languages of Power*, 215–17, 223–24; Francis A. Underhill, "By Their Works Ye Shall Know Them: Elizabeth de Burgh and Clare College, Walsingham Friary, Ballinrobe," in *The Worlds of Medieval Women: Creativity, Influence, and Imagination* (Vol. 2, Literary and Historical Perspectives of the Middle Ages.), ed. Constance H. Berman, Charles W. Connell, and Judith Rice Rothschild (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1985), 86–96; Frances Underhill, *For Her Good Estate: The Life of Elizabeth de Burgh* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Jennifer C. Ward, "Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare," in *Medieval London Widows*, ed. Caroline M. Barron and Anne F. Sutton (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), 29–45; Jennifer Ward, ed. and trans., *Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare (1295–1360): Household and Other Records*, Suffolk Records Society, 57 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2014).

48. For an elaboration, see my essay, "Richard Maidstone and Psalms of Lordship," in *The Psalms and Middle English Literature*, ed. Tamara Atkin and Francis Leneghan (forthcoming, Boydell and Brewer).

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49. For Anne's command of languages, see Saul, *Richard II*, 455.

50. Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England*, 102, suggests that Joan may have prompted Anne to ask for a general pardon for those involved in the rising.

51. For my speculations about John of Gaunt as literary patron, see *Languages of Power*, 165–96.

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CHAPTER 6

Royal Biography as Reliquary

Christine de Pizan's *Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*

Nadia Margolis

By now well known to modernists and medievalists alike as a pioneering medieval woman poet, moralist, and polemicist, Christine de Pizan (1364/65–c. 1430) has found greatest modern renown for her *Livre de la Cité des dames* (*Book of the City of Ladies*, 1404–5). But equally extraordinary is her biography of her adoptive country's esteemed monarch, Charles V (1338–80), the *Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V* (*Book of the Deeds and Good Practices of King Charles V the Wise*) of 1404.[1] A rare official biography of a king authored by a woman, it was Christine's first of many prose treatises out of a total oeuvre of some forty-three titles in verse, prose, or *prosimetrum*. As Christine tells us in her opening chapter, the late king's brother, Duke Philip the Bold of Burgundy, commissioned Christine specifically because of her rousing homage to the king as ideal ruler in her verse narrative *Livre du Chemin de lonc estude* (*Book of the Path of Long Study*, 1402–3) and her proven talent for writing a special kind of moralized history, albeit in verse, as exemplified in her 24,000-verse *Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune* (*Book of Fortune's Transformation*), which she had given Philip as *étrennes*, or official New Year's gift (1403). Because the duke would die before *Charles V*'s completion late in 1404, Christine would present a deluxe copy to his son and successor, John the Fearless, soon thereafter (see fig. 6.1).[2]

As with most of her writings, Christine experimented both subtly and daringly in *Charles V*, apparently undaunted by its aura of official mandate from the most powerful man in France. This essay attempts to show how

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Fig. 6.1. Opening page of the earliest presentation ms. of Christine's *Charles V*: Paris, BnF fr. 10153, fol. 2r. Its particular scribal hands, with their text framed by *fantaisie*-frilled yet sharply defined justification and initials, exemplify the style of Christine's atelier. (© Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.)

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her approach to royal biography rendered it something more than a distinctive "mirror for the prince."[3] By transforming chronicle materials, principally the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, a vast chronicle history encompassing the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, manuals such as Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* (*The Governance of Princes*), and other learned sources, such as her personal connections at court, Christine wove together a quasi-biography in which Charles's life story functions as sole *exemplum* of ideal kingship, with the equally original combined purpose of teaching as well as praising.[4] Her approach differed from earlier princely mirrors—including her own *Epistre Othea*—in that it offered practical and ethical advice by creating multiple exempla drawn from myth and history to illustrate proper conduct and decision-making.[5] She thus more than memorialized the king; she rendered her book, and her persona, what Pierre Nora might have labeled a *lieu de mémoire* ("realm of memory") by inscribing her individual memory incarnating him within official French history, France's "national memory," in Lori Walters's words.[6]

THE EXEMPLARY BIOGRAPHY AS SACRED OBJECT: MEMORY AND REVERENCE

Christine objectified and exalted Charles's virtues—those making him a great king, principally his noble heart, chivalry, and wisdom—by showcasing them while *en*casing them within a special rhetorical and didactic structure and imagery to imprint them in the reader's memory. Her prose thus functions much in the way that visually remarkable reliquaries preserve body parts of saints in order to encourage contemplation and emulation of the holy lives of these martyrs. Ernst Kantorowicz's classic exploration of the concept of the king's two bodies—one personal-mortal, the other incarnating the kingdom itself—shows this image as calculatedly derived from the *corpus naturale-corpus mysticum* designating the body of Christ and its relationship to the Church. Christine's literary effigy of Charles as ideal sovereign is likewise mystically tinged with key Christ-like traits, which enhance the king's sacrosanct allure as divine *corpus mysticum* projected onto earth as body politic.[7] Moreover, as Caroline Bynum has observed in her more general discussions of the intersections of gender and the human body, Christine first *fragments* her subject in body and deed so as to *redeem* him,

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and in turn legitimize and *consolidate* all of French royalty and kingship, so severely menaced at this time by English succession claims.[8]

Despite its outwardly pedagogical trappings, *Charles V* is no easy read. Its densely woven, heteroclite prose and content, at first disparate and obscure, then systematically revelatory, parallel later medieval reliquaries' hidden-display strategies to discourage the idly curious and reward worthy readers for their diligent, careful reading.[9] This Christine accomplishes through a sort of thematic layering, resembling the structure of a reliquary as first protective and then edifying object. In explaining each of Charles's three principal virtues and numerous related "sub-virtues," she reconstructs and preserves her ideal king through a series of discursive "coffers," one inside the other. These fall into three basic categories of rhetorical concretization and encasement: (1) her self-legitimation as historiographer chosen by a supreme earthly being (Philip) and, she hopes, God; (2) laudatory enumeration of the king's deeds, character, and virtue, crystallized by citing precedents, metaphor, and repetition; (3) humanistic merging of secular-pagan with Christian religious exaltation to guarantee his sanctity on earth as a model for other princes, and his eternity in heaven. Each "encasement" is in a sense "annealed" to the other by interrelated gloss or validation, in recurrent cycles, to preserve and display Charles's virtues as ideal ruler, and Christine's aptitude as his historian.

The notion of text-as-holy-object was already present in the minds of early hagiographers, whose transmission narratives often describe their texts as relics.[10] As for Christine's conscious patterning of her work as such, modern commentators have noted *Charles V*'s hagiographic and panegyric characteristics.[11] These may reflect much more than her political allegiance to and fond memories of the king, for Christine's hagiographic propensities were already surfacing in at least one other text. Chronologically speaking, she must have been working simultaneously on *Cité des Dames*, appearing a year after *Charles V*. Part III of *Cité* centers on the legends of female Christian martyrs, most fully St. Christine (not surprisingly), and unstintingly relates details of physical violence in their ordeals and God's punishment of their persecutors, as if to convey the sublime joy of bodily suffering for the Lord.[12] Her style of sanctifying through objectification also would have benefited from her apprenticeship as a virtuoso poet of *fin'amors*, a lyric mode sharing its thematics and imagery with mystical visionary writing, so that the courtly poetic veneration of objects belonging to one's beloved as

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a means of connection is replaced by no less intense protocols for uniting oneself with God and vice versa.[13]

Just as texts could function as holy objects, holy objects could function as texts. As demonstrated in Cynthia Hahn's work on medieval reliquaries, which often relies on literary terminology in defining the reliquaries' purpose, these objects prepare and teach the reader-viewer how to absorb their precious contents, along lines very similar to how Christine manipulates the reader of her *Charles V*.[14] Christine's most pertinent metaphor introduces her biography as an "envelope en or, en esmail ou drap de soie" ("envelope of gold, enamel or silk cloth") enclosing a "pierre precieuse, digne et fine et de grant chierté" ("highly precious, worthy and fine gemstone," *Charles V*, I.3). Christine, the astrologer's daughter, knew her way around lapidaries, as evidenced in other works.[15] Hahn and earlier scholars have found that gems and gold customarily decorating reliquaries became reliquaries in themselves, and then even synonymous with the relics. The gems' beauty emphasized the relics' precious, divinely luminous yet durable qualities, transcending their initial ugliness as old clothing remnants, bones, hairs, and even dried blood. The holy object's power of *reverentia* increased as the gemstone evolved from useful décor or container into a trope for the relic, and eventually into the entire saint.[16]

Christine may likewise be effecting a separation-then-slippage between object boundaries in *Charles V* for the same reason, causing her book to self-transform from useful princely manual to unique personal portrait—exclusively verbal, since, oddly enough, no manuscript of *Charles V* contains miniatures bearing the king's likeness or an author portrait, despite their presence in earlier royal biographies and Christine's excellent atelier for illuminating her other works—and finally to talisman embodying Charles as royal institution and saving spirit of France.[17] In III.49, again using metallic imagery from another angle, she affirms her work's value for princely education through its durability and dissemination. Citing Ovid, she declares that she has "made a work that neither fire nor iron can destroy,"[18] since through multiple copies and widespread scattering "into the wind" books like hers record "beautiful, exemplary legends" for the benefit of future princes that they may govern equally well. This rhetorical trope mimics early Christian commentators, who viewed the scattering of relics as dissemination without diminution.[19] Subjacently, Christine is proving once again, as she did in the *Mutacion*, that women can write history on a par with or better than men—

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hence Duke Philip's order—and now hagiography, another traditionally masculine genre even for lives of female saints. In this light, *Charles V* is also a new kind of woman's object.

EDUCATING THE PERFECT PRINCE IN IMPERFECT CIRCUMSTANCES

Because Christine dedicates *Charles V* exclusively to its patron rather than to its intended reader/pupil, scholars like Suzanne Solente have wondered why and for whose benefit Philip the Bold commissioned this work, aside from the impulse to revere his late brother. They conclude most logically that it envisioned Philip's grandnephew and Charles V's grandson, the Dauphin Louis de France, Duke of Guyenne, then aged seven, who was about to become Philip's grandson as well by marrying the latter's granddaughter, Marguerite (daughter of Philip's son, John the Fearless): a doubled bond promising Burgundy still greater influence over the monarchy.[20]

Louis was not alone in needing a sound chivalric education.[21] Fifteenth-century French nobility overall exhibited an alarming deficiency in this regard, requiring mass (re-)education, in Christine and other moralists' opinions, as a remedy to a widely perceived aristocratic decay. France's political integrity was simultaneously threatened from without by belligerent English claims to its throne since 1337, as the Hundred Years War staggered on, and potential civil war from within between Orleanists/Armagnacs and the Burgundians. These seeds of upheaval began to emerge after Charles V's death in 1380. His reform-minded son Charles VI had wrested power from his warring ducal uncles (Anjou, Berry, Burgundy) only to yield it back to them upon going mad in 1392. Duke Philip managed to restore order as regent but knew it would die with him, so that part of his program to guarantee France's lasting solidarity, beyond his reign, included reminding its ruling class of its responsibilities through education. Hence his appointment of Christine, a learned, loyal subject and proven author of didactic texts favoring his régime, as a sort of royal historiographer, despite her gender.

The Dauphin Louis's education was therefore all the more crucial in guaranteeing the savior-king France sorely needed. Unlike Louis IX, canonized by the Church even before his confessor Joinville's encomiastic *Histoire de Saint Louis*, Charles V had not been canonized, nor had he written his own manual for his successor.[22] Christine may accordingly have

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noticed that her princely mirror-cum-personal portrait required an additional sanctifying component, the above-noted third encasement, to ensure that her Valois king would match his Capetian precursor in popular affection and political loyalty. But she first needed to excite the emulative instincts of the Dauphin Louis, who precociously enjoyed finery, would commission illuminated religious texts,[23] and might thus be attracted to her introduction of *Charles V* as a "precious stone" enveloped in "gold, enamel or silk," just as the artisans of jewel-studded reliquaries hoped to rekindle piety within their wealthy patrons.

While innovatively structuring her entire manual around Charles as single real-life exemplum, laced with comparisons to ancient heroes and anecdotes from contemporaries or personal memory, Christine does adhere to the princely mirror tradition, as Daisy Delogu observes, by dividing her book into three parts. Yet she personalizes this convention by labeling each part according to her own ideal of kingly virtues: nobility, chivalry, and wisdom.[24] These virtues she extolled in earlier poetic works, whether in certain courtly ballades or more obvious narrative precursors like *Chemin de lonc estude*, another type of princely mirror, in verse, dedicated to Charles's brothers and his son, Charles VI.[25]

THE BIRTH OF AN HISTORIAN

Christine's framing of Charles V's physical and spiritual bodies begins in part I with an explicitly labeled prologue that is followed by two more prefacing its main topic, Charles's "noblece de courage" ("nobility of heart"). Here Christine retains the motif of orality—lips instead of hand/pen—for its spiritual effectiveness, while elsewhere stressing *Charles V*'s authority as a written text. The prologue (I.1) commences as a devotional prayer—"Sire Dieux, euvre mes levres, enlumine[s] ma pensée, et mon entendement esclaires à celle fin que m'ignorance n'encombre pas mes sens à expliquer les choses conceues en ma memoire" ("Lord God, open my lips, illuminate my thinking, that ignorance not encumber my ability to explain the things conceived within my memory")—as one would normally praise God in a Book of Hours, a more conventional example of a book as sacred object. This prayer, recalling Psalm 51:15, asks that God "open [her] lips" and illuminate her intelligence to enable her to praise Charles to the utmost, just as she would praise God himself.[26] This image of bodily opening, even birthing,

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also intricately underscores the reliquary aspect by a kind of oxymoron, as if Christine must open her mind and expressivity in order to extoll, encompass, and finally seal Charles's virtues, his mystical body, within this text.

When she does begin her biography (I.1–2), it is not with Charles's birth but with her own rebirth from poet to royal historiographer of this "nouvelle compilacion"—now in the prose style (*stille prosal*) following her classical-antique models: another legitimizing layer. Toward the end of the book (III. 63–68), she further elaborates on her choice of prose over poetry (here narrative fiction as well as lyric) because, according to the ancients, prose is more truthful by reason of its directness, devoid of poetry's reliance on allegories and other hermetic figures. Rather like Hahn's reliquarists, she instructs the reader in how she wishes to be read.[27] Even when using abstractions like virtue and the body politic, she appears to ask us to read literally, to guarantee our grasp of her "truth."

Here, then, is the essence of her first encasement, her book's own story of itself.[28] As in any good creation myth, light and dark, greatness and smallness compete as she, an avowedly fragile woman of feeble learning ("faiblesse de savoir"), emerges from the "tenebres d'ignorance" ("shadows of ignorance") to the "cler entendement" ("light of understanding") granted her by God to make her worthy of this "pleasant mission."[29] This light of understanding will translate into Charles's own radiance as exemplary king. The metaphor of encased, enhanced light brings to mind Hahn's assessment, summarizing Paulinus of Nola's twofold approach to the making of reliquaries: "by encasing them in order to create 'enhanced light' and to appreciate their origin in Christ; and 'renewing' older reliquaries and structures out of honor to their contents and their ultimate maker," which triggers a "dynamic which seeks to recharge the power of the relic for its audience."[30] Christine's numerous references to her own role, together with her descriptions of the king, reflect a similar purpose and cause us to interpret *Charles V*'s sanctifying monumentality even beyond the impressive assessments by Walters and Delogu, among others.[31]

When she recreates her actual meeting with Philip, which takes place before various other nobles with full pomp and ceremony, as he issued her his "commandement" to compose *Charles V*, and her humble acceptance (I.2), it is as if Christine-biographer had to be created and, in a sense, "crowned" before Charles V could be properly commemorated as ideal king. On a more practical level, I.3 then explains her use of sources, both learned and from reliable personal knowledge and memory. Her book's Trinitarian structure

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works both organizationally and symbolically—adding to later associations of Charles with Christ—to fashion a "veritable narracion" of the king's good qualities. Again, she prepares us for how to read Charles's life, as she does continuously throughout, as part of her reliquary-like encasement.[32]

Toward this end, she skillfully uses various ploys. One we might call the "seulette" ("lonely little woman") persona—a favorite since her genuinely self-consoling lyric days—now used to blindside potential (male) misogynistic detractors of her historiographical abilities by using their stereotype of women's inherent weakness and inferior intelligence against them, as in I.36, to reinforce Christine's status as chosen historian, first by Duke Philip and then by God. We later find her more aggressively defending herself in part II, chapter 18, against some foreseeable *redargus* ("counterattacks") on her motives and competence by unnamed, presumably male, rivals accusing her of using flattery with the royal family and "presumption" in attempting to write history and discuss such masculine topics as chivalry and history, all of which she deftly parries. In II.21, whose rubric purports to discuss how authors should write about chivalry, she continues the self-defense begun in chapter 18 by refuting accusations of merely parroting her sources. It is here that she introduces such striking metaphors as "le ventre de la memoire" ("the stomach of [collective] memory") and the more trenchant ones of architecture, masonry, and embroidery to illustrate her philosophy of composition as compilation arranged toward a specific intellectual purpose.[33] She does not need to create her own material, but rather should be judged on how competently she assembles these raw materials (II.21).[34]

This defense's distinction between craftsman (maker) and artist (autonomous creator) leads to Christine's most confident and subtle ploy, in which she modestly seems to pose as mere maker or "compiler" of her *matiere* ("material"), Charles's life, while actually functioning as autonomous author of this book, and thus of Charles's posterity. At the same time, she also promotes Charles as autonomous architect of the new chivalry and body politic of his kingdom. Her dual apotheosis of herself and Charles as architects (II.21) arises significantly at the organizational, though not structural, midpoint of the entire book.[35] Her architectural metaphor, especially when she describes her incorporation of older sources for illustrating Charles's virtues, reinforces the association with reliquaries when we consider that many reliquaries were fashioned as little house-like shrines of gold and jewels, often "remodeled" so as to protect and revere their sacred core more perfectly.[36]

Christine utilizes a final discernible tactic when inserting herself as real

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participant in Charles's life, as one of his many grateful subjects, for example at the end when she repeats how she considered it a privilege to commemorate Charles's virtues, since she and her family had been "nourished from his bread" (III.72). More generally, as her *Advision* (*Vision*) more openly attests, Charles's reign coincided with the happiest period in her life.[37]

THE KING FRAGMENTED, THEN RECONSTRUCTED, IN BODY AND DEED

As mentioned earlier, Christine organized her book around Charles's three principal virtues, or general categories of virtue: nobility of heart, chivalry, and wisdom. Each of these parts/categories is divided into at least thirty-six chapters (as in part I) focusing on a particular related "sub-virtue," with part III containing the most, fifty-two, to emphasize *sagece* as Charles's most salient trait. Two other qualities appear to pervade all of these: his prudence (esp. III.5–7) and love of order.

Charles's qualities are not only isolated by name and chapter divisions—usually highlighted all the more by scribal rubrication—but also by the mechanics of each part and even of individual chapters. After being so designated, the virtue is then illustrated by an anecdote from Christine's recollections and/or a chronicle source and/or by a comparable anecdote to a classical-antique or biblical analogue, such as Alexander, Xerxes, or Caesar, sometimes adding opinions from classical or early Christian thinkers, or by introducing a symbol, such as the chain representing chivalry's harmony and order (II.4), as if to seal by precedent or impressive object this virtue's meaning within the reader's memory. Less frequent but equally telling comparisons to medieval kings are limited to Charlemagne and Saint Louis, France's holiest rulers. In both classical-antique and Christian linkages with Charles, Christine is reassembling these culturally disparate, diachronic personages in conjunction with Charles's actual blood relatives (esp. II.11–17) to reconstruct the continuity of the Valois line from ancient roots, per Bynum's paradigm redeeming it, as the rightful ruling lineage for France. Also conforming to Bynum's paradigm will be Christine's reunification of all the parts, chapters, and virtues introduced at the beginning of the book by repeating key phrases, motifs, and terms at the end to produce a new, redeeming whole vision of Charles.

As an example of her technique, Christine begins part I's elucidation

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of Charles's first virtue by citing Aristotle and Ecclesiasticus 41:15, defining nobility of heart as "three motivations ending in one": aspiring toward lofty matters, loving virtue, and using wisdom and foresight in all affairs. She then shows that Charles's nobility of heart was also guaranteed by his Valois lineage, traceable, following the *Grandes Chroniques*, to the noble Trojans (I.5). She compares Charles's birth and infancy with those of Moses and Christ (I.6), portending what I have labeled above as her third encasement—but not his adolescence. For this phase of his life she departs markedly from her usual *laudatio* by describing his "jeunesce" instead as problematic (I.7).[38] She blames Charles's youthful excesses on inadequate discipline from his governors and tutors and inserts an excursus on the need for especially careful discipline in princely education (I.8),[39] an example of her self-affirmation as worthy royal preceptor inextricably intertwined with Charles's life. Then, in the next chapter, as though transformed by Christine's words, the young Charles is shown, on his coronation (1364) at age twenty-seven, following the "rule of virtue," which Christine further glosses by references to Aristotle's *Ethics* as assimilated in Henri de Gauchi's translation of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*. She has thus transformed one of Charles's rare flaws into a virtue, just as we witnessed her doing with herself as author. But this depiction of him as an ideal conglomeration of attributes and exploits, despite his supposedly wild youth, whets our desire to read more about him as a flesh-and-blood person.

Such a portrait appears in I.17, depicting his "physiognomy" (*fizonomie, phinozomie*) and "body" (*corpulance*). She begins straightforwardly enough, seeming to rely on her personal memories of him by describing his well-formed body, although she mainly focuses on his head, noting such traits heralding his intelligence and charisma as a high forehead, well-set, arresting brown eyes, and so forth. She downplays his thinness and pallor—signs of weakness—by ascribing these to the accident of youthful illness and not inherent defect. Her verbal description of his face and body is faithful to the many visual portraits of him.[40]

But when she describes his "phinozomie" (as opposed to his face), his bearing and movements entail more idealizing, arbitrary adjectives—"sage, attrempé et rassise à toute heure" ("always wise, temperate and calm")—while his voice carries a "pleasing" tone and his "beautiful" discursive style is well-ordered and moderate, in keeping with the rest of him. Through such idealizing, this chapter ends up offering more of a moral portrait than a real physical likeness. Here we must consider, as does Stephen Perkin-

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son, the fourteenth-century belief in physiognomic analysis for reading the depths of human character, in assessing her portrait of Charles in relation to her source, a long-evolving mirror for princes titled the *Secret des secrez* (*Secret of Secrets*, 10C–16C), based on a fictitious letter of advice to Alexander from his mentor Aristotle.[41] Those passages depicting everyday details of Charles's life, such as his home life with the queen (I.18, 20), minutely described excursions on horseback (I.18), finances (I.19), and child-rearing (I.21), function mainly to illustrate the aforementioned virtues, as well as his keen sense of order.

Christine privileges the moral over the physical, conventional, personal portrait because, as head of the body politic, Charles's identifiable traits are his virtues and his body parts—for our purposes, his relics—reflecting those virtues. She similarly fragments, then reassembles and magnifies, Charles by the same isolating-encapsulating through glossing-monumentalizing process in the other two parts, as she demonstrates his innovatively practical approach to chivalry (part II) and cultivation of wisdom in diplomacy and governing (part III). Since the *Grandes chroniques*, which Charles supervised anyway, has already recorded his military campaigns and related events quite comprehensively, she was free to pursue her own more metonymic or metaphoric paradigm of exemplary "teaching moments" highlighting the king's reign.

One type of example, her definition of chivalry in II.4, is strikingly germane to reliquaries, when she, paraphrasing the Roman historian Vegetius, sets forth the ideal knight's duty to protect all social classes, from princes to clergy to *menu peuple*, by committing "something as precious as his life, his blood, his arms and his assets, for it was agreed that in recompense for spilled blood one would bring honor and respect to knights everywhere [and that, to repay their sacrifice] it was fitting that . . . fine jewelry and beautiful metalwork set off in gold and precious stones were owed them." Another example uses the body-politic metaphor in praising Bertrand Du Guesclin as Charles's right hand in providing France's sole victorious phase in the Hundred Years War for that century (II.6–10, 19–20, 22–26). Du Guesclin thus contributes toward making Charles himself a "vrai chevalereux" ("perfect knight," II.39), even though Charles's (and Christine's) new chivalry was mainly based on enlightened peacemaking rather than war.[42] Another kind of example, in part III, involves zooming in and lingering for fifteen chapters on one event: the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV's visit as the supreme moment for all of the French monarch's virtues, from lavish hospital-

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ity to shrewd negotiation (III. 33–48). Delogu's analysis here aptly captures Christine's characterization of Charles as architect or artist (III.11) to defend his absolutism subtly and efficiently on multiple levels. His innate sense of order, form and structure cause him to control his barons and expel the marauding Grandes Compagnies of mercenaries. This predilection also motivates his calculated patronage of the University of Paris, and commission of learned translations, arts and crafts. Most literally in her own scheme, Christine cites his direction of vital public works projects for improving the kingdom's infrastructure.[43]

Not all of his policies were easily defensible, notably his handling of the Great Schism, which Christine manages to spin favorably (III. 51–62).[44] This she manages in part by inserting a chapter on a foiled plot to poison him, perhaps to win sympathy for him without inciting trouble by naming the plot's instigator, Charles the Bad (III.52).[45] Just as Christine prudently rewrote Charles's fragile body, she also strengthened his body politic.

SANCTIFYING THE KING

Having already observed traces of this third encasement in her opening and closing prayers, her likening of Charles's birth and infancy to those of Moses and Christ (I.6) and similar comparisons, we now arrive at Christine's highest accolade for her king and completion of her reliquary: his quasi-canonization. To the classical-antique paragons typically found in other mirrors, Christine links Charles's sincere Christian piety as an equally essential trait, in keeping with the new humanistic values of her milieu.

She further crystallizes her message (III.69) by repeating Charles's three virtues (nobility, chivalry, wisdom), assuming the humbler tone of her preface, again contrasting her own limited capacities with the "boundless stream" of her topic's magnitude. Her rhetoric then becomes more grandiose in exalting the king's *bonnes meurs* for all eternity, encapsulating them as a sort of talisman for all mortals to fend off future villainy, and to guarantee his soul's receiving eternal glory in heaven. Beyond didactic strategy, Christine is setting the eschatological stage for Charles's final act, his "bonne mort" (exemplary death), presaged by that of the valiant Du Guesclin shortly before (III.70). Christine relates the king's last moments via his own highly eloquent speeches, reproduced in direct discourse from an anonymous Latin eyewitness source,[46] on the faults and glories of his reign, then records him

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confessing his sins, amidst his château at Beauté's splendor, and the solemnity of his last rites, as he dies in the arms of Bureau de la Rivière, his chamberlain and confidant, while his subjects weep (III.71).

In perfect symmetry, the book does not end with Charles's death, any more than it began with his birth.[47] This Christine underscores inadvertently by reporting his death date incorrectly, following her Latin source.[48] Rather, as noted above, the concluding chapter (III.72) consists in Christine's final self-validation as author of this reliquary and book by offering her prayer, sealed by the appropriate words *Amen*, also recalling resemblance to a breviary, and *Explicit* to close her secular book. Her final prayer, to the Holy Trinity, commends Charles's soul and those of his brothers (including Duke Philip) and ancestors into Paradise—another means of gloriously giving closure to the initial chapters on Philip's "planting the seed" of this book, and on Charles's pedigree and birth.

But more tangible than our three theoretical encasements and related evidence in representing *Charles V* as reliquary is the lack of any description of the king's tombs, in contrast, for example, to Christine's careful reportage of the fate of the heart, entrails, and body of his predeceased queen, Jeanne de Bourbon (III.50). This despite the historical fact that Charles's body was interred next to Jeanne's at St. Denis, his heart was buried at Rouen, his entrails at Maubuisson Abbey.[49]

In the end Christine's book promulgates a salvific message: to show that Charles's moral excellence is no fortunate fluke, but was instead portended by his ancient counterparts and ancestry, and thus remains a promise not only of survival but also of redemption and future greatness for France after the Hundred Years War, as God's chosen kingdom.[50] The reader's success at understanding and implementing the lessons of Charles's life, which we might equate with a pilgrimage, completes the book's function as reliquary.

Notes

1. My heartfelt thanks to Nancy Bradbury and Jenny Adams for their suggestions in reading and editing earlier drafts of this essay. All citations from this text, henceforth *Charles V*, are from the edition by Suzanne Solente, *Le Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*, 2 vols., Société de l'Histoire de France, 437, 444 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1936–40). See also the modern French translation by Eric Hicks and Thérèse Moreau, *Le Livre des Faits et Bonnes Mœurs du roy Charles*

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V le Sage, série "Moyen Age" (Paris: Stock, 1997). For ease of consultation of either, my parenthetic references give the part/book number (capitalized Roman numeral) followed by a full stop and the chapter number (Arabic). For editions and translations of other works by Christine mentioned in passing, see Angus J. Kennedy, *Christine de Pizan: A Bibliographical Guide*, Research Bibliographies and Checklists (London: Grant & Cutler, 1984); *Supplement 1* (London: Grant & Cutler, 1994); *Supplement 2* (Woodbridge, UK, and New York: Tamesis/ Boydell & Brewer, 2004).

2. Now Paris, BnF fr. 10153 (fig. 6.1 depicts fol. 2r), for which, along with another manuscript, Christine was paid 100 écus. For this ms.'s full description and importance in Christine's total scriptorial œuvre, see Gilbert Ouy, Christine Reno, and Inès Villela-Petit, *Album Christine de Pizan*, Texte, Codex & Contexte, 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 489–95. The three other contemporary, serial copies were probably given to Charles VI, Louis of Orléans, and Louis de Bourbon, the king's brother-in-law. Another copy, now lost, she presented to Philip's brother, John, duke of Berry, recorded as *étrennes* ("New Year's gift") in 1405. See Gilbert Ouy and Christine Reno, "Manuscrits copiés en série: les quatre témoins contemporains du *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V^e^ d'icelluy nom*," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales* 16 (2008): 239–52 at 240. For the sociopolitical value of these *étrennes*, see Brigitte Buettner, "Past Presents: New Year's Gifts at the Valois Courts, ca. 1400," *Art Bulletin* 83 (2001): 598–625 and Stephen Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 238–47.

3. Christine would pen at least six works, including *Chemin*, and *Charles V*, now considered, in part or wholly, mirrors for princes: *Advision* (*Vision*); *Epistre Othea* (*Epistle of Othea* [see n. 11 below]), *Corps de Policie* (*Body Politic*), and *Livre de Paix* (*Book of Peace*). See especially: Hicks and Moreau, "Introduction," in *Livre des Faits*, 9–39; Lori Walters, "Christine de Pizan comme biographe royal," translated by Laurence Costa, in *L'écriture du passé au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance: Entre autorité et invention*, ed. Pierre Chastang and Michel Zimmermann (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2007), 223–36.

4. Daisy Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign: The Rise of the French Vernacular Royal Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 155–57. For all of Christine's sources for *Charles V*, see Solente, *Livre des Fais*, 1: xxxii–lxxxviii.

5. *L'Epistre que Othea la deesse envoya a Hector de Troye* (*The Epistle that the Goddess Othea Sent to Hector of Troy*, 1400–1). Its innovation lay instead in its multimedia interpolation in epistolary form of one hundred glossed and allegorized mythological stories as exempla to educate the nobility, including her son Jean, future royal notary.

6. "Christine de Pizan, France's Memorialist: Persona, Performance, Memory," *Journal of European Studies* 35.1 (2005): 29–45 at 29. Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–92).

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7. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

8. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), esp. 183–85.

9. Cynthia Hahn, "What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?," *Numen* 57 (2010): 284–316 at 305–8. http://spectrum.huji.ac.il/PDF/Hahn_what%20do%20reliquaries%20do%20for%20relics.pdf (last accessed 7 September 2015).

10. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans, eds., *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory 1280–1520* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1999), 7, also cited in Lori Walters, "Christine de Pizan as Translator and Voice of the Body Politic," in *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook*, ed. Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady (New York: Routledge, 2003), 25–41 at 41n55.

11. As "panegyric": see, e.g., Hicks and Moreau, trans., *Livre des Faits*, 16; Tracy Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight for France* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2014), 107. As "hagiography": e.g., Delogu, *Theorizing*, 182–83; also 154, 244n7.

12. In 1410, her *Lamentacion sur les maux de la France* (*Lamentation on France's Ills*), *Epistre de la Prison de Vie humaine* (*Epistle on the Prison of Human Life*, 1416–18), and *Heures de contemplacion sur la Passion de Nostre Seigneur* (*Hours of Contemplation on Our Lord's Passion*, 1420–29) all evoke extreme bodily suffering in a variety of contexts.

13. See, e.g., Marguerite Porete's expressed desire, using courtly love motifs, for union with God through meditative self-annihilation in her *Mirouer des simples ames* (1306). For Christine's use of reverential, secretive objects in her love poetry, see, e.g., her *Jeux a vendre*, most pertinently no. 70, involving an *escrinet* ("coffer") enclosing her name in its anagram and that of her beloved.

14. Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty: Issues in the Making and Meaning of Reliquaries, 400–circa 1204* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2012); "What Do Reliquaries."

15. For extended precious stone metaphors see her *Mutacion de Fortune* (vv. 524–769) and *Advision Cristine* (III.27.72–81). A quick search of the Christine de Pizan Database (http://www.christine.llc.ed.ac.uk/conc2_p.htm) under just the words *pierre(s)* (= gemstone or rock) and *pierrerie* (gemstones) alone (one could go on to search individual stones by name) provides a more complete list for most of Christine's works, while showing *Mutacion* and *Charles V* to contain their greatest frequency.

16. *Reverentia*, connoting the relic-viewer's desired response, as used by Hahn, crediting Peter Brown, "What Do Reliquaries," esp. 284, 301. For the precious mate-

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riality of reliquaries, see ibid., 309–11; Joan Evans, *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), esp. 134–35.

17. The four mss. of *Charles V*, handsomely executed under Christine's supervision, contain no miniatures, portrait or otherwise (Ouy and Reno, "Manuscrits copies," 241–43, 250–51). For author-subject portraits in Einhard's *Vita Karoli Magni* (*Life of Charlemagne*) and the *Grandes Chroniques* covering Louis IX's and Charles V's reigns, see Walters, "Christine biographe royal," 225–28. For portraits of Charles V, see Perkinson, *Likeness*; Claire Richter Sherman, *The Portraits of Charles V of France (1338–1380)* (New York: College Art Association of American/New York University Press, 1969); and Didier Lechat, "L'art du portrait dans *Charles V*," in *Contexts and Continuities: Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan (Glasgow 21–27 July 2000) published in honour of Liliane Dulac*, ed. Angus J. Kennedy with Rosalind Brown-Grant, James C. Laidlaw, and Catherine M. Müller, 2:515–29 (Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press, 2002).

18. Solente, *Livre des Fais*, 2:132, identifies it as *Metamorphoses*, 15:871–72; but we note Christine omits "nec Jovis ira" ("not by Jove's anger").

19. See, e.g., Paulinus of Nola's "like life-giving seeds" simile evoking the role of scattered sacred ashes (*Carmina*, 19:353–62), cited in John Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of the Saints in the Early Christian West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 20.

20. Solente, *Livre des Fais*, 1:xxviii–xxix. See also Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight*, 107–9.

21. Louis de Guyenne (1397–1415), then only seven, because of his father Charles VI's madness, was already being scrutinized as future king. Despite efforts by notable mentors, Louis, though gifted, supposedly became fat and dissolute, eliciting Christine's continued admonitions. See Angus J. Kennedy, "The Education of a Good Prince: Repetition and Variation in Christine de Pizan's *Livre du Corps de Policie* and *Livre de Paix*," in *"Contez me tout": mélanges de langue et littérature médiévales offerts à Herman Braet*, ed. Catherine Bel, Pascale Dumont, and Frank Willaert (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), 507–25.

22. Louis IX (d. 1270, canonized 1297) composed his *Enseignements* (*Teachings*) for his son the future Philippe le Bel. For Joinville's life of Louis IX as milestone in the vernacular royal-biography tradition leading to *Charles V*, see Delogu, *Theorizing*, 22–57.

23. See Émilie Lebailly, "Le Dauphin Louis, duc de Guyenne, et les arts précieux (1409–1415)," *Bulletin Monumental* 163.4 (2005): 357–74, http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/bulmo_0007-473x_2005_num_163_4_1578 (last accessed September 7, 2015).

24. Delogu, *Theorizing*, 156.

25. Tracy Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight*, 107, sees *Charles V* as a re-

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sponse to the *Chemin*, which contains a debate among four allegorical figures, three of them Charles's virtues.

26. Walters, "Christine as Translator," 33, relates the "lips" of praise more specifically to the thematics of the Hours of the Virgin, thus making Christine a "second Mary."

27. Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 40, on the *Epistre Othea*: unlike her contemporaries, even when Christine speaks through allegories and fables, she is unambiguous about how she expects to be read.

28. See Delogu, *Theorizing*, 181; Walters, "Christine as Translator," esp. 33–37.

29. In *Cité des Dames*, I.7, Christine again tells the story of her book, as she rises from the darkness of her despair at predominantly male misogyny to the light of wisdom offered her by the Three Virtues sent by God to enable her to compose this work.

30. Hahn, "What Do Reliquaries," 292.

31. As attested by this study's numerous references to them, Walters and Delogu have done major pioneering analyses of Christine's historiographical technique in *Charles V*, while noting the significance of the hagiographical and/or religious component of the king's persona as ideal sovereign (Delogu) and Christine's authority to memorialize it, with her own mystical body, particularly her "tongue," as "living relic" (Walters, "Christine as Translator," 36). Equally important, more secular in textual approach, is Claire Le Ninan, *Le Sage Roi et la clergesse: l'écriture politique dans l'œuvre de Christine de Pizan*, Études christiniennes, 12 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2013).

32. Given the nature of this princely mirror/exemplary life, Christine's goals and Charles's are often so closely intertwined that we cannot always separate them. This section will therefore limit itself to key phases in her self-representation as "reliquizer" of Charles's life.

33. She would magnify the masonry metaphor to reconstruct women's history in *Cité des Dames* (1404–5).

34. For more on the architect/ure metaphor, see Delogu, *Theorizing*, 163–74.

35. Delogu, *Theorizing*, 248n37. See also Michael Richarz, "Prudence and Wisdom in Christine de Pizan's *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*," in *Healing the Body Politic: The Political Thought of Christine de Pizan*, ed. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews, Disputatio, 7 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 99–116 at 105–7.

36. Hahn, "What Do Reliquaries," esp. 292.

37. See III.4.53–54: "Moult nous fut Fortune favourable le temps durant de la vie du sus dit bon saige roy Charles . . ." cited from *Le livre de l'advision Cristine*, ed. Christine Reno and Liliane Dulac. Études christiniennes, 4 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001), 97.

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38. For more on contemporary criticism of the youthful Charles, see Adams, *Christine de Pizan and the Fight*, 108–9.

39. Christine previously inveighed against the inadequate education of princes and its consequences in her *Mutacion de Fortune*, III.ix, vv. 5761–5862, and later in the *Corps de Policie* and *Livre de Paix*.

40. Although, as Solente affirms (*Livre des Fais*, 1:49n1), her prose description closely resembles the visual portraits found in contemporary manuscripts and sculpture, these latter, especially Jean Bondol's, were more naturalistic. See Sherman, *The Portraits of Charles V of France (1338–1380)*, and Perkinson, *Likeness*, 138–39, 149–52, 208–14, 247–53, etc.

41. *Likeness*, 148–49. Also, 152: her emphasis on Charles's face was probably influenced by the *Livre des echez amoureux moralisés* by Charles's physician, Evrart de Conty. See also Lechat, "L'art du portrait dans *Charles V*," esp. 517–20.

42. Forhan, *The Political Theory of Christine de Pizan* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 143; Delogu, *Theorizing*, 249n45; Nadia Margolis, "Christine de Pizan: The Poetess as Historian," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 47 (1986): 361–75 at 372.

43. See Delogu, *Theorizing*, 179, and, generally, Françoise Autrand, *Charles V le Sage* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

44. See Richarz, "Prudence and Wisdom," 114–16. Simply put, Charles's active support of the French pope proved a menace and hindered resolution of this crisis, as Christine has him vaguely suspect on his deathbed (III. 70).

45. See Solente, *Livre des Fais*, 2:139n2.

46. On the *Relation latine*, BnF ms. lat. 8299, see Sherman, *Portraits*, 12, and Solente, *Livre des Fais*, 1:lvi–lx.

47. Delogu, *Theorizing*, 181–82.

48. See Solente, *Livre des Fais*, 1:lx.

49. Sherman, *Portraits*, 66.

50. Christine would rejoice in France's divine election through victory in her last work, *Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc* (*Song of Joan of Arc*, 1429, e.g., stanzas 39–41, 45–47, 51–58, 61), as would Joan herself in her trial testimony, e.g., March 1, 1431.

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CHAPTER 7

A Gift, a Mirror, a Memorial
The Psalter-Hours of Mary de Bohun

Jill C. Havens

On the verso side of folio 181 in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4. 4, the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, appears a full-page miniature of an enthroned Virgin Mary with the Christ child on her lap (fig. 7.1).[1] In the lower left-hand corner, the illustrator has depicted a female patron saint, identified by most as Mary Magdalene, and a young woman adoring the Virgin and Child.[2] The young woman is presented as an unmarried virgin with her long, blonde hair unbound and uncovered, flowing over her shoulders and down her back. The clothes she wears reflect her aristocratic status: her tight-fitting *cotehardie* bears the arms of the royal family of England (before 1340), while her fur-lined, open-sided *surcote* bears the arms of the Bohun family, earls of Hereford, Essex, and Northampton.[3] The deep blue of her *surcote* matches the deep blue of the Virgin's overcloak, drawing the viewer's eyes naturally from the young lady up to the Virgin. The woman's hands are clasped, palms together, and both she and the woman behind her kneel in a position of penitent prayer. Unlike similar donor portraits in which the donor is separated from the holy figure by an architectural boundary, the young woman and the female saint are clearly part of the same sacred space inhabited by the Virgin and Child, suggesting an intimacy and closeness between the various holy figures and the donor.[4]

That intimacy extends to the very form of the psalter itself. A small and delicate volume, smaller than a modern trade paperback, the Bodleian Psalter-Hours was clearly intended for personal use.[5] It is small enough to be held comfortably in one's hands while sitting at a private altar; it could also be taken wherever the owner wished to use it, at Mass or in a private chamber. Opening its pages, the viewer is struck by the brilliant colors of

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Fig. 7.1. Donor portrait of Mary de Bohun with Mary Magdalene, the Virgin Mary and Christ-child in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4. 4, fol. 181v. (By permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.)

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red, blue, and gold. As the pages turn backwards or forwards, light falls upon the burnished gold illuminated miniatures, initials, and borders, drawing the eye to different parts of the page. The original binding has not survived, but it is likely that the manuscript had a leather or velvet binding and perhaps, given its small size, also a chemise binding like that seen in Rogier van der Weyden's painting of the Virgin reading a book now in the National Gallery in London. Though primarily used to protect a manuscript from dust and dirt, chemise bindings were of expensive cloth, luxurious to the touch, such as velvet or soft leather, and provide another way for the bearer of the book to draw attention to its luxury status.[6]

But who used this elegant book? Art historians have long speculated that the young woman in this portrait is in fact Mary de Bohun, daughter of Humphrey de Bohun, seventh Earl of Hereford.[7] Born around 1369, Mary de Bohun, one of two surviving female heirs to Humphrey de Bohun, was married to Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, in 1380 or 1381 when she was about eleven years old.[8] She died in 1394 in childbirth when she was twenty-five.[9] We know little about Mary's life except for the few documents in the household accounts of the Duchy of Lancaster in the Public Record Office; these typically mention her name in conjunction with the lands acquired from her inheritance.[10] Some of these documents offer more personal details, hinting to her love of music, her expensive taste in clothes, and her concern for her children's welfare.[11]

No one has produced a study focused specifically on Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4. 4, the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, and its relationship to Mary, most readers preferring to embed it in the larger context of the group of more than ten manuscripts commissioned and owned by the de Bohun family.[12] In *The Lichtenthal Psalter and the Manuscript Patronage of the Bohun Family*, Lucy Freeman Sandler spends some time discussing Mary and her relationship to Baden-Baden, Lichtenthal Abbey Archive MS 2, the Lichtenthal Psalter. But, as the title of her book clearly indicates, Sandler is necessarily more concerned with making a case for the Lichtenthal Psalter's identification as a newly discovered Bohun manuscript than with its relationship to its presumed owner, Mary de Bohun. She nevertheless provides an invaluable model for analyzing the manuscript's contents, pictorial program, and historical context, a necessary first step in an analysis of a manuscript like the Bodleian Psalter-Hours.[13]

A different, but fruitful, approach to exploring the relationship between books of hours or psalters and their owners is Alexa Sand's *Vision, Devotion,*

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and Self-Representation in Late Medieval Art. Though she provides a detailed examination of owner portraits only from 1200 to 1350, her observations about these portraits and their depiction of "the self in relation to the sacred" offer a valuable heuristic for interpreting the relationship between the owners represented and their manuscripts after 1350.[14] In these portraits, the owners become "both seeing subjects and visible objects."[15]

Looking back at fol. 181v, the portrait of Mary de Bohun captures what Sand calls an "unrepresentable experience," an imagined moment that never happened in the "real" world; yet preserved in ink, paint, and gold illumination on the vellum page of a manuscript, this imagined moment has become a tangible object in the "real" time of the young woman holding the manuscript in her hands.[16] Framed inside a rectangular border of foliate sprays and red and blue interlace with a burnished and elaborately textured gold background, the image resembles a panel painting or an enameled scene on the surface of an engraved gold reliquary, inviting the viewer not only to look but also to touch.[17]

The hands that touched this book were many, and while the Bodleian Psalter-Hours offers primarily a testimony to the life of Mary de Bohun, it also offers a window into the relationship between Mary and her mother, Joan Fitzalan. I will argue that this manuscript meant something different to each woman and became the physical embodiment of each woman's relationship with the other. To Mary's mother, it was a dynastic gift to her daughter before a royal marriage and a memorial to their family and to the women who preceded them; to Mary, it functioned as her own personal devotional mirror. For both of these women, the Bodleian Psalter-Hours is simultaneously a precious, personal devotional relic and a tangible, public symbol of their family, wealth, and privilege.

A DYNASTIC GIFT

In her study of the Lancastrian heraldry in several Bohun manuscripts, Sandler has suggested that Joan Fitzalan commissioned perhaps as many as four of the eleven surviving Bohun manuscripts to honor the marriage of her daughter Mary to Henry Bolingbroke.[18] Throughout the later Middle Ages, it was common practice for families to commission psalters in honor of the marriage of their children, and as Susan Bell Groag has uncovered, it was more specifically the "practice for mothers to commission books as

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wedding gifts for their daughters."[19] Stella Panayotova notes that such books would include not only texts, illuminated miniatures, and historiated initials, but the families being joined would commemorate such "dynastic alliances through ostentatious armorial displays."[20] It would also be fairly common, according to Panayotova, that the program of illustration would "allude to historical events, political figures, social changes, ideological controversies, intellectual developments, personal circumstances, and career moves" relevant to the families newly aligned.[21]

Given that Mary's marriage was fraught with a variety of expectations both social and physical, it would not seem surprising that the Bodleian Psalter-Hours would embody a mother's concern for her daughter. Born into a well-connected noble family and then married into royalty, Mary's life revolved around her duty to her own family to uphold its prominence and to continue its bloodline through heirs for her new family.

That Joan was acutely aware of the importance of her daughter's marriage into the royal family is suggested by an interesting episode mentioned in the *Chronicles* of Jean Froissart. After the death of their father Humphrey in 1373, Joan's daughters Eleanor and Mary became wards of King Edward III, who in turn placed them in the care of his youngest son, Thomas Woodstock.[22] Within the next year, Woodstock planned to marry the elder daughter, Eleanor, once she came of age; they were married around 1376 when Eleanor was ten years old.[23] The younger Mary remained under Woodstock's guidance. As Froissart tells us, Woodstock "took on himself the tutelage of his sister-in-law, and had her instructed in doctrine; for it was his intention she should be professed a nun of the order of St. Clare. . . ."[24] The story continues that John of Gaunt, "being a prudent and wise man," saw that the young heiress would make a very good match for his oldest surviving son, Henry Bolingbroke.[25] However, Gaunt waited until Woodstock was away in France in 1380 before acting. While Woodstock was out of the country, "the duke of Lancaster had the young lady conducted to Arundel castle . . . where the marriage was instantly consummated between her and Henry of Lancaster."[26] This marriage dashed any hopes Thomas had of acquiring the entire Bohun inheritance for himself and, according to Froissart, led to a considerable rift between the brothers.[27]

This story of Froissart's has been mainly used by historians, such as G. A. Holmes, Anthony Goodman, and Nigel Saul, to elicit information about the relationship between John of Gaunt and his temperamental younger brother, Thomas Woodstock.[28] Even Jennifer Ward, who translates this pas-

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sage in her collection of documents relating to noble and gentry women in medieval England, uses it only to demonstrate the extent to which marriage for these classes was about property and power, especially when "securing an heiress."[29]

Yet Froissart's account is also valuable for what it can tell us about the political intentions of Mary's mother, Joan Fitzalan.[30] The abduction of Mary was made possible by the aid of a woman Froissart refers to as "Lady Arundel," but whom historians now agree must be Mary's own mother, Joan Fitzalan, sister to Richard, Earl of Arundel.[31] Joan was present at the wedding held in Rochford Castle near Ludlow (not Arundel Castle as Froissart states), and John of Gaunt expressly placed Mary in Joan's care to remain with her at Gaunt's cost until Mary turned fourteen.[32] Of this "Lady Arundel," Froissart states that her involvement in the affair was "out of complaisance to the duke of Lancaster" and influenced by her desire "for the advancement of the young lady."[33]

Read this way, the story becomes more about maternal intentions than patrimonial debates. In reorienting Froissart's story, Sandler reads Joan as carefully calculating the future for her daughter. With her husband now dead, a very considerable inheritance and the future of her two young girls to protect, Joan would have been wise to align herself with Gaunt, the most powerful man in the kingdom.[34] Joan Fitzalan continued to be a constant Lancastrian ally and an "indispensable" supporter of her son-in-law, especially after he became king in 1399, some five years after the death her daughter.[35] Widowed in 1373, Joan remained unmarried until her death in 1419; as Jennifer Ward demonstrates, during those forty-six years she became actively involved in the local politics of Essex and was directly engaged in the management of her dower lands and those of her grandchildren while they were her wards.[36] As the sister and wife of great magnates, Joan was imminently aware of the status of her family; her involvement with her grandchildren and their great respect for her shows the value Joan placed on family, a family deeply involved in the ruling of England.[37] Though as a devout laywoman, Joan would be proud of a daughter who chose the cloistered life of a nun, she clearly saw the advantage of tying her family more closely through marriage to England's royal family.

The armorial images incorporated throughout the Bodleian Psalter-Hours further reinforce the idea that Joan saw the union of her daughter Mary to Henry Bolingbroke as an opportunity to project, as Sandler puts it, "her dynastic vision."[38] Joan also wanted to remind Mary of her obligation

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to pray not only for the living but also for the past members of her family's dynasty, which included her recently deceased father.[39] Notably, the most elaborate heraldic display in the Bodleian Psalter-Hours occurs on fol. 169r around an illustration of the Last Judgment at the beginning of the Penitential Psalms, juxtaposing the arms of Bohun, Lancaster, Butler, and Courtenay with the scene of Christ in judgment above the dead summoned from their tombs (fig. 7.2). This is unusual for Bohun manuscripts; most typically include armorial displays on the Beatus page of psalters or the Matins page of books of hours.[40] Sandler has observed of the Lichtenthal Psalter that such armorial displays "proclaim the connection of all the Bohuns—past and present—with kings and princes, a view of the high estate of the family that commissioner and artist hoped to transmit to those who would inherit these books in the future."[41]

If the Bodleian Psalter-Hours served as a reminder to Mary and her heirs of their family's noble alliances and its dynastic role in England's past, they were also deeply personal items, their contents reflecting the individual devotional needs of their owners.[42] Although most psalters and books of hours were, by the mid-fourteenth century, illustrated using a range of sources for the visual narrative in their miniatures and historiated initials, the collection of Bohun manuscripts are unique in that they stemmed from a close collaboration between the Bohun patrons and the artists, two of whom have been identified as John de Teye and Henry Hood.[43] Teye and Hood were Austin friars given special dispensation to live at the family's castle at Pleshey in Essex, and, based on the mention of Teye in the will of Humphrey, the sixth Earl of Hereford and Essex, Sandler has suggested that they were probably members of the earl's *familia*, or household.[44] This situation seems to have been highly unusual, especially by the late fourteenth century, but such a close relationship is reflected in the uniqueness of each of the Bohun manuscripts, as Sandler has shown in several of her articles on Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1826; London, British Library MS Egerton 3277, and Oxford, Exeter College MS 47, all seemingly custom-made for the individuals for whom they were intended.[45]

Sandler has yet to apply the same sort of analysis to the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, but looking closely at this manuscript, it seems clear that Joan, in her commissioning of this book, created a similarly unique manuscript by ordering illustrations that would impress upon her young daughter the importance of children, family, and religious devotion. Sandler explores these themes in her discussion of the pictorial program in another manuscript

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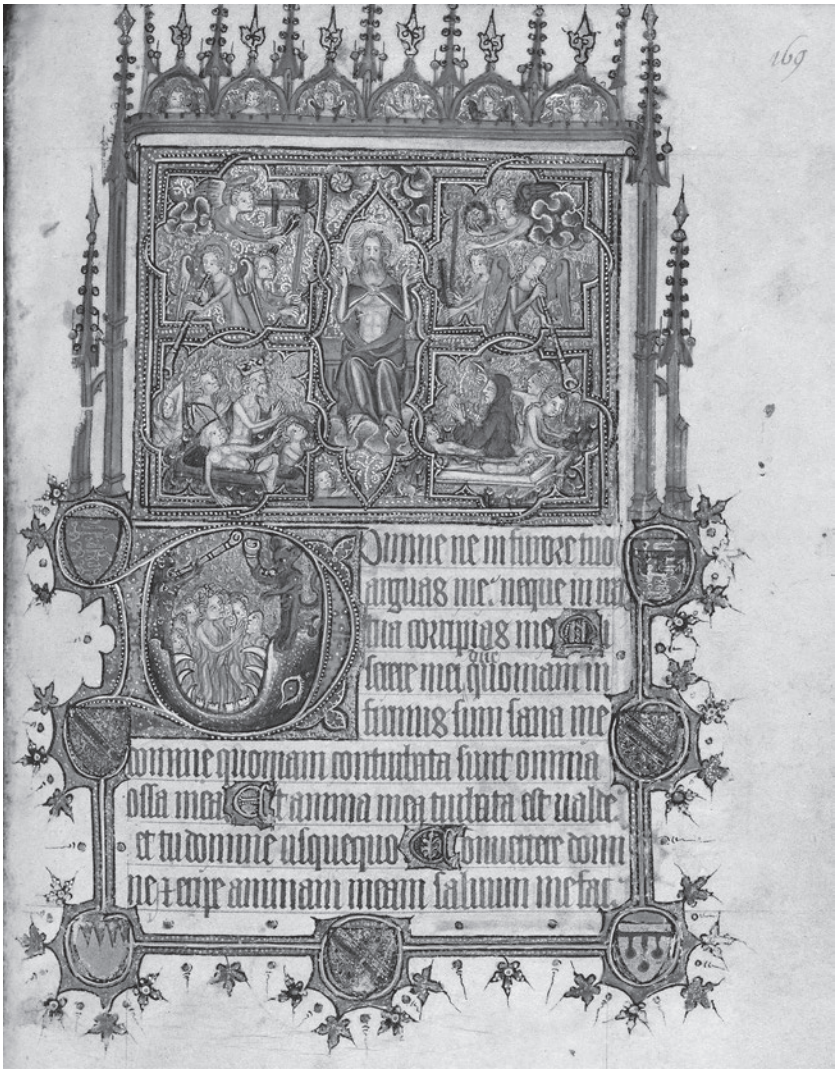

Fig. 7.2. Opening page of the Penitential Psalms depicting Christ in judgment with the arms of Bohun, Lancaster, Butler, and Courtenay incorporated into border decoration in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4. 4, fol. 169r. (By permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.)

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for Mary, the Lichtenthal Psalter, arguing that the Old Testament scenes from Creation to Moses emphasize images of women who are "young, beautiful, fruitful, and obedient to their husbands."[46] The artist of the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, John de Teye, also seems to focus on images of childbirth and dutiful wives.[47] All of the major divisions at Psalms 1, 26, 38, 51, 52, 68, 80, 97, 101, 109, 119, and 136 are illustrated with a half-page miniature divided into four narrative scenes at the top of the page and a historiated initial that begins the text of the Psalm below.[48] The miniatures for Psalms 38, 80, 97, 101, 109, 119, and 136 are all dominated by images of wives and children, in particular the Old Testament women Eve, Sara, Hagar, Rebecca, and the unnamed wife of Lot. Several births are also illustrated: at Psalm 38, the miniature includes a scene of Eve in her bed breastfeeding the younger Abel (fol. 40r). The birth of Isaac is shown in the miniature for Psalm 97 (fol. 105r), and the birth of the twins Esau and Jacob is illustrated in the miniature for Psalm 119 (fol. 138r).

The theme of childbearing and motherhood also appears in other manuscripts possibly commissioned by Joan for the wedding of her daughter. A *Livret de Saintes*, now Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek MS Thott. 517.4°, contains the short, personalized collection of Anglo-Norman French saints' lives, specifically the stories of the death and assumption of the Virgin Mary, a unique version of the life of St. Margaret, and the life of Mary Magdalene.[49] Sandler points out in her analysis of the manuscript that this collection of saints' lives, especially the invocation to St. Margaret at the end of her legend to protect women in labor and their children from being "ill in body or in limb," would have "meant much" to Mary de Bohun; Mary suffered the death of her first child a few days after its birth when she was only twelve years old and gave birth to six more children before she died in childbirth at age twenty-five.[50] Unlike the psalters and books of hours in Latin, this smaller volume is in Anglo-Norman French and does not contain the vast pictorial narratives found in the larger books; this was a book Mary actually read. As Sandler describes, each legend begins with a historiated initial depicting iconic moments associated with these women: the assumptions of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene into Heaven, and Margaret bursting out of the dragon.[51] These images, like those in the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, reinforced Mary's role as a wife, mother, and devout Christian.

Although Joan likely intended the Bodleian Psalter-Hours as a constant and daily reminder for Mary of her obligations as a royal wife to be dutiful and fruitful, her choice to commission a portrait of her daughter as an

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unmarried virgin represents a significant departure from tradition. Married women in medieval art, especially in owner portraits, are consistently shown with their hair up in either a wimple or contemporary headdress.[52] It is very rare to see a female owner shown with uncovered and unbound hair. Yet Mary's hair flows loose and uncovered down her shoulders in the fashion acceptable for young, unmarried women in medieval iconography.[53]

If we were to consider Mary's portrait as a commemorative picture, this depiction of her as an unmarried virgin captures her at her most spiritually pure state before her marriage. Argues Sand of the role of portraits in manuscripts, "as a votive double of the devotional body, [this portrait] memorializes and reifies an ideal, unchanging state of being": a state of being she shares with her namesakes and patron saints, the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene.[54]

A SPIRITUAL MIRROR

To return to Friossart's story of Mary's marriage, we see some clues about her education: "She was also constantly attended by nuns from this convent who tutored her in matters of religion, continually blaming the married state. The young lady seemed inclined to their doctrine, and thought not of marriage."[55] While the emphasis on Mary's indoctrination against marriage is perhaps dramatic fiction, the suggestion that she had started religious training with the Minoresses provides some indication of the extent of her learning before her marriage. While it was very common for noble children to be educated in nunneries like the Minoresses outside Aldgate in London, young girls who were not going to take the veil typically left the nunnery between ten and fourteen years old.[56] At the age of eleven or twelve, Mary was at the very point when her family would have decided if she was to become a novice or a wife.

It is likely that Mary's tutoring at this time made her very familiar with the daily office and the various prayers and devotions that were an essential part of the religious life.[57] The nuns at the Abbey of the Minoresses without Aldgate in London, a late established house with continuous noble patronage, were "among the wealthiest nuns in England," enjoying not only special secular and ecclesiastical exemptions but also centuries of gifts and bequests from English royalty.[58] Based on a later fifteenth-century English copy of "The Rewle of Sustris Menouresses Enclosid," probably confiscated from

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the London abbey at the time of its dissolution, the daily life of a Minoress was "for to do þe office & seruise of god by day & be nyht to þe preysing of god & to þe gladnes of his glorie," and along with the office, "deuowte preyinge for þe dede."[59] Those "whoche canne rede & singe schal do þe office reuerentli & mesurabli after þe custome & þe ordre of freris menoures" and the rest, presumably those who could not read, were expected to repeat by rote the Pater Noster throughout the day.[60] The text says very little else about what the sisters learned or believed, but encourages them to be "ocupiid in profitable & honest trauayles" to ward off the temptations of sloth.[61] Eileen Power, in her classic study *Medieval English Nunneries*, reaffirms this rule's expectations for the literacy of its members; as Power argues, literacy for nuns was mostly limited to the ability to read Latin and probably French, but not to write.[62] In addition to the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, several other manuscripts were owned or intended for Mary, suggesting that she could in fact read that daily office.[63] Once Mary left the Minoresses and began her secular life as a royal wife, the reading of the daily office would still have played an integral part of her regular private devotions.[64]

Indispensable to those daily private devotions was Mary's Psalter-Hours. While the exterior of the Bodleian Psalter-Hours was an outward and highly visible sign "of wealth and literacy and all the social privileges that accompanied these traits," Mary's attention would have been drawn to the contents of its luxurious pages, both image and word.[65] Stella Panayotova describes how a Psalter's illustrations would have provided for the reader "markers of major text divisions and mnemonic aids . . . helpful as focal points for meditation and incentives to examine the biblical text in minute detail; instructive in their moral messages and visual interpretations of Scripture."[66] Illustrations in books of hours worked in the same way. Susan Groag Bell, in her discussion of Catherine of Cleves's Book of Hours (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MSS M 917 and M 945), connects the images in the historiated initials and miniatures, especially the owner portrait of Catherine standing at the foot of the cross, to her duties as a noblewoman, "reminding Catherine of her expected duty as a merciful and chaste mother."[67] Bell goes on to explain that "it is clear that Books of Hours were much more than simple prayerbooks. They could bring spiritual consolation, edification, and perhaps peace of mind; they could also instruct, distract, and amuse."[68]

As discussed earlier, the Bohun manuscripts were products of an unusually close collaboration between patron and artist. Sandler has observed that the three earliest Bohun books—Vienna MS 1826, British Library MS

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Egerton 3277, and Oxford, Exeter College MS 47—are distinctive in their visual interpretations of scenes from the Bible, and they create a unique pictorial tradition that does not follow the usual models that other manuscripts at the time used, but which shape "the experience of the book by its user."[69] Sandler has also argued that the relationship between the pictorial programs and texts in the manuscripts commissioned for Mary's father, Humphrey, shows a family tradition of a nuanced understanding of biblical texts and intelligent reading of images.[70]

The sophisticated understanding of images witnessed in her father's manuscripts is also evident in Mary's Psalter-Hours. The standard set of images that would accompany the Hours of the Virgin features highlights of the Virgin's life from the Annunciation to her Coronation in Heaven, sometimes called the Infancy Cycle.[71] Another traditional cycle used to illustrate the Hours of the Virgin was the Passion Cycle. Unlike most manuscripts that include one of these standard cycles, the Bodleian Psalter-Hours is clearly personalized for the needs of the owner. Instead of the Infancy or Passion cycles, the Bodleian Psalter-Hours uses scenes from the Miracles of the Virgin in the opening miniatures with a cycle of images in the historiated initials that conflates the Infancy and Passion cycles.[72] Though the depiction of the Miracles of the Virgin in manuscripts dates back to the early thirteenth century, these typically appeared in manuscripts containing the text of the miracles themselves.[73] However, the inclusion of illustrations of the miracles in books of hours is unusual, Mary de Bohun's Psalter-Hours and her Copenhagen Book of Hours being rare examples of a direct association of the miracles with the canonical hours.[74] Of the many Miracles of the Virgin that circulated in literary collections and were illustrated in manuscripts, the selection of miracles in the Bodleian Psalter-Hours share themes of the Virgin's intercessory powers to protect children, mothers, and nuns.

The depictions of the Virgin's miracles in the Bodleian Psalter-Hours also emphasize the relationship between mothers and their children. Beginning with Matins through to Compline, the miracles included are the stories of Theophilus, the fallen abbess, the nun who leaves her convent, the Jew of Bourges, Amoras, the child-image taken as hostage, the boy offered to the devil, and the drowned nun.[75] What is most striking about these illustrations, especially in comparison with those in other manuscripts, is the prominence of the "real" Virgin acting in the scenes of her miracles while the statue of the Virgin and Child is shown in the background.[76] The scenes are also narrative, read by the viewer from left to right: on the left, the art-

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ist depicts the moment of the protagonist in prayer begging the Virgin for help, and then on the right we see the Virgin in action, fulfilling her role as an active intercessor.

The juxtaposition of the Hours of the Virgin with her miracles seems to doubly emphasize the intercessory power of the mother of Christ and would have enabled in the viewer a deeper devotion to her. In the story of the fallen abbess at Lauds, the miniature depicts the real Virgin giving the nun's illegitimate child into the safe keeping of the hermit. At Prime, the miniature tells the story of the nun who left the convent. The focus of the picture is on the end of the story when the nun is reunited with her son. At Terce, the story of the Jew of Bourges centers on the Virgin's actively stopping the father from stuffing his son into an oven. Most poignant, however, is the image for None (fig. 7.3). The miracle depicted is the story of the child-image taken as hostage. In the miracle, a woman whose son has been imprisoned takes the image of the Christ child hostage until the Virgin can rescue her imprisoned son. What is interesting here is that the moment of the Virgin's sacrifice in the miracle is juxtaposed with the scene in the historiated initial on the same page showing the Crucifixion, amplifying the Virgin's sacrifice as a mother with the loss of her child, not once, but twice.

The most important illustration for Mary in her manuscript would have been the portrait of her in prayer, alongside her patron saint Mary Magdalene, before the Virgin and Child on fol. 181v (fig. 7.1). The full-page miniature faces the first page of the Daily Office that begins with Matins; Mary would have seen this image every time she began her daily devotions. By seeing herself at the foot of the Virgin regularly, as Sand argues, Mary likely believed "that with proper application to her devotions, [she] might experience what her pictorial double does."[77] The portrait of Mary served as both a model of proper devotional behavior and a spiritual mirror, what Sand terms the "self-reflecting image."[78] As Sand explains in her book on owner portraits in illuminated manuscripts, the image becomes proof of the efficacy of prayer and "the power of the owner's prayer to bring her into contact with the sacred."[79]

We do not know what actually happened to the Bodleian Psalter-Hours between Mary's death in 1394 and its acquisition by George Tickell in 1543, but it was probably passed on to her children upon her death.[80] That it was fairly common, especially toward the end of the fourteenth century, for mothers to bequeath their treasured books, usually psalters and books of hours, to their children has been well attested.[81] The French will of Mary's

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Fig. 7.3. The child-image taken as hostage depicted for the Hour of None in the Hours of the Virgin in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4. 4, fol. 209r. (By permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.)

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older sister, Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester, includes her detailed bequests to her eldest son and her three surviving daughters and makes clear her desire to keep these books in the family.[82] Given the personalized nature of their contents, these books would have reminded their new owners of their family history and triggered what Sandler refers to as "'appropriated memories'" of the family's social and political affiliations.[83]

Mary's daughter Blanche also provides evidence for keeping cherished books in the family. After her father ascended the throne to become King Henry IV, Blanche, the elder daughter, was married to Ludwig III, Count of the Rhine Palatinate in 1402.[84] Sandler has argued that, along with the stunning jeweled crown that is now in the Treasury at the Residenz Museum in Munich, Blanche also brought her mother's book, now the Lichtenthal Psalter, as part of what Susan Groag Bell calls a "literary trousseau" when she left England.[85] The Bodleian Psalter-Hours appears to have remained in England and was perhaps passed on to one of Mary's four surviving sons.[86] Whichever child inherited her book, the portrait of Mary on fol. 181v would have been an especially poignant memorial. Mary, similar to the intercessory roles of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin, would have been seen by her heirs as a "potential [advocate] for the souls of the living" after her death.[87]

Notes

1. For descriptions of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4. 4, see E. G. Millar, *English Illuminated Manuscripts of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (Paris: Van Oest, 1928), 26, 86 (no. 261), pls. 63–65; M. R. James and E. G. Millar, *The Bohun Manuscripts: A Group of Five Manuscripts Executed in England About 1370 for Members of the Bohun Family* (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1936), 23–32, pls. XXIII–XXXVIII; Otto Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library Oxford*, vol. 3, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 60 (no. 665), pl. LXVIII; Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385*. A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, ed. J. J. G. Alexander (London: Harvey Miller, 1986), vol. 2: 157–59 (no. 138); vol. 1: ills. 367, 368, 371; Elizabeth Solopova, *Latin Liturgical Psalters in the Bodleian Library: A Select Catalogue* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2013), 202–14, ill. 33.

2. Millar, in his *English Illuminated Manuscripts*, is the first to identify this figure as Mary Magdalene (26); see also Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385*, vol. 2, 158; the figure is incorrectly identified as St. Catherine by Nigel Morgan, "Patrons and Devotional Images in English Art of the International Gothic c. 1350–1450," in *Reading Texts and Images: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Art and Patron-*

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age in Honour of Margaret M. Manion, ed. Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 103. The presentation of an owner by a patron saint was rare in English manuscripts and scholars such as Sandler have suggested that this image in MS Auct. D. 4. 4 is an early example in England of what becomes more popular in donor portraits of the fifteenth century (Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385*, vol. 2, 159); see for example fol. 150v in Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery MS W. 220 from c.1450 that depicts St. Catherine presenting a female patron to an enthroned Christ, or fol. 13v in Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery MS W. 267, the Buves Hours, another mid-fifteenth-century manuscript in which the angel Gabriel presents a kneeling patroness to the Virgin. Portraits depicting patron saints presenting a donor or owner are rare this early in illuminated manuscripts, though early examples from the end of the fourteenth century are found in other forms like the Wilton Diptych (1395–99), which depicts in the left panel King Richard II presented by his personal saint John the Baptist, and English saints Edward the Confessor and Edmund Martyr. Another later English donor portrait in a manuscript, on fol. 8r in London, British Library MS Royal 2. B. I, the Psalms of Duke Humphrey, shares the same positioning as the Bodleian Psalter-Hours' portrait with St. Alban standing behind the kneeling Duke Humphrey. Kathleen Scott in her description of the Royal manuscript also notes this unusual composition: "This type of Commendation is relatively uncommon in English illustrative art." She goes on to note several later fifteenth-century donor portraits that also include saints commending their mortal patrons: Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390–1490*. A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, ed. J. J. G. Alexander (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), vol. 2, 240.

3. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385*, vol. 2, 158.

4. For examples of donors separate from holy figures, see the portrait of Mary of Burgundy on fol. 14v in the Hours of Mary of Burgundy, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibilothek MS 1857; Margaret de Beauchamp on fol. 19r in the De Lisle Hours, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS G. 50; Jean de Berry on fol. 103v in the Petite Heures of Jean de Berry, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France ms. lat. 18014. Alexa Sand explores the change from this separation to more intimate portraits in her chapter "Domesticating Devotion: Body, Space and Self" in *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation in Late Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 211–64. For another early English example of more intimate shared space, see fol. 1r in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 188, in which a young woman wearing a crown kneels in front of an enthroned Virgin and Child. Like the Bodleian Psalter-Hours' portrait, the Virgin's throne is upon a dais, suggesting only a difference in height.

5. The Bodleian Psalter-Hours measures roughly 6½ x 4½ inches. The three largest Bohun manuscripts are: London, British Library MS Egerton 3277, measuring from 15½ x 9 inches; Oxford, Exeter College MS 47, measuring 11¼ x 7½

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inches; and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1826, measuring 11 x 7¼ inches. None of the original bindings survive, but evidence suggests that the pages were at some point trimmed for their current later bindings, as demonstrated by artwork that has been cropped along the edges of some pages.

6. For more on chemise bindings, see J. A. Szirmai, *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 1999), 234–36, and Frederick Bearman, "The Origins and Significance of Two Late Medieval Textile Chemise Bookbindings in the Walters Art Gallery," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery, Essays in Honor of Lilian M. C. Randall* 54 (1996), 163–87. Bearman examines the range of expensive materials used for chemise bindings, such as velvet, silk, and damask for the cover itself, with braids and tassels for decoration.

7. M. R. James and E. G. Millar, *The Bohun Manuscripts*, 23–24; Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385*, vol. 2, 158; Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Lichtenthal Psalter and the Manuscript Patronage of the Bohun Family* (London: Harvey Miller, 2004), 11. Lynda Dennison, in her 1988 thesis, additionally proposed either Joan Fitzalan, Mary's mother, or Eleanor de Bohun, Mary's elder sister, as possible candidates: "The Stylistic Sources, Dating and Development of the Bohun Workshop, ca. 1340–1400" (PhD diss., Westfield College, University of London, 1988), 259. Sandler comments on problems with Dennison's chronology in "The Illustration of the Psalms in Fourteenth-Century English Manuscripts: Three Psalters of the Bohun Family," in *Reading Texts and Images: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Art and Patronage in Honour of Margaret M. Manion*, ed. Bernard J. Muir (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 126 n.11. I also find Dennison's dating problematic because she bases it on her incorrect dating of the Bodleian Psalter-Hours' twin manuscript, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 38–1950, the Riches Psalter or Psalter of Henry Bolingbroke. This manuscript contains the arms of Castile and Leon used by Henry's father, John of Gaunt, starting in 1372, after his marriage to Constance of Castile and his claim to the kingship of Castile and Leon. Dennison (252–53) argues that the Fitzwilliam Psalter was created in the early 1370s; however, she does not note that Gaunt retained those arms until 1387 when he relinquished his claim to Castile. Thus these manuscripts could have been made or completed in the 1380s, not earlier in the 1370s, as Dennison suggests. Ironically, in her discussion of London, British Library MS Royal 20. D.iv, another manuscript that contains the arms of Castile and Leon, she argues that this Bohun/Bolingbroke manuscript dates to the 1380s based on the presence of these same arms (265).

8. Jennifer Ward, "Joan de Bohun, Countess of Hereford, Essex and Northampton, c. 1370–1419: Family, Land and Social Networks," *Essex Archaeology and History* 32 (2001), 147; Sandler, *The Lichtenthal Psalter*, 11; Bryan Bevan, *Henry IV* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 7.

9. Ward, "Joan de Bohun," 147–48.

10. G. A. Holmes, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility in Fourteenth-Century Eng-*

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land (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 19–25; Holmes describes the lengthy inheritance disputes between Thomas Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, and Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, that continued well into the 1390s.

11. In *Henry IV,* Bryan Bevan says of Mary and Henry: "One shared interest with Henry brought them close, their mutual love of music, for he would play the flute and she would sing in a sweet voice, and play a canticum. Later they seem to have been fond of chess" (8), though he cites no source. More reliable evidence pertaining to Mary's dress and the clothes of her children comes from Ward's translation of Duchy of Lancaster documents in *Women of the English Nobility and Gentry, 1066–1500*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 73 (no. 58) and 187–88 (no. 140).

12. See generally the studies of Bohun manuscripts by M. R. James and E. G. Millar, Lucy Freeman Sandler, and Lynda Dennison.

13. Even studies of other psalters and or books of hours owned by women in the late fourteenth century are surprisingly rare. In an exception to this, Kathryn A. Smith offers detailed examinations of the De Lisle, De Bois, and Neville of Hornby Hours and how these books helped to facilitate a deeper personal devotional experience for their female owners in *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours*, British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003). Because these books were owned by up-and-coming lower nobility and gentry, Smith also explores the additional role of these manuscripts as "a potent form of social display" (4). Smith's study is, however, limited to books of hours produced in the early fourteenth century. More plentiful are general surveys of women's ownership of devotional books at the end of the fourteenth century, such as Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 149–87; Sandra Penketh, "Women and Books of Hours," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, ed. L. Smith and J. H. M. Taylor (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 266–81; and Karen K. Jambeck, "Patterns of Women's Literary Patronage: England, 1200-ca. 1475," in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 228–65.

14. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 4.

15. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 5.

16. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 265.

17. Lynda Dennison, "The Stylistic Sources," describes the technique, which she calls *pouncing*, used by the artist to give this textured effect similar to Italian *pastiglia* or stucco and argues for a possible Italian influence on the artist (239).

18. See Sandler, "Lancastrian Heraldry in the Bohun Manuscripts," in *The Lancastrian Court: Proceedings of the 2001 Harlaxton Symposium*, Harlaxton Medieval

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Studies XIII, ed. Jenny Stratford (Donington, UK: Shaun Tyas, 2003), 231. She develops her theory in more detail in *The Lichtenthal Psalter*, 26. M. R. James, Lucy Freeman Sandler, and Lynda Dennison all disagree about when the manuscript was begun and completed, though a date around 1380 seems most likely. James, noting the addition of three single leaves of different thickness with full-page miniatures painted by a different artist (fol. xiiv, fol. 181v, and fol. 243v), suggested that the manuscript was probably begun in the early 1370s, originally intended for Mary's father, Humphrey the seventh Earl of Hereford. After his death in 1373, the manuscript was perhaps put aside by the artists until its future ownership was determined. Once Mary was to be married to Henry Bolingbroke, the manuscript was then repurposed for its new young female owner, and the new leaves, including Mary's portrait, were added. This idea was later disproved by Sandler in her *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385* catalogue when she showed that the artist of the added pages had also painted the Beatus miniature on fol.1r, one of the original images in the Psalter (158). Another possibility I see here is that the same artist who originally started the manuscript for Duke Humphrey before 1373 was still in the family's employ when it was repurposed for Mary a few years later. As I will show, the visual program of the illuminations in the Bodleian Psalter-Hours strongly indicate customization for a female audience.

19. Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 165.

20. Stella Panayotova, "The Illustrated Psalter: Luxury and Practical Use," in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity*, ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 248. She goes on to give Henry Bolingbroke's psalter, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum MS 38–1950 as an example, though her discussion is marred by her mistaken identification of Mary de Bohun's father, Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex, as "Henry de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Sussex," 249.

21. Panayotova, "The Illustrated Psalter," 263–64.

22. Holmes, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility*, 24.

23. Ward, "Joan de Bohun," 147.

24. The translation of Froissart comes from Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 21 (no. 2).

25. Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 21 (no.2).

26. Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 22 (no. 2).

27. According to Anthony Goodman, the rift was short lived and the brothers were on good terms by 1383 when John of Gaunt attended the christening of Thomas's daughter, lavishing expensive gifts upon the newborn. See Anthony Goodman, *The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard II* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971), 90.

28. See Holmes, *The Estates of the Higher Nobility*, 24n.6; Anthony Goodman,

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The Loyal Conspiracy, 89–90; and *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 275–77; Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 140n.21.

29. Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 15.

30. Sandler only briefly mentions Froissart in her article as "one contemporary source," and without much analysis of Froissart's text, argues for Joan's direct hand in Mary's marriage with Henry; see "Lancastrian Heraldry," 231–32.

31. Jennifer Ward indicates in the notes to her translation that a variety of details in Froissart's account are incorrect, including even the names of the Bohun sisters, which he gives as "Blanche" and "Isabella." In spite of these inaccuracies, historians generally accept Froissart's account of this event. See Holmes *The Estates of the Higher Nobility*, 24n.6; Goodman *The Loyal Conspiracy*, 89–90; Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, 275–77; Saul, *Richard II*, 140n.21. Froissart's story seems believable in light of other information these historians don't mention: that within a year of the marriage, Mary, aged only twelve or thirteen, gave birth to a son who died a few days later. See Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 69–70 (no. 52); Bevan, *Henry IV*, 8. By having the marriage physically consummated, Gaunt ensured that the marriage was binding and could withstand any challenges by his younger brother.

32. Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, 276. Ward, in *Women of the English Nobility*, provides a translation of a document from the Duchy of Lancaster in the PRO (DL29/262/4070) specifically providing payment of over £26 to Joan for the maintenance of her daughter Mary until she "reaches the age of fourteen years," 22 (no. 3).

33. Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 21–22 (no. 2).

34. Sandler, "Lancastrian Heraldry," 231–32.

35. Ward, "Joan de Bohun," 150–51.

36. Ward, "Joan de Bohun," 148–50.

37. For example, in a document granting Joan hunting rights in Hatfield Forest, her grandson, King Henry V, says he does so "on account of the sincere love and deep affection which we have towards our very dear grandmother." This document is translated in Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 185–86 (no. 137).

38. A detailed description of the arms on this page and the significance of their arrangement are given in Sandler, "Lancastrian Heraldry," 226–27, 232.

39. Sandler uses the phrase "dynastic anxiety" to refer to the heraldic display in the Vienna manuscript in "Word Imagery in English Gothic Psalters: The Case of the Vienna Bohun Manuscript (ÖNB, cod. 1826)," in *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose, and Placement of Its Images*, ed. F. O. Büttner (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2004), 394.

40. Sandler, "Lancastrian Heraldry," 223–28.

41. Sandler, *The Lichtenthal Psalter*, 146.

42. Panaytova provides a general survey of the use of Psalters in private devotion; see her "The Illustrated Psalter," 247–71.

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43. Lucy Freeman Sandler, "A Note on the Illuminators of the Bohun Manuscripts," *Speculum* 60.2 (1985): 364–72.

44. Sandler, "A Note on the Illuminators," 365.

45. Sandler, "Word Imagery," 394–95. For example, in her analysis of the complex relationship between image and text in the Vienna Psalter of Humphrey, the sixth Earl of Hereford, Sandler concludes that illustrations in this manuscript reflect the needs and knowledge of "a more mature reader" who would engage "with the words of the text on a sophisticated level." See also Sandler, "Political Imagery in the Bohun Manuscripts," in *Decoration and Illustration in Medieval English Manuscripts*, English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700, vol. 10, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2003), 114–53; and Sandler, "Worded and Wordless Images: Biblical Narratives in the Psalters of Humphrey de Bohun," in *The Social Life of Illumination: Manuscripts, Images and Communities in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Joyce Coleman, Mark Cruse, and Kathryn A. Smith (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013), 83–120.

46. Sandler, *The Lichtenthal Psalter*, 142.

47. Sandler in "A Note on the Illuminators" argues that John de Teye is the main artist in the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, 367.

48. For a complete list of the images in the Bodleian Psalter-Hours, see Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385*, vol. 2, 157–58.

49. The manuscript is described in some detail in Lucy Freeman Sandler, "Mary de Bohun's 'Livret de saintes' in Copenhagen," in *Tributes to Nigel Morgan, Contexts of Medieval Art: Images, Objects & Ideas*, ed. Julian M. Luxford and M. A. Michael (London: Harvey Miller, 2010), 65–76.

50. Sandler, "Mary de Bohun's 'Livret de saintes,'" 69–70.

51. Sandler, "Mary de Bohun's 'Livret de saintes,'" 72. Sandler seems to misinterpret Mary Magdalene's depiction, describing her long hair as "the long, hairy golden tan garment of a hermit." Mary's own long hair was a common iconographic symbol, along with her ointment jar, and refers both to her hair used to wipe Jesus's feet and also to a story when Mary becomes naked in the desert and uses her hair to cover her body; see Andrea Begel, "Exorcism in the Iconography of Mary Magdalene," in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 355.

52. Some typical examples are given in Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*: Pl. 2. of Hawisia de Bois from the De Bois Hours, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.700, fol. 3v; Fig. 1 of Margaret de Beauchamp from the De Lisle Hours, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS G 50, fol. 19r; Fig. 5 of Isabel de Byron from the Neville of Hornby Hours, London, British Library MS Egerton 2781, fol. 36v; Fig. 113 of Blanche of Burgundy from the Savoy Hours, New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library MS 390, fol. 25r; Fig. 145

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of Yolande of Soissons from the Psalter-Hours of Yolande of Soissons, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M. 729, fol. 232v.

53. I have not found a source that specifically addresses this tradition of depicting unmarried women in art with their heads uncovered. Art historians simply refer to the fact that any woman shown bareheaded is unmarried or virgin. The only examples I have come across so far are the portraits of the daughter of Isabel de Byron in the early fourteenth-century Neville of Hornby Hours (London, British Library MS Egerton 2781), and the image of a young maiden in a collection of works by St. Anselm from the early thirteenth century (London, British Library MS Additional 15749) with "blonde hair uncovered and unbound." For the Neville of Hornby Hours, see Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, Pls. 6, 7 and fig. 87. For British Library MS Additional 15749, see Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 127. Sand, 162, also mentions a similar portrait in Vienna, Museum für angewandte Kunst Cod. Lat. XIV (S.5).

54. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 215.

55. Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 21 (no. 2).

56. Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066–1530* (New York: Methuen, 1984), 63–65.

57. Lynn Staley, "*Pearl* and the Contingencies of Love and Piety," in *Medieval Literature and Historical Inquiry: Essays in Honor of Derek Pearsall*, ed. David Aers (Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 88.

58. Nancy Bradley Warren, *Spiritual Economies: Female Monasticism in Later Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 58–59. Froissart himself refers to it as "a very rich and large convent"; see Ward, *Women of the English Nobility*, 21 (no. 2). See also Lynn Staley, *Languages of Power in the Age of Richard II* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 215. "Friaries: The Minoresses without Aldgate," in *A History of the County of London, Volume 1: London within the Bars, Westminster and Southwark*, ed. William Page, Victoria County History (London, 1909), 516–19.

59. Walter W. Seton, ed., *Two Fifteenth-Century Franciscan Rules*, EETS os 148 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), 85.

60. Seton, *Two Fifteenth-Century Franciscan Rules*, 85.

61. Seton, *Two Fifteenth-Century Franciscan Rules*, 86.

62. Eileen Power, *Medieval English Nunneries, c. 1275–1535* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1964), 245, 276–77.

63. Sandler argues that several other manuscripts can be closely tied to Mary through heraldic evidence and dating of the manuscripts' production based on the artwork they contain. These other manuscripts are: Baden-Baden, Lichtenthal Abbey Archive MS 2 and Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek MS Thott 547.4. See Sandler, "Lancastrian Heraldry," 221–32.

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64. In the introduction to her study *Art, Identity and Devotion*, Smith suggests that most noble women "appear to have said the Hours all at once, in the morning" (2).

65. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 160.

66. Panayotova, "The Illustrated Psalter," 252.

67. Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 161.

68. Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 161.

69. Sandler, "The Illustration of the Psalms," 126, 135.

70. Sandler, "Worded and Wordless Images," 110–15.

71. Good descriptions of this standard cycle can be found in Christopher de Hamel, "Books of Hours: 'Imaging' the Word," in *The Bible as Book: The Manuscript Tradition*, ed. John L. Sharpe III and Kimberly van Kampen (London: British Library, 1998), 137–43, at 140, and Roger Wieck's *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: George Braziller, 1988), 60–72.

72. The Bohun artist shifed the Adoration of the Magi to Terce, the Presentation to Sext, and added the Crucifixion for None and the Resurrection for Vespers, before returning to the Coronation of the Virgin at Compline.

73. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, 222–23.

74. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, 223.

75. One of the most comprehensive lists of Miracles of the Virgin is now available online at The Oxford *Cantigas de Santa Maria* Database. Accessed February 2015. http://csm.mml.ox.ac.uk/?p=database

76. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, 223–24.

77. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 17.

78. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 3.

79. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 191.

80. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385*, vol. 2, 159.

81. A good summary of the literary patronage and relationships between mothers, daughters, and granddaughters is given in Jambeck's "Patterns of Women's Literary Patronage," 236–39.

82. To Humphrey, along with four other books, Eleanor includes "a psalter well and richly illuminated, with gold clasps enamelled with white swans, and the arms of my lord and father enamelled on the clasps, and other bars of gold with work in form of mullets, which psalter was given to me to remain to my heirs, and so 'from heir to heir aforesaid.'" To her daughter Joan, Eleanor bequeaths one "book having the psalter, primer, and other devotions, with two gold clasps enamelled with my arms, which book I have much used, with my blessing." Her daughter Anne received another illuminated book, and her youngest daughter Isabella, a Minoress at the same London abbey for which Mary had been intended, received seven books. Eleanor's will is recorded in J. Nichols's *A Collection of All the Wills, Now Known to be Extant, of the Kings and Queens of England, Princes and Princesses of Wales, and Every*

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Branch of the Royal Blood, from the Reign of William the Conqueror, to that of Henry the Seventh Exclusive (London: Nichols, 1780), 177–86. The translation quoted here comes from Melville M. Bigelow, "The Bohun Wills, II," in *The American Historical Review* 1.4 (July 1896): 644–49. Mary's will, if there ever was one, has not survived, but given that her death occurred during childbirth when she was only twenty-five, it is unlikely that she had written one.

83. Sandler, "The Illustration of the Psalms," 139–41.

84. A wonderfully romanticized but detailed life of Blanche of Lancaster is given in M. A. E. Green's *Lives of the Princesses of England from the Norman Conquest* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1857), vol. 3, 302–41.

85. Sandler, *The Lichtenthal Psalter*, 145, 151–53; Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners," 173–76. It is interesting to note the resemblance between the crowns on the Virgin and Mary Magdalene in Mary de Bohun's portrait and the crown Blanche brought with her to the continent.

86. Mary's sons were later Henry V; Thomas, Duke of Clarence; John, Duke of Bedford; and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.

87. Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation*, 290.

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CHAPTER 8

"Parchment and Pure Flesh"

Elizabeth de Vere, Countess of the Twelfth Earl of Oxford, and Her Book

Jocelyn Wogan-Browne

The literary culture of fifteenth-century East Anglia is rightly celebrated for its many notable English texts, patrons, and readers, and recent scholarship continues to enrich this picture.[1] The francophony of this literary culture and its supra-regional dimensions, however, have received less explicit attention.[2] I want here to look at the book and life of a fifteenth-century East Anglian "chaste matron," a role much illuminated by Carolyn Collette's work.[3] In the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the public female image and agent of spirituality is as likely to be the secular married or widowed woman as the professed religious. My chaste matron is Elizabeth de Vere, Countess of Oxford (d. late 1473/early 1474), a woman already known to English-language literary history, but who also offers an occasion for considering the underexplored presence of francophone spirituality in late medieval women's lives and objects in England. Her book is a compendium of twenty-eight religious treatises in French (now Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 41). Elizabeth de Vere gave the volume to Barking Abbey in 1474: it turned out to be the Abbey's largest and last collection of continental French writings before the Dissolution.

The book's opening text immediately inscribes a devotional culture in which the role of the book is always already internalized for its users, and in which the materiality of the manuscript provides metaphors with which to think and desire:

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> Ly livres en quoy nous devons especialement lire sans nul entrelaissement si est la doulce remembrance de la mort et de la passion Jhesu Crist de quoy ce livre parle asses, comme vraiement ly vraiz amans des ames nous ayma. Ce fu le doulx Jhesu Crist qui volt morir pour nous. Et si est ly livres en trestout le monde ly mieudres en quoy nous aprendrons plustost a amer nostre seigneur. C'est li doulx crucifiement Jhesu Crist.[4]
>
> [The book in which we ought specially to read without intermission is the sweet remembrance of the death and passion of Jesus Christ, about which this book has much to say of how truly the true lover of souls loved us. This was sweet Jesus Christ who willingly died for us. So it is the best book in all the world for learning most immediately how to love our lord. It is Christ's sweet crucifixion.]

Interrelations between memory, desire, and the material book are assumed in this devotional reading: the reader's recollection of the Passion is embodied in the codex that reactivates it, even as the book serves as a stimulus to opening up and perusing that recollection. The book's parchment is said to be Christ's pure flesh and the holiness of his sinless life (*Ly parchemins de ce livre c'est la pure char et la saincté qui nasqui et morut sanz pechie*): the book's leaves are the torments he suffered for the sake of sinful humanity, for, "just as when we turn through all the leaves of a book, so when we turn and turn through again the whole life of our true friend Jesus Christ we never find anything there except pain, suffering and anguish until his blessed soul parted from his body."[5] The book is ornamented in blue and red, blue from the lividity of Christ's discolored flesh when he deprived himself of bodily beauty for our sake and, since a book is "much more handsome when ornamented with red and blue together," there is also the red of the precious blood expended for us on the cross.[6]

In Magdalen MS lat. 41, these metaphors are particularly pertinent. The book, 218 folios and 265 x 185mm, is a little smaller than the dimensions of a sheet of letter-sized writing paper, but is a substantial and elegant codex. Written in two columns, its steady gothic *textura quadrata* is marked by blue and red capitals for paragraphs and by the occasional restrained illumination of capitals in titles. It is very much a book for readers and hearers and does not rely on visual realizations of its metaphors in the *mise-en-page*. A small crux in these metaphors is especially suggestive of the familiar materiality of manuscripts for the audience interpellated by the opening text: as

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the codicological embodiment of the "sweet, amorous and humble words" Christ spoke from the cross, some manuscripts offer the reading *pertues*, "holes," where other copies have *serres*, "book clasps." "Clasps" makes more immediate sense, but the scribes who read *pertues* may have been thinking of the practice of incorporating holes in parchment books into devotion as signs of the piercing of Christ's body, and perceiving here a metaphor that reliteralizes the book as beloved and agonized object.[7]

This is not the only moment of the book's self-presentation as a vehicle for contemplation, but it is an important one. Although the opening text is listed as the *Lamentacions saint Bernard* in Magdalen lat. 41's table of contents (fol. 1ra), it is not by Bernard, but is rather a small compilation drawing on several works. These include one often attributed to him, the *Liber de passione Christi et doloribus et planctibus matris eius* or *Quis dabit*, second in popularity only to the Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes vitae Christi*.[8] The initial allegory of Christ's crucifixion as book frames a version of the *Quis dabit*, a narration of the Passion by the Virgin and a demonstration of "Saint Bernard's" empathic response; these are succeeded by an allegory of Adam's soul as a king's daughter weeping over the arms of the noble king's son who marries her, and who dies fighting for the restoration of her heritage.[9] At the *Lamentacions*' conclusion, having cited a flurry of authorities (Hugh of St. Victor, Augustine, Chrysostom, Bernard) reprehending those who do not feel compunction, the text offers a "*contemplacion*" of paradise and the heavenly city.

Combining *courtoisie* and contemplative ambition, this text assumes an already sophisticated and habitual reading culture in its audiences. Lament and gratitude for Christ's sacrifice is a major theme, but the *Lamentacions* does not aim simply at evoking affect.[10] Its more exegetical passages show a concern for argument by metaphor and for scriptural authority (or, perhaps, for evoking scriptural memory by well-known phrases, in a kind of enthymemic argument by recollection), but they appeal to readerly experience and recollection as well as offering exegetical instruction.[11] This is a text and a book for readers of some spiritual aspiration, though not necessarily for professional contemplatives.

The book as a whole is an extremely rich and highly structured assembly of texts that continues many of the themes sounded at its opening. Intentionality can be too readily ascribed to the thematic sequences and convergences in a codex, but, especially given the relative stability of contents and their arrangement in Magdalen lat. 41 and in the collection's seven other

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known copies, it would be hard not to see this as a purposive compilation.[12] Both in its individual items and in its performance as a whole book, the manuscript bespeaks a sophisticated vernacular culture of orthodox and engaged late medieval devotional reading.

What kind of object might this book be for a fifteenth-century noblewoman such as Elizabeth de Vere?

THE MATRON

As countess to the twelfth Earl of Oxford, Elizabeth de Vere (née Howard) was a member of a family with investments in literary culture. The de Veres seem to have owned the Ellesmere manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*, which has a flyleaf poem in praise of the de Vere lineage.[13] Elizabeth's second son, John, was one of Caxton's patrons, and John de Vere's second wife, another Elizabeth de Vere (née Scrope), owned collections of Middle English devotional writing (which she in turn gave to Barking Abbey before her death in 1537).[14] The Elizabeth de Vere who had earlier given her French book to Barking is named as a special benefactor in the Syon Abbey *Martirloge*, and was a member of the confraternity of Lydgate's monastery, Bury St. Edmunds; Lydgate was appointed as Prior of Bury's cell at Hatfield Broadoak (of which the de Veres were patrons) from 1423 to 1434.[15] She is also among the Pastons' correspondents.[16]

Elizabeth de Vere's best-known literary role, however, is as *destinataire* of the first of Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Holy Wommen*. Bokenham, an Augustinian friar at Stoke by Clare, gives a well-known representation of the 1445 Twelfth Night celebration in nearby Clare Castle as a foundational scene for his legendary. It is a scene of "reuel and daunsyng" for the younger members of the Clare family, but amidst it, Lady Isabella Bourchier (d. 1484) solicits from Bokenham a Life of Mary Magdalen that she much desires "in englysshe to han maad."[17] She wants this Life to be along the lines of what Bokenham has already begun for Elizabeth de Vere, a Life of Elizabeth of Hungary, the early thirteenth-century Hungarian princess, and Margravine of Thuringia, famed as a married, ascetic, and charitable saint:

> . . . whos lyf alone
> To alle wyuys myht a merour be
> Of uery perfeccyoun in sundry degre,

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Whos holy legend as at þat tyme
I newly had begunne to ryme
At request of hyr to whom sey nay
I neyther kan, ne wyl, ne may,
So mych am I bounden to hyr goodnesse,
I mene of Oxenforthe þe countesse,
Dame Elyzabeth Ver by hyr ryht name,
Whom God euere kepe from syn & shame. (ll.5046–56)

Bokenham's praise of Elizabeth de Vere deploys her primarily as exemplary *commanditaire* of his text, not necessarily as a patron.[18] This scene focuses on representing a regional socio-spiritual community centered on Clare with its great secular and attached religious households. The noblewomen of East Anglia play the role of leading chaste matrons, but other women from local magnate and gentry families and their retainers also become dedicatees of Lives in the *Legendys*.[19] At the time of the legendary's composition, when Lady Isabella Bourchier and her husband held Clare Castle, Isabella's brother, Richard, Duke of York, was a distant and unengaged patron of Bokenham's priory at Stoke by Clare. Cynthia Camp has cogently argued that one of Bokenham's purposes in writing the *Legendys* was to remind the duke of his ties and obligations as the new patron of the friary.[20] The women Bokenham links with his legendary may be not so much figures of patronage for the text as emblems of the regional spiritual community to which Bokenham sought to draw Richard of York's attention.

Bokenham's *Legendys* have attracted much discussion as a foundational female literary tradition in a burgeoning East Anglian literary culture.[21] The figure of Elizabeth de Vere alerts us to the way in which, for all its imaging in what Bokenham terms "the language of Suthfolk speche" (l.4064), the territory of his English chaste-matron community is that of a multilingual culture. If, from an English-language perspective, this is a foundational late medieval female literary tradition, it is one preceded and accompanied by established francophone traditions of household reading and spirituality: an East Anglian late medieval English culture with multilingual roots, modalities, and connections. Alongside English and Latin works, insular and continental French books continued to link various persons and places across the East Anglian and Essex landscape in the fifteenth century: at Pleshey Castle, for instance, Eleanor de Bohun's dispositions for her large and largely French library in 1399 include seven substantial volumes in French (a Bible,

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decretal collections, the *Historia scholastica*, and so on) for her daughter Isabella, who became abbess of the Minoresses (themselves founded from Longchamps outside Paris) at Aldgate in London by 1421–22.[22] Sir Thomas Crofts, dying at the nunnery of Bungay, gave a French Old Testament copied in England to the small house of canonesses at Flixton in his will of 1442.[23] In 1448, Dame Agnes Stapilton bequeathed a volume of French saints' lives to a laywoman, and a crucifix "*et unum librum de frensshe*" to the Abbess of Denny.[24] Richard Rous's 1464 bequest of three *libros gallicos* to the canonesses at Campsey was conditional on their returning a fourth *librum gallicum* to his son and heir.[25] Elizabeth de Vere's will does not survive, but her son left a chest of "frenshe and englisshe bokes."[26]

The map and the image of East Anglian chaste-matron culture in and beyond magnate and religious houses is thus incomplete without the dimensions signaled by French. We might want to reconceive that map less as a bounded insular region than as an area consisting of two coasts and their hinterlands, linked by the Middle Ages' fastest form of transport, water, and readily crossed in both directions by French, the Middle Ages' most important transregional vernacular. Like many of her contemporaries, Elizabeth de Vere had links on both sides of the Channel: her father-in-law had campaigned in France and was at Harfleur and Agincourt; her husband was at Calais in 1436 and Oye in 1439; when she herself was about thirty, she spent the year 1441–42 at Rouen in the retinue of Richard, Duke of York, at the time Lieutenant General of France, together with her neighbors from Clare Castle, Henry and Isabella Bourchier (herself countess not only of Essex but also of Eu in Normandy), and other magnates.[27] The de Veres may have enjoyed French cuisine: at all events they had two cooks from France in their household.[28] The continental romance writer Philippe de Rémi deploys an idea of the de Veres as francophone transregional figures in his late thirteenth-century romance, *Jehan et Blonde*: the Earl of Oxford is said to have good French because he has been to France to learn it, while the Duke of Gloucester (the hero's rival for the Earl of Oxford's daughter) is extensively mocked for his inept French-speaking.[29]

By the time Elizabeth de Vere donated her French book to Barking in late 1473 or early 1474, her life must have seemed unimaginably remote from any such image as Bokenham's 1445 festive scene of a young noble chaste matron and her family in pleasant and pious celebration at the heart of a socio-spiritual community. The date given in the memorandum of donation Barking added to the book is February 26 (1474).[30] It may be merely coin-

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cidental, but nevertheless prompts reflection, that February 26 is the day in 1462 when Elizabeth's husband was executed as a Lancastrian loyalist (and hence traitor to the Yorkist Edward IV) and that this execution was preceded a couple of days earlier by the execution of Elizabeth's eldest son, Aubrey. A little over a decade later, when she gave her book to Barking, Elizabeth de Vere's surviving second son John was in prison in Calais, her daughter-in-law destitute, and Elizabeth herself, a considerable heiress in her own right, had recently been stripped of everything she owned.

Although she had been arrested in 1462 when her husband and eldest son were attainted for treason and their lands confiscated, Elizabeth de Vere was eventually released and permitted to resume her own lands.[31] She went to live at her manor of Wivenhoe, inherited from her mother. Her second son, John, received his father's lands from a conciliatory Edward IV in 1464. However, in 1471, John de Vere, a Lancastrian once more, fled to France and was captured and imprisoned at Calais.[32] At this point, Elizabeth quickly transferred her lands to feoffees to prevent further confiscation. But the future Richard III, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, in whose custody his brother Edward IV now placed Elizabeth de Vere, took her under duress from Stratford-at-Bow nunnery, where she was visiting, to a London townhouse in 1473. Here, by several eyewitness accounts, the distressed and frail countess was made to convey her lands to Richard of Gloucester.[33] She was then allowed to return to Stratford-at-Bow and died soon after.[34]

THE BOOK

There is little direct evidence as to how Elizabeth de Vere weathered the storms of her later life, apart from her reported distress at the enforced surrender of her lands to Richard of Gloucester. But the book she gave to Barking can be usefully considered against the savage and rapid changes that could occur in elite women's lives and those of their families. While it is unclear when and how the twelfth countess acquired the book,[35] considering the valences its texts might have held and reading the texts themselves in the light of their owner's experiences can vivify our understanding of both.[36]

Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 41 was made in France, most probably in Paris, in the late fourteenth century, and arrived at Barking, on the evidence of its own memorandum of donation, shortly after Elizabeth de Vere's death in late 1473 or early 1474.[37] There is thus nearly a century be-

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tween the book's making and the donation, but the Countess of Oxford was not simply getting rid of an old-fashioned anthology. Apart from the characteristic long currency of manuscripts,[38] the specific grouping of some twenty-eight texts in Elizabeth de Vere's book had continued to be copied throughout the fifteenth century. At least four of the extant eight copies of this collection are fifteenth century, and the latest was made in 1474, the year of the Barking memorandum, for Jacques d'Armagnac, Duc de Nemours (a gorgeous deluxe copy for a noted bibliophile by the duke's priest and scribe, Michel Gonnot).[39]

Magdalen lat. 41 is elegant and serviceable rather than deluxe, a fitting gift for a prestigious and learned nunnery,[40] but it is also a collection, as the Duc de Nemours's copy suggests, wanted in magnate households (the book's opening *Lamentacions de saint Bernard* indeed envisages its audiences as "hommes et femmes," fol. 3ra, line 16), and equally pertinent for secular houses.[41] The collection inhabits the rich territory where lay and clerical desires and interests meet and where French is an established language of *écriture sainte* for patrons, producers, and audiences. Traditions and precedents for spirituality as sponsored by chaste matron figures in religious and secular households alike were well established in cross-channel francophony, as also in insular textual culture.[42] Elizabeth de Vere's collection of texts is, among other things, an enlarged version of comparable earlier collections made for noblewomen patrons, sometimes women of considerable wealth, who were interested in maintaining particular styles of spirituality across their various residences as they moved their households between them.[43]

In the manuscript's program, self-disgust and awareness of individual and collective debt to Christ's redemptive grace are to be the dynamic of a considerable amount of self-fuelling devotional work by the book's readers and audiences, leading to an enriched inner and outer spirituality. The *Lamentacions* are succeeded by two mini-florilegia much read in the later Middle Ages and each dedicated to the wretchedness of the human condition and the cultivation of self-knowledge as a means to loving God (the *Meditacions* of St. Bernard, text 2, and the Pseudo-Augustine *Meditacions*, text 3, "Les contemplacions saint Augustin": see Appendix).[44] Spiritual movement and progress towards the heavenly court are predicated in the arrangement and themes of this section of the manuscript: text 4 (*Comment on doit Dieu amer*) instructs the reader on how to love and on love in heaven, text 5 (*La voie . . . en paradis*) on how to go to paradise and the etiquette and feasting there. Text 6 (*L'ordenance du char Helye le prophete*) is an allegory

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on Elijah's chariot and its horses, fierily making their way to heaven (while allegorically discarding hypocrisy and conforming the inner and outer). Text 7 (*Un preschement de nostre Seigneur*) is, appropriately, Sully's sermon on the parable of the wedding feast and the kingdom of heaven. From this account of the heavenly court, text 8 moves to the nature of the heart in which God dwells (*Les .vii. choses que cuer en qui Dieu habite doit avoir*), and, in text 9 (*Comment .iiii. pechiez mortelz sont segnefiez par .iiii. bestes sauvages*), to how the four wild beasts of sin have to be hunted out from Christ's forest and served up to him as so much roasted venison if one is, in the exemplum of text 10 (*De la demande . . .*), to get through the king's gates into the city.[45]

The next set of treatises reemphasizes the dire state of humanity without redemption: the weighty translation of Innocent III's *De miseria* (text 11) is a still stronger account of the wretchedness of the human condition than the manuscript's earlier *Meditacions de saint Bernart* (text 2).[46] The *De miseria* translation is partly answered by text 12's treatment of the spiritual profit of worldly tribulations (*Des tres grans proffis espirituelz . . .*),[47] and by texts 13 and 14 on avoiding sin and temptation. These are also a preparation for the salvific sacramental ritual that chiefly addresses humanity's wretchedness, the Mass. At the center of the collection is an account of how to think and behave during the Mass (text 16), preceded by a short narrative text on Adam and Eve and their son Seth's journey back to the earthly Paradise (*De l'aage Adam et comment il envoia Seth son filz . . .* , text 15). After the treatise on the Mass, there follow instructions on confession (text 17); then, in texts 18–21, the teachings of St. Louis (Louis IX, d. 1270) for his son Philip and his daughter Isabelle, and the exemplary deaths of Louis himself and his daughter-in-law, Jeanne de Châtillon, Countess of Alençon and Blois (d. 1292).[48] At text 22 (*Le livre que fist maistre Hugues de St Victor*), the nature and goals of contemplation are further detailed in Pierre de Hangest's French version of Hugh of St. Victor's *De arrha animae*. This influential work addresses the soul's need to love in the right way through the metaphorics of the bridegroom's gifts, understood as his pledge of final union.[49] The ethics of everyday life are then treated via two proverb collections ascribed to Seneca (23) and Cato (24), and the manuscript concludes with a final subsection of *ars moriendi* works (25–28, incorporating the Pater noster at 27). The last of these is Augustin Bongenou's early fourteenth-century verse meditation, "de la mort," with his acrostic signature built into the lines.[50]

The manuscript is thus an ambitious and programmatic collection, a portable spiritual library. It offers much for personal devotional reading and

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for use by a range of people in a large religious or secular household. And although its spiritual program is relatively conservative, the book's allegories are not readily dismissible. At first glance they can seem like opportunistic wooing of the reader or hearer with laid-on ultra-aristocratic *courtoisie*. But the manuscript's ordering of its texts carries meaning, and the allegories make intellectual and affective demands of their audiences.

In the collection's central treatment of the Mass, for instance, it may seem initially odd or overly simple that text 16, the *Devise de la messe* (explanation, description, plan or design of the Mass) is preceded by the narrative of Adam and the mission he gives Seth in text 15. But another fourteenth-century guide to the Mass made in French in England suggests the logic of this pairing: at the *introit*, the lay participants are instructed to "consider the desire the holy patriarchs and prophets had that our Lord should come to ransom them." As Aden Kumler has pointed out, the image with this rubric shows a hell-mouth containing Adam and other patriarchs within the same pictorial space as the celebrant priest.[51] The priest sacramentally brings Christ in the Mass, and the congregants represent the human longing for redemption made present by Adam and his companions. In Magdalen lat. 41, Seth journeys to the gates of Paradise to quest for oil of mercy before the Mass treatise occurs in the volume, but Adam's redemption from hell is only fully realized in the sacrifice embodied in the Eucharist. Magdalen lat. 41 amplifies the collaboration of layperson and priest in the Mass by conjoining the narrative of humanity's need and efforts with an account of God's. There is a two-sided agency here.

The *Devise de la messe* is a text found with innumerable variations in late medieval books of hours and prayer collections, and also in the *Menagier de Paris*'s vast householding compilation for a young wife.[52] Both the *Menagier*'s and Elizabeth de Vere's versions frame the Mass in terms of the longstanding allegory of the *introit* as a king's entry into a city, but Magdalen lat. 41 places more emphasis on the ways in which human worship intersects with, rather than merely parallels, that of the angels:[53]

> Apres chante on la loenge des [fol. 153va] angelz qui sans fin dient *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus* devant la Trinité [et] qui descendent pour appareillier le lieu et la table ou Dieux repaist les siens amis. Si doit on de cuer et de bouche loer Dieu *avecques les angelz . . . et devons avoir parfaite congnoissance avecques cherubim et parfaite amour avecques seraphim*. (Magdalen Lat. 41, fol. 153rb-153va, italics mine).

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> [Then there is chanted the angels' song of praise, who forever sing *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus* before the Trinity and who come down to prepare the place and the table where God feeds his friends. Then one must praise God with heart and mouth with the angels. . . . And we ought to have perfect knowledge with the cherubim and perfect love with the seraphim.]

Here, the reader is invited not only to imitate the song of angels but also to sing and worship with them. By contrast, in the *Menagier* the angels similarly prepare the table where God will feed his friends on the mere sight of himself (*par son seul regard repaistra ses amis*), but the response prescribed is to be very attentive to God's coming (*entend l'on a veoir sa venue*) and to prepare oneself as good loving subjects do at a king's entry (*comme bons amoureuz subgiez s'appareillent quant le roy entre en sa cité*), by praying mentally or in a low voice (*en pensee et bassee voix*). There is no thought of equaling the angels as courtiers.[54]

While it is certainly true that neither the *Devise* nor the manuscript as a whole engages with the contentious late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century issues of transubstantiation, soteriology, or the role of the priest, there is a rich system of signification and intertextual development at work across Magdalen lat. 41's texts. Its version of the *Devise* builds on existing familiarity with the Mass and its meaning, emphasizing participation in a court and its feasts that are at once eternal, stable, and sacramentally accessible. If one's *hostel* is made fit for God to lodge in here, one may be able to lodge in God's house hereafter: yet this overarching notion of an ultimately stable court is not a distant goal or metaphor but something interpenetrated with life in its earthly habitation. The *Devise* presents the Gospel as the rules and the form of service by which the Lord's table and banquet may be known (*li rieules et li ordenaires par quoy nous devons congnoistre la table et la refection avec nostre seigneur*, fol.152va): living the Gospel becomes commensality with God. The *Devise* gives context to the feasting, pursued in the registers both of contemplation and the courtesy book, that is one thematic strand of the collection (as in Paradise in the *Lamentacions*, text 1, and in texts 5, *La voie . . . en paradis*, and 7, Sully's wedding feast sermon). Class awareness and aesthetics deeply structure this model of devotion, but they do not necessarily exclude those of less than noble rank, any more than does a magnate's feast. At the beginning of the manuscript, the *Lamentacions*' allegory of Adam's soul as a noblewoman fought for by a king's son uses an aristocratic exemplum, but

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one that applies to all humans.[55] Spiritual aspiration is in any case encoded as the elite and the refined and offered as attractive in a wide range of medieval texts.

The movements between ferocious abjection of world and self and ardently aristocratic *courtoisie* across the book's collection also make for engagement: orthodoxy is anything but dull here and includes a surprising range of viewpoints. On the one hand, in the translation of Innocent's *De miseria*, for instance, there is the foulness of human conception, of nourishment in the womb on deflected menstrual blood, of being born, squalling, to the knowledge of mortality (fol. 89r), and the unpleasant contrast with the created world where the plants and trees put forth flowers and fruits, and humans produce saliva, urine, and excrement (*et tu aportes de toi la salive et le pissant et la fiente*, fols. 89v-90r). Life on earth is warfare and even to the animals we should rule we are but *proie* and *viande*. There is the violence of lordship and *la misere des serfs*, serfs who are often "terrified by threats, oppressed and exhausted by forced labour, afflicted and injured by wounds and beatings, and robbed of what they own" (Bk. 1, ch. xv of *De miseria*, fol. 92v). And there is lordship's pointlessness: "*Je me purchaçay chanteurs e chantereesses, henaps et orciaux*"—"I acquired musicians, drinking cups and sacred vessels," says Solomon (fol. 91vb)—and for what? The man of sense endures this world as an exile and is enclosed in his body as in a prison (fol. 94vb).

On the other hand, God's love is to be responded to with *fin' amor*'s intensity and integrity, just as (in text 4, fol. 67va) one praises a gold cup by saying that is entirely of refined gold (*fin or*), and not of gilt. Like the Magdalen at Christ's tomb, one intensely seeks news of the beloved and sends jewels and fine gifts of devout prayer and pure meditation; one weeps lacerating tears with the desire of being with him and faithfully (*loyaument*) accepts his gifts, the jewels of poverty, anguish, tribulation, and adversity, with which he inflames those he loves. "*Je bat et chastie ceulx que j'aime*," says the manuscript's Christ (fol. 68vb).

THE MATRON AND THE BOOK

Elizabeth de Vere's book vigorously constructs exile and alienation as the human condition, in order to offer a home at an inviolately and permanently stable court, where allegiance is always to the same king and to an uncontest-

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ed throne. So too the manuscript's library of texts, portable through change and exile, is also a constant virtual court community, in which one is both in stasis, always in a posture of existential humility and abjection, and yet always also dynamically rising or slipping downwards in relation to the king over specific points of behavior and feeling. The book's spirituality is imagined and performed in a household community participating metonymically in the royal household of God, and pursued in the magnate household of earthly court or cloister. This spirituality might well speak with special eloquence to the privileged and yet catastrophe-ridden lives led by many noblewomen and their families during the English conquest of France and the Wars of the Roses. The collection in Magdalen lat. 41, as earlier noted, remained remarkably stable from the late fourteenth to the late fifteenth centuries and must have been familiar to many elite people from either side of the Channel. For this Countess of Oxford at the end of her life in 1473/74, the family life, home, and good works that supported chaste married piety as represented in Bokenham's *Legendys* were over, and nunneries had become a refuge, or perhaps even, in the light of Richard of Gloucester's depredations, the only place left to Elizabeth de Vere. Her French book perhaps offered perspectives close to her late life experience of the misery of the human condition, together with its counterpart, the hope of stable dwelling in God's secure household.

The historical connections between Elizabeth de Vere and her book can be only suggestive, not proven, but the multilingual nature of the contributions made to devotional culture by "chaste matrons" as patrons and practitioners is not in doubt. In the spirit of Carolyn Collette's explorations of Anglo-French culture, we can bring the traditions of cross-channel francophone spiritual writing back from the desert in which they currently live, suspended between scholars of English and French. Whether the subjectivities of a book are more illumined by the history of its owner or vice versa is a matter for discussion, but I would argue that even one such object as Elizabeth de Vere's book (let alone the others of its kind) enforces a more complex account of late medieval English women's literary culture than anglophone nationalizing literary history permits, together with some opportunities of reimagining women's lives.

Bradbury, Nancy. *Medieval Women and Their Objects.*
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Appendix: Contents of Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 41

fol. 1r-1vb Table of Contents

1. fols. 2ra-14vb [acephalous] Lamentacions saint Bernart
2. fol. 15r Les meditacions de saint Bernart
3. fol. 38r Les contemplacions saint Augustin
4. fol. 67r Comment on doit Dieu amer
5. fol. 71r La voie par quoy nous devons aler en paradis
6. fol. 78v L'ordenance du char Helye le prophete
7. fol. 81r Un preschement de nostre Seigneur (Maurice de Sully)
8. fol. 82v Les .vii. choses que cuer en qui Dieu habite doit avoir
9. fol. 84v Comment .iiii. pechiez mortelz sont segnefiez par .iiii. bestes sauvages
10. fol. 85v De la demande que fist la mere saint Jehan et saint Jaque
11. fol. 86r Le livre de la misere de l'omme (Innocent III, *De miseria*)
12. fol. 121r Des tres grans proffis esperituelz que les tribulacions font
13. fol. 147r Enseignemens pour eschiver les pechiez de luxure, d'avarice, e d'accide
14. fol. 147v Comment on se doit garder contre aucunes temptacions
15. fol. 150r De l'aage Adam et comment il envoia Seth son filz en paradis terrestre
16. fol. 151v De la devise de la messe
17. fol. 155r L'ordenance comment on se doit confesser
18. fol. 160r Les enseignemens saint Loys au roy Phelippe son filz
19. fol. 161v Les enseignemens saint Loys a la royne de Navarre sa fille
20. fol. 163v La fin saint Loys qu'il ot a sa mort
21. fol. 164r L'ordenance de madame la contesse d'Alensson et de Bloys a sa trespassement
22. fol. 177v Le livre que fist maistre Hugues de St Victor de l'arre de l'ame
23. fol. 204v Les proverbes en prose que fist Seneca li philosophes
24. fol. 207r Les dis et proverbes des sages et premierement Catons dist
25. fol. 209v Le dit des philosophes d'Alixandre le grant quant il fu mort
26. fol. 210r Le livre qui est appelé "Je vois morir"
27. fol. 214r La Pater nostre en françois
28. fol. 214v La meditacion de la mort (with acrostic signature verses by Augustin Bongenou)

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Notes

I am much indebted to Nancy Bradbury and Jenny Adams for their editorial insight and suggestions, and for the opportunity to pay tribute to Carolyn Collette, whose generous friendship and courage and creativity as writer, academic, and teacher offer an inspiring model. I am grateful to the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study for a semester's membership and the National Endowment for the Humanities for a Fellowship that provided research time, and to Dr. Laurie Postlewate for the invitation to speak at the 2014 Barnard College Conference on "Female Community in the Ancien Régime" at which some of this material was aired. Dr. Rebecca June provided meticulous copy-editing help with an earlier version and Danielle Sottosanti and Elizabeth Light, PhD candidates at Fordham, have checked subsequent versions.

1. See for instance, Carol M. Meale, "Katherine de la Pole and East Anglian Manuscript Production in the Fifteenth Century: An Unrecognised Patron?," in *Makers and Users of Medieval Books: Essays in Honour of A .S. G. Edwards*, ed. Carol M. Meale and Derek Pearsall (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), 132–49.

2. For a valuable account of fourteenth-century French religious writing, however, see Catherine Batt, trans., *Henry of Lancaster: The Book of Holy Medicines*, FRETS 8 (Tempe, AZ: ACMRS, 2014), 1–64.

3. Carolyn P. Collette, *Performing Polity: Women and Agency in the Anglo-French Tradition, 1385–1620* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006) and numerous articles and essays.

4. A leaf at the end of the capitulum and the beginning of the first text in Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 41 has been removed, perhaps because it was one of what may have been two illustrated pages in the volume (the only illustrations in it, if so, see further n. 40 below). Text lacking due to the loss of the leaf is supplied here from Paris, BnF f. fr. 916, fol. 1r-v (punctuation and capitalization mine, i/j, u/v normalized).

5. "ainsi come nous tournons [MS trouvons] touz les fueilles d'un livre, tournons et retournons toute la vie a nostre vray amy Jhesu Crist, ja n'y trouverons se tormens non et douleur et angoisse jusques atant que la benoicte ame lui parti du corps" (BnF f. fr. 916, fol. 1v).

6. "Mais moult est li livre plus biaux quant l'enluminement est d'azur et de vermeillon ensemble. Li vermillons fu li sancs precieux du precieux corps Jhesu Crist nostre seigneur qui fu espandus pour nous en la crois," Magd. lat. 41, fol. 2ra. See Marlene Villalobos Hennessy, "The Social Life of a Manuscript Metaphor: Christ's Blood as Ink," in *The Social Life of Illumination: Manuscripts, Images, and Communities in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Joyce Coleman, Mark Cruse, and Kathryn A. Smith (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013), 17–52, for English sources, including the spec-

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tacular Carthusian development of entire pages of blood drops and blood (Plates 1 and 2).

7. For example, BnF f. fr. 916, fol. 1v, l. 10, *pertues*: BnF f. fr. 22921, fol. 2v, line 13, *serres*. See further Nancy Vine Durling, "British Library MS Harley 2253: A New Reading of the Passion Lyrics in Their Manuscript Context," *Viator* 40.1 (2009): 279–80 and n. 36. I thank Dr. Catherine Batt for this reference.

8. The prologue allegory appears to be an addition particular to the French text. As with a number of the works in Magd. lat. 41, there is no critical edition of the French *Lamentacions de saint Bernard* (also sometimes attributed to Augustine or Anselm) or of its Latin sources. The *Quis dabit*, actually by Ogier of Locedio (1136–1214), Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Locedio in Piedmont, is printed in PL182.1134–1150 and by W. Mushacke, ed., *Altprovenzalische Marienklagen des XIII Jahrhunderts* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1890), 41–50: a thirteenth-century Turin manuscript is edited by C. W. Marx, "The *Quis dabit* of Oglerius de Tridino, Monk and Abbot of Locedio," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 4 (1994): 118–29. T. H. Bestul edits and translates the *Quis dabit* from British Library MS Cotton Vespasian E i, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), Appendix I, 165–85. The continued popularity of the text in the fifteenth century is suggested by the twenty-nine printed editions between 1467 and 1568 (Bestul, *Texts of the Passion*, 210, n. 127, and see his discussion of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Latin Passion texts, 43–60). I have not been able to find a likely source manuscript, but the collection of Latin texts attributed to Gerson, Bernard, Anselm, and Augustine in BnF lat. 3352, an early s. xv compilation given to Charles d'Orléans by the King of England's notary and secretary in Rouen and subsequently owned by Jean d'Angoulême, gives a good idea of the tenor and currency of the pseudo-Bernardine texts in fifteenth-century religious culture (see BnF Gallica digitization and description at http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ead.html?id=FRBNFEAD000061241).

9. See Wilbur Gaffney, "The Allegory of the Christ-Knight in *Piers Plowman*," *PMLA* 46.1 (1931): 155–68; Rosemary Woolf, "The Theme of Christ the Lover-Knight in Medieval English Literature," *Review of English Studies* 13, no. 49 (1962): 1–16.

10. Inset within the book allegory, for example, is exegesis of the lividity in Christ's flesh using biblical citations: Christ's flesh was beautiful because his mother is "*pulcra . . . ut luna, electa ut sol* [Cant. 6.9], *c'est a dire belle comme l'alme eslevee come le soleil entre les estoilles, et apres 'Pulcra es et decora'* [Cant 6.3] *et telle la mere come le filz*," and he himself is *speciosus forma pre filiis hominum* [Psalms 44.3] and yet *non erat . . . species* [Isaiah 53.2]. (Text missing from Magd. lat. 41 supplied from BnF. fr. 916, 1vb: the Magd.lat.41 text is extant only from fol. 2ra.) The French text here seems closer to the *Quis dabit* version in PL182.1135B-C than to Mushacke, p. 44, in Bestul, p. 170 or Marx p. 124/78–82, but the discussion and citation of authorities

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is developed in the French beyond the Latin in any of the versions (whether directly or through an intermediary in either language is unclear without work beyond the scope of this paper). The Latin citations are not arcane or highly scholastic and are translated, but they imply or impart familiarity with argument from scripture.

11. The reading implied in such writing has been analyzed by Sylvia Huot, "Polytextual Reading: The Meditative Reading of Real and Metaphorical Books," in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mark Chinca and Christopher Young (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 203–22. On medieval conceptions of the book as support for human recollective work, see Mary Carruthers, "Reading with Attitude, Remembering the Book," in *The Book and the Body*, ed. Dolores Warwick Frese and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 1–33.

12. Other manuscripts are BnF f. fr. MSS 916, 918, 19271, 22921; MS nouv. acq. fr. 10237. Alexandra Barratt identified BnF MS nouv. acq. fr. 6881 as the missing continuation of BnF f. fr. 918 ("A Reconstruction of an Old French Anthology of Religious Prose," *Romania* 103 [1983]: 371–73), and identified a copy in Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale MS 1234, and a partial copy in Nantes, Bibliothèque municipale MS 212. See eadem, ed., *The Book of Tribulation*, Middle English Texts 15 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1983). Joseph Morawski (to whom the Magdalen manuscript was unknown) identifies three variant forms of the collection in his edition of *Les Diz et proverbes des sages* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1924), xii–xviii, but none concerns more than a couple of texts among the twenty-eight or so.

13. Ralph Hanna and A. S. G. Edwards, "Rotheley, the De Vere Circle, and the Ellesmere Chaucer," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 58.1 (1995): 11–35; James Ross, *John de Vere, Thirteenth Earl of Oxford (1442–1513): "The Foremost Man of the Kingdom"* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2011), 218–19.

14. Elizabeth Scrope married John de Vere, thirteenth earl, in 1509. On her volumes of medieval English religious writings, see A. I. Doyle, "Some Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey," *Essex Archaeological Society Transactions*, n.s. 25 (1958): 222–43 (at 239–43).

15. See Virginia R. Bainbridge, "Women and Learning, 1415–1600," in *Syon Abbey and its Books: Reading, Writing and Religion, c. 1400–1700*, ed. Edward A. Jones and Alexandra Walsham (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2010), 87 and n. 35. On Lydgate see Hanna and Edwards, "Rotheley, the De Vere Circle . . . ," 21.

16. Norman Davis, ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, EETS s.s. 21 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 2:501, 502, 503.

17. Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, ed. Mary Serjeantson, EETS o.s. 206 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 138:l.5024, 139:ll.5072–73, henceforth cited by line number in the text. Perhaps Isabella Bourchier knew a French Magdalen Life or Lives (of which many circulated) and wanted the newer fashion, an English-language Life.

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18. Whether Elizabeth de Vere had given active patronage to the Life, or whether Bokenham was repaying some earlier obligation is not known. It is possible that Bokenham had some earlier connection with Elizabeth de Vere that made him "bounden to hyr goodnesse": if he came from Old Buckenham in Norfolk, he came from the same area as the chief seat of the Howards, her natal family, while her de Vere marital family was based at Hedingham Castle in Essex, some eight miles south of Clare in Suffolk.

19. In addition to Lady Bourchier, there are several connections of Elizabeth de Vere's among the dedicatees to whom other lives are assigned in the compiled *Legendys* of 1447: St. Katherine for Katherine Howard (Elizabeth de Vere's natal family), wife of John Howard of Stoke Neyland near Clare Castle, and for Katherine Clopton Denston (local gentry from Melford near Clare); St. Agatha for Agatha Flegge (wife of John Flegge, a retainer of Richard, Duke of York); St. Anne for Anne, daughter of Katherine Clopton Denston and her husband, John, (local gentry as above): see further Sheila Delany, "Matronage or Patronage? The Case of Osbern Bokenham's Women Patrons," *Florilegium* 16 (1999): 97–105, and for the *Legendys*' East Anglian career, see A. S. G. Edwards, "The Transmission and Audience of Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*," in *Late Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission: Essays in Honour of A. I. Doyle*, ed. A. J. Minnis (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), 157–67.

20. Cynthia T. Camp, "Osbern Bokenham and the House of York Revisited," *Viator* 44.1 (2013): 327–52. This seems more convincing than seeing Bokenham's work as "Yorkist" in the later sense of that term: in 1445, the first Battle of St. Albans was still a decade away. Elizabeth de Vere (a Howard by birth but married into what became a Lancastrian family) and her cousin John Howard (later a leading Yorkist) seem to have remained on good terms at least until the 1460s (see Anne Crawford, "Victims of Attainder: The Howard and de Vere Women in the Late Fifteenth Century," *Reading Medieval Studies* 15 [1989]: 63–64). The figure of Elizabeth de Vere would be unlikely to function as anything but a positive example of local magnate relations around the priory in the 1440s.

21. See, e.g., Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical: Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 50–82.

22. These francophone book-gifts have been well noted by historians of women's reading but the extant volumes little studied. I cite from French-language wills here: John Nichols, *A Collection of All the Wills . . . of Every Branch of the Blood Royal from the Reign of William the Conqueror to that of Henry the Seventh Exclusive* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1780), 177–86.

23. See Michael Camille, "Visualising in the Vernacular: A New Cycle of Early Fourteenth-Century Bible Illustrations," *Burlington Magazine* 130, no. 1019 (1988): 97–106.

Bradbury, Nancy. *Medieval Women and Their Objects.*
E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9222733.
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24. J. W. Clay, ed., *North Country Wills*, Surtees Society 116 (Durham, UK: Andrews, 1908), 48–49.

25. Marilyn Oliva, *The Convent and the Community in Late Medieval England: Female Monasteries in the Diocese of Norwich, 1350–1540* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1998), 69: TNA PCC PROB/11/5/178.

26. W. H. St. J. Hope, ed., "The Last Testament and Inventory of John de Veer, Thirteenth Earl of Oxford," *Archaeologia* 66 (1915): 328.

27. For Elizabeth's father-in-law and for her husband, see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (henceforth *ODNB*) Richard de Vere, eleventh Earl and John de Vere, twelfth Earl. For the de Veres in Rouen, see James Ross, "Essex County Society and the French War in the Fifteenth Century," in *Conflicts, Consequences, and the Crown in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2007), 60.

28. C. M. Woolgar, *Household Accounts from Medieval England*, British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, n.s. 17–18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992–93), 2:537 for a payment to "Thome Frenshman' de coquina"; eadem, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 37 for a similar payment to "Johannis Frensshman."

29. Barbara N. Sargent-Baur, ed., *Philippe de Rémi*, Jehan et Blonde, *Poems and Songs* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), vv. 129–32 (Oxford), vv. 2635–61, 2695–2705, 2816–46, 3103–64 (Gloucester). The figure of the count of Oxford in *Jehan et Blonde* may owe something to the reputation of Aubrey de Vere III (d. 1194), Count of Guînes and Earl of Oxford, noted for a scandalous divorce (*ODNB* s.v. Aubrey de Vere), and later credited (by Leland) with chronologically impossible crusading feats: see Hanna and Edwards, "Rotheley, the de Vere Circle," 22–26.

30. The memorandum (Magd. lat. 41, fol. 218v) is in English (which by the later fifteenth century was increasingly used where French or Latin had been the default option in nunneries, as in secular houses). The date has been gone over in a second hand, in an apparent attempt to clarify the minims. It has been variously read as 1474/75 and 1476/77 (Doyle, "Some Books," 235. n. 7). I am grateful to the librarian and fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, who permitted me a high resolution digitization of the manuscript in which the alteration to the date is easier to read: I read it as 1474.

31. The family of a man attainted for treason traditionally became legally dead at his execution; wives were sometimes imprisoned in nunneries or kept under house arrest, though they were also sometimes allowed to keep their marital jointure lands: Crawford, "Victims of Attainder," 61–67 (62 for Elizabeth de Vere's arrest). Michael Hicks edits and discusses the depositions made by Elizabeth de Vere's feoffees and servants when in 1495, her son John had them testify to the coercion of his mother as part of his own securing of the de Vere lands: see M. A. Hicks, "The Last Days of Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford," *English Historical Review* 103, no. 406 (1988): 76–95.

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32. Amidst his own sudden changes of fortune, John de Vere was able to sentence to death John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who had presided over his father and older brother's attainders and execution and to secure Bosworth and the death of Richard III for Henry Tudor: see further Ross, *John de Vere* and ODNB, John de Vere, thirteenth Earl of Oxford (1442–1513).

33. Hicks, "The Last Days," 87–95 makes a strong case for the value of these eyewitness depositions as evidence.

34. The date of Elizabeth de Vere's death cannot be ascertained for certain beyond very late 1473 or early 1474, and her will does not survive. Her book may have gone to Barking because her third daughter Mary was a nun there (Ross, *John de Vere*, 18). The de Veres had long-standing connections with Barking, and Anne de Vere was its Abbess from 1295–1318: see E. A. Loftus and H. F. Chettle, *A History of Barking Abbey* (Barking, UK: Wilson and Whitworth, 1954), 36–38.

35. Books of executed nobles were often returned to the widows after initial confiscation: see Jenny Stratford, "The Early Royal Collections and the Royal Library to 1461," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume III, 1400–1557*, ed. Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 258–59. The volume may have been originally acquired by Elizabeth's husband, John, twelfth Earl of Oxford, or by Elizabeth or her husband when they were in Richard of York's entourage in 1440–41 in Rouen (itself an important center of book production by the 1440s), if she did not acquire it in later life, perhaps during her widowhood. Following its stay at Barking, the manuscript went after the Dissolution to Coughton Court, Warwickshire, the final home of Elizabeth Throckmorton (d. 1547), last abbess of Denny, and three of her nuns, whence it was donated by Sir Arthur Throckmorton to Magdalen College in 1626.

36. That the chances and changes of fifteenth-century elite women's lives were a subject for contemporaries is testified to by Christine de Pizan's *Epistre de la prison de vie humaine*, ed. Angus J. Kennedy (Glasgow: University of Glasgow French Department, 1984) and Alain Chartier's post-Agincourt poem, *Les quatre dames*, ed. J. C. Laidlaw, *The Poetical Works of Alain Chartier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 196–304, and see further Christopher Allmand, "After Agincourt: Women and Pain," *History Today* 62.2 (2012): 30–35, accessed Sept. 14, 2014 http://www.historytoday.com/christopher-allmand/after-agincourt-women-and-pain. The analyses in Hicks, "The Last Days," and Crawford, "Victims of Attainder," are also eloquent. It is worth noting that under comparable circumstances some women fought their corner as far as possible: in 1326, Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare, at a much younger age than Elizabeth de Vere, was imprisoned in Barking Abbey after her attainted husband's death and had to give up her lands to the Despensers: she and one of her staff or counsellors drew up a document in Anglo-Norman and Latin protesting the coercion, before de Burgh went to join Queen Isabella's rebellion against Edward II: Jennifer Ward, ed., *Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of*

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E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9222733.
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Clare, 1295–1360: Household and Other Records, Suffolk Record Society 57 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2014), xvii.

37. The decoration, script, and the language of its *scripta* all suggest continental provenance, probably Paris, as the place of the manuscript's making. On the date of Barking's memorandum of donation (Magd. lat. 41, fol. 218v), see n. 30 above.

38. See, e.g., Wendy Scase, "Afterword: The Book in Culture," in *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500*, ed. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 292–98.

39. BnF f. fr. 916 is digitised at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8539714c/f7.image. Gonnot is better known in anglophone scholarship as the scribe and compiler of the great collection of Arthurian romances in Paris, BnF f. fr. 112, but see Susan Blackman, "Observations sur les manuscrits religieux de Jacques d'Armagnac," *Livres et bibliothèques, XIIIe-XVe siècle, Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 31 (1996): 371–86.

40. The manuscript is written in a professional textura throughout, in a single hand, in two columns, without illustrations. However, one leaf has been cut out between the table of contents and the first item (one other is similarly lost at the beginning of the prologue to item 22, a translation of Hugh of St. Victor's *De arrha anime*), and it seems very likely that this was because these leaves had illustrations, such as occur in this position in the anthology copies in BnF f.fr. 916, fol. 1r; BnF f. fr. 22921, fol. 1r; Lyons, Bibliothèque municipale MS 1234. In another of the textura copies of the anthology, BnF f. fr. 19271, the leaf that most probably held an opening illustration has been similarly taken out and the *Lamentacions* text is first present, acephalously, on fol. 2r.

41. The opening illustration for the collection is in several extant cases a crucifixion, but BnF f. fr. 916, fol. 1r, Jacques de Nemours's copy, shows a congregation of contemporary fifteenth-century women and men—another fifteenth-century socio-spiritual community—listening to Christ (who is barefoot in a brown robe), while a Cistercian monk, presumably representing St. Bernard rather than his fellow Cistercian Ogier of Locedio, is visible in a window, writing his text, from the courtyard in which the listeners sit.

42. On continental French religious books, see the numerous foundational studies of Geneviève Hasenohr, e.g., "La littérature religieuse," in *La Littérature française au XIV-XVI siècle*, ed. Daniel Poirion et al., GRMLA VIII (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1988), 1:266–305; and more recently, Sean L. Field, "From *Speculum Anime* to *Miroir de l'âme*: The Origins of Vernacular Advice Literature at the Capetian Court," *Mediaeval Studies* 69 (2007): 59–110. For some beginnings for insular French religious literature, see Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "'Our steward, St. Jerome': Theology and the Anglo-Norman Household," in *Household, Women, and Christianities in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 133–65; eadem, "'Cest livre liseez . . . chescun jour': Women and Reading *c.*1230-*c.*1430," in *Language and*

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Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100-c. 1500, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2009; pbk., 2013), 239–53, and on the fourteenth century, Batt, trans., *Henry of Lancaster*, Introduction.

43. A cross-channel example that has had recent attention is a collection of nineteen texts made for Marie de Bretagne (d. 1339). All three extant copies of the collection represent a figure of this granddaughter of Henry III in identical iconography, contemplating a crucifixion where the upright of a Tau cross is the spine of a large bifolium and Christ's hands reach to the edge of the verso and recto: see Aden Kumler, "Translating ma dame de Saint-Pol: The Privilege and Predicament of the Devotee in the *Legiloque* Manuscript," in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Karen L. Fresco and Charles D. Wright (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 35–53 and fig. 3.4; Huot, "Polytextual Reading," 208–9 and fig. 1; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Making a Home with God: Elite Women as Aliens in Late Medieval England," paper delivered at the British Academy conference on Aliens, Foreigners and Strangers in Medieval England, c. AD 500–1500, 26–27 March 2015.

44. Many of the manuscript's texts remain unedited or without a critical edition: I am grateful to Mr. James Fishwick, Reader Services Librarian at Magdalen College Old Library for a copy of Magdalen's catalogue description of MS lat. 41 with its helpful initial identifications of some of the texts. On text 2, the Pseudo-Bernard *Meditacions* (not by Bernard, though incorporating some of his work, text in PL185. 485–508), see R. Baron and R. Bultot, "Les 'Meditationes' Pseudo-Bernardines sur la connaissance de la condition humaine. Problèmes d'histoire littéraire," *Sacris Erudiri* 15 (1964), 256–92; R. Bultot, "Encores les 'Méditations' Pseudo-Bernardines," *Sacris Erudiri* 16 (1965), 425–27; Sean L. Field, "Reflecting the Royal Soul: The *Speculum anime* Composed for Blanche of Castile," *Mediaeval Studies* 68 (2006), esp. 17–18. On the Pseudo-Augustine traditions (text 3) see Geneviève Hasenohr, "Les traductions médiévales françaises et italiennes des soliloques attribués à Saint Augustin," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 79 (1967): 299–370.

45. I have not been able yet to identify texts 5–6 and 8–10 other than to find that text 5 (*La voie . . . en paradis*) is not closely related to Robert de Sorbonne's *De Tribus Dietis*. For the Sully sermon (text 7), see C. A. Robson, *Maurice de Sully and the Medieval Vernacular Homily with the Text of Maurice's French Homilies from a Sens Cathedral Chapter Ms* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), 188–90.

46. There were three prose and several verse versions of Innocent's *De miseria* in French: Magd. lat. 41's is exemplified in thirteen other manuscripts, but the critical edition planned by Robert Bultot never appeared. Manuscripts of this and the other translations are listed in *De Miseria condicionis humanae*, ed. Robert E. Lewis (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 67, n. 10.

47. On the version of the *Livre de tribulation* in Magd. lat. 41, see Barratt, ed., *Book of Tribulation*, 18–20.

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48. See Kathleen Ashley, trans. "The French *Enseignemenz a Phelippe* and *Enseignement a Ysabel* of Saint Louis," in *Medieval Conduct Literature: An Anthology of Vernacular Guides to Behaviour for Youth, with English Translations*, ed. Mark D. Johnston (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 3–16. For the Comtesse d'Alençon, see Henri Platelle, "Les Regrets de la Comtesse d'Alençon († 1292): un nouveau manuscrit, un nouveau texte, un modèle religieux," *Romania* 110 (1989): 426–65.

49. Pierre de Hangest is briefly discussed among other translators of *De arrha* by Geneviève Hasenohr and Robert Bultot, eds., *Le* Cur Deus homo *d'Anselme de Canterbury et le* De arrha animae *de Hugues de Saint-Victor* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut d'études médiévales de l'Université catholique de Louvain, 1984), 88–89 (an edition of Pierre Crapillet's translation). De Hangest's substantial translation is extant in eight manuscripts. The only other manuscript currently known to me that includes Magd. lat. 41's prologue is Arsenal MS 2247, where Hangest's text occurs alongside Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* with a miniature of an unknown noblewoman presenting the manuscript to Charles V.

50. Bongenou seems to have been active in Picardy or Artois in the earlier fourteenth century: his acrostic appears in proverb compilations in BnF n.a.fr. 6882 and 10327, and he may be the compiler of this group of *memento mori* texts and proverbs ("Notice de "Augustin Bongenou" dans la base Jonas-IRHT/CNRS [permalink: http://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr/intervenant/5258]"), though not necessarily (*pace* Morawski, *Diz et proverbes*, xv) of the whole anthology.

51. The manuscript (MS BnF f. fr. 13342) contains a copy of the *Mirour de seinte eglyse* of Edmund of Canterbury as well as a treatise on the mass, and is connected through its artists with the Queen Mary Psalter: Aden Kumler, *Translating Truth: Ambitious Images and Religious Knowledge in Late Medieval France and England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 122–26 and fig. 37. It is digitized at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b105094193/f95.image. For images of acolytes pushing laypeople out of the sanctuary and of elite men and women witnessing the elevation and taking communion, see Alixe Bovey, "Communion and Community: Eucharistic Narratives and their Audiences in the Smithfield Decretals," in *The Social Life of Illumination*, ed. Coleman, Cruse, and Smith, 53–82.

52. Georgine E. Brereton and Janet M. Ferrier, eds., *Le Menagier de Paris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 286, n. 12, n. 13. The Menagier makes a priority of "l'amour de Dieu et la salvacion de vostre ame," necessary to gain both the love of one's husband and the peace there should be in marriage (3, §5). For an excellent study which pays attention to the Menagier's Mass instruction as well as to socioeconomic issues, see Glenn Burger, "Labouring to Make the Good Wife Good in the *journées chrétiennes* and *Le Menagier de Paris*," *Florilegium* 23.1 (2006): 19–40.

53. On the tradition that humans can directly participate in the song of the an-

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gelic orders, see Margot Fassler, *Gothic Song: Victorine Sequences and Augustinian Reform in Twelfth-Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), "The Alleluia and its commentators," 30–33.

54. Brereton and Ferrier, eds., *Menagier*, 14, Bk. I, iii, §12.

55. On the range of late medieval reading communities engaging in devotional francophone reading in northwest Europe, see Margriet Hoogvliet, "Encouraging Lay People to Read the Bible in the French Vernaculars: New Groups of Readers and Textual Communities," *Church History and Religious Culture* 93 (2013): 239–74 (see especially 265–73).

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PART 3

Bodies, Objects, and Objects in the Shape of Bodies

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CHAPTER 9

Objects of the Law
The Cases of Dorigen and Virginia

Eleanor Johnson

Of the many recurring themes in *The Canterbury Tales*, how women can or cannot gain access to legal agency is one of the least studied, despite being one that Chaucer investigates at least three times.[1] This theme emerges relatively early on in the Ellesmere order of the *Tales*, in "The Man of Law's Tale," in which Custance finds herself in England as the object of a pre-Christian murder trial.[2] Although things look dicey for her, given that a corrupt knight has bloodied her hands with the gore of her ostensible victim, Custance's status as one of God's chosen emissaries for Christianity ultimately saves her: no human justice, no mortal mode of evidence, nor any earthly trial proceeding, the tale suggests, could possibly countervail divine justice. Indeed, whizzing into the trial scene come God's hand, smiting Custance's slanderous accuser on the neck, and God's voice, revealing the truth of her innocence in a paradigmatically ungainsayable way. In response to these divine interventions, the local embodiment of earthly justice—King Alla—acquits her of her alleged crime and, moreover, converts himself and his people to Christianity.[3] In this conversion, the law of man is shown to be subordinate to God's justice, so that a woman can become not a powerless *object* of the law but rather a de facto *agent* of the law, an instrument or conduit through which law exerts itself, where that law is dually the law of the English king and the law of God.[4] Custance, indeed, shifts from being an object of man's law to being the Christianizer of the English law itself. In this shift, the tale makes a positive comment on the moral righteousness of the Christianized English Common Law and on its availability even to relatively disempowered members of the commonwealth, like women.[5]

This idealistic affirmation of the law of man as a system of justice in

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which women can function not as objects but as agents is reexplored and, ultimately, undercut in two much later tales from the Ellesmere order—"The Franklin's Tale" and "The Physician's Tale"—on which this essay centers. The former tale stages the susceptibility of the law to perversion and miscarriage by first demonstrating the dangerousness of contracts and second showcasing the potential for interpretive error that is encoded into the very logic of case law. The latter takes a yet darker turn, by showing how a state legal system, already vulnerable to corruption and misconstruction, can be turned into a veritable mongrel of injustice when that state legal system comes into conflict with an even more ancient, insidious, and inflexible system of justice. In the end, as I will demonstrate, the Franklin and Physician each offer a sobering corrective to the Man of Law's optimistic perspective on women's access to legal agency. The Franklin and Physician each insist that we recognize the law's dangerous capacity to treat women merely as objects of value, where that value consists in their status as exchangeable sexual objects. Each tale will meditate on whether women can extricate themselves from their objectified status by mobilizing precedents; but each tale will, in its own way, conclude that precedents are not always efficacious in saving women from their objectification.

DORIGEN'S MANY CONTRACTS AND MANY CASES

"The Franklin's Tale" uses legal discourse to enact a multifaceted inquiry into the nature of two kinds of legal interpretation: one, the interpretation of contracts and, two, the interpretation of precedents.[6] This dual inquiry highlights how legal interpretation structures human social relations, particularly for women, in a way that can be objectifying and dehumanizing at worst or, at best, merely coercive. The tale stages the logic of contractual discourse—the language of obligation, debt, promise, and covenant—and shows how that logic can be marshaled in the service of patriarchalism and authoritarianism; it does so by pinning Dorigen between two conflicting contracts with men. Dorigen's entrapment in multiple overlaid contracts puts her in a position where she seems only to have two options: first, she can allow herself to be a nonagential object of the law of contract; second, she can follow a stream of case precedents for suicide in an effort to circumvent the contractual overlap.[7] It is a grim choice she faces, and one that the tale will stage as painstakingly as possible, deploying an ever-increasing

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array of lexemes that—although each on its own can participate in many different lexicons—combine together to signal the tale's intense interest in problems of agency in the law of contract.

The tale's fascination with contractual agency appears from the very start, albeit in a romantic context. In the beginning of the tale, we meet a knight named Arveragus who marries a beautiful woman named Dorigen. Their exchanged vows of marital fidelity constitute the primary contract in the tale, in opposition to which the subsequent ones create friction.[8] The Franklin's account of their marital vows very carefully deploys the language and logic of binding contractual obligation: Arveragus "swoor" (V.745) an oath "of his free wyl" (745) that he would never take mastery over Dorigen "agayn hir wyl" (748).[9] Thus, both parties are shown to engage in their marital obligation through their free will, and the obligation is consecrated with an oath. Of course, these terms and the taking of oaths are part and parcel of standard medieval marriage rites, but as Chaucer's tale progresses, it will hone in on specific terms that foreground the contractual obligation inherent in marriage—a contractual obligation that will be important to the rest of the tale.[10]

Indeed, Dorigen's response to Arveragus's freely willed oath of obligation revolves around the words *trouthe* and *trewe*, which have, as Richard Firth Green has shown, taken on tremendous ideological significance as concepts in the law of contract by the late Ricardian period.[11] Prior to the Ricardian period, these terms seem primarily to have denoted something like interpersonal trust or honor, thus befitting a tale about marriage. But during the Ricardian period, concomitant with the rise of documentarianism in the laws of contract and obligation, the terms come increasingly to signify a more technical legal notion, that of documentary verifiability and the creation of legal contracts. Thus, when Dorigen agrees to marry Arveragus, packing two versions of this emergent legal keyword into her vow, "Sire, I wol be youre humble *trewe* wyf— / Have heer my *trouthe*—til that myn herte breste" (758–59), we are urged to think not just about her honesty and trustworthiness but also about the legally binding nature of a marriage vow. Dorigen is wed to Arveragus not only by her honor but by a binding contractual obligation.[12]

Soon thereafter, Arveragus heads out on an adventure voyage for a couple of years without his wife—never a good idea in romance narratives—during which time Dorigen, ever-faithful, pines for him, worrying obsessively over what she calls "the grisly rokkes blake" (859), the seemingly agential

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objects on the shore, which she fears might sink his returning ship. In an attempt to protect him from these grisly rocks, she prays for him to return to her safely—exerting what little agency she feels that she has over inanimate objects that seem far more powerful than she. Indeed, Dorigen seems perplexingly obsessed with these rocks, as she later helplessly wails, "But, Lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake, / That semen rather a foul confusion / Of werk than any fair creacioun / Of swich a parfit wys God and a stable / Why han ye wroght this werk unresonable?" (868–72). What incites such anxiety in Dorigen is that these rocks seem to possess not just agency but also malicious will—in contravention of God's wisdom and perfection. They seem to Dorigen hell-bent on harming her beloved, through their rocklike immutability and their stubborn refusal to obey reason. She imagines them having a great degree of direct power over her and her husband's fate, in obvious contrast with the powerlessness that she herself feels to keep him safe. In sum, for her, the agential rocks represent, metonymically, the law of Nature itself: inscrutable, arbitrary, uncontrollable, and intermittently malicious.[13] They are the distillation in miniature of the many possible deaths or adversities to which Arveragus would be exposed on every day of his voyage, and they reveal to her the precariousness of her happily contracted marital bond with her husband.

It is this sense of powerlessness to control her reality and protect her marriage that preforms her willingness to enter into a second contract, which countermands the first with Arveragus. While Arveragus has been away, Aurelius the squire has become erotically obsessed with Dorigen. He has tried in various ways to woo her, but she has proved as stonily unmovable in her loyalty to her marital contract with her husband as have the grisly rocks in their mindless menace. Even so, Dorigen eventually takes pity on Aurelius, making a vow that, if he can make the grisly rocks disappear, she will favor him with her love (988–98). Contract number two, obviously in conflict with her marital contract with Arveragus, thus emerges, resulting from her wish to subordinate the agency she perceives the rocks to have—from her fantasy that she can divest the rocks of agency by exerting agency herself.[14]

She enters into this second verbal contract, of course, believing the disappearance of the rocks to be a complete impossibility—indeed, the tale specifically says that she enters into this contract with Aurelius "in pley" (988).[15] And she is not alone: Aurelius calls the feat of disappearing the rocks "an inpossible" (1009). This claim of impossibility is pointed: it raises a particu-

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larly complex issue in early contract law. In the emergent medieval English law of contract, any contract or covenant that is entered into between two or more parties, in which any condition of the contracted service or obligation is impossible can be ruled unenforceable and nonbinding.[16] But, awkwardly, an impossible contract *can* also be ruled binding, with the impossible term of the contract alone ruled unenforceable.[17] Thus, the tale sets up this second contract pointedly as a meditation on the limits of contractual obligation: on the one hand, this contract is clearly entered into with no serious intention behind it and is marked for its impossibility. But on the other, since such a contract *could* be argued binding in a court of law, Dorigen could legally become the object of exchange in the contract, as well as the agential subject who—however jestingly—initially entered into it. Seemingly to get us out of this legal snarl, the legal underpinning of Dorigen's vow to Aurelius is—or at least should be—fully evacuated when Arveragus returns: since Arveragus is home, the rocks no longer *need* moving. Both for its prima facie impossibility and for its post factum irrelevance, then, the second contract with Aurelius should be null and void.

But that would be a pretty dull tale.

And the tale is not dull; it is keen to explore the absolute limits of contractual obligation between people. For this reason, the tale confects a way—far-fetched though it is—to obviate the impossibility problem. In order to coerce Dorigen into honoring her contract with him, Aurelius has no choice but to turn to magic. Broken-hearted, Aurelius goes to meet with a magician in Orleans, and they strike up yet another bargain and enter into a third contract: Aurelius will pay a thousand pounds if the magician makes the rocks vanish. And, miraculously, the deed is shortly done:[18] "But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or tweye / It semed that alle the rokkes were awaye" (1295–96). This is most distressing for fair Dorigen, who launches into a monologue about her deplorable position, again evoking the contractual concept of possibility—"Allas . . . that ever this sholde happe! / For wende I never, by possibilite / That swich a monstre or merveille might be!" (1342–44)—to indicate the level of injustice of her entrapment in a sexual contract with Aurelius, in which she herself has now become the object of exchange. For the second time, Dorigen signals why the contract might be ruled nonactionable—its central obligation being "inpossible"—but here, she sees herself as nevertheless beholden to the terms of the contract, since the ostensibly "inpossible" event has "semed" to find fulfillment. Once the rocks have disappeared, Dorigen shifts from being an agential subject who deploys

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contractual language to being a nonagential object of that contract—the good that is to be exchanged for its fulfillment—entrapped and rendered powerless by the supervening authority of her own contractual vow.

Grasping her disempowerment through her contractual obligation to Aurelius, she falls back on a mainstay of common law procedure: she recites a slew of near precedents for her current predicament, in an attempt to gain clarity on what she should do.[19] Specifically, she lists the scores of unhappy women in history and literature who, trapped by fate and the evil workings of men, have chosen to slay themselves rather than succumb to sexual dishonor. Women, that is, who have chosen to render themselves absolute objects—corpses, rather than volitional human beings—in response to entrapment in a sexually degrading situation in a supervening patriarchal system of power and legal relationality.

As she recounts these precedents for female suicide in cases of loss of sexual value, she deploys language that resonates with contract law:

> But nathelees, yet have I levere to lese
> My lif than of my body to have a shame,
> Or knowe myselven fals, or lese my name;
> And with my deth I may be quyt, ywis. (1360–63)

Here, by describing her death as an "acquitting" of her obligation to Aurelius, she semantically flags her situation as a contractual problem: she, like the Man of Law in his tense conversation with Harry Bailey, will "acquyt [herself] now of [hir] biheeste" (II.37).[20] To be sure, the language of "quyting" can have many valences in Middle English—including the famous inter-pilgrim "quyting" that provides the central agonism of *The Canterbury Tales* overall. But, in context of "The Franklin's Tale"'s overall thematic interest in contractuality, and the ever-growing net of contractual language in the tale, Dorigen's particular usage of this term sounds in a rather more legally specific key.

As her lament continues, she deepens and complicates its embedded legalism in several ways. She does so first by noting the specifically trespassory nature of the sexual bind in which she finds herself. From there, she coordinates her own contractual trespass with those of many women before her:

> Hath ther nat many a noble wyf er this,
> And many a mayde, yslayn hirself, allas!
> Rather than with hir body doon trespas? (1364–66)

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But Dorigen's sense that her problem is one of contractual obligation and legal conflict is not limited to her registering of her need to "acquit" herself of her obligation, nor to her awareness of the impending bodily "trespass" to which she is ensnared. Her next lexical foregrounding of the legal nature of her plight comes when she anchors her listing of the virtuous women before her as constituting some kind of legal precedent for her case. She does so by again deploying the lexicon of legal procedure, saying, "Yis, certes, lo, thise stories beren witnesse" (1367) to what she herself must do. Next, she specifies the "bearing witness" that she expects her stories to do as "case" precedent a few lines later: "O Cedasus, it is ful greet pitee / To reden how thy doghtren deyde, allas! / That slowe hemself for swich manere cas" (1428–30). The unprepossessing line "That slowe himself for swich manere cas" amplifies the legality of this moment not only by using the word *cas* but also by implicitly raising the logic of case law: situations that arise in legal cases are resolved by looking back to historical cases that work in "such a manner," or, in the same way. The precise events do not need to be the same, but the manner does. Dorigen's already contractually inclined mind—having made one with Arveragus and another with Aurelius—is quick to fall into legal logic, and even to "pleyn" in a manner evocative of presenting cases: "Thus pleyned Dorigen a day or tweye, / Purposynge evere that she wolde deye" (1457–58). The term "pleyned," of course, means "complained" or "lamented," but, cognate with "plaintiff," it can also mean to present a case. Given the proliferation of contractual and legal language around this term and in "The Franklin's Tale" more broadly, it seems designed to signal the kind of "complaint" Dorigen makes as a precedential, legal one. Ironically and painfully, Dorigen is not only the accused in this imaginary trial, but is also her own prosecutor. By recounting precedential cases ad nauseam in which women faced with sexual disgrace choose self-slaughter over shame, Dorigen builds a case against herself, weaving herself more and more deeply into the web of patriarchal legalism that she has fallen into through her overlapping contracts.

The patriarchal ensnarement of Dorigen takes a turn soon thereafter, when she confesses her bind to her husband, Arveragus. Happily, it seems, Arveragus is supportive of her, bidding her to do what she must to protect her "trouthe" (1474) to Aurelius, and vowing that he will try to "endure" (1484) the insult of having his wife couple with another man. In this tale, evidently, the cumulative authority of case law is not enough to keep Dorigen ensnared in a disempowering obligation that results in self-harm.[21] In

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this tale, through the collusion between Arveragus and Dorigen, precedent becomes an *option*, not a mandate; how contracts get fulfilled, that is, can vary freely according to circumstances and according to the free wills of the agential parties involved. By confiding in Arveragus and, with his permission, overriding her list of narrative precedents, Dorigen reclaims her agency even within a contractual system of overlaps that seemed bound to be her undoing.

Or does she? Despite the fact that Arveragus addresses his distraught wife "with glad chiere, in freendly wyse" (1467), thus putatively playing the role of a supportive and understanding spouse, the particulars of his creation of a loophole in his marital contract with Dorigen are far from straightforwardly geared to spare Dorigen any distress. When Arveragus tells Dorigen she shall hold her truth, he adds the oath, "by my fay" (1474). Seemingly innocuous, this oath begins to reveal that Arveragus's true motives in having Dorigen guard her "trouthe" to Aurelius are far from magnanimous. He tells Dorigen that *he* would rather be "ystiked" than have her break her honor (1476–78), thus registering her honor as *his* problem, as *his* concern. Immediately thereafter, he anchors this impression further, noting that "Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe" (1479)—not woman, but *man*. Evidently, Arveragus understands this renegotiation of terms with Dorigen primarily through his sense of his *own* honor, not hers. Indeed, he quickly insists that he will murder her if she ever breathes a word of her tryst with Aurelius to anyone (1480–83). From there, he says "As I may best, I wol my wo endure" (1484), thus construing her impending affair with Aurelius as *his own woe*, rather than Dorigen's; in so doing, he utterly elides her own feelings. Arveragus, that is, allows her this loophole not so much for *her* sake, nor to promote her sense of freedom and agency, but because it seems right to him to uphold the contract, so long as he can keep his own honor untainted. Arveragus, then, actually supports the patriarchal system that seeks to objectify Dorigen through contractual entrapment and coercion. The lack of agency felt by Dorigen is tragically encapsulated in her statement to Aurelius, made "half as she were mad" (1511), that her husband "bad" (1512) her to hold her "trouthe" with Aurelius, "allas! allas!" (1513). She may have escaped the precedential fate of suicide, but she has not accessed true agency as a legal subject.

Even so, there is a relatively happy conclusion to the conflict. When Dorigen goes to tell Aurelius of her husband's decision, Aurelius is so moved by the "gentilesse" of Arveragus that he decides not to hold her to her con-

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tract, instead releasing her of all her bonds.[22] In releasing her, Aurelius recapitulates the language of *trouthe* that we encountered in the first contract between Arveragus and Dorigen as well as the language of contractual obligation that Dorigen had so recently uttered:[23]

> "Madame, seyth to youre lord Arveragus
> That sith I se his grete gentilesse
> To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse,
> That his were levere han shame (and that were routhe)
> Than ye to me sholde breke thus youre trouthe . . .
> I yow relesse, madame, into youre hond
> Quyt every serement and every bond . . .
> My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve
> Of no biheste . . ." (1526–30, 1533–34, 1537–38)

In this story, there is a trickle-down effect of truth: Arveragus and Dorigen hold to their truth, which exerts hermeneutic pressure on Aurelius to interpret his contract liberally as well, rather than holding Dorigen to a contract made as an ostensible "inpossible" obligation. Through this emergent economy of *trouthe*, Dorigen's agential status is maintained, as is her sexual virtue. It must be noted, however, that the core dynamic in this scene is between the two men: it is because of Aurelius's perception of Arveragus's honor (1527) that he releases Dorigen of her bond. The power dealing is between two agential men, with Dorigen acting merely as the object of exchange.[24] She may escape self-slaughter at this point, but she does not gain ground as a fully fledged agent in brokering her own contracts and determining her own value.[25]

Unfortunately for Aurelius, his dissolution of his contract with Dorigen does nothing to relieve him of *his* contractual problem, because of his preexisting agreement to compensate the magician for making the rocks vanish. Aurelius laments, "I se namoore but that I am fordo. / Myn heritage moot I nedes selle, / And been a beggere; heere may I nat dwelle . . ." (1562–64). When he goes to the magician, however, the pressure to demonstrate generosity and *trouthe* between men continues: the magician absolves Aurelius of his contractual debt, following Arveragus's and then Aurelius's example, so that Aurelius will not have to sell off his patrimony and inheritance.[26] The magician says, eliding Dorigen altogether, "Leeve brother / Everich of you dide gentilly til oother / Thou art a squier, and he is a knyght / But God

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forbede, for his blisful might / But if a clerk coude doon a gentil dede / As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!" (1607–12). In keeping with the thematics of the rest of the story, honesty, good intention, and *trouthe*-keeping among men are contagious,[27] even if that contagion is born of each man's desire to keep his own reputation for being "gentil" intact, and the magician forgives Aurelius's debt, claiming that Aurelius's true intention to perform his end of the bargain "is ynogh."

On the one hand, this seems a rather sanguine take on the interpretability of legal obligation. It is a tale in which the *trouthe*-based interpretations of contracts enable everyone to thrive. In the end, by each person's reliance on their own agential *trouthe*, the destabilizing social effects of conflicting contracts are undone. The tale has borne witness to a drama of language, in which interpersonal relationships are created, endangered, broken, and remade by the verbal enactment and dissolution of promises and contracts, and in which *trouthe* is sometimes better maintained by flouting case precedents and breaking contracts than by adhering to them.

But on the other hand, the tale implicitly registers that these truth-based, honor-saving contractual loopholes are designed by and for *men*. Dorigen, throughout the tale, is the object of the law—the object of her marital contract, the object of her contract with Aurelius, the object of her litany of precedential *felo de se*, the object of the new contract she makes with Arveragus. To be sure, the rigid law of contractual obligation and the rigid logic of precedent have some give in them, but only when the wielders of those laws are men. In the end, contracts and precedents are objects: they have power only insofar as male interpreters grant power to them. If male interpreters instead deny all-encompassing power to these legal instruments, then the male interpreters themselves become the agents and authors of the law, rather than its passive objects. Women, on the other hand, remain the law's objects all the while.

Unlike "The Man of Law's Tale," which imagines the fundamental and historical underpinning of British law as just and Christian, "The Franklin's Tale" insists that we recognize the potential dangerousness of contracts, words of obligation, and the ways in which they can imperil self and social relationality—particularly for women.[28] But in the end, "The Franklin's Tale" evinces its own flavor of optimism about the law, suggesting that if all male parties bring their *trouthe* to the negotiation table, and, moreover, if all parties are willing to bend the strict letter of case precedent to suit the exigencies of a particular situation, a just outcome can be arrived at, in which

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all parties survive intact. For the Franklin, the justness of legal relationality is underpinned by the justness and free exercise of interpretation of the male agents of the law whose lives are interconnected by an ever-shifting net of obligation that can be recast as needed.

THE CONFLICTING JURISDICTIONS OF VIRGINIA

"The Physician's Tale," by contrast, paints a far darker picture of the law, showing it to have a dangerous tendency to objectify women beyond reason and redemption. As will become clear, the Physician, who speaks immediately after the Franklin in the Ellesmere order, sees overlapping jurisdictions, legal procedures, and case precedent not as potential resources to be exploited for the creation of greater and more prosocial *trouthe* among men, but rather simply as machines by which women run the risk of being trapped in the status of radically contingent, nonagential objects. Although not widely regarded as one of Chaucer's more compelling tales, "The Physician's Tale" is not without its driving philosophy.[29] Indeed, I would suggest that the Physician tells a tale of astonishing sophistication about the socio-legal plight of women living in a patriarchal society. Throughout, the tale bodies forth a programmatic and witheringly critical interrogation of how women's bodies can become the objects of law and what the consequences are of that objectification. The tale will stage a situation in which there are so many competing claims on the body of a woman that she cannot tell her own tale, cannot speak in her own defense, and certainly cannot—as the Franklin would have us believe—rely on well-disposed and truth-seeking male intercessors to extricate her from legal binds. To this end, the Physician structures his tale carefully as an imaginative pitting of a particularly corrupt version of the medieval English law of villeinage—the law that governs the free or unfree status of people—against the long-standing Roman law of the *pater familias*, to suggest that, in the absence of innately just and law-abiding male representatives, young women are terrifyingly vulnerable to being converted into mere objects in the eyes of the law.[30] Their vulnerability to being converted into objects—objects of fragile sexual value—means that, at least in "The Physician's Tale," women have no real legal agency. In the Physician's story, women's un-power to tell their own tales, their un-power to overwrite and rewrite the law is irredeemable and tragic, as Virginia's demise makes clear.

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We meet the beautiful, young, virtuous Virginia, the legitimate and thus free-born daughter of a knight named Virginius and his wife (VI.5), through the eyes of the Physician himself, who describes her beauty and gentility at great length, taking up, indeed, nearly half the story with detailed meditations on her excellence. Once the Physician has introduced us to Virginia, he turns to tell how Appius, a local judge, is smitten with desire for her, after catching the merest glimpse of her while she is on her way to temple. Rather than attempting to woo Virginia, however, as Aurelius had initially done with Dorigen, this judge uses the legal machinery at his disposal, in essence, to steal her: he colludes with his henchman, the *cherl* Claudius, to claim that Virginia is *not* in fact the legitimate daughter of the knight Virginius and his wife, but is instead a *thral* that has been stolen by Virginius. Rather than conforming to standard procedures for pursuing a villeinage case, namely procuring a naifty writ against Virginia,[31] and instead availing himself of his boss's privileged status as the maker of legal documents, the *cherl* Claudius simply presents a "cursed bille" (176) at court, asserting that Virginius, "Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee, / Holdeth, expres agayn the wyl of me, / My servant, which that is my thral by right" (181–83). Without further examination, without assembling witnesses to attest to the churl's allegation,[32] without even hearing a word of self-defense from Virginius (191–97), Appius passes summary judgment: "The cherl shal have his thral, this I awarde" (202). Thus, the judge bends the law of personhood to his sexually depraved will, superimposing unfree status—that of a "thral"—on a free woman, superimposing on her, that is, the status of an object in the eyes of the law.

Further activating a reader's legal awareness and complicating that awareness by insisting on some of the moral problems that can emerge through the wrongful enforcement of villeinage law, that bill mentions that Virginius has broken "al equitee" (181) in keeping Virginia for himself, ironically invoking a key phrase—equity—for bringing suit before an appellate court.[33] But this evocation of "equitee" does not result in equitable judgment, but rather in its opposite: instead of waiting for Virginius to defend his daughter, Appius summarily rules against him, awarding Virginia to Claudius, who will hand her back over to Appius himself. Evidently, the very law of equity itself can be badly corrupted in a trumped up trial of villeinage, and can instead be converted into a mechanism of legal corruption by the powerful men who control the law's mechanisms and devices.

Although Chaucer follows Livy and the *Roman de la Rose* in setting the

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tale in Rome, the evocation of villeinage law is designed to resonate with the legal culture of fourteenth-century England, since the law of villeinage had been a feature of the English legal landscape for many generations by the time Chaucer wrote. But the Physician's evocation of villeinage law comes at a moment in English history at which the law that governed free/unfree status is under strain: in the wake of the plague years, as the labor supply in England has declined, the problem of controlling populations of serfs and regulating the status of laborers has become an increasingly volatile and complex issue.[34] Thus, when Virginia's status comes up for examination by Appius and Virginius, the contemporary fourteenth-century legal awareness of the precariousness and intricacy of determining someone's free status would be quickened. This poem, that is, quietly announces itself not as pertaining to Rome but as pertaining to contemporary medieval Europe, and as meditating on how this contemporary law could be miscarried and perverted in England.[35]

Virginia has been deprived of her status as a free woman through a corruptly conducted and summarily executed villeinage trial. She herself, we must note, has not even been called to account for herself, nor to defend her right to her free status.[36] Virginia is, to this point in the tale, utterly mute, merely a disputed object of value in the eyes of the law. And in this omission of Virginia's access to justice, the Physician's dark legal exemplum parts ways with the Man of Law's much more sanguine presentations of women's access to legal power, their access to agency via either God's truth or their own ability to tell their own tales.[37] It also parts ways with "The Franklin's Tale"'s more complex optimism about a *trouthe*-ful law maintained by good men, by reminding readers what can happen when the men who control the law fail in their role as upholders of *trouthe*.

But this grotesque abuse of the procedures and mechanisms of the law is not the limit of Virginia's woe, indignity, and objectification. Instead, when Virginius returns home to report to her what has happened, we find that Virginia is caught between one dehumanizing and highly corruptible jurisdiction—the law of villeinage—and another: the law of her own father as the Roman *pater familias*. He decides that, rather than allowing his daughter to be debauched and dishonored, he will simply execute her by striking off her head—literalizing her status as an object by rendering her a corpse. As atrocious as this decision may seem, it is critical to recognize that a father in the ancient Roman legal system was perfectly within his rights to slay a daughter,[38] particularly one who destroyed or threatened to

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destroy the family's honor by engaging in illicit sexual acts.[39] The conflict in the tale, then, is between a corruptible and patriarchal extrafamilial mode of power and a Draconian and patriarchal intrafamilial one.[40] Appius's justice is the justice of social control, which seeks to keep unfree persons unfree, to regulate motion and movement, and to control the female body. Virginius's justice is the justice of honor, the protecting and sequestration of family cohesion and the *nom du père*. Indeed, even her own name derives directly from her father's; her independent personhood is radically compromised from the get-go.

Virginia thus is set up as "a pure object," caught between two competing and overlapping legal jurisdictions, each of which derives its juridical power by denying the independent humanity and agency of its subjects, and each of which is equally susceptible to misuse by the men who control it.[41] She has, to this point in the tale, exerted no power, spoken no words, participated in no meaningful way in the processes that determine and delimit her life, and yet her fate has been categorically and ineradicably determined. As the Physician presents it, both of these systems of justice are lamentable, according to the reactions of the local populace, although it is crucial to note that it is Virginius's familial law that ultimately triumphs: the family can do an end-run around publicly corrupt justice by taking the law into its own hands and exerting power directly and irrevocably over a living body. It does so, simply and awfully, by turning that living body into a radical object, a corpse, which cannot in any way impinge upon the honor of the family, because of its abject lack of agency and correlative fixity of signification. As in the Franklin's narrative, so here an interpersonal solution is offered to legal entrapment. But here that solution is coded as extremely tragic: both Harry Bailey and the Physician himself find Virginia's fate horrifying (288–93).

And yet, within the tale itself, there does seem to be some kind of emergent and possibly salvific mode of true justice. Virginius's choice to slay his child seems to meet, if not with the approval of the locals, at least with their understanding, since Virginius goes unpunished for the slaughter.[42] Once Appius's malfeasance is discovered, by contrast, the populace responds by imprisoning him (268), indicating their intolerance for his corrupt exercise of legal power. Appius's corruption of the local legal system, then, is corrected by the community. And it is corrected in part through the expert knowledge of the locals themselves: according to the Physician, the people were aware of Appius's shady character (266), so the judgment against him was not difficult to reach. Meanwhile, in a more surprising move, Virgin-

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ius, heretofore entirely unable to exercise merciful or equitable judgment on anyone's behalf—including and especially his own daughter—finds it in his heart to beg leniency on Claudius's behalf, so that he will be exiled rather than killed for his collusion with Appius (274, 273). Thus, Virginia's entrapper escapes her cruel fate by the exercise of the very kind of equitable ruling that she herself was utterly denied.

But this conclusion to the tale raises a rather perplexing problem. How has the populace—including Virginius himself—suddenly become empowered, capable of exercising its own legal agency as interpreter of the law? How have they managed, at this late stage, both to punish Appius's corruptness *and* to understand the value of equitable rulings? In some strange way, I would suggest, Virginia's death seems to have righted the legal system in her city. It seems to have done so by integrating the local knowledge of people who were able to attest to the characters of the parties involved. The manner in which the locals use Appius's known character as evidence against him corresponds with how medieval English jurors were meant to bring their own knowledge of the character of an accused party to bear on their assessment of his probable guilt.[43] From Virginia's lamentable death, that is, we see an emergent form of common law procedure and common law justice, a justice based on the collective exercise of immediate knowledge. From Virginia's death, from witnessing that gross injustice, the people of her town learn their proper role as, in effect, guarantors of the law.

This canniness about legal procedure, this staging of the careful exercise of collective, community knowledge about a person's status and character, reflects how villeinage trials are supposed to work in England in the late Middle Ages. In a case of 1283, a judge rules that the circumstances of a defendant's allegedly unfree status are complex enough to warrant the formation of a full jury, so as better to assess the all-important question of whether the defendant's father was or was not unfree.[44] Communal knowledge is ground zero of villeinage procedure in medieval history; the judgment of the people is what is supposed to attest to a person's status and, in many cases, to defend that person's freedom. Unfortunately that shared, communal knowledge arrives too late for Virginia herself. Virginia, object of the corrupted consistory justice and the twisted patriarchal logic of her father, becomes, in effect, the point of origin for true and collective justice in her death.

But why? To answer that question, we must note that, despite Virginia's lack of control over her own fate, she *does* speak up, however briefly and ineffectively, in her own defense. She begs her father first for "mercy" (231),

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and then she evokes the language of equity courts, asking her father if there is no "grace" or "remedye" for her situation (236).[45] In this plea, not present in Chaucer's sources, she channels fourteenth-century English legal theory, recognizing that in cases of misapplied justice, the best available recourse is to appeal a ruling in a court of equity, by relying on the traditional formulae for assessing nonequitable prior judgments, namely that they now need the king's grace, conscience, and remedy to be resolved properly.[46] She shows herself aware, that is, of the logic of the English appellate system, notwithstanding her residence in Rome. But her father—relying on his Roman right as the *pater familias*—flatly denies her access to remedial justice. At this point, having exhausted all possibility of equitable appeal or remedy, she has no choice but acquiesce to his harsh and arbitrary ruling that she must die.

But, even as she acquiesces in body, in voice she asks for a moment to make her own complaint, to tell her own story and express her feelings. In so doing, in making herself an author, however briefly, she resists the tale's overarching pressure on her to remain simply and unqualifiedly an object. As a precedential justification for her wish to lament, she makes reference to the biblical story of Jephthah, who unrighteously slew his daughter (240). Virginia notes that even this woman was allowed to complain before her execution and that, here again relying on the technical vocabulary of the law, Jephthah's daughter did no "trespass" in her request for self-expression (242). In this brief and pointedly juridical reference to the biblical story, Virginia reminds the Physician's audience of the fundamental nature of their own shared legal system, their own shared legal habits: she reminds them of the logic of case-as-precedent, the same logic that Dorigen performed in her recitation of historical female suicides. By locating her own right to complain in the precedential biblical story of Jephthah's daughter, Virginia simultaneously calls attention to English legal logic *and* reminds her audience that all legal authority derives ultimately from the Bible, the Old Testament, the book of God's Law itself, not from the wicked earthly justices and narcissistic fathers who notionally represent that law.

Indeed, Virginia's case-based protest against the justice of this ruling is savvy not simply in terms of its formal articulation or its procedure but also in terms of its explicit content. As medieval exegetes well recognized, Jephthah's slaying of his daughter was wildly unjust; he was condemned as being overly obedient, overly strict, and unable to moderate justice for her daughter based on extenuating circumstances.[47] Thus, at the moment of her own death, Virginia is able to marshal a precedent that not only justifies her

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own request for a moment to express herself but also quietly undercuts any notion that Virginius could possibly be justified in taking matters into his own hands as he does. Virginia's final lament, although not efficacious in saving her own life, nevertheless succeeds in highlighting the wrongfulness of both of the two legal systems within which she is trapped. For the Physician, patriarchal systems of law that derive a woman's value from her sexual purity and seek to regulate that purity, either by documentation or violence, must be counterbalanced by equitable collective judgment and an awareness of the hermeneutic flexibility with which one ought to approach the law that governs personal freedom.

The implicit dual critique of the law in "The Franklin's Tale"—a critique of the dangers of contractual obligations and a critique of the authority inherent in precedent—becomes a rather more explicit, and far more damning, critique of the law in "The Physician's Tale." There, rather than seeing how like-minded and *trouthe*-ful people can work even dicey legal circumstances to their benefit, we see how two conflicting but equally patriarchal forms of legal power are forcefully exerted over the body of Virginia and how she, debarred from any kind of authority or power as an agential subject, can only exert influence on her city's deeply corrupted legal system once she has become a corpse, a radical object, and one now devoid of sexual value, but impregnated with a surplus of symbolic, ideological value as a case of unexercised equity. Her precedent-based complaint about Jephthah's daughter has no efficacy in the end for her; but her very vulnerability, powerlessness, and ultimately mortality, her ability to suffer an unjust death, finally prompt the legal reformation we witness in Appius's imprisonment and, ironically, Claudius's partial pardon. Her legally reforming power consists solely in her fully achieved status as an object, a thing, a nonperson. Thus, in the end, "The Physician's Tale" enacts a two-pronged critique of the law, both as a real structure of power in the political world and as an interpersonal structure of power in families, that amplifies the objectification and dehumanization of women as at once a possible side effect of those systems of power *and*, seemingly, as the initial condition for the exercise of collective judgment and equity. That is, in "The Physician's Tale," it is Virginia's death that prompts the evolution of a better justice in Rome; women's objectification lies at the heart of justice, whether that justice is corrupt or equitable.

In the end, then, "The Physician's Tale" serves as a bleakly cautionary corrective to "The Franklin's Tale," with all of its emphasis on free will, generosity, and interpretation as efficacious in determining the actionability of

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contracts and precedents that determine the fates and statuses of women.[48] Where Dorigen survived her contractual double-bind, Virginia has no such salvation from the conflicting laws of villeinage and patrimony, no such recourse to well-disposed men who have legal power. Women, the Physician warns, do not often have the kind of power that men have to bend the law to their will. At baseline, in legal situations, women are vulnerable to being converted into exchangeable objects of sexual value while they are alive, and into nodal objects of ideological heft when they are dead. Since they cannot always tell their own tales, cannot always interpret case precedent for themselves, cannot serve as their own jurors or judges, they too often end up instead subject to the hermeneutic practices of the men who surround them, insuring and ratifying their status as objects of value in the eyes of the law and of the law's male practitioners.

Notes

1. Chaucer's interest in how women are barred from legal power in other poems has been more studied. Focusing on *Troilus and Criseyde*, Christopher Cannon has read Criseyde's letter in book five as a manifestation of Chaucer's awareness that women had relatively little access to legal representation in the late English Middle Ages. See Cannon, "The Rights of Medieval Women: Crime and the Issue of Representation," in *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 156–85.

2. Maura Nolan has studied the utility and gravity of legalism in "The Man of Law's Tale." In Nolan's view, "For a vernacular poet such as Chaucer, seeking to establish not only his own authority but also the authority of poetic and secular discourse itself, the language of the law could provide an essential vocabulary of legitimacy." See Maura Nolan, "Acquiteth Yow Now," in *Letter of the Law*, ed. Emily Steiner and Candace Barrington (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 152.

3. For more on Custance as a moving signifier of Christianization and specifically of Christian justice, see Joseph Grennen, "Chaucer's Man of Law and the Constancy of Justice," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 84 (1985): 498–514. Susan Heinzelman also discusses how Custance brings Christianity with her. See Susan Sage Heinzelman, *Riding the Black Ram: Law, Literature, and Gender* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 7–9. See also Eleanor Johnson, "English Law and the Man of Law's 'Prose' Tale," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 114 (2015): 504–25.

4. Heinzelman sees this moment as a proto-nationalistic coming into being of an English legal polity in *The Canterbury Tales*. See Heinzelman, 2.

5. Helen Cooney sees the tale itself as an enactment of a providential view of his-

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tory. She also sees Chaucer's specific alterations to Trevet's text as designed to underscore the Man of Law's will to believe in divine justice. Helen Cooney, "Wonder and Immanent Justice in the *Man of Law's Tale*," *Chaucer Review* 33 (1999): 264–87, at 267 and 283. Kathryn Lynch has come to a more ominous reading of the tale, in which the Man of Law's vision of the law is "confused" by his awareness of the competing claims made by God's law, common law, and mercantile law. See Kathryn Lynch, "Diversitee betwene hir bothe lawes," *Chaucer Review* 46 (2011): 74–92, at 92.

6. For an analysis of the development and evolution of the law of contract, see S. F. C. Milsom, "Not Doing is No Trespass; A View of the Boundaries of Case," *Cambridge Law Journal* 105 (1954); see also Milsom, "Trespass from Henry III to Edward III," *Law Quarterly Review* 74 (1958). For a further anatomization and analysis of the history of the law of contract, see A. W. B. Simpson, *A History of the Common Law of Contract* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 506–38.

7. Alan Gaylord registers that the core problem for Dorigen in the tale is one of two conflicting contracts, one between her and Arveragus and one between her and Aurelius. Gaylord, "The Promises in *The Franklin's Tale*," *ELH* 31 (1964): 331–65, at 342.

8. The numerous records of lawsuits between parties about the legal enforceability of a marital covenant, bond, or contract attest to the seriousness of the contractual obligation that marriage had become by the late Middle Ages in England. In one case from the 1490s in London, a woman tries to free herself from an engagement that was witnessed and entered into using the correct formulae for betrothal; even her mother testifies against her in the case, fearing damage to her own reputation if her oath were to be found untrue (she had sworn in favor of the daughter's marriage during its initial contracting). See *Love and Marriage in Late Medieval London*, ed. Shannon McSheffrey (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publiations, 1995), 37–40. As R. H. Helmholz has shown, the words exchanged are the central and necessary constituent of a legally enforceable marriage: ". . . all the cases required an actual exchange of promises and words which clearly related to marriage. The contract might be difficult to evaluate, but an actual contract there had to be." See Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 45.

9. Larry D. Benson, ed., *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). References to this edition noted by line number parenthetically in the body of the essay.

10. Emma Lipton has also noted how carefully the words of Dorigen and Arveragus echo the formulae required for binding marriage—though Lipton also draws out how the Franklin's protagonists emphasize their own free will and mutuality, indicative of the tale having taken on board the values of "sacramental marriage." See Emma Lipton, *Affections of the Mind: The Politics of Sacramental Marriage in Late*

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Medieval English Literature (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 29–30, 34.

11. See Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 1–31, 199, 200, 236–37.

12. For a fuller discussion of marital contractuality in general and specific instances in which the medieval law seeks to establish the legally enforceable status of specific marital contracts, see Helmholz, 25–73.

13. Gerhard Joseph has argued that this indictment of natural law stems from an initial misunderstanding of God's supervening providence, and that Dorigen's anger toward God is part of what blocks her from true understanding and from a productive resignation to God's order. See Gerhard Joseph, "The Franklin's Tale: Chaucer's Theodicy," *Chaucer Review* 1 (1966): 20–26.

14. Alan Gaylord, considering Dorigen's "promise" to Aurelius, notes the solemnly covenantal tone of their exchange, but notes that "legalism" was not necessary in Aurelius's mind (335).

15. For this reason, Wood has criticized Dorigen's "single-mindedly literal" compulsion to honor the contract; this reading, however, blunts the legal-theoretical sophistication of the tale. Chauncey Wood, "Of Time and Tide in the 'Franklin's Tale,'" *Philological Quarterly* 45 (1966): 688–711, at 701–2. Alan Gaylord, though, has noted that in her initial articulation of her "solemn promise" to Aurelius, Dorigen clearly believes her vow would never be meaningful because the terms of its fulfillment were so difficult (334).

16. See A.W. B. Simpson, *A History of the Common Law of Contract: the Rise of the Action of Assumpsit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 107–8, 525. See also William McGovern, "The Enforcement of Informal Contracts in the Later Middle Ages," *California Law Review* (1971): 1145–93, who notes that the late fourteenth-century justice Finchdean ruled that "if a man is bound by his deed to do a thing which is impossible to be done (although it is his folly) still the deed is void" (1144). For other cases on the voidance of contracts made with impossible terms, see 11 Rich 2 (Ames) 211 (1388); in this case, a covenant was ruled unenforceable because of an inevitable act of God (a tempest). *Year Books of Richard II: 11 Richard II (1387–1388)*, ed. Isobel Thornley (London: Ames Foundation, 1937).

17. Simpson, 29, 108. For other cases in which the court seems mixed on whether the impossibility of the terms of the contract do or do not rule it nonbinding, see Y. B. Mich. 31 Edw. 1 (1303). In this case, Bereford ruled the impossible contract binding, but Toudeby dissented. *Yearbooks of the Reign of Edward the First: Years XXX and XXXI,* Rolls Series no. 31, ed. Alfred Harwood (London: Longmans, 1863), 476–77. For Bereford, an impossible condition could be ruled irrelevant to the ultimate doing of the contract, if the contract's other terms were possible. Toudeby felt that the impossible term invalidated the whole.

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18. Or seems to be: the consensus in scholarship at this point is that the "magician" actually just waited for the tides to come in, and that readers of Chaucer's poem likely would have known that to be the case, leaving Dorigen's belief in her own accountability to Aurelius only all the more problematic. See Anthony Luengo, "Magic and Illusion in 'The Franklin's Tale,'" *JEGP* 77 (1978): 1–16, at 12; see also Gertrude White, "The *Franklin's Tale*: Chaucer or the Critics," *PMLA* 89 (1974): 454 and Chauncey Wood, "Of Time and Tide in the 'Franklin's Tale,'" *Philological Quarterly* 45 (1996): 688–711. The most compelling proof, in my view, for this reading comes in an astronomical history article that argues for a freakishly high tide off the coast of England and France around the time Chaucer was born. See Donald Olson, Edgar Laird, and Thomas Lytle, "High Tides and the Canterbury Tales," *Sky and Telescope* (2000): 44–49.

19. Steele Nowlin also notes the centrality of precedential logic to this tale; indeed, in Nowlin's view, the characters of the tale must gradually realize that there are options beyond those dictated by precedent, and Arveragus's forgiveness of Dorigen is central in that realization. See Nowlin, "Between Precedent and Possibility: Liminality, Historicity, and Narrative in Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale*," *Studies in Philology* 103 (2006): 53, 55.

20. For a treatment of how this phrase activates associations with common legal procedure, see again Nolan, "Acquiteth Yow Now," 145–49.

21. "Arveragus has chosen the spirit over the letter; the new covenant of love and truth over possession and law" (White, "Chaucer or the Critics," 456).

22. Lipton sees this release of Dorigen and Arveragus as an indication that the friendship dynamic of mutuality between Dorigen and Arveragus has spilled over, as it were, into Aurelius as well, so that he is now bonded as by friendship to Arveragus. See Lipton, *Affections of the Mind*, 42.

23. Referring to this passage, Gaylord notes that Aurelius talks as if he is revoking a "chattel mortgage" (Gaylord, "Promises," 345). But Gaylord goes on to ask why *anyone* would think Dorigen had truly entered into any kind of binding agreement with him, given that her intention is obviously not behind it, and suggests that there must be something morally (or hermeneutically) wrong with Aurelius for even attempting to hold her to her word (Gaylord, 347). For Gaylord, the takeaway from the tale is that "rash promises are not to be kept," in keeping with contemporary legal and moral treatises; this decisive and moral reading, however, blunts the edge of what I think Chaucer (via the Franklin) is up to: thinking through the hermeneutic and physical difficulties that arise through the creation and dissolution of contracts (Gaylord, 352). In his view, Dorigen's promise, although worded as a solemn promise, should not at all be construed as one (Gaylord, 357).

24. Putting rather a positive spin on this dynamic, as White puts it, "In the Franklin's Tale, the real magic is not that of the clerk of Orleans. It is Arveragus' 'trouthe,' which maintains the reality of an ideal in a world full of physical and moral menace"

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(White, "Chaucer or the Critics," 462). Kathleen Kennedy sees the interactions between the men of this tale as "competition," with Aurelius "making an implicit power play against Arveragus" that only begins to resolve with Arveragus's orders to Dorigen. See Kennedy, *Maintenance, Meed, and Marriage in Medieval English Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 40.

25. As Kennedy puts it, "Arveragus steps in to clarify the situation, and *lay down the law* in his marriage, in an attempt to define, to fix, the degree of her autonomy relative to his" (Kennedy, *Maintenance, Meed, and Marriage*, 40).

26. See also Lipton, *Affections of the Mind*, 42–44. Lipton construes these homosocial bonds positively, as evidence that the mutuality and friendship of Arveragus's marriage with Dorigen has suffused the nonamatory relationships of the tale as well.

27. Alastair Minnis elegantly refers to this as the "chain-reaction of *gentilesse*." See Minnis, "From Medieval to Renaissance? Chaucer's Position on Past Gentility," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 72 (1986): 227.

28. This is not, of course, to say that late medieval English women had no power in the law, nor even to say that Chaucer thought or the Franklin thought they had no power. As Carolyn Colette has shown, certain categories of women in the English Middle Ages often had a great deal of legal power, particularly high-ranking women such as Anne of Bohemia in Ricardian England. See Collette, *Performing Polity: Women and Agency in the Anglo-French Tradition, 1385–1620* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 99–121. What I am suggesting here is rather that the Franklin is interested in meditating on the *vulnerability* of women in legal situations, a vulnerability borne of the fact that their access to legal power and agency is far more attenuated, partial, and contingent than is that of the men who surround them.

29. John Hirsch notes that most scholars view this tale as wildly problematic and thematically incoherent. See John C. Hirsch "Modern Times: The Discourse of the 'Physician's Tale,'" *Chaucer Review* 27 (1993): 387–95, at 387. Lee Ramsey also describes the tale's ill-favor among scholars. See Lee Ramsey, "'The Sentence of It Sooth Is': Chaucer's Physician's Tale," *Chaucer Review* 6 (1972): 185–97.

30. Jerome Mandel has argued that the tale is fundamentally about governance, where the judge represents the state and Virginius represents family. See Mandel, "Governance in the 'Physician's Tale'," *Chaucer Review* 10 (1976): 316–25.

31. As Paul Hyams has demonstrated, suits of villein status—also called "naifty cases"—were almost invariably initiated by the claimant, who sued for repossession of the alleged serf as his property. The claimant would have to produce a naifty writ, as well as two male witnesses who could speak affirmatively to the defendant's unfree status. See Paul Hyams, *Kings, Lords, and Peasants in Medieval England: The Common Law of Villeinage in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 162–67, 174–75.

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32. The production of witnesses to the accused's serf status was absolutely critical to the suing of a naifty case: without two witnesses who would swear to the accused's being a serf, the suit failed automatically. See Hyams, *Kings, Lords, and Peasants*, 174–75.

33. Indeed, it was under Richard II that the equity-oriented appellate courts of chancery were first developed in the late fourteenth century, to deal with conflicts between the Common Law and the (Roman) Canon Law of English Ecclesiastical courts. See Charles P. Sherman, "A Brief History of Medieval Roman Canon Law in England," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 68 (1920): 245–46. For an updated and more detailed overview of the origin and early evolution of the concept of equity in medieval English appellate courts of chancery, see P. Tucker, "The Early History of the Court of Chancery: A Comparative Study," *The English Historical Review* 115 (2000): 791–811, esp. 794–97.

34. See May McKisack, *Oxford History of England, vol. 5: The Fourteenth Century, 1307–1399* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 335–37, 341–42. Indeed, there were cases in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that were quite similar to what we will see happen to Virginia—involving probably collusion between plaintiffs and witnesses in suits about a third party's free status. In 1269, a court reverses the judgment of a previous court, which had assigned unfree status to a freed man. The reversal of the decision noted that the previous court had not undertaken appropriate measures to verify that the person in question was, indeed, a villein; instead, the first court had simply taken the testimony of two witnesses produced by the plaintiff, which persuaded the county court that the man was unfree. See *The Earliest English Law Reports*, vol. 3, ed. Paul Brand (London, 2006), 122 SS 6–7. In 1345, a plaintiff sues for recovery of his alleged villein, bringing that alleged villein's alleged grandfather to testify that he himself was a villein of the plaintiff's grandfather, to be inherited by the plaintiff, and that the defendant was his own grandson. Fascinatingly, the defendant counterclaimed that his own father was a bastard, and thus not the child of the alleged grandfather, so that the suit of villeinage could not be prosecuted. See *Year Books of the Reign of Edward the Third: Year XIX, Rolls Series no. 31, Part B*, ed. Luke Owen Pike, (London, 1906), 32–33. This case illustrates how suits of villeinage relied on the testimony of local people as to the nature of their relationships with the accused. A similar case, wherein the accused claims his own father is a bastard in order to escape the accusation of villeinage, occurs later in the same year. See *Year Books of the Reign of Edward the Third*, 110–13.

35. Chaucer's immediate source, *The Romance of the Rose*, also has Appius's servant call Virginia his slave, thus invoking a villeinage situation. But Chaucer amplifies both the specific legal language pertaining to this law and its potential for corruption (his references to equity and the cursed bill) and how precisely the trial is conducted. Chaucer was likely inspired to think through the logic of villeinage law

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from his sources, but he significantly augmented the legal attention to it in his own redaction. See *Roman de la Rose*, ed. Armand Strubel (Paris: Lettres Gothiques, 1992), 5594–5654.

36. From the vantage point of medieval English villeinage law, it must be noted, this was at once highly unusual and highly typical. Although people on trial as potential serfs were indeed always supposed to be present at their own trials, making Virginia's absence a conspicuous miscarriage of justice, it is also true that women's testimony counted for practically nothing in practice in villeinage suits. Indeed, in a villeinage trial of 1279, a justice ruled that two women's testimonials in a suit of villein status were inadmissible because women are inherently less reliable as witnesses than men, and of lesser status in the eyes of the law. See *The Earliest English Law Reports , vol. 3*, ed. Paul Brand (London, 2006), 122 SS 63–65. Paul Hyams notes that it is possible women were allowed to testify in villeinage cases in which women were on trial, but there are no surviving cases to affirm that possibility. See Hyams, *Kings, Lords, and Peasants*, 175.

37. R. Howard Bloch notes that it is difficult to understand what the narrative motivation is for such an awful story. Bloch, "Chaucer's Maiden Head," *Representations* 28 (1989): 113–34 at 113. He further notes that the plot is hugely illogical—Claudius's accusation is improbable, Appius's demands are ridiculous, Virginius's lack of fighting back is implausible (113). Ultimately, in Bloch's view, the tale is designed to stage the medieval ideology of virginity (115).

38. See Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1986), 118, 131.

39. In most cases, for a *pater familias* to kill a daughter for sexual acts, she would have had already to commit adultery; in this case, the killing is preemptive. See Jane Gardner, *Family and* Familia *in Roman Law and Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 121–22.

40. Anne Middleton notes that Virginius repeats Appius's abuse of power, confusing his role as father with his role as absolute governor. See Middleton, "'The Physician's Tale' and Love's Martyrs: Ensamples Mo than Ten as a Method in *The Canterbury Tales*," *Chaucer Review* 8 (1973): 18.

41. Anne Middleton argues that Virginia is made into a "purely passive object," whom her father can, by rights, sacrifice (Middleton, "Love's Martyrs," 21).

42. Daniel Kline reads Virginius as a torturer, who views his daughter only as an extension of himself. See Daniel T. Kline, "Jephthah's Daughter and Chaucer's Virginia: The Critique of Sacrifice in *The Physician's Tale*," *JEGP* (2008): 77–103, at 77–78.

43. Roger D. Groot, "The Early-Thirteenth-Century Criminal Jury," in *Twelve Good Men and True: The Criminal Trial Jury in England, 1200–1800*, ed. J. S. Cockburn and Thomas A. Green (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 3–35, esp. 34–35. See also Thomas Andrew Green, *Verdict According to Conscience: Per-*

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spectives on the English Criminal Trial Jury 1200–1800 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 8, 10–12, 16, 52.

44. See *The Earliest English Law Reports, vol. 4*, ed. Paul Brand (London, 2007), 123 SS 445–46.

45. This is also the language of Christian repentance; the logic that underpins equity language is, of course, the same logic that underpins repentance: the logic of conscience-taking, whereby one party seeks the merciful intercession of a more powerful party's conscience-motivated judgment on their behalf. But in the context of "The Physician's Tale," in which court scenes and worldly justices dominate, I would construe these lexical choices more squarely in legal discourse than religious. It may also be designed to evoke the logic of royal pardon, which, as Helen Lacey has shown, centers on the idea of obtaining the king's "grace." See Lacey, *The Royal Pardon: Access to Mercy in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, UK: York Medieval Press, 2009), 20.

46. In medieval England, the Chancery court, which delivered equitable appellate decisions for previous misapplications of justice, was designed to provide "remedy" (Tucker, "Early History of the Court of Chancery," 804–5, 807 n. 1) according to the dictates of "conscience" (Tucker, 806, 807 n. 1, 810) and "grace" (Tucker, 800).

47. Richard Hoffman notes a series of parallels between Judges XI and "The Physician's Tale." Richard L. Hoffman, "Jephthah's Daughter and Chaucer's Virginia," *Chaucer Review* 2 (1967): 20–31.

48. Hoffman and Peter Beidler have also noted close parallels between "The Franklin's Tale" and "The Physician's Tale," arguing that the two are authorially designed as a pair. In addition to finding parallels between the plots of the two tales, Beidler sees strong juxtapositions between the two heroines, Dorigen and Virginia: in his view, Virginia's virtue, modesty, and chastity function as retroactive correctives to the imprudence, impulsivity, and impatience of Dorigen. See Hoffman, "Jephthah's Daughter," and Peter G. Beidler, "The Pairing of 'The Franklin's Tale' and 'The Physician's Tale,'" *Chaucer Review* 3 (1969): 275–79.

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CHAPTER 10

Galatea's Pulse

Objects, Ethics, and Jean de Meun's Conclusion

Robert R. Edwards

In her letter of 1401, responding to Jean de Montreuil's now-lost *opus gallicum*, which had defended the *Roman de la Rose* in virtually all respects, Christine de Pizan addresses the scandalous ending of Jean de Meun's poem. She describes the Lover's allegorical pilgrimage to sexual consummation as "la tres horrible et honteuse conclusion" ("this very horrible and shameful conclusion").[1] Christine objects to Jean de Meun's breach of literary decorum, his choice of genres, and his handling of allegory; she acknowledges the literary accomplishments of the *Rose* yet finds the poem all the more dangerous for its virtues.[2] Her most damning objection, however, is that Jean has said nothing new. Christine rejects any possible claim by defenders of the *Rose* that Jean speaks at the end of the poem "par maniere de jolie nouvelle," in a clever, transferred sense using figures such as metaphor: "je te respons que en ce nulle estrangeté ne nous raconte!" ("I respond that he does not tell us anything extraordinary whatsoever!"). She repeats the point a few lines later: "mais nulle nouvelleté en ce ne nous anonce" ("but he does not tell us anything new in this"). *Estrangeté* means something strange, surprising, mysterious, or extraordinary. *Nouvelleté* is not just news but novelty, a new or extraordinary fact.[3] The underlying problem that Christine identifies here lies not in the order of language (diction, discursive conventions, or figurative modes) but in the order of things themselves.[4] Jean's conclusion fails, she says, as a material account of objects and the sensuous experience of bodies in the world. Do we not know, Christine asks, how men usually and

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naturally have sex with women ("Ne scet on comment les hommes habitent aux femmes naturellement")?

Christine's material critique of Jean's allegory involves not just figuration but forms of knowledge. It asks specifically, what new knowledge can be derived from material things? In the ending to the *Rose*, this question moves from aesthetic to erotic to ethical concerns. It addresses not just what things are or what they represent but how we are to understand them. To track this movement, I want to look first at the narrative framing of Jean's conclusion, then at Jean's rewriting of the Pygmalion and Galatea episode, an embedded parallel to the consummation scene, and finally at the hermeneutic lens that this redacted Ovidian story offers for the Lover's sexual possession of the rose. Jean's conclusion, I shall propose, maps a shift from desire to appetite—that is, from an erotic demand constrained yet constituted by deferral and repetition to one that aims for terminal gratification.[5] Jean's conclusion is "horrible and shameful" because the Lover substitutes the reductive consumption of appetite for the moral complexities and knowledge of desire.

"UNE YMAGETE EN LEU DE CHASSE"

At the end of the *Rose*, Jean de Meun makes his most aggressive display of material objects in a poem that has largely used them as euphemisms for female bodies. As the barons mustered in service to Love prepare to renew their attack on the Castle of Jealousy, Venus draws her bow to fire a burning arrow through a narrow opening ("une petitete archiere," 20792) located between two silver pillars that Nature has placed on the front of the castle.[6] Her target is a small statue occupying the place of a reliquary or shrine in a sanctuary: "Une ymagete en leu de chasse" (20799). At this point, however, Jean halts the narrative action of the poem to introduce and embed the story of Pygmalion and Galatea. His stated purpose is to draw a comparison between the statue in the tower and the statue of Galatea created by Pygmalion. The Lover describes the likeness as that of a mouse to lion. When he resumes the narrative, Venus fires the arrow to induce panic in the castle's defenders. She does so, Jean remarks, in a way too subtle ("si soutiment," 21256) to be perceived, though the effect is to drive the defenders from the castle, free Fair Welcome, and set the Lover on his allegorical journey as a sexual pilgrim to penetrate the statue and take possession of the rose.

In the conjoined *Rose*, the Pygmalion episode serves a number of poetic

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functions.[7] It may have been originally written as a separate example of rhetorical *imitatio*, but it operates as a rhetorical digression that both retards and amplifies Jean's narrative.[8] The episode aligns the cultural prestige and authority of a classical source with vernacular romance and links myth with the allegorical narrative. Structurally and thematically, it balances the Narcissus episode in the first part of the *Rose*; by extension, it counters Guillaume de Lorris's courtly erotics with the alternative of Jean's materialism. The episode also elaborates Jean's succession of Guillaume as the author of the *Rose*, for it gives Jean the final, emphatic position over Guillaume as an imitator and reviser of Ovid. Pygmalion makes the thematic contrast overt when he remarks that Narcissus futilely sought to embrace his own insubstantial reflection ("son ombre, 20879)—futile because it offered no sensory, tactile pleasure as a material object: "Onques ne s'enpot solacier" (20880). Often used in a figurative and courtly sense of consolation or pleasure, *so(u) lacier* carries a primary sense of "caress."[9] Though he registers the anxiety of his desire and resembles the foolish Lover of the *Rose* ("Se je vuel folement amer," 20868), Pygmalion sees himself in the world of matter and touch as against Narcissus's phantom realm, which is exemplified by Narcissus's inability to possess what he sees in the fountain. Pygmalion lays claim to the material embodiment that eludes Narcissus: "la prens et acole et baise" ("I hold and embrace and kiss it," 20885). For most readers of the *Rose*, these differences follow the lines that Daniel Poirion neatly outlines: Narcissus is the man of the look, and Pygmalion is the man of the hand.[10]

Within the frame of Jean's conclusion, the Pygmalion episode represents a decisive turn to the material. The comparison deals with the *ymagete* placed within the tower and the "ymage d'ivuire" (20826) carved by Pygmalion and likewise called "l'ymagete" (20825.01). Unlike Poirion's thematic juxtaposition of courtly gaze and material hand, this comparison places material objects directly into relation with each other. It is the relation of objects in Jean's poem that constitutes a form of knowledge. This is what Jean means in his famous authorial remarks about proceeding dialectically, "des contraires choses" (21573).[11] Though the first-person voice in the *Rose* moves subtly between the poet-narrator and the Lover narrating his dream, here the voice is arguably that of the poet commenting on the structural disposition of his work. It thus establishes a point where the conceptual stakes of objects—the literalized images and figures of allegorical discourse—stand revealed in their power to sustain complex understanding.

Jean makes it clear that the comparison he sets out is an act of judg-

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Fig 10.1. Pygmalion and Galatea. (By permission of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Philip S. Collins Collection, 1945-65-3, fol. 143v.)

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ment guided by reason and the powers of understanding. After describing the *ymagete* in the tower, he offers an exposition that promotes a surprising application and *utilitas*:

> Et se nus, usans de raison,
> Voloit faire comparoison
> D'ymage a autre bien portrete,
> Autel la puet fere des ceste
> A l'ymage Pymalion
> Comme de soris a lyon. (20811–16)

> [If anyone, using reason, were to draw a comparison between this and any other image, he could say that this image was to Pygmalion's as a mouse is to a lion.]

Jean's comparison aims to make these two objects of women intelligible. They are comparable, he says, in being well executed and fully realized as objects of making ("bien portrete"). They are above all objects of manufacture and craft. The unanticipated discovery Jean offers—the *estrangeté* and *nouvelleté* that Christine broadly denies him—is the frame of comparison. Jean expresses the relation as a proportion: the *ymagete* is to Pygmalion's statue of Galatea as a mouse is to a lion. Every expectation leads us to anticipate that the image in the tower ("ceste"), shaped as it is by Nature, will be the element in terms of which Pygmalion's statue ("l'ymage Pygmalion") will be seen as a subordinate or secondary version; the natural exemplar, incorporating the reason of providential creation, logically precedes the work of representation imitating Nature and executed by man. Indeed, editors and translators insist on this expected order, even against the literal sense of the passage. Ernest Langlois explains that, despite the precise grammatical construction, the mouse must refer to Pygmalion's statue and the lion to the statue in the tower.[12] Charles Dahlberg's translation offers an accurate literal rendering, while his note on the passage argues that the simile shows the superiority of the Lover's image to Pygmalion's.[13] Phillip McCaffrey finds the comparison ironic whether it is taken as exaggeration or a literal account.[14] Discovering the comparison we should expect offers one kind of conventional understanding, but it ignores the literal meaning of the text and the explicit relation between two richly imagined objects whose value the poet signals by using the techniques of amplification and narrative dilation. In what way, we might plausibly ask, does it make sense to see the two objects in the relation that Jean actually formulates?

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Jean's comparison of these objects turns on their shared quality of manufacture. The statue in the tower is a product of Nature acting in her role as artifex. She is first an architect in building the tower and then a shaper of figures in furnishing it. Venus aims her arrow at what Nature has placed through her craft ("par grant mestrise," 20795–96) between the two pillars. The *ymagete* framed by the pillars is an artifact created according to principles of proportion:

> Qui n'ert trop haute ne trop basse,
> Trop grosse ou trop grele, non pas,
> Mes toute taillie a compas
> De bras, d'espaules et de mains,
> Il n'i falloit ne plus ne mains. (20800–4)

> [Neither too tall nor too short, neither too fat nor too thin in any respect, but constructed, in measure, of arms, shoulders, and hands that erred in neither excess nor defect.]

The "grant mestrise" of Nature is visible and tangible in the rational order that informs the statue as an object of aesthetic unity, one executed with fitting and exact proportions ("a compas") among its different elements. John V. Fleming notes that the description of the statue closely follows the earlier description of Reason.[15] Though overcharged with eroticism in the Lover's sensual demands and Jean's scandalous narrative, the *ymagete* paradoxically follows an aesthetic of the mean ("ne plus ne mains").

The comparison with Pygmalion ostensibly aims to give the statue some defining nuance and context beyond the internal order it already manifests. Jean gives a formal account of the statue, stressing its order and properties. His subsequent description of the unnamed Galatea, "l'ymage Pymalion" (20815), incorporates a corresponding formal account: it is so well constructed and flawless ("bien compassee et . . . nete," 20826.02) that it duplicates the beauty of a natural creation. But Pygmalion's "ymage d'ivuire" (20826) goes beyond the formal correspondences. It possesses a narrative that places the formal object within a myth extending over generations. The comparison thus marks a shift in understanding, from the isolated experience of the object in an act of perception to a network of human connections that entail contingencies and consequences.

The thematic trajectory that Jean sketches moves, therefore, from the aesthetic to the erotic and then to the ethical. Pygmalion is a sculptor ("en-

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taillierres," 20817) working across media—stone, metals, bone, and wax—that can be shaped by his intention and will. His initial motive is the desire to demonstrate his mastery: "Por son grant engin esprouver" (20822). The statue he creates is the means to this end, for its lifelike qualities rival those of the most beautiful creatures, surpassing Helen and Lavinia, the objects of conquest in classical heroic narrative and in the vernacular *matiere de Rome* joining Troy's destruction to Rome's ascendancy. The aesthetic gives way to the erotic in a moment of surprise: "Touz s'esbahist a soi meïme / Pymalions, quant la regarde" (20838–39). Seeing what he has created, Pygmalion has the strange recognition of his own desire for the material object. The statue is unexampled by other images he has fashioned and absolutely unsought by him in this instance: "Dont me vient ceste pensee?" (20849). His recognition of desire leads in turn to a moral understanding of the unnatural quality of his love. The passage gives at least part of Christine's language for disavowing the conclusion of the *Rose*: "Mes ceste amor est si orrible, / N'ele ne vient pas de Nature, / Trop mavesement m'i nature" ("But this love is so horrible that it doesn't come from Nature. I am acting despicably in this case," 20862–64). If the statue in the Castle of Jealousy incorporates the rational order of a divinely sanctioned Nature, the figure created by Pygmalion leads him beyond natural attachments. It is an erotic investment for which he claims authorship and ethical responsibility: "Si ne la doi je pas blamer, / Se je vuel folement amer; / Ne m'en doi plaindre, s'a moi non" ("But I should not blame her because I love insanely, nor should I put the blame anywhere but on myself," 29867–69). As Jean's language indicates, Pygmalion acts as he wishes ("je vuel") and the ethical center of action is his will ("a moi"), even if its operations surprise and astonish him with the emotions they reveal.

Jean adapts thematic features from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in constructing his narrative shifts. Ovid's Pygmalion turns to carving his statue while he remains celibate ("caelebs"), an unmated creature removed from fecundity and reproduction.[16] As Orpheus, a poet also removed from fecundity and reproduction, recounts in the Ovidian frame tale, Pygmalion is repulsed by the Propoetides, the Cyprian women turned into prostitutes by Venus and eventually transformed into lifeless stones. The petrification of the Propoetides carries over to Jean's suggestion that Pygmalion's statue is a simulacrum of the unresponsive beloved addressed in courtly discourse: "J'aime une ymage sorde et mue / Qui ne se crole ne se mue / Ne ja de moi merci n'avra" ("I love an image that is deaf and mute, that neither stirs nor moves nor will ever show me grace," 20851–53). When he later remarks that he does not know whether the statue is dead or alive (20926), the comment ap-

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plies equally to inert matter or a courtly beloved unmoved by persuasion and appeal. In addition, the attentions of Ovid's Pygmalion to the statue recall the hopeless efforts of poet-lovers like Propertius, Tibullus, and Catullus to supplicate the disdainful mistress of Latin love elegy.[17] When Jean's Pygmalion complains of her coldness, he fears that he has offended her: "Trop ai folement parlé; / Merci, douce dame," 20908–9). In effect, he transforms himself from an artificer imposing design on matter to an abject lover in the grip of shifting, violent emotions. The object intended to demonstrate Pygmalion's artistry and craft ("son grant engin") thus ironically compels his subjection. He becomes the affective creature that the carved image seemingly cannot be.

Jean's shifts toward moral understanding follow the pattern of established rhetorical procedures for composition. Pygmalion's invention and shaping of the statue leads to adornment, as he dresses the statue with a rotating wardrobe of fabrics, jewels, and accessories. The description is greatly amplified from Ovid. Jean recites an inventory of objects brought to vary and inflect Pygmalion's experience of his creation.[18] The sculptor's obsessive attention to clothing the surface of the statue parallels the poet's rhetorical *copia* in describing it and his overgoing Ovid in detail and conception. Dressing and reclothing Galatea is an occasion both for successive rewriting, as in the variations required on a set topic in rhetorical exercises, and for a renewal of desire as the statue changes appearance among styles—domestic and exotic, regional, Western, and suggestively (but not quite) Oriental. Dress provides an illusive and enticing barrier that serves by turns as an obstacle and lure for desire and potentially a lure because it is a barrier.[19] The effect of dress as an aesthetic process and an erotic procedure is powerful enough to invert the relation of inside and outside things, kernel and covering integument. Jean remarks (21071–72), following Ovid ("nec nuda minus formosa videtur," 10.266), that the statue is no less beautiful nude than clothed. Fabienne Pomel has suggested that Pygmalion's dressing the statue is an allegory about allegory, in which the cold and naked statue corresponds to a dead letter or naked sense, while the clothing represents allegorical writing; undressing the statue would be a complementary figure for reading, for seeing through a figurative sense or integument to a literal meaning.[20] Pygmalion's dressing and undressing the statue, like his works across different artistic media, obsessively asserts his formal power of invention while disclosing the erotics within the fantasy of aesthetic mastery.

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GALATEA'S PULSE

In both Ovid and Jean, Pygmalion's mastery over his materials is a figure for the creative power of art, hence the poet's artistry in crafting fictions, including those that reflexively describe themselves. Philip Hardie points out that for Ovid the erotics of verbal creation leads the poet to the same dilemma that he creates for his narrative characters: just as fashioning the artwork can never close the distance between aesthetic representation and real objects, so language fails an impossible demand to make fiction fully present in reality.[21] The narrative device of animating the statue through Venus's intercession, which Ovid and Jean use, solves this dilemma within the fiction. But it leaves open a fundamental problem, which is to give some account of the relation of a desiring subject to the object he shapes from his own demands rather than one found in the world (even one as arbitrarily chosen as the rose that the Lover finds or the image Narcissus discovers in Guillaume's portion of the poem). As the two Pygmalion narratives unfold, their formulations of an ethics of desire give different weight to the play of sensation and affect in the material world.

Ovid foregrounds sensation by his repetition of the verb *temptare*, "to handle, touch, feel," with the transferred meaning "to test and try out" and even "to agitate and excite." After creating the statue, Pygmalion tries to determine by touch whether its matter is ivory or flesh: "Saepe manus operi temptantes admovet, an sit / corpus, an illud ebur, nec adhuc ebur esse fatetur" ("he often moves his hands feeling the work to test whether it was flesh or ivory, nor from that could it be said that it was ivory," 10.254–55). He repeats the test after Venus signals that his petition has been granted, and he returns to the statue, lying upon the image and kissing it, as it seems to grow warm: "admovet os iterum, manibus quoque pectora temptat" ("he moves his mouth toward her again, he feels her breast," 10.282). The ivory probed in this mix of inquiry and pleasure (*temptatum ebur*) submits by growing soft ("mollescit") and yielding literally and metaphorically to the fingers on its surface: "subsidit digitis ceditque" (10.283). As commentators frequently note, the pressure of Pygmalion's touch in his urgency to know and experience Galatea's transformation tropes his earlier fear, as his fingers seem to sink into the body ("credit tactis digitos insidere membris," 10.257), that his probing might leave a bruise: "et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus" (10.258). Here, as Ovid's simile makes obvious, the physical surface gives way

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to a fantasy of submission and shaping to both the will and insistent pressure: "ut Hymettia sole / cera remollescit tractataque pollice multas / flectitur in facies ipsoque fit utilis usu" ("as the wax of Hymettus softens in the sun and worked by the thumb is bent into many shapes and becomes useful and fitting with use itself," 10.284–86). Pygmalion knows that Galatea has a living body ("corpus erat!," 10.289) only when he has the tactile evidence of her pulse registered against the pressure of his hand: "saliunt temptatae pollice venae" ("the veins tested by the thumb beat," 10.289).

Jean carefully reformulates Ovid's use of touch as a mechanism of knowledge and desire. The statue is rigid and transfers its cold when he kisses it so that Pygmalion's mouth is chilled (20903–6). Ovid's Pygmalion imagines that the statue returns his kisses ("Oscula dat, reddique putat," 10.256) or senses his care in arranging her on pillows ("tamquam sensura," 10.269), but Jean demonstrates the impossibility of his fantasy.[22] The statue remains inert to his courtly supplication and service. Jean resituates Ovid's simile of shaping wax from the scene of Galatea's animation to earlier in the narrative sequence, where the artist courts his creation. His point in doing so is to show that the lover-artist is constrained by his craft and desire. The flesh that Pygmalion thinks gives way like wax reveals only the pressure of his hand on matter: "Et croit, aussi cum se fust paste, / Que ce soit sa char qui li fuie, / Mes c'est sa main qu'il y apuie" ("he thought that she was like putty, that the flesh gave way under his touch, but it was only his hand which pressed her," 20928–30). Even after the extensive descriptions of Pygmalion's dressing the statue and offering it musical performances in a mock liturgy, Jean returns to the futile love-making of a man led on and excited (*esmouveir*) by his own projections onto his unresponding creation: "Por sa sorde ymage esmeüs" (21068).

The ethical center of the Pygmalion story in Ovid and Jean lies in the relations that each poet imagines for the lover and the statue. These relations shift as the narratives unfold. Ovid describes Pygmalion using the vocabulary of love elegy. As a figure of the ambivalent poetic mistress (*puella*), the statue receives the gifts and attention recommended to prospective lovers by Ovid in his *Ars Amatoria*. After dressing the statue, Pygmalion optimistically calls it his bedmate (*tori socia*, 10.268). Praying to Venus, however, he seeks a wife or possibly a consort ("coniunx," 10.275). In a revealing act of self-censorship as well as semantic slippage, he dares not ask directly for the ivory statue but requests instead something like it, a simulacrum of an image: "'Si, di, dare cuncta potestis, / sit coniunx, opto,' non ausus, 'ebur-

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nea virgo' / dicere Pygmalion 'similis mea' dixit 'eburnae'" ("'If, gods, it is true that you can give everything, I would like to have as my wife'—Pygmalion did not dare to say 'my ivory girl'—but said, 'someone similar to the ivory image,'" 10.274–76). As he puts desire into language and states his demand ("opto"), Pygmalion moves briskly through a sequence of objects in a chain of substitution: women, who have been rendered inaccessible to him because of the Propoetides, are replaced by the statue of Galatea, which is displaced in turn by a request for a wife resembling the statue. Venus immediately understands the complex layering within Pygmalion's prayer. The "vota" (10.278) she accepts from him have at least two senses—the *votum* is a prayer and a marriage vow. When he returns home, Pygmalion seeks the object that contains all his desires and self-imposed evasions; it is a "simulacra suae . . . puellae" (10.280), the statue of a girl that he has made and a representation of the erotic partner he cannot possess.

Jean's equivalent to the *puella* of Latin elegy, as we have seen, is the distant courtly *amie* suggested by Pygmalion's initial address to the statue as its tormented suitor. After his elaborate draping and adornment of the statue, he addresses her as a wife, summoning Hymen and Juno to witness the wedding he imagines: "De cest anel je vous espous, / Et deviens vostres, et vous moie" (21014–15). At the festival, he asks Venus that the statue become "ma loial amie" and that he possess her "cors, ame et vie" (21099–100). Unlike Ovid's Pygmalion, who cannot speak what he desires, Jean's character is explicit in his willingness to trade chastity for the stabilized eroticism of marriage. His chastity, in these terms, is more than the denial or lack that structures Ovid's Pygmalion; it is the marker of eroticism redirected to marriage and its network of affective relations sustained by access to bodies. Moreover, Venus does not simply animate the statue, as in Ovid, but sends it a soul that makes it a natural and social creature: "A l'ymage envoia lors ame, / Si devint si tres bele dame" (21117–18). Pygmalion's return to find the statue alive and embodied ("vive et charnue," 21133) amplifies Ovid's mention of the pulsing veins of the animated statue: "Et sent les os et sent les venes, / Qui de sanc erent toutes plenes, / Et le pouz et batre et movoir" ("he felt the bones and the veins all filled with blood, and he felt the pulse move and beat," 21137–39). The difference that Jean claims from Ovid's scene is between shaped matter transformed to a sentient creature and matter made incarnate by divine intervention and transformed to a separate creature. Pygmalion may offer marriage to the statue before Hymen and Juno, but what he finds on his return from Venus's festival is a human and social being.

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In both narratives, Galatea emerges directly from Pygmalion's uncertainty about what she really is and what he can believe her to be. In Ovid, she becomes a living creature and known as such when she both feels and responds with an instinctive blush to Pygmalion's kisses: "dataque oscula virgo / sensit, et erubuit" (10.292–93). Brooke Holmes argues, "the metamorphosis is realized only at the moment it is not the *corpus*, the 'body,' but the girl herself who senses and responds to Pygmalion's ardor with a blush" that recalls the ambivalent bruise and sweeps Galatea up in the dynamics of Pygmalion's desire.[23] When she cautiously raises her eyes, Galatea sees both the sky and her lover: "timidumque ad lumina lumen / attollens, pariter cum caelo vidit amantem" (10.293–94). The "lumina" she sees with her own eyes ("lumen attollens") are twofold and exist in the same moment ("pariter . . . vidit"), for the world of nature (*caelum*) and the sight of Pygmalion as lover hovering over her are simultaneously before her. The created world and the artist-creator occupy the same plane of vision.

It is only after the statue has transformed and responded with her blush that Venus solemnizes the marriage that she has made possible: "Coniugio, quod fecit, adest dea" (10.295). At one level, Venus's agency has succeeded Pygmalion's to correct his original abandonment of eros and to restore what had been lost through her transformation of the Propoetides into bloodless women, incapable of blushes, and finally changed into stone. Catherine Bruno suggests that a second difference informs the passage as well. For Bruno, it is Pygmalion's love-making that transforms Galatea into a woman, while Venus's intervention only animates her.[24] The trajectory that Ovid's Galatea follows is from the uncanny to the familiar, to a fecund domestic life that begins a genealogy.

Though Jean moves in and out of the Lover's voice at the end of the *Rose*, he acts as the improbable poet of domesticity in rewriting the Pygmalion story.[25] Pygmalion responds to his sensory experience of testing the statue in a much-elaborated passage that registers the effects of the uncanny. He does not know if what he sees is false or true ("mençongne ou voir," 21140), and so he freezes, fearing enchantment and temptation from an object and power he cannot name. Suspended between waking and dreaming, he tries to define his experience of the transformed statue within a literary-cognitive taxonomy: is it "songe," "apert songe" ("likelife dream"), "merveille," "phantom, ou anemis" (21145–49)?[26] As the last few items suggest, knowing is closely linked with affect. And it is against this fraught narrative background that Galatea speaks as "la pucele" (21151). Giving her voice, Jean takes the figure

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significantly beyond Ovid's portrayal, in which her reactions and experience are described for her. Jean's Galatea gives assurance that she is neither a phantom nor an enemy but "vostre amie / Preste de vostre compaignie / Recevoir, et m'amor vous offer / S'il vous plest recevoir tel offer" ("your sweetheart, ready to receive your companionship and to offer you my love if it please you to receive such an offer," 21155–58).

As these terms indicate, Galatea is the courtly woman ("m'amie," 20903) whom Pygmalion initially seeks in creating the statue and then asks Venus to produce for him ("ma loial amie," 21099). What changes from these earlier demands is the stress on erotic reciprocity, which Jean conveys by repeating the prefix *entre* in the verbs that describe the bond of affect between Pygmalion and Galatea: "s'entrefient" (21165), "s'entrefacent" (21167), "s'entrebracent" (21168), "s'entrebaisent" (21169), and "s'entr'aiment" (21170). The full realization of desire coincides not with the possession of body, soul, and life, as Pygmalion asks Venus, but with a concord of wills negotiated and continually affirmed by lovers within marriage. Douglas Kelly argues that the love displayed in the story is the only example that follows the principles set out by Reason and the only positive mythological example in the poem.[27] Kevin Brownlee emphasizes "the reciprocity of agency" in which Pygmalion and Galatea "occupy simultaneously the positions of desiring subject and of object of desire."[28] The mutual embraces they share as a couple, says Brownlee, at last fulfill the erotic demands that have been deferred throughout the poem.

LOST OBJECTS

Ovid and Jean complicate this resolution, of course, by citing the narratives that the Pygmalion episode subsequently generates. Ovid makes the turn from resolution to sequel when he says that Cinyras, the grandson of Pygmalion and Galatea, would have been numbered among the happy if he had remained childless ("si sine prole fuisset," 10.298)—in effect, if he had suffered the barrenness that afflicted the Propoetides and the celibate and frustrated Pygmalion. As Susan Stakel observes, Myrrha's incestuous relationship with her father subsequently replays Pygmalion's relation with the statue he creates and desires, while Myrrha's final form as a tree rooted in place resembles the statue at the beginning of her lineage.[29] For Ovid, Myrrha's actions are an impiety contrary to divine law (*nefas*) and a crime

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(*scelus*). For Jean, they are a bizarre trick ("trop estrange semille," 21199), a diversion from his poetic "matire" (21211) whose meaning is deferred until the end of his work: "Bien orrois que ce segnefie / Ains que ceste ovre soit fenie" (21213–14). The overt explanation that Jean mentions here does not, in fact, occur later in the poem but has to be inferred from the conclusion.

The significance that Jean promises to reveal directly evokes the comparison that begins the poem's conclusion. Jean reiterates the distinction contained in the "similitude" (21221) of the two images, the difference in scale and value. This is the hermeneutic method folded into the poem's narrative structure and made explicit when the narrator-poet describes the procedures that render things intelligible in the poem: "Aussi va des contraires choses, / Les unes sont des autres gloses" ("Thus things go by contraries; one is the gloss of the other," 21273–74). Comparison, he explains, marks difference, and difference permits definition:

> Car qui des deus n'a connoissance
> Ja n'i metera difference,
> Sanz quoi ne puet venir in place
> Diffinicion que l'en face. (21579–82)

> [For he who has no understanding of the two will never understand the difference between them, and without this difference no definition that one may make can come to anything.]

Narratives seen in relation to each other rather than direct, expository commentary provide the gloss. Thus, as the Lover finally advances to the *ymagete*, he repeats Pygmalion's initial devotion to his statue and fulfills his erotic demands without recognizing the difference. The mutual desire that emerges with Pygmalion and Galatea gives way to what Brownlee rightly describes as "the union of two sets of detached, depersonalized genitalia, figured metaphorically."[30]

The appetite glossed and defined through these contraries supports Christine's objection that Jean's conclusion tells us nothing new. Its mechanized eros is as unremarkable as the ordinary sexuality that she says in her letter would be better expressed through a beast fable ("matiere de rire pour la fable"). Modern readers have interpreted the poem's final display of appetite as idolatry, as in Fleming's application of medieval allegory and iconography, or as the irony that Marc Pelen detects in Ovid's tone and Venus's

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inability to protect her followers from catastrophe.[31] Equally important is the sense of loss that informs the ending. While the Lover advances to possess the statue and collect the rose, the narrator who recounts this triumph knows that it is already over. He describes it from retrospect, from waking consciousness looking back on a dream concluded. (The dream itself is a Macrobean *insomnium*, one devoid of meaning.) From this position, the objects of appetite remain as unrecoverable for the narrator as they were transitory for the Lover in his quest. This perspective, in which narrative closure can only be loss, also invites us to reflect on the conceptual differences set out in Jean's conclusion. If horrible events—what Ovid calls "Dira" (*Metamorphoses* 10.300)—follow the Pygmalion story, the animated statue nonetheless has offspring and a history. The Lover, though he inseminates the rose, leaves by his act nothing but the testimony of his own appetite. In Jean's poem, the tragic aftermath of Pygmalion and Galatea requires an understanding that the Lover never attains. As desire narrows to appetite and appetite aims to gratify itself, he misses the larger lesson that the meaning of objects resides not in things themselves but in the relations they generate and signify.

Notes

1. Christine de Pisan et al., *Le débat sur le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Eric Hicks (Paris: Champion, 1977), 20. All citations will be to this text. Translations are from *Debate of the* Romance of the Rose, ed. and trans. David F. Hult (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); cf. *Debating the* Roman de la rose: *A Critical Anthology*, ed. Christine McWebb (New York: Routledge, 2007), 128.

2. Christine returns to the ending of the *Rose* in her letter to Pierre Col of October 2, 1402. Jean Gerson addresses the passage in his sermon sequence *Poenitemini* and his treatise against the *Rose*.

3. *Dictionnaire du moyen français*, s.v. "étrangeté"; DMF : *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, version 2012 (DMF 2012). ATILF—CNRS & Université de Lorraine. Site internet: http://www.atilf.fr/dmf

4. The contrast is with the debate between Reason and the Lover over naming "coilles" (6927–7228).

5. I follow here the distinction that David Halperin sets out in "Platonic *Erôs* and What Men Call Love," *Ancient Philosophy* 5 (1985): 161–204.

6. *Le Roman de la rose*, ed. Daniel Poirion (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1974), 549. All citations will be to this text. Translations are from *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. Charles Dahlberg (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

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7. Though the Pygmalion episode is clearly part of the overarching design of the poem, it is sometimes omitted in *remaniements* and other reworkings of the *Rose*; see Sylvia Huot, "Authors, Scribes, Remanieurs: A Note on the Textual History of the *Romance of the Rose*," in *Rethinking the* Romance of the Rose: *Text, Image, Reception*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 203–33. The episode is also omitted in medieval translations such as the *Fiore* ascribed to Dante and a Middle Dutch adaptation; for the latter, see Dieuwke van der Poel, "A Romance of a Rose and Florentine: The Flemish Adaptation of the *Romance of the Rose*," in *Rethinking the* Romance of the Rose, 305.

8. Luis Cortés Vázquez, *El episodio de Pigmalión del* Roman de la Rose: *Ética y estética de Jean de Meun* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1980), 41–45. In some manuscripts, the delay is extended by an added comparison with Medusa; see Sylvia Huot, "The Medusa Interpolation in the *Roman de la Rose*: Mythographic Program and Ovidian Intertext," *Speculum* 62 (1987): 865–77.

9. Frédéric Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle* (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881–1902), s.v. *soulacier*.

10. Daniel Poirion, "Narcisse et Pygmalion dans le *Roman de la Rose*," in *Essays in Honor of Louis Francis Solano*, ed. Raymond J. Cormier and Urban T. Holmes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), 159.

11. Marc-René Jung, "Jean de Meun et l'allégorie," *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises* 28 (1976): 30–31.

12. Ernest Langlois, ed. *Le Roman de la Rose*, 5 vols. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914–24), 5:109.

13. *The Romance of the Rose*, 421–22.

14. Phillip McCaffrey, "Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun: Narcissus and Pygmalion," *Romanic Review* 90 (1999): 446–47.

15. John V. Fleming, *The* Roman de la Rose: *A Study of Allegory and Iconography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 227.

16. All quotations from the *Metamorphoses* will use the Loeb text: Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2 vols., trans. Frank Justus Miller, rev. G. P. Goold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916). Charlton T. Lewis et al., *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), s. v. *caelebs*.

17. Jane E. Miller, "Some Versions of Pygmalion," in *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 207.

18. Sarah-Grace Heller, "Fashioning a Woman: The Vernacular Pygmalion in the *Roman de la Rose*," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 27 (2000): 1–18.

19. I am grateful to Jenny Adams for her helpful suggestions in thinking about the uncertain barrier that dress provides. Perhaps the most developed example of dress as a barrier and source of enticement is the vision of Beatrice held in Love's hand and covered only by a thin veil in chapter 3 of Dante's *Vita Nuova*.

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20. Fabienne Pomel, "Revêtir la lettre nue: l'allégorie sous le signe du désir et du manque," in *Le Nu et le Vêtu au Moyen Âge (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)* (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2001), 299–311.

21. Philip Hardie, *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

22. Colin Burrow, "Reembodying Ovid: Renaissance Afterlives," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 310, observes Ovid's grammatical subtlety in the phrase "tamquam sensura," which can be rendered as both "as if she could feel them" and "as if she will feel them."

23. Brooke Holmes, *The Symptom and the Subject: The Emergence of the Physical Body in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 193.

24. Catherine Bruno, "Fabriquer la femme qui n'existe pas," *Psychanalyse* 14 (2009): 59.

25. Eva Martin, "Away from Self-Authorship: Multiplying the 'Author' in Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*," *Modern Philology* 96 (1998): 1–15.

26. Langlois, *Roman de la Rose*, 5:112, glosses "apert songe" as a dream in which things are coherent and comport with reality.

27. Douglas Kelly, *Internal Difference and Meanings in the* Roman de la Rose (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 76–78, 81, 106, and 147.

28. Kevin Brownlee, "Pygmalion, Mimesis, and the Multiple Endings of the *Roman de la Rose*," *Yale French Studies* 95 (1999): 198.

29. Susan Stakel, *False Roses: Structures of Duality and Deceit in Jean de Meun's* Roman de la Rose (Stanford, CA: ANMA Libri, 1991), 109.

30. Brownlee, 207.

31. Fleming, *The* Roman de la Rose, 231–32; and Marc Pelen, *Latin Poetic Irony in the Roman de la Rose* (Liverpool, UK: Cairns, 1987), 46–47 and 165–66.

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CHAPTER 11

Transgender and the Chess Queen in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess

Jenny Adams

> And this is why it happens that when the pawns go the whole length of the board they become Venuses and are converted into the nature of the queen and like the queen move diagonally.[1]

> Awake! Let be your sorwful lyf,
> For in your sowre there lyth no red;
> For, certes, swete, I am but ded.[2]
> (202–4)

Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* opens with a narrator whose insomnia has lasted for a phenomenal eight years. As he bemoans his sleepless state one night, he asks someone near him to fetch him Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, deciding ". . . it better play / Then playe either at ches or tables" (50–51). Although chess and backgammon might provide a distraction, the narrator rejects them in favor of reading, which he imagines as an engaged exchange through which writers can communicate across generations.[3] The *Metamorphoses* contains fables that clerks have "put in rime" for later generations to read and contemplate, and these stories appear "in minde" in ways that accord with the laws of "kinde" (53–56).[4] "Ches," it seems, does not have the same potential.

Yet while the stories from "olde tyme" might reanimate historical figures, they do not animate the narrator, who falls asleep soon after reading a single story in the *Metamorphoses*, and it is in the context of the dream that chess

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resurfaces. No longer a static (and thus rejected) pastime, the game now possesses reanimating qualities it formerly seemed to lack. The narrator encounters it when in his dream he meets a Black Knight, who recounts the story of his heartbreaking loss at the game:

> At the ches with me she [Fortune] gan to pleye;
> With hir *false draughtes* dyvers *cheating moves*
> She staal on me and tok my fers. (652–54)

In these lines and the ones preceding them, the Black Knight uses chess as an allegory to describe the death of his lover, "Whyt," whom he imagines as a *fers* (or chess queen) Fortune has taken. When the literal-minded narrator fails to understand the lost chess piece as a representation of death, the Black Knight begins to describe his lover in an encomium that takes up most of the poem's remaining lines. If Whyt can be said to come back to partial life through an imagined chess piece, then the Black Knight's loving descriptions of her reanimate her in ways so clear that the narrator still cannot believe she has died.

In this essay I will argue that Chaucer used the metaphor of chess, and specifically the figure of the chess queen, to represent Whyt because it challenges the finality of death. On a narrative level we can see the ways the narrator's own misunderstanding of the allegory prompts an imaginative reanimation. When the narrator fails to make the connection between the lost chess queen and the Black Knight's lover, the knight brings his love back to life through language.[5] But more profoundly and on an allegorical level, to imagine Whyt as a chess piece is to imagine her as a figure perpetually reborn. To some extent, this can be said of all chess pieces, whose "deaths" are reversed once one game ends and another begins. But the queen holds a particular status as it was the only piece that could be "born" or "reborn" during the course of play. Once a medieval player's pawn reached the final line, it automatically became a queen.[6] This had the effect of bringing a captured queen back to life or producing a second queen on the board, one imaginatively forged from the body of the pawn.

I will further argue that the pawn's gender-crossing, which took place upon the moment of pawn promotion, is tightly bound with the chess queen's ability to cross the line that divides animate and inanimate, and it helps Chaucer to produce what Deborah Horowitz describes as "an aesthetic of permeability."[7] Not only did Chaucer's contemporaries recognize what we

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would call a transgender moment, but the piece itself also carried with it reminders of its previously male identity: thus the promoted pawn's name, the *firzān* or *fers*, a name that hearkened back to the queen's early identity as a male piece. It is no coincidence that the Black Knight repeatedly calls Whyt his *fers*, a word that can mean pawn or queen, and the word that captures the slippage between these two identities. Further enhancing this tie between gender fluidity and animation is the dream frame. Ovid's story, the one the narrator has chosen over chess, is of another queen, Alcyone. Only through mimicking Queen Alcyone in another moment of gender-crossing can the narrator finally fall asleep. In sum, the chess allegory and the Ovidian story that frames it offer vivid connections between gender change and animation, while also making clear the stakes of gender permanence. Indeed, the surest way to stabilize gender in the *Book of the Duchess* is to die.

Before proceeding, I will add that many (myself included) have written about the chess allegory in the *Book of the Duchess*.[8] But all of us have grounded our arguments on a static notion of chess as played in fourteenth-century England. In other words, we have read the chess queen as a queen, the king as a king, the game as a whole as a fixed object without taking into account its historical permutations and changes. In this essay, I want to depart from that model to consider the detritus that clung to the game as it passed through players and regions, and to consider the ways chess's polychronic meanings might open new ways to understand this moment, which thus might in turn have implications for the ways we read other chess scenes in medieval literature.

THE *FERS* AND/AS THE QUEEN

The central moment in the *Book of the Duchess* takes place when Fortune takes the Black Knight's "fers." This act signals the end of the game, the death of Whyt, the bereavement of the Black Knight, and the need for a commemorative poem. But in taking the *fers*, what exactly does Fortune get? Readers grow exasperated with the narrator for his inability to answer this question, and this frustration is shared by the Black Knight, who twice reminds his interlocutor "I have lost more than thow wenest" ("I have lost more than you think," 744, 1306). For the Black Knight the answer seems self-evident: he has lost his love Whyt whose death he represents allegorically through the game. Yet the Black Knight's impatience cloaks the *fers*'s own complicated history as a male piece and the masculinities that lingered long after

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its gender switch upon its arrival in Europe. It also masks the game's own precariousness as a metaphor for death, chess being something played again and again rather than a final and permanent change in state. Before working through the Black Knight's allegory, it is useful to look more closely at the history of chess itself and in particular the complicated residues of the queen's transgendered rebirth.

When chess arrived in Europe in the tenth century, the pieces experienced rapid changes as the game become a means to represent European social organization.[9] At the same time, many aspects of the earlier Arabic game lingered. Thus while the Persian word *shāh* immediately became the "rex" (king), the continued use of "checkmate" (*shāh māt*, or "the shāh is dead"), highlighted the game's lingering Persian and Arabic traces.[10] Even more telling was the use of "scacus / scachus," which very quickly came to signify all the pieces in the *ludus scacorum*, or "game of chessmen."[11] In this case of the *al-fīl* or "elephant," the form of the piece itself changed shape almost immediately, its animal-like shape morphing into a human figure. Like the *shāh*, the *al-fīl*'s name persisted, and throughout Europe *alphiles, alfinus, or aufin* became the chess piece recognizable as the bishop.[12]

Yet the transformation of the male *firzān* (or counselor) into a female *fers* (or queen) brought with it the most visible and complicated vestiges of its previous historical contexts, and these traces of the past adhered even as the game began to morph and spread throughout Europe. Such vestiges appear in the material iterations of the game itself and particularly in its anthropomorphic form, which can be seen clearly in deluxe sets such as the early twelfth-century "Charlemagne" chessmen and the later twelfth-century Lewis chessmen.[13] This turn toward anthropomorphism dovetails with the general tendency of medieval European cultures to see the board as a reflection of social order. Indeed, whereas the Eastern game's pieces—elephant, chariots, horses—drew attention to the game as a mode of conflict, Western names—knight, bishop, farmer—realigned the game's metaphorical overtone, emphasizing social stability.[14] Physical representations of chess pieces did not, however, completely erase the markers of the game's own history. In manuscript illuminations, the pieces appear as abstract figures sometimes indistinguishable from their Arab and Persian counterparts. In Arabic and Latin texts, a horsehead represented the knight, triangles with circular "heads" denoted pawns, and a castle-shaped object stood in for the rook.

These material traces of the game's history were accompanied by linguistic nonerasures, and again this was particularly pronounced in the case of the queen. The piece's name, *firz* or *firzān*, which circulated with little change

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in Spain, France, and England, persisted even as the piece itself adopted a female pronoun. Not only was the name preserved, but it also lingered centuries after the game's arrival, with the queen identified in England as the *fers* or *fiers* as late as the seventeenth century. Even in territories where the *fers* became the *regina*, *reina*, or *koninginne* (queen), name changes did little to cover up the queen's lingering masculinities, and the ever-present possibility of pawn promotion modulated the queen's newly feminized identity.[15] As noted above, a pawn obtaining the final square of the board *had* to become a queen, a situation that meant both the original queen and the promoted pawn could occupy the board at the same time. This material transformation of pawn to queen thus destabilized the queen's own identity; if a promoted pawn could so easily adopt a queen's body, what should one make of the *regina* herself?[16]

What makes such transgender moments so interesting are the ways medieval players and writers sought to preserve them. One of the most basic ways to have "fixed" the queen's fluctuating gender would have been to change the rules of pawn promotion. If allowed to become a bishop or knight, a promoted pawn would have gained *more* power than a medieval chess queen, who in most places could advance only one square in a diagonal direction. This change would have not only limited this piece's transgendering—a promotion of a pawn to a bishop would not have disrupted the delicate balance of the king/queen pair—but also increased the speed and complexity of the game.

Instead of making this rule change, players preserved the pawn-to-queen promotion and enacted changes that *highlighted* the inherently instable gender identities at play. One such modification to the game prevented players from promoting a pawn unless the original queen had been captured. This rule appears in the eleventh-century *Einsiedeln* poem, a short poem of ninety-eight lines preserved in two manuscripts in Switzerland:

> Hoc iter est peditis, si quando pergit in hostem,
> Ordinis ad finem cumque meare potest
> Nam sic concordant: oblique tramite, desit
> Ut si regina, hic quod et illa queat.

> [It is thus that the pawn, if he is able to reach the end of his enemy's side of the board without getting taken, can move like a queen, as long as she is taken.][17]

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The poet's description of the pawn as moving "ut si regina" [like the queen] throws into relief the gender transformation that takes place as the promoted pawn becomes a new *regina*. The pawn's new gender is reaffirmed by the movement of the piece, a proxy for the imagined movements of a queen's physical body. Moreover, the *regina*'s physical removal from the board imagines the queen's symbolic death as a necessary means to facilitate the king's (re)union with a new figure, a piece whose male identity will be reestablished the moment the game ends.

Another rule modification shows a different negotiation of the game's potential for transgendering. Whereas the *Einseideln* author restricts the time at which pawn promotion can occur, fourteenth-century problem sets often stipulated that the promoted pawn take a different name in order to denote its new identity as a queen.[18] Under these rules, the original queen went by the title *regina* while the promoted pawn became the *fers*, a name that refers back to its earlier male antecedent at the same time that it embraces a new female identity. Notably, this change in name not only hearkens back to a male piece, it also imagines the king paired with two different figures, one of which has recently transformed from a male to a female piece. That both figures can move in the same fashion drives home the ability of the male pawn to take on the attributes of a female queen, an ability that further suggests that gender transformation could move just as easily in the other direction.

Alexander Neckam's twelfth-century *De Naturis rerum* provides a good example of the ways writers embraced rules that promoted gender fluidity. This treatise contains a short account of the game in which Neckam pauses to note the pawn's transgender switch:

> Cum vero expleto cursu ultimam tenet lineam reginæ dignitatem adipiscitur, sed sexus privilegio destitui videtur. Tiresiatur veniens ad Gades suas novoque fruitur incessu, Iphis alter. Angulariter incedit postquam sublimatus est qui in directum tendebat quamdiu privata erat persona.[19]
>
> [When in truth he obtains the final line of the course, he acquires the dignity [or rank] of the queen, but is also perceived as stripped of the rights of his sex. He is made like Tireseus coming to Gades, and he enjoys another move, just like Iphis. After he is elevated, he begins to move at an angle, he who was formerly moving straight as long as he was a regular person.]

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For Neckam, who embraces the gender changes embedded in the pawn's promotion, gender-switching is tightly bound to a change in class status. Conceived of here as the pawn's "rights," masculinity is converted into an increase in social standing, a promotion gained through the loss of his sex. Neckam shores up the transgender aspects of this moment by invoking not only Tireseus but also Iphis, a less well-known mythical figure whose mother, ignoring Iphis's biologically female sexual organs, raises him as a boy until Juno eventually relents and transforms his female body into a male form. That Neckam sees Tiresius as "just like" Iphis ("Iphis alter") suggests his understanding of gender-crossing as moving in two directions. At the same time, his comparison throws into relief the masculine base still lurking at the heart of this transformation. Does Iphis resemble Tireseus because both experience female subjectivity or because both are, at heart, men? After all, whereas Tireseus eventually reassumes his male body, Iphis becomes permanently transformed, and the subsequent birth of his children authenticates his new physical identity.

Other players who used naming to distinguish a promoted pawn from a queen opted for the word *domina*.[20] As in the texts that use *fers* to describe a promoted pawn, manuscripts that record this name change imagine that a *domina* might appear on the board concurrently with the *regina*. A word whose meaning ranges from a lady of rank to a mother, *domina* highlights the promoted pawn's gender switch, and thus in some ways seems more insistent on the completeness of the pawn's change.[21] Indeed, by the end of the fifteenth century, vernacular versions of *domina* (*dame*, *dama*, *donna*) had come to replace *regina* and stand in for any queen, promoted or not, a change that still exists today in Scandinavia, Germany, and Holland.[22] Yet like the *fers*, the *domina* still does not completely throw off its masculine undertones, and its name offered a reminder of its newly forged identity, one that differed from that of the original queen. It is telling in this regard that by the sixteenth century, a Latin poem on chess refers to the promoted pawn as the "Amazon," a name that, like the Amazons themselves, produces a female identity predicated on its own partial erasure.[23]

Only at the end of the Middle Ages did the rules governing pawn promotion change; instead of changing a pawn to a queen, a player now had the choice to promote it to any piece. Yet even more than the above changes, this new rule testified to a desire to preserve the pawn-to-queen transformation. For this rule did not come alone but was accompanied by the biggest change

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in the game itself: the queen's new moves.[24] Now instead of moving one square in any direction, the queen enjoyed unlimited movement along any axis. Given the queen's substantially increased powers, most players would now elect to do what previous rules required. And while a player might choose another piece, promoting to anything but a queen would defy all logic in the game.

While Neckam and the *Einsiedeln* author focus on chess games, allegorists who used the game to represent an idealized social order often had a greater investment in stabilizing the queen's identity. Indeed, the very pairing of the queen with the king, whose own transformation from *shāh* marks a different understanding of the piece, seems to perform this type of cisgendering work. A *shāh* might have many wives, but a king can have only one queen, and this elimination of polygamy in turn produces a secure binary through which to read these pieces.

The appeal to a heteronormative "naturalism" that undergirds the queen's relationship to the king is further strengthened by the queen's subsequent role as the conduit for royal succession. Her identity as royal mother is made explicit in Jacobus de Cessolis's *Liber de ludo scachorum*, which uses chess to imagine the body politic with all its constituent parts from the nobility to the farmers and blacksmiths, doctors and lawyers. In the chapter on the queen, Jacobus explains that "she is sette on his lifte syde is by grace gevyn to the kynge by nature and of right. For better is to have a kyng by successyon thenne by eleccion."[25] Here the queen's role on the board is in part determined by her role off of it. The only way for the king to pass power through succession is for her to bear his (presumably male) heir, an ability that no promoted pawn could have. This image of the queen's body as the means through which a kingdom defines itself foregrounds a biological essentialism that runs counter to the easy gender changes seen in Neckam or the *Einsiedeln* poet.

Not only does the queen's gender appear fixed, but also in Jacobus's imagined state the queen's biological sex is *validated* by the pawn in front of her. Imagined as a doctor, this piece's main responsibility is to tend to the queen's health:

> And therfore is the phisicien duly sette tofore the quene, so that it is figured that he ought to have in hymself chastyté and contynence of body. For hit apperteyneth som tyme unto the phisicien to vysite and cure

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> quenes, duchesses and countesses, and alle other ladyes, and see and beholde somme secrete sekenessis that falle and come otherwhile in the secretis of nature.
>
> (Book 3, ch. 5, ll. 844–48)

This description casts the queen's body as a physiological other, reaffirming her essential nonmaleness through her body's tendency toward sickness. These are, it seems, sicknesses that come to "duchesses, countesses and *all* other ladies." To be a woman (even an imagined one) is to be prone to physical ailments.

Yet other parts of Jacobus's treatise undercut these attempts to secure the queen's sex and gender. As we read further in this same chapter, we learn that the doctor must be on constant watch as

> . . . women ben likened unto softe wax or softe ayer, and therefore she is callyd mulier. . . . And hit happeth ofte tymes that the nature of them that ben softe and mole taketh sonner the inpressyon than the nature of men that ben rude and stronge."
>
> (Book 3, ch. 5, ll. 903–6)

Here, women's physical weakness is configured specifically as an inherent malleability, one that leaves her vulnerable to *any* change. Her body therefore needs constant surveillance lest her "softe and mole" nature take the impression of something else.

And indeed, by the time we reach the *Liber*'s final section, the queen's ability to move like a man becomes her strength. As he discusses the moves of the chess queen, Jacobus notes that the piece can advance on the board "as an alphyn" (Book 4, ch. 3, l. 209). Because she moves like a bishop, she should have "parfyt wysedom as the alphyns have, whiche ben juges, as hit sayd above in the chappytre of the quene" (Book 4, ch. 3, ll. 217–18). Jacobus's earlier distinctions between the sexes now start to blur in the shared movement of these pieces. This image of hybridity also surfaces in Jacobus's description of pawn promotion. Following the (now predictable) tradition of distinguishing the promoted pawn as a *fers* (or, in Caxton's case, a *fiers*), his description of the pawn's moves tellingly reveals the extent to which these two identities overlap. The *fiers* may "goo on al sides cornerwyse fro poynt to poynt onely as the quene, both fightyng and takyng whom he fyndeth in his waye" (Book 4, ch. 7, ll. 365–66). At three different points Jacobus reminds

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us that the *fiers* takes on the "dygnyté of the queen," a comparison that not only foregrounds the pawn's transgendered state but also the queen's own perpetual potential to be embodied by a male other.[26]

I have traced the queen's long history in order to expose a general cultural investment in her transgender identity. Yet I would also like to suggest that in addition to the many complicated name changes surrounding the queen (*regina*, *fers*, *domina*, amazon, pawn) the actual mechanics of pawn promotion made visible the connection between gender change and animation. Although there is little recorded about how players actually played chess, the physical realities of pawn promotion are not hard to reproduce. When promoting a pawn, a player might return the original *regina* to the board, provided it had been captured. In this case the *regina* would stand in for the promoted pawn, her previously feminine body now relabeled a *fers* yet her form physically unchanged. If the queen had not been taken, a player might add something to the pawn to designate its new identity as a *fers*. The *fers*'s new movements point to a more fundamental shift in gender identity, one that coincided with its rebirth.

THE QUEEN AS/AND THE *FERS*

I now want to bring this history of the chess queen to bear on Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*, a poem that embraces the chess queen's fluctuating identity and uses it to imagine a permeable line dividing life and death. As described above, a medieval chess pawn experiences a figurative death upon reaching the final square. The pawn's subsequent removal from the board enables the return of the queen's body. She is figuratively reborn through him, and this moment of rebirth comes at the moment of gender change. In the *Book of the Duchess*, Chaucer plays with this trope, presenting Whyt through the eyes of an uncomprehending narrator who sees the queen as a *fers* and then suspends her final moment of death until the closing lines.

Chaucer's connection between gender change and bodily reanimation is not, however, confined to the chess game, appearing in the poem's opening accounts of the narrator's insomnia. When the narrator finishes the story he has read, he focuses in particular on the story of Queen Alcyone, who mourns her missing husband, Seys. In Chaucer's version of the Ovidian tale, Alcyone prays to Juno, asking to learn what has happened to her husband. Rather than answering Alcyone directly, the goddess commands Morpheus

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to "crepe" (144) into Seys's corpse and make it speak "as hyt was woned to doo" (150). Morpheus complies, taking up the "dreynte body," transporting it to Alcyone, and telling her what has happened. Unlike pawn promotion, Morpheus's superficially male identity does not mark this as a moment of dramatic gender change: both Morpheus and Seys are male. Yet Morpheus's own passive and sleeping body, which Juno's messenger finds in a deep, dark cave, troubles any gender fixity in this moment. Morpheus could, it seems, take on the aspect of any body, and his own form here appears passive and feminized as he becomes beholden to Juno's will.

This tendency toward feminization increases after the narrator finishes this story. Rather than identifying with Seys, the male narrator goes to great lengths to take on the more "feminized" aspects of Alcyone's character. Like Alcyone, he prays to Juno; falls asleep in bed; has a dream; and somewhere along the way finds himself "al naked" and vulnerable to the images he receives while sleeping. This adoption of Alcyone's behavior not only marks the narrator's rejection of his own masculinity but also marks his transition from conscious to unconscious; by becoming another version of Alcyone, he is able to fall asleep. At the same time, his subsequent dream throws open the question of animation altogether. When one is dreaming, is one animate or inanimate? Given the narrator's eight years of having "felynge in nothyng" (11), it seems just as likely that as Alcyone he has become animated out of his torpor.

As this opening frame thus suggests, Chaucer's poem does not merely align masculinity with animation and activity, and femininity with passivity and inertness. Rather it is fixed gender that produces a fixed state of being. By performing a type of gender-crossing and becoming a version of Alcyone, the narrator sleeps his way into a new state of existence. By contrast, Seys's prostrate and naked body can be only weakly (and temporarily) reanimated by Morpheus. Further, his (or it is Morpheus's?) last speech to Alcyone offers one final confirmation of their gender roles, a confirmation articulated immediately before the queen's permanent death.[27]

This early connection between gender-crossing and animation lays the groundwork for the appearance of the Black Knight, who shares the narrator's gender indeterminacy. On the one hand, the Knight's connection to Octavius's hunt and his status as a "wonder wel-farynge knyght" (452) suggests a type of hyper-masculinity. Yet on the other hand, this masculinity is warped by the profound sorrow that has physically altered the knight. Mourning has turned the knight's "hewe" sallow, rendered him nearly unable

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to move, and made him insensible to the approaching narrator. In short, he resembles Alcyone in his physical suffering, and in the steps he takes—Alcyone through prayer, and the Black Knight through song—to alleviate it. The knight's young age of "foure and twenty yer" (455) and his lack of beard further emphasize his alignment with Alcyone. Both highlight the gender indeterminacy of his body.

It is almost immediately after the narrator meets the knight that the poem returns to chess, a pastime rejected by the narrator in the poem's opening lines yet one that reemerges to become the defining metaphor for the questions of gender and life that Chaucer has been posing. The Black Knight's lengthy description of his game with Fortune, which runs over one hundred lines, is too long to reproduce here. But the passage below gives a sufficient sense of the various crossings—life/death, male/female—at play:

> "At the ches with me she gan to pleye;
> With hir false draughtes dyvers
> She staal on me and tok my fers.
> And whan I sawgh my fers awaye,
> Allas, I kouthe no lenger playe,
> But seyde, 'Farewel, swete, ywys,
> And farewel al that ever ther ys!'
> Therwith Fortune seyde 'Chek her!
> And mat in the myd poynt of the chekker,
> With a poun errant!' Allas."
> (652–61)

Setting aside the problematic alignments in this imagined game—for instance, the pairing of a Black Knight with a White Queen—it seems clear that the Knight's own understanding of his metaphor is one of straight-up loss: Fortune has taken this chess queen, a stand-in for his love, Whyt. Yet the gender indeterminacy of the game itself complicates these "straight"-up alignments. The presumably living body of "Whyt," who stands in for the dead historical figure of Blanche of Lancaster, becomes a "fers" taken by Fortune, the main player in the game, and the specter of masculine identity that lingers in this piece is further compounded in the actual moment of its loss. The queen is not taken by a bishop, knight, or rook, but by a "poun," the same piece that could furnish the substance of her figurative reanimation. Should the Black Knight move one of his own pawns to

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the final square, he would automatically regain his lost *fers*. The only thing that prevents this move, it seems, is the Black Knight himself, who can "no lenger playe" when Whyt goes, and his impotence in turn allows Fortune to check and mate him.

Lest we dismiss the potential for reanimation embedded in the *fers*, Chaucer doubles back to it in the response of the hapless narrator who fails to understand what the Black Knight has just described. Interpreting the *fers* as a literal (and quite possibly male) piece, the narrator quickly insists that the Black Knight should not feel despondent. Even if he "had lost the ferses twelve" (723), the game could continue. Readers of the *Book of the Duchess* often note that moments like this confirm the narrator's self-promoted ignorance.[28] But in this case, ignorance comes not just through misunderstanding the Black Knight's allegorical language but also through the misrecognition of the piece itself. If a *fers* is a pawn, there can indeed be many of them, and the loss of a single one might have little bearing on the game. Or to use the narrator's own words, "ther is no man alyve her / Wolde for a fers make this woo!" (740–41).

This imagined proliferation of disposable *ferses*, a pointed contrast with a singular *fers* or original *regina*, in turn prompts the Black Knight's detailed inventory of Whyt's feminine attributes. Thus the narrator hears about her "white handes, and nayles rede," and "Rounde brestes," and the "good brede" of her hips (955–57). The Black Knight devotes four lines to her hair color alone, which is not red, or yellow, or brown but "most lyk gold" (858). And all this is a precursor to his long description of his courtship, thus reconfirming her status as feminized object, one subject to his own male pursuit.

In short, only by writing Whyt as female, a process that takes hundreds of lines, can the Black Knight shore up his own masculine identity. It is thus no coincidence that the moment in which the narrator finally recognizes "Whyt" as a stand-in for the Black Knight's love dovetails with the same moment that he understands the chess game as a metaphor:

> "She ys ded!" "Nay!" "Yis, be my trouthe!"
> "Is that youre los? By God, hyt ys routhe!"
> And with that word ryght anoon
> They gan to strake forth; al was doon,
> For that tyme, the hert-huntyng.
> With that me thoghte that this kyng
> Gan homwarde for to ryde. (1309–15)

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Here, in some of the most compact dialogue in Chaucer's oeuvre, the gender-crossings that have predominated are suddenly reversed. Whyt's identity, unknown to the narrator until this moment, changes from lost *fers* to Black Knight's dead lover. Yet this fixed gender comes at a price; Whyt now really is dead, a fact that Chaucer's narrator has verified with his "trouthe." This death of Whyt, her suddenly fixed identity as female, in turn produces a fixed identity in the Black Knight, who is no longer a knight but a "king," who, as it seems, has no more to say. He rides off and out of the poem, his departure jarring the narrator out of his dream and back into the world of life. This reclaiming of gender identity in turn affects the narrator, who ends both his sleepless state and his poem: "now hit ys doon."

THE *FERS* AS AN OBJECT-PERSON, OR THE CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper I have sidestepped distinctions between the chess *fers* and its connection to the "real" queens it ostensibly represented. Although some of this elision stems from this essay's own space constraints, my consideration of the *fers*-as-a-queen reflects the tendency of medieval audiences to animate objects and/or to see objects as animate extensions of living matter. After all, a cleric like Neckam would not bother to usher in stories of Tireseus as a means to talk about a pawn's gender switch if he saw the pawn as dead matter completely divorced from social investments.

Thus while in considering the chess queen's gender, I do not make any larger claims about the status of objects and their agency, it is fair to note that I also try not to assume that my understanding of medieval chess queens bears any resemblance to their status in Chaucer's world and, importantly, in the many centuries before it. It is undeniable that objects held a different status in the medieval world than they do in the modern one, and Chaucer's own vision of this particular object and the ways he uses it can help us explore larger ontological questions about life and nonlife.[29] What lent potency to Chaucer's animation of the chess queen are the polychronic traces that inform its materiality. As Jonathan Gil Harris has shown, cultural materialists have tended to privilege the "the sovereignty of the moment state," seeing in physical objects an "integrity and singularity" that in turn shores up the idea of a historical moment that differs from our own.[30] Yet the objects we use have their own histories, ones we cannot quite erase even if we tend to think of them as fixed in a historical present.

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Understanding the physical and cultural traces of the queen's masculine identities is, as I have argued, crucial to recognizing Chaucer's larger preoccupation with gender-crossing as well as the ways he aligns this crossing with the ability of bodies to change their state of being. Just as a promoted pawn on a chessboard provides the catalyst for the chess queen's rebirth, so too do Chaucer's characters use gender-crossing as a means of reanimation, with the further suggestion that those outside the poem's world might do well to follow the same advice.

Notes

1. Joan Morton Jones, *The Chess of Love (Old French Text with Translation and Commentary)*, (PhD diss., The University of Nebraska, 1968), 11.

2. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Book of the Duchess*, in the *Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987). Subsequent references to this edition will be noted by line number parenthetically in the body of the essay.

3. This idea of communication between writers across time comes across even more clearly in another of Chaucer's early dream visions, *The House of Fame*.

4. Reanimating stories and actors is a common theme for Chaucer and his peers. In "The Matter of Armenia in the Age of Chaucer," Carolyn Collette maps the ways the fall of Armenia lingered and as literature "continued to kindle the popular imagination" long after the prime actors in this confrontation had died. In many ways, Collette's "diachronic and synchronic" approach has influenced my own. See Carolyn P. Collette and Vincent J. DiMarco, "The Matter of Armenia in the Age of Chaucer," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 23 (2001): 317–58, at 358 and 317.

5. In her recent book, *Making Chaucer's Book of the Duchess: Textuality and Reception* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2015), Jamie C. Fumo compares this moment to a similar moment in Charles of Orleans's *Fortunes Stabilnes*, a text that amplifies this potential for rebirth by returning to an earlier metaphor, that of the phoenix, which Charles uses to imagine a renewal, albeit one that will come through his union with another woman.

6. *As in* modern chess, medieval chess players practiced pawn promotion; a pawn that reached the far side of the board would be "promoted" to another piece. *Unlike* modern chess, which allows the player to promote the pawn to any piece, the medieval pawn could *only* become a queen. Medieval rules for the game varied. Yet the rule of pawn promotion was surprisingly consistent in all regional versions of the game. Murray, *History of Chess*, 452–85.

7. Deborah Horowitz, "An Aesthetic of Permeability: Three Transcapes of the *Book of the Duchess*," *Chaucer Review* 39.3 (2005), 259–79 at 260.

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8. Mark N. Taylor, "Chaucer's Knowledge of Chess," *Chaucer Review* 38.4 (2004): 299–313; Guillemette Bolens, "Chess, Clocks, and Counsellors in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*," *Chaucer Review* 35.3 (2001): 281–93; Jenny Adams, "Pawn Takes Knight's Queen: Playing at Chess in the *Book of the Duchess*," *Chaucer Review* 34.2 (1999): 125–38; Guillemette Bolens, "The Game of Chess in Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*," *Chaucer Review* 32.4 (1998): 324–34; Margaret Connolly, "Chaucer and Chess," *Chaucer Review* 29.1 (1994): 40–44; S. W. Stevenson, "Chaucer's Ferses Twelve," *ELH* 7.3 (1940): 215–22; W. H. French, "Medieval Chess and the Book of the Duchess," *Modern Language Notes* 64.4 (1949): 261–64.

9. For a more extensive discussion of this change, see my own *Power Play: The Literature and Politics of Chess in the Late Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

10. Murray, *History of Chess*, 394–400.

11. In English, "checks" also came to refer to the squares on the board. Murray, *History of Chess*, 394–400.

12. Four names of European origin record this transformation of the elephant, which became in various parts of Europe a sage man (Italy), a bishop (England, France, Germany, and Iceland), a count (Germany), or a fool (France). Murray, *History of Chess*, 424.

13. For a more detailed analysis of chess as an allegory for social order, see my *Power Play*, 1–14.

14. Chess pieces everywhere existed in abstract sets and actual carvings of forms. But whereas non-European sets reproduced animals and men (Murray, *A History of Chess*, 87), European pieces featured male and, in the case of the queen, female figures. The only piece still associated with an animal was (and still is) the knight. In *shatranj*, the version of chess that existed in the Arab empire, pieces did not customarily appear as images of people or men (Murray, 223).

15. Places that changed the name to *regina* or *Koninginne* were predominantly in Italy and Germany. For Murray, "the fact that *firz* was adopted and not translated in some of the European languages proves that the meaning of the Arabic name was not understood" (Murray, *History of Chess*, 423). Perhaps. But the immediate transition along with the eventual replacement of *firz* by *regina* suggests that more might be at work.

16. That some philosophers saw women as producing reproductive seed similar to sperm is indicative of the hazy and constantly moving gender lines at play. See Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) in particular 105–227.

17. The *Einseideln Poem*, in Murray, *History of Chess*, 514, lines 67–70.

18. Problem sets are endgame diagrams that challenge a player to mate the king in a given number of moves.

19. Alexander Neckam, *De Naturis rerum, libri duo, with the poem of the same*

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author, De laudibus divinæ sapientiæ, ed. Thomas Wright (London: Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863), 324–25. This passage is also reproduced in Murray, *History of Chess*, 511. Murray adds this quote from Ovid: "Sequitur puer Iphis euntem / Quam solita est maiore gradus" ("As her mother went, Iphis comes, with larger steps than she had normally taken.") I have modified Murray's Latin translation, which appears on p. 501 of his *History*.

20. Murray records this change in the fourteenth-century *Corpus Poem* (*History of Chess*, 427).

21. For Murray, whose *A History of Chess* appeared in the early twentieth century, the general tendency of players to change the queen's name was the most practical solution for the players whose "moral sense . . . was outraged" (426). The other solution, namely restricting pawn promotion until the queen was taken, "reduced the brightness of the game, and was opposed to its spirit" (*History of Chess*, 427). Yet Murray's analysis overlooks the fact that the promoted pawn still assumed a female name—by the fourteenth century, a promoted pawn was throughout Europe called *domina*—and fails to account for Neckam's titillating allusions to Tireseus. Rather than moral outrage, it seems that writers had a general desire to shore up and normalize the pawn's gender transformation.

22. Murray notes that *facere dominam* occurs nineteen times while *facere reginam* occurs only two times. See *History of Chess*, 427–28.

23. Murray, *History of Chess*, 791.

24. For an extended (albeit debatable) argument for the reasons behind the change in the queen's power, see Marilyn Yalom, *The Birth of the Chess Queen: A History* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004).

25. William Caxton, *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*, TEAMS Middle English Text Series, ed. Jenny Adams (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009), 26, lines 127–29. Subsequent reference to this work will be cited by book and chapter in the body of the essay. Caxton's work is a translation of Jacobus's work. For a Latin version of the *Libellus* produced nearer to the time of composition, see *Libellus de moribus hominum et officiis nobilium ac popularium super ludo scachorum*, ed. Sister Marie Anita Burt (PhD diss., The University of Texas, Austin, 1957).

26. These references to a pawn's ability to acquire "dignity" appear in lines 345, 351–52, 368–69.

27. This speech begins with ". . . My swete wyf / Awake! Let be your sorwful lyf," (201–2), an injunction easily read as a suggestion that the "wyf" let go of "lyf" altogether.

28. Offering a counterview, Arthur Bahr argues that "the Narrator may be neither dullard nor psychotherapist, but simply confused at and impatient with the Black Knight's generalizing, idealizing language; and he and the Black Knight therefore repeatedly talk past each other." See Bahr's "The Rhetorical Construction of Narra-

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tor and Narrative in Chaucer's *The Book of the Duchess*," *Chaucer Review* 35.1 (2000) 43–59 at 50.

29. Chaucer might be acting a bit like the members of the current *postmedieval* collective, who often view things from the position of an object and in turn use this idea of animation to challenge human exceptionalism. A good example of the *postmedieval* collective's efforts in this regard is Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral: Ethics and Objects* (Washington, DC: Oliphaunt Books, 2012). Even more recent critics of object-oriented ontology (OOO) such as Andrew Cole call less for a wholesale departure from OOO than for its contextualization in a philosophical history that accounts for medieval frameworks of thought. See Cole, "The Call of Things," *minnesota review* 80 (2013): 106–18.

30. Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 2–3.

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CHAPTER 12

Statues, Bodies, and Souls

St. Cecilia and Some Medieval Attitudes toward Ancient Rome

C. David Benson

1.

This essay features two Roman marble statues that portray women, and no ordinary women at that, but a pagan goddess, Venus, and a famous Christian martyr, St. Cecilia.[1] My inspiration is a pioneering study by Carolyn Collette on Chaucer's only saint's life, "The Second Nun's Tale."[2] Collette was ahead of her time in showing that this short tale, which had been largely ignored by critics, was a genuine "work of art" (337, 347) and thematically coherent in contrasting bodily sight with spiritual Christian insight: "In Chaucer's version of the life of Seinte Cecile we learn that the apparently real, that perceived by the senses, is only a shadow, while that perceived by the eye of the soul is truly real" (337). Collette supports her reading with St. Augustine's distinction between *things* and *signs* in the second book of his *De Doctrina Christiana*: things are objects to be used or enjoyed for themselves, but signs are things that "represent another level of reality" (Collette, 342). As Augustine puts it: "a sign is a thing which of itself makes some other thing come to mind, beside the impression that it presents to the senses."[3] Collette points out that Cecilia makes a similar distinction in a long, final debate with the Roman prefect Almachius, who demands that she sacrifice to the city's pagan gods.[4] The saint contemptuously refuses, saying that the prefect is "blynd" because the image that he calls a god is nothing more than a "thyng," for all can see it is only "stoon," as the senses show: "lat thyn hand upon it falle / And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it fynde" (VIII. 498–

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504). Chaucer's Cecilia shows that it takes true spiritual insight, rather than fallible physical sight, to see beyond this world and know that "myghty God is in his hevenes hye" (508).[5]

In her rejection of apparent things for signs of the real, Chaucer's Cecilia represents the "triumph of the spirit over the flesh" (Collette, 348), even if that flesh is Christian and dear to her. She does not lament the martyr's deaths that come to her husband and his brother because in giving up earthly existence they will thus gain "the corone of lif that may not faille" (383–90). Nor does Cecilia care much about her own life. When Almachius threatens her with death, she scorns his power, saying that she is perfectly capable of enduring whatever violence he uses on her (480–86), and when he almost severs her head, she does not pray to God for a cure but only a respite of three days to preach, teach, and arrange for her house to become a church (542–46). As in the Latin lives of Cecilia that were his sources, Chaucer also says little about the saint's body after death. In the tale's final stanza we are told only that Pope Urban buried her secretly "among his othere seintes," presumably in the catacombs where he was still hiding, and that the church she requested was duly consecrated, in which, to this day, "Men doon to Crist and to his seint servyse" (547–53). The tale thus concludes with no mention of the subsequent history of St. Cecilia's remains, which, as we shall see, is as eventful as her life.

Collette's reading persuasively demonstrates the careful art and spirituality of "The Second Nun's Tale," and the sharp opposition she finds in the tale between the material and the spiritual prompted me to think about things and signs in two other medieval English texts on Rome that I have been working on. One was written long before Chaucer and the other after and neither has any direct connection with his work. The earlier text is a Latin report of a visit to Rome by Master Gregorius, which demonstrates that physical things may be signs without necessarily being spiritual. Augustine himself recognized that some signs had secular meanings (a footprint suggests an animal and a trumpet that soldiers should advance or retreat), and Gregorius so interprets a statue of Venus. As a Christian, he does not treat it as a religious image, but his close inspection finds significances that are aesthetic and antiquarian rather than sacred. A second, later poem in Middle English, the *Stacions of Rome*, offers another medieval perspective on materiality that is more devotional than Gregorius's but less dismissive than Chaucer's Cecilia: this Middle English poem treats the relics of the ancient saints as both things and signs, matter and spirit: it asserts that the

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bodies in their tombs are not inert but still inhabited by the saints' active, holy presences. I conclude by returning to St. Cecilia and, in particular, to a Counter-Reformation statue of her by Stefano Maderno (1576–1636) that still survives in her church in Rome. Chaucer's version of Cecilia's story, which ends with her death, ignores the saint's body in order to celebrate her heavenly transcendence. By contrast, Maderno's statue complicates Chaucer's antimaterialist stance by using a very material statute to celebrate the spiritual. Unlike Chaucer's heroine, Maderno does not see an absolute divide between body and spirit. Instead, his statue of Cecilia asserts that her physical remains (here represented in marble and actually preserved in her tomb below) exert the full spiritual presence of the blessed saint. In presenting Cecilia this way, Maderno draws on other late medieval texts that locate the holy in ancient physical objects.

II.

Chaucer's Cecilia cannot wait to depart Rome for the next world, but Master Gregorius and the poet of the *Stacions of Rome* respond to the city and its material objects more positively, finding them to be conduits for historical and religious meaning. Master Gregorius, who is otherwise unknown but who circumstantial evidence suggests was English, is named as author of the sole surviving manuscript of a distinctive Latin treatise of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century entitled the *Narracio de Mirabilibus Urbis Romae* (*Narration of the Marvels of the City of Rome*).[6] The *Narracio* is a brief prose report of Gregorius's first visit to Rome, where, like so many other visitors before and since, he was overwhelmed by the many wonders he saw. Gregorius declares that he is writing at the request of clerical companions engaged in the study of Holy Scripture, but his work largely ignores Christian Rome in favor of the pagan culture that Chaucer's St. Cecilia holds in such contempt. No churches appear in the *Narracio*, which instead describes ancient topographical sites and structures, such as palaces, arches, temples, baths, and especially statues. Gregorius provides genuine information about the remains of classical Rome, although it is not clear how much of what he tells depends on fanciful legends or misunderstandings of the function of ancient buildings. He is proud of his literary learning, which he often displays, while being contemptuous of the pious credulity of ignorant pilgrims, such as those interested in the obelisk now in the center of St. Peter's Square,

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because they believe that crawling under it will cause them to be "cleansed of their sins" (29.549–52; trans. 35).

As his scorn suggests, Gregorius has no interest in the Christian use of such ancient monuments. He values classical remains for themselves, even as he laments how much has been lost. Early in the *Narracio*, he quotes the first lines of the famous medieval poetic lament by Archbishop Hildebert of Lavardin:

> *Par tibi, Roma, nichil, cum sis prope tota ruina:*
> *Fracta docere potes, integra quanta fores.*
>
> [Nothing can equal you, Rome, although you are
> almost a total ruin,
> Shattered you can teach, whole how much you would speak.]
> (12.40–41; trans. 18)

Gregorius the antiquarian is as active as any pilgrim pursuing atonement in his attempts to learn what ancient Rome was like when it was still whole; if he crawls under no obelisk, he assiduously measures the diameter of the Pantheon (23.384–86; trans. 29) and dips his hand into the water of what he says was a bath, though he refuses to go further because of the stench (19.264–66; trans. 25).[7] The Roman marvels to which Gregorius pays particular attention are freestanding statues, such as the bronze of a young boy picking a thorn from his foot known as the *Spinario* (he is one of the earliest medieval authorities to mention it) and the magnificent gilded bronze monument of a horse and its rider, which we now know depicts Marcus Aurelius, both of which can be found in the museums of the Capitoline. These works of art may have especially appealed to Gregorius because, unlike so many classical structures, they were still intact.

The statue that most fascinates Gregorius, for a number of reasons, is a particular marble Venus, one that appears to have resembled the famous Capitoline Venus (fig. 12.1). First of all, it allows him to show off his classical knowledge: he reports that the statue was inspired by the myth of the Judgment of Paris and supplies a poetic quotation on the goddess's amatory power from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (1.248).[8] In a characteristic move, Gregorius goes from citations of classical texts to his own experience in Rome, as he makes explicit the overwhelming emotional effect the sight of the statue had on him:

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Fig. 12.1. "Capitoline Venus," Roman copy of the *Venus pudica* type, Capitoline Museum, Rome.

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> *Hec autem imago ex Pario marmore tam miro et inexplicabili perfecta est artificio, ut magis viva creatura videatur quam statua: erubescenti etenim nuditatem suam similis, faciem purpureo colore perfusam gerit. Videturque comminus aspicientibus in niveo ore ymaginis sanguinem natare. Hanc autem propter mirandam speciem et nescio quam magicam persuasionem ter coactus sum revisere, cum ab hospicio meo duobus stadiis distaret.*
>
> [This image is made from Parian marble with such wonderful and intricate skill that she seems more like a living creature than a statue: indeed she seems to blush in her nakedness, a reddish tinge coloring her face, and it appears to those who take a close look that blood flows in her snowy complexion. Because of this wonderful image, and I know not what magic charm, I was drawn back three times to look at it, although it was two stades distant from my hospice.] (20.286–93; trans. 26)

In Augustinian terms, Gregorius describes the statue of Venus as a thing that makes an impression on the senses, but also as a kind of sign that makes "some other thing come to the mind."[9] One of those things is the representational power of art. He stresses the aesthetic qualities of the statue: its high-quality marble, the skill of its sculpting, the red tinge of the face that suggests blushing. Sight, which is central to Collette's reading of "The Second Nun's Tale," is also emphasized, but instead of Cecilia's spiritual insight, Gregorius's vision remains resolutely earthbound. Those who look closely at the statue, he insists, will discover not just a marble thing, like the pagan idols Chaucer's Cecilia calls deaf and dumb (286), but an image whose illusion of flowing blood makes it seem more like a living woman (*viva creatura*) than a statue.[10] Gregorius's reference to the Judgment of Paris, his quotation from Ovid's love poem, and his emphasis on the statue's nakedness all suggest her sexuality, which may explain his apparently self-mocking reference to being drawn back three times, as if by some magic force.

The statue of Venus is also a sign that brings something more abstract to Gregorius's mind: it stands for the achievements of classical Rome that so fascinated him. Venus is not so much an example of the religion of the ancient city as of the wider culture of Rome's influential myths, literature, and other arts. Unfortunately, because of the limitations of the physical, temporal world, Gregorius is unable to experience, despite his best efforts,

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the two things that the statue seems to promise. Her sexuality, which stands in such contrast to St. Cecilia's purity, cannot be enjoyed by Gregorius, as it was by another classical sculptor most famously described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Whether or not it was a magic charm that drew Gregorius back to the statue, no supernatural transformation occurs as it did for Pygmalion. Venus does not step down from her pedestal and go off with her admirer, but remains stone. And if classical statues do not come alive in Gregorius's world, neither is the Englishman able to find himself back in the time when the statue of Venus was first created and ancient Rome and its pagan culture were whole. However much he might wish it, Gregorius cannot return to that lost city; he is left to puzzle over its ruins and surviving fragments, his antiquarian appetite stimulated but unsatisfied. Gregorius values the material world that St. Cecilia despises and rejects in "The Second Nun's Tale," but he is barred from complete knowledge of it.

III.

Like Gregorius's meditation on the statue of Venus, the popular late medieval poem known as the *Stacions of Rome* sees the potential of the physical world to act as a conduit to the spiritual. Yet unlike Gregorius's unfulfilled antiquarian yearnings (and disdain for pilgrimage), it declares that certain ancient Roman bodies, distinguished by their Christian piety rather than their classical beauty, do indeed have extraordinary power, the power to absolve from sin those who seek them. These bodies are not works of art but the mortal remains of Rome's early martyrs, enshrined in the city's many churches. Cecilia is one such martyr mentioned in the *Stacions*, but her presentation is very different from that in "The Second Nun's Tale." Chaucer's Cecilia rejects all earthly material things, including her own survival, for the spiritual joys of heaven, whereas the *Stacions* proclaims that it is precisely by means of Roman bodies such as hers that salvation may be achieved—for all and not just the elect.

Rome had long been famous for its saints and especially for its early martyrs, whose heroic faith had helped to convert the city from a pagan to a Christian capitol. In the early Middle Ages, pilgrims came to Roman shrines to worship, pray, and even live out the rest of their lives in proximity to sanctity, but by the late Middle Ages, these holy places promised tangible rewards as well. Indulgence from the penalties of sin was extended from cru-

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saders and other special classes to pilgrims in general. Because of the quality and quantity of its shrines, Rome was believed (and announced itself) to be pre-eminent in the amount of pardon it could supply. The churches of Rome, the sacred relics they contained, and the pardon they offered were recorded in medieval Latin texts known as the *Indulgentiae ecclesiarum urbis Romae*, which became popular in the fourteenth century and quickly spread throughout Europe, including England.[11] The *Stacions of Rome*, which appeared in various but generally similar forms in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is a version of the *Indulgentiae* in Middle English verse. Although without literary distinction, the *Stacions* was relatively popular in late medieval England: six long versions and two fragments survive, with two of the former in major religious miscellanies.[12]

The *Stacions* differs from "The Second Nun's Tale" in its focus on holy bodies after death. Many of these bodies, like that of Cecilia herself, were said to have been moved from the catacombs and brought into the city's central churches, such as the "vij þousende holy bones" Pope Simplicius gathered and placed in a single church (Vernon, 415–19). As the phrase "holy bones," which appears often in the *Stacions*, suggests, the poem insists on the relics' materiality, often by emphasizing their great number or even their appeal to the senses. One version of the *Stacions* says that a pilgrim kneeling by an opening in the double tomb of Sts. Lawrence and Stephen will enjoy "a swete smelle of bodyes þat þer be" (Cotton, 530).[13]

Chaucer's St. Cecilia represents one extreme of medieval spirituality in her eagerness to shed her body and go to heaven; in contrast, the medieval veneration of the relics of the saints, as in the *Stacions*, celebrates the holy bodies left on earth. In his ground-breaking *Cult of the Saints*, Peter Brown argues that one of the elements that distinguished Christianity was seeing in the saint a direct connection between the divine and the mundane: for "the saint in Heaven was believed to be 'present' at his tomb on earth" and capable of mighty deeds.[14] Or as Patrick Geary puts it, most people thought "relics *were* the saints, continuing to live among men."[15] In the late Middle Ages, and nowhere more so than in Rome, the cult of the saints developed further as their bodies came to be regarded not only as objects of veneration and imitation but also as the practical source of relief for humans burdened by sins.

Church doctrine insisted that while the guilt (*culpa*) of sin was forgiven by a genuine confession, its punishment (*pena*) still needed to be satisfied by penance and good works, and as a result most humans died greatly in arrears.[16] This huge debt necessitated additional punishment in purgatory before heaven could be achieved. The bountiful indulgences offered in

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Rome's numerous churches, supposedly drawn from the Catholic Church's inexhaustible Treasury of Merit accumulated by the virtues of Christ and the saints, were a sure way for the sinner to significantly reduce what he or she owed.[17] An introductory section in an early version of the *Stacions* speaks directly to readers whose souls are "in synne bounde," telling them that a place exists where they can "medicyn fynde" to avoid "þe fuir of helle" (Vernon Prologue, 9–14).[18] That place is "Grete Rome," for "Þer is þe medicyn, crop and rote, / Þat men clepeþ pardoun" (Vernon Prologue, 17–19). Like many of the Latin *Indulgentiae*, the *Stacions* cites Pope Boniface's assertion that if men only knew the amount of "þe pardoun þat is at grete Rome," they would feel no need to go "ouer þe see" to Jerusalem or to St. Katherine's shrine (Vernon, 285–93). Although the penitent must be contrite, boundless pardon is freely available at Roman churches made holy by the relics of martyrs and others.

The church of S. Cecilia is treated more briefly than many other Roman churches in the *Stacions*, and yet, in a single couplet, its benefit because of the saint is made explicit: "At Sesyle [S. Cecilia], the holy marter, / Thowe myght have a C yere" (Cotton, 832–33).[19] The century of indulgence mentioned in the second line is a relatively modest amount, for other Roman churches in the *Stacions* offered many thousands of years, full remission of sins, or even the immediate release of a friend from Purgatory.[20]

While Chaucer's "Second Nun's Tale" envisions an ascetic life of denial and mortification as the way to salvation, the *Stacions of Rome* promises mercy and grace to all. Chaucer's tale describes "a greet bataille" against devilish forces by stalwart martyrs to achieve the "corone of lif" that they have richly "deserved" (383–90), whereas readers of the *Stacions* need only appear at the churches of Rome to collect the spiritual riches earned for them by the saints. As in the late medieval genre known as the *Miracles of the Virgin*, where the simple, heartfelt prayer of the most hardened sinner may win Mary's mercy, the *Stacions* insists that boundless pardon is available to all those who visit Roman churches made holy by the relics of martyrs and other saintly figures.

IV.

I conclude this essay on Roman statues, souls and bodies by returning to the church of S. Cecilia in Rome. Although dedicated to the heroine of "The Second Nun's Tale," the church contains a Renaissance statue of the saint

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that suggests the less austere values of the two medieval English texts about ancient Rome discussed above: the *Narracio* of Master Gregorius and the *Stacions of Rome*. S. Cecilia in Trastevere was standing in Chaucer's time and still stands today, though it has been much altered over the centuries. The present church was built in 821 by Pope Paschal I (817–24) specifically to house the remains of the saint, whose incorrupt corpse he claimed to have discovered in the catacombs at the very spot she had revealed to him in a dream.[21]

A modern visitor to the church, after passing by the tomb of the English Cardinal Adam Easton, a contemporary of Chaucer, sees a gleaming white object at the other end of the nave below and in front of the central high altar.[22] This is a marble sculpture of St. Cecilia lying on her side at the point of death or just after, placed in a contrasting niche of black marble, itself surrounded by further decoration, giving the statue of the saint even more prominence. Cecilia appears as a young woman, barefooted and clad in a simple robe, with her knees slightly drawn up before her, her arms stretched along her sides, and her turbaned head turned away so that her face remains hidden, though we see her neck with its wounds from which drops of blood ooze.[23]

Cardinal Paolo Emilio Sfondrato (1560–1618), who had been assigned S. Cecilia in Trastevere as his titular church, was responsible for ordering and displaying the statue of the saint. According to a detailed historical account Sfondrato commissioned from the renowned archaeologist Antonio Bosio, while the church was being renovated, the cardinal unearthed three sarcophagi beneath the altar, the smallest of which was found to contain the body of Cecilia, still as incorrupt as it had been when placed there almost eight hundred years earlier by Pope Paschal.[24] The discovery on October 20, 1599, caused a sensation in Rome, with citizens, clergy, and even the pope eager for a sight of the famous martyr, though her body was only occasionally displayed publicly before being reburied under the altar on her feast day, November 22, 1599. Soon after Cecilia's reburial, her statue was made at Sfondrato's request by the young sculptor Stefano Maderno, who portrayed her, as a subsequent plaque nearby states, "in the position in which she was found."

Maderno's marble image of St. Cecilia (fig. 12.2) has long been recognized, in the words of John Pope-Hennessy, as "one of the most celebrated statues of its time."[25] Although it is unclear how much credit belongs to Maderno himself (none of his subsequent work matches it) and how much

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Fig. 12.2. Stefano Maderno, *Martyrdom of Saint Cecilia*, marble statue, Church of St. Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome. (By permission of Scala/Art Resource, NY.)

to his sophisticated patron, Cardinal Sfondrato, a leader of the Counter-Reformation at Rome, the success of the sculpture is undeniable. The "truly moving simplicity" of the saint's wounded body creates an understated emotional effect, very different from the flamboyant extremes of the Roman baroque sculpture that followed soon after Maderno.[26] In his travel journal, the novelist Stendahl wrote that the sculpture pleased him very much and that, as with Gregorius and the statue of Venus, one "cannot avoid going back, to look at it over and over again"; the Marquis de Sade also echoes Gregorius in noting the delicate naturalism and sense of life in the statue, saying that it resembled a "flower picked almost at the moment of birth . . . like a body just thrown there, soft and willowy, breathing."[27]

The lovely and moving figure created by Maderno conflicts with some of the key themes of "The Second Nun's Tale." The body that the saint mortified and willingly relinquished for the spiritual joys of heaven has been made into an object to delight the senses of even such as de Sade, though, as a piece of marble, it is a "stoon" like the pagan idols to which Cecilia refused to sacrifice. Maderno's statue, like Chaucer's tale, honors Cecilia's heroic self-sacrifice, but it also incorporates other, less severe medieval attitudes

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toward the body, such as those seen in Gregorius's Roman treatise and in the *Stacions of Rome*.

The delicate elegance of Maderno's statue, for example, calls to mind the "wonderful and intricate skill" of the Venus praised by Gregorius, though instead of the latter's sexual response to the statue of the goddess, the Italian sculptor sought to evoke compassion for his young, modest, and innocent victim. What Claudio Strinati calls a "masterpiece of introspection and silence" is especially appropriate because Cecilia's story is unusual in medieval virgin martyr tales in containing no element of sexual threat.[28] If Maderno's artistry reminds us of Gregorius's aestheticism, he also shares something of the writer's antiquarianism, but, once again, his purposes are more devotional than secular. Maderno was trained to copy ancient art, perhaps one of the reasons Sfondrato commissioned him for the Cecilia statue, and his approach is noticeably classical, most explicitly in his realization of the saint's turned away face, which derives from a Hellenistic statue of a dead Persian.[29] An obvious reason for using such an antiquarian style is to pay tribute to the purity of the early Roman Church and thus to associate the present with that heroic past. Although the accompanying plaque proclaims that the statue portrays Cecilia's body exactly as it appeared when her tomb was opened in 1600, blood is still dripping from her wound, thus conflating the moment of her death with her rediscovery well over a millennium later.[30]

Maderno's Cecilia contains elements that suggest Gregorius's secular response to Venus, but it is finally, like Chaucer's "Second Nun's Tale," a Christian work of art, though one whose respect for holy bodies is more like that of the *Stacions of Rome*. The statue of Cecilia suggests that matter need not be the "fetter of the spirit" (Collette, 338), as it is in Chaucer's tale, but can be a powerful religious sign. The most obvious Christian signification of Maderno's Cecilia, evident even to casual visitors, is its strategic location in the church. The horizontal statue is slightly raised above the nave floor and parallel to the main altar one level above, both image and altar framed by the famous thirteenth-century ciborium of Arnolfo di Cambio. In Sfondrato's renovation of the church, as Kämpf explains, "two new clear-cut horizons were established—one for the veneration of the relic and the other for the liturgical celebration of the mass."[31] For worshipers in the nave, the statue reinforces the most important act performed in any Christian church: the transubstantiation of the Host. The body and blood of Christ in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist are echoed in the bloody body of the saint just below, whose physical intactness also looks forward to "Christ's

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Second Coming and the bodily resurrection of the faithful."[32] Whatever the aesthetic beauty and historical interest of the statue of Cecilia, it functions in the church as a marble sign of Christ's great sacrifice and his promise of eternal life.

The statue of the dying Cecilia is also a sign of the uncorrupt body of the saint herself, who was believed to be still an active presence in her nearby tomb, like the holy relics detailed in the *Stacions of Rome*. Maderno made the link between statue and holy body explicit by shaping the marble Cecilia so that its head looks in the direction of her remains in the crypt directly beneath the main altar, where she rests with her husband and his brother. The contemporary archaeologist and historian Bosio describes the statue as "'turning her face towards the *confessio*,' thus indicating the burial place of the saintly bodies beneath."[33] The body of the saint in her shrine is not immediately accessible to visitors, but her statue is, especially on Cecilia's feast day when it is available to be touched and kissed by the devout.[34] Such veneration of an inanimate statue may look like the idol worship condemned by Chaucer's heroine; it would certainly be so judged by Christian iconoclasts, among them England's Lollards, who were suspicious of all religious representation, which they believed broke the commandment against graven images and misappropriated the worship due to God.[35] The orthodox medieval theology behind the *Stacions of Rome*, which was written when suspicion of the Lollards was high and perhaps in deliberate opposition to them, would have valued a statue like Maderno's Cecilia not because of its beauty and evocation of past history or even as an object of veneration, but because it was a sign of Cecilia's holy body, a sacred relic.

Chaucer's "Second Nun's Tale" expresses little regard for the preservation of Cecilia's body, either before or after death, but, as we have seen, the *Stacions of Rome*, Pope Paschal, Cardinal Sfondrato, Maderno, and pilgrims to this day exhibit the greatest care and reverence for her corpse, regarding it not as worthless matter but as the vessel of the saint's real presence. Gregorius hoped in vain to bridge the gap between medieval and classical Rome through the statue of Venus, but the body of Cecilia creates just such a link between present and past. Her statue and holy remains unite the viewer (whether in 1600 or the twenty-first century) with the still vital saint at the moment of her martyrdom and acceptance into heaven. Gregorius is granted only the illusion of life as he looks intently at Venus, and he cannot return in any meaningful way to the time of her creation, but Cecilia comes from the ancient past (and heaven) to meet those who come to visit her shrine,

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helping them to achieve their own salvation, as she did the people of Rome during her earthly existence.[36]

Instead of the rejection of the physical for the spiritual that underlies "The Second Nun's Tale," as Carolyn Collette has demonstrated, a marble statue and especially the dead body it represents, though material, inspires the hope of spiritual regeneration. The austere theology of "The Second Nun's Tale" is not the only lesson taken from ancient Roman Christianity. There is also the more undemanding message of the *Stacions of Rome*, which does not reject but uses the objects of this world to promise joy in the next. In the Middle Ages, the church of S. Cecilia in Trastevere continued the preaching and teaching of its saintly patron, as indicated in Chaucer's tale, but Maderno's statue of St. Cecilia reinforced a more immediate and less intellectual message: the church of S. Cecilia was a place where pilgrims could find healing for their sins as the result of the heavenly power that resided in the body of the young martyr beneath its altar.

Notes

1. I am grateful for this opportunity to join in honoring another remarkable woman, Carolyn Collette. Although Carolyn has not yet, to my knowledge, been officially recognized either as a saint or goddess, her learning, insight, generosity, and good humor have been a blessing to countless students and colleagues, as I know from my own experience. In this essay, I shall generally use the form St. Cecilia for the name of the saint (even though Chaucer's spelling is different) and S. Cecilia for the name of her church in the Trastevere section of Rome. I am further grateful to Carolyn for the occasion to discuss one of my very favorite Roman churches.

2. Carolyn P. Collette, "A Closer Look at Seinte Cecile's Special Vision," *Chaucer Review* 10 (1976): 337–49. Further citations to this essay will be by page number in my text and notes. Other works by Chaucer, such as "The Man of Law's Tale" and "The Prioress's Tale," not to mention *The Legend of Good Women*, contain hagiographical elements, but Cecilia is the only Chaucerian protagonist who is actually a Christian saint.

3. Collette quotes Augustine in her essay (342), but my translation is from Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 57. For a brief but useful discussion of Augustine's theory of signs, see Elizabeth Sears, "Medieval Sign Theory," in *Reading Medieval Images: The Art Historian and the Object*, ed. Elizabeth Sears and Thelma K. Thomas (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 16–17. Sears notes that Augustine's primary interest is in verbal rather than visual signs.

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4. References to Chaucer's works, including "The Second Nun's Tale," are from the *Riverside Chaucer*, ed. Larry D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987). Subsequent citations to this tale in my text are parenthetical by line number.

5. See Collette, 346–47. In contrast to Almachius's blindness, Cecilia's spiritual insight is emphasized in some of the etymologies of her name in the Prologue to "The Second Nun's Tale": "Cecilie is to seye 'the wey to blynde'" (VIII. 92) or "'Wantynge of blyndnesse,' for hir grete light / Of sapience" (VIII.100–101). The saint also brings true sight to others: after following her instructions, her husband gains the faith to enable him to see the holy angel that was previously invisible to him, he "now sees what before was hidden" (Collette, 344); and he in turn opens the eyes of his brother when he "in one sweeping statement . . . affirms the greater reality of the word beyond sight, scorning the pale shadows of the material world" (Collette, 345):

> "In dremes," quod Valerian, "han we be
> Unto this tyme, brother myn, ywis.
> But now at erst in trouthe oure dwellyng is."
> (262–64)

6. My quotations of Gregorius's *Narracio* are from the Latin edition of R. B. C. Huygens, *Magister Gregorius: Narracio de Mirabilibus Urbis Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), and from an English translation, which I have slightly modified, by John Osborne, *Master Gregorius: The Marvels of Rome* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1987). All further citations will be included in the text and will refer first to the page and line number of the Latin original and then to the page number of Osborne's translation.

7. Osborne, *Marvels of Rome*, 58, casts doubt on the existence of a working bath in Rome at the time and notes that Gregorius's account is based on a version of the *Seven Wonders of the World*, suggesting that Gregorius's attempts to recreate Rome depended on texts as well as direct experience.

8. Given the details he mentions, especially the blushing of the goddess, the statue Gregorius saw probably did not depict the Judgment of Paris but rather was an example of a famous representation of Venus emerging naked from her bath, known as the *Aphrodite Pudica*. Gordon Rushforth, "Magister Gregorius *De Mirabilibus Urbis Romae*: A New Description of Rome in the Twelfth Century," *Journal of Roman Studies* 9 (1919): 25, identified Gregorius's Venus as the so-called Capitoline Venus now in the Capitoline Museum, and this was accepted by Osborne, *Master Gregorius*, 59, but Dale Kinney, "*Mirabilia Urbis Romae*," in *The Classics in the Middle Ages*, ed. Aldo S. Bernardo and Saul Levin (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1990), 214, calls this identification "neither likely . . . nor necessary." The Capitoline Venus seems to have been rediscovered too late to be the one Gregorius saw, though he may have seen a similar work.

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9. In the *Narracio*, Gregorius frequently refers to bronze statues as signs (*signum*) among other terms (13.50, 51, 56, 15.128, 16.164), though he calls the marble Venus an image (*imago*) twice and statue (*statua*) once, as seen in the quotation above.

10. Gregorius also insists that other ancient statues give the illusion of life, including speech: a bronze bull on Castel Sant'Angelo was so skillfully made, he says, that it appears to viewers as if it were about to "bellow and move" (*mugituro et moturo*) (13.54; trans. 19), and to one looking intently (*attencius inspexerit*), the bronze head of the Colossus at the Lateran appears to be "moving and speaking" (*moturo et locuturo*) (18.205; trans. 23).

11. For the most comprehensive account of medieval Continental and English manuscripts of the *Indulgentiae* in Europe, see Nine Robijntje Miedema, *Die römischen Kirchen im Spätmittelalter nach den "Indulgentiae ecclesiarum urbis Romae"* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2001), and her *Die "Mirabilia Romae"* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996).

12. For a list of extant Middle English verse versions of the *Stacions of Rome*, see Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, *A New Index of Middle English Verse* (London: British Library, 2005), item 1172. The long versions of the *Stacions* are (1) Vernon (Oxford, Bodleian Library Eng. poet.a.i, fols. 314r-315v), (2) Simeon (London, British Library Additional 22283, fols. 123r-124v), (3) Cotton (London, British Library Cotton Caligula A.ii, fols. 83r-86v), (4) Lambeth (London, Lambeth Library 306, fols. 152v-165r), and two rolls: (5) one originally from Bicester Priory, Oxfordshire (London, Public Records Office SC 6/956/5), and (6) another now in Chicago (Newberry Library MS -32). My quotations of the *Stacions* are from published editions of Vernon, in *The Stacions of Rome*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, OS 25 (London: Trübner, 1867), and from Cotton (with a continuation from Lambeth), in *Political, Religious, and Love Poems*, ed. F. J. Furnivall, Early English Text Society, OS 15, 2nd ed. (London: Kegan Paul, 1903), 143–73. Citations will be included in my text.

13. Most of the bodies of the saints were enclosed in their shrines, but other nonhuman but very material relics associated with Christ, Mary, and the apostles were available for inspection, as the *Stacions* repeatedly insists. These include "þe Table þer men may se" used by Christ at the Last Supper (Vernon, 305) at the Lateran, or, in the church named for them (S. Pietro in Vincoli), "þe cheynes þere men may see" that once restrained Peter (Vernon 583).

14. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (1981; rpt. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 3. See also Jonathan Sumpton, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Mediaeval Imagination* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), 48–49: "Ordinary men looked on the saints as individuals no less immediate, no less visible and tangible in death than they had been in life.

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It was essential to this view of things that the saint should be considered to inhabit the place where his relics were preserved."

15. Patrick Geary, "Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 176.

16. For my discussion of indulgences, I depend on the work of Robert W. Shaffern, especially his "The Medieval Theology of Indulgences," in *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. R. N. Swanson (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 11–36, and on his *The Penitents' Treasury: Indulgences in Latin Christendom, 1175–1375* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2007).

17. See, especially, Shaffern, "Medieval Theology of Indulgences."

18. This is from the introduction to the Vernon version of the *Stacions*, edited separately by F. J. Furnivall, who calls it a Prologue, in *The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS*, Early English Text Society, OS 117, vol. 2 (London: Kegan Paul, 1901), 609–11.

19. These lines are from the Lambeth continuation to Cotton published by Furnivall. Other versions mention another relic at S. Cecilia, the foot of Mary Magdalen (see Vernon, 664).

20. In the murky theology of indulgences, a sinner could never know for certain how much pardon was required to offset the debt he owed. There was (and is) also confusion about what the years of an indulgence meant. J. R. Hulbert, "Some Medieval Advertisements of Rome," *Modern Philology* 20 (1923), 420, explains: "By a hundred days or a hundred years of indulgence is meant not release from that many days or years in purgatory [as often assumed], but as much shortening of punishment as a hundred days or a hundred years of penance performed on earth would accomplish."

21. Paschal's construction of S. Cecilia has recently been described in Caroline J. Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I: Papal Power, Urban Renovation, Church Rebuilding and Relic Translation, 817–824* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). An account of Paschal's dream and discovery of Cecilia's body appears in the *Liber Pontificalis*; see *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, trans. Raymond Davis (Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 1995), 15–18.

22. All cardinals are given title to a church in Rome and S. Cecilia's was Easton's; it has even been suggested he might have been the inspiration for "The Second Nun's Tale": see John C. Hirsh, "Did Chaucer Visit Rome?" *ELN* 37 (2000): 1–8.

23. For a recent account of Maderno's statue on the occasion of its restoration with stunning photographs, see Anna Lo Bianco, *Cecilia: La Storia, l'Immagine, Il Mito: La Scultura di Stefano Maderno e il suo Restauro* (Rome: Campisano Editore, 2001).

24. These claims have always raised questions. Although Cecilia was named as

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a martyr in the early centuries of Christian Rome, most scholars now believe that her story was a later invention. Pope Paschal obviously thought she was genuine and that he had found her preserved body, as did Cardinal Sfondrato (whose name is also given as Paolo Camillo Sfondrato). During the last century, a consensus developed that what was found by the cardinal in 1599 were only some clothes. The discovery of drawings in a contemporary document, however, seems to offer eyewitness testimony that an intact body of woman was found in the church, though not lying in the same position as the statue and as stated in the written report that accompanied the drawings. For a thorough account of the purported discovery of Cecilia by Cardinal Sfondrato and the new document, see Tomaso Montanari, "Una Nuova Fonte per I'Invenzione del Corpo di Santa Cecilia: Testimoni Oculari, Immagini e Dubbi," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 32 (2005): 149–65. See also Tobias Kämpf, "Framing Cecilia's Sacred Body: Paolo Camillo Sfondrato and the Language of Revelation," *Sculpture Journal* 6 (2001): 10–20, and Emma Stirrup, "Time Concertinaed at the Altar of St. Cecilia in Trastevere," in *Rome: Continuing Encounters between Past and Present*, ed. Dorigen Caldwell and Lesley Caldwell (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 57–78. This section of my essay is indebted to these articles.

25. John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture*, 4th ed. (1996; rpt. London: Phaidon Press, 2002), 3 vols., 3.288.

26. Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750*, revised by Joseph Connors and Jennifer Montagu, 6th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 3 vols., 1.90. For the difference between Maderno's Cecilia and the later baroque sculpture, especially the work of Bernini, see Kämpf, "Framing Cecilia's Sacred Body," 10.

27. Stendahl is quoted in Lo Bianco, *Cecilia*, 54; de Sade in Stirrup, "Time Concertinaed," 59. Note that de Sade imagines the body still alive rather than preserved at the moment of death.

28. Claudio Strinati, "Premessa," in Lo Bianco, *Cecilia*, 7.

29. Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture*, 3.288, identifies the Hellenistic source of the face. For Maderno's classical training, see Lo Bianco, *Cecilia*, 27. For Sfondrato's Christian antiquarianism, see Stirrup, "Time Concertinaed," 57: "Sfondrato was acting in response to the example set by several of his counter-Reformation contemporaries, in their zealous regeneration of the Catholic Church, and specifically their sensitive and archaeologically aware restoration of early Christian churches. The principal concept governing these restoration projects was to demonstrate and reaffirm an unbroken chain of tradition in Rome between the Apostolic early Christian community and the newly reformed church of the late sixteenth century."

30. As noted by Montanari, whereas Maderno's statue shows the saint lying on her side, a contemporary drawing of her rediscovery in her church shows her lying

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flat in a coffin. This may not indicate conscious deception by Maderno or even that he altered Cecilia's position so that her body would be better seen in the church, but rather that he wished to present different moments of the saint's life in a single sculpture.

31. Kämpf, "Framing Cecilia's Sacred Body," 14.
32. Kämpf, "Framing Cecilia's Sacred Body," 16–17.
33. Kämpf, "Framing Cecilia's Sacred Body," 17.
34. Stirrup, "Time Concertinaed," 57.
35. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), esp. 45: "the Western discourse about images never completely lost an awareness that their physicality is a problem, that manifesting the divine in the material is at best a paradox, at worst an invitation to idolatry." For the complexity of iconoclasm, in our day and in the past, see James Simpson, *Under the Hammer: Iconoclasm in the Anglo-American Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
36. Stirrup, "Time Concertinaed," 74, argues that the "beholder [of the Cecilia statue] is invited to observe the continuation from the Rome of the Apostles to the present, from a divine perspective, all of these present in one scene."

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Index

Note: Page numbers in italics refer to illustrations

Albin, Andrew, 58–60
Alma Redemptoris Mater, 6, 56–66, *59*
Anglicus, Bartholomaeus: *De Proprietatibus rerum* (*On the Properties of Things*), 3–4
Anne of Bohemia, Queen of England, 7, 97–112; agency of, 104–6; described in historical documents, 97–101; and other royal women, 107–10; represented in late medieval poetry, 97–98, 102–6, 110–12
Augustine of Hippo, Saint, 9–10, 61–62, 173, 267–69

Barr, Helen, 57, 60, 65
Bartholomaeus Anglicus. *See* Anglicus, Bartholomaeus
Boccaccio, Giovanni: *De Casibus virorum illustrium*, 42, 49, 50, 51; *De Mulieribus claris*, 43, 47–48, 49, 50, 51
Bohun, Mary de. *See* Mary de Bohun
Boke of Cupid. See Clanvowe, John
Bokenham, Osbern: *Legendys of Holy Wommen*, 174–76, 183
Busby, Keith, 21
Bynum, Caroline Walker, 4, 56–57, 64, 125–26, 132
Cecilia, Saint, 48, 268–69, 272–74; Maderno statue of, 10, 276–80, *277*; Roman church of, 275–80, 283n24. *See also* Chaucer, "Second Nun's Tale"
Charles IV, King of France, 104, 107, 108–9
Charles V, King of France, 7, 104, 106, 109; life authored by Christine de Pizan, 123–36
Charles VI, King of France, 105, 128
chaste matron culture, 8, 171, 175–78
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 5–6, 7, 8–10, 97–98, 104, 108, 110–12, 201–2
Book of the Duchess, 9, 248–50, 257–62
Canterbury Tales
"Clerk's Tale," 44
"Franklin's Tale," 8–9, 202–11, 213, 217–18
"Knight's Tale," 47
"Man of Law's Tale," 201–2, 210
"Miller's Prologue," 24, 30
"Miller's Tale," 16
"Monk's Prologue," 43–44
"Monk's Tale," 6, 39–51
"Nun's Priest's Tale," 45–46, 50–51
"Physician's Tale," 8–9, 202, 211–18
"Prioress's Tale," 6, 56–66
"Second Nun's Tale," 9–10, 48, 267–69, 273–75, 277–80
"Wife of Bath's Prologue" 6, 15–16, 48
"Wife of Bath's Tale," 6, 15–17, 22–23, 27–32
Legend of Good Women, 44, 49, 51, 102–3
Parliament of Fowls, 102
Troilus and Criseyde, 51
chess queen (*fers*): Chaucer's Whyt as, 9, 249–51, 257, 259–61; history of piece, 251–57; as object-person, 261–62
Christine de Pizan, 109, 111–12
Le Débat sur le Roman de la Rose (*Debate on the Romance of the Rose*), 229–30, 233, 235, 242
Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V (*Book of the Deeds and Good Practices of Charles V the Wise*), 7–8, 123–36
Livre de la Cité des dames (*Book of the City of Ladies*), 48, 49, 105
Livre de la Mutacion de Fortune (*Book of Fortune's Transformation*), 123

Bradbury, Nancy. *Medieval Women and Their Objects.*
E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9222733.
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Le Trésor de la Cité des dames (*Treasure of the City of Ladies*, also called *The Book of the Three Virtues*), 104, 105
Clanvowe, John: *Boke of Cupid*, 7, 97–98, 102–3, 104, 111
Cole, Andrew, 3, 11n5, 265n29
Collège de Navarre, Paris, 4, 7; plan and architecture, 73–87, *72*, *73*, *75*, *78*; chapel, 79–87, *81*, *82*, *83*, *84*, *85*; founding and aims, 71–77
Collette, Carolyn P.: Dedication to, vii–x; on Anglo-French culture, 183; on Anne of Bohemia, 97; on "early humanism" of Chaucer, 49; on "Prioress's Tale," 56, 60; on "Second Nun's Tale," 9, 267–69, 272, 278, 280; on women and gender, 5, 40, 171
Concordia. *See* Maidstone, Richard

Dame Sirith, 16, 34n6
Davidson, Audrey Ekdahl, 57–58, 61, 66n9
De Regimine principium. *See* Giles of Rome
DiMarco, Vincent J., 43
distaff, 6, 39, 41–44, 46, 50–51, 53n15
Les Douze dames de rhetorique, 1, 2
Durand de Champagne: *Miroir des Dames* (*Speculum Dominarum*), 7, 76, 85, 87, 104–7, 111

Edward III, King of England, 99, 107, 110, 148
Einsiedeln poem, 252–53, 255
Elizabeth de Vere, Countess of the Twelfth Earl of Oxford, 8; life, 171–77, 188n18; owner and donor of books, 174, 177–83

fers. *See* chess queen
Fleming, John V., 234, 242
Fleming, Robin, 4

Galatea, *232*; brought to life 236–43; created by Pygmalion, 230, 233–36; dressed in fabrics and jewels, 236
Gayk, Shannon, 64–65
Giles of Rome: *De Regimine principium*, 107, 125, 133
Gregorius, Master (Magister): *Narracio de Mirabilibus Urbis Romae (Narration of the Marvels of the City of Rome)*, 9–10, 268–73, 276–79
Guillaume au faucon, 16
Guillaume de Lorris, 231, 237

Hahn, Cynthia, 127, 130

Jacobus de Cessolis: *Liber de Ludo scachorum*, 255–57
Jean de Meun: *Roman de la Rose*, 9, 212–13, 229–43
Jeanne de Navarre, 4, 7, 75, 106; founding of Collège de Navarre 76–87; patron of literature and education, 71–76, 104
Joan Fitzalan, 8, 147–50, 152
Joan of Kent, 107, 108, 111

Latour, Bruno, 3
Legendys of Holy Wommen. *See* Bokenham, Osbern
Lenoir, Albert, 79–82
The Life of Saint Marina, 16
Livre des Fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V. *See* Christine de Pizan

Maderno, Stefano, 10, 269, 276–80
Maidstone, Richard: *Concordia*, 7, 97–98, 102–4, 110–11
Mary de Bohun, 8, 108, *145*; Psalter-Hours of, 144–58
Miroir des Dames (Speculum Dominarum). *See* Durand de Champagne
The Myroure of our Ladye, 61–62, 64

Narracio de Mirabilibus Urbis Romae (Narration of the Marvels of the City of Rome). *See* Gregorius, Master
Neckam, Alexander: *De Naturis rerum*, 253–55, 261
Newman, Barbara, 31

objects: abstract vs. material, 15–16; corpse as, 56–57, 173, 274; female patronage and, 71–87, 104–6, 146–58, 176–77; gendered and transgendered, 1–5, 9, 42–44, 47–50, 248–62; genital organs as, 17–30, 242; historical use of word, 3–4, 11n6; literary closure and, 39–40, 46, 50–51; miraculous, 56–57, 64–65, 274; royal biography as reliquary, 125–28, 132–36; statues as, 230–43; 269–80; women as, 9, 40–41, 98, 202–11, 211–18

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E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9222733.
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Osberg, Richard, 65–66
Ovid: *Metamorphoses*, 27, 127, 230–31, 235–41, 243, 248–50, 257–59, 273; *Ars Amatoria*, 270
Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D. 4. 4., 8, 144–58, *145*, *151*, *157*
Oxford, Magdalen College MS lat. 41, 171–84; description, 172–74, 177–78; table of contents, 184

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France MS fr. 10153, 123–36, *124*
Philippa of Hainault, Queen of England, 107–8
Philippe de Mézières: *Le Songe du vieil pèlerin*, 105
Philippe de Rémi: *Jehan et Blonde*, 176
Poirion, Daniel, 231
Pygmalion: relation to Galatea, *232*, 236–41, 243; as sculptor 234–36

Les Quatre souhaiz de saint Martin (The Four Wishes of Saint Martin), 17–22

De Regimine principium. *See* Giles of Rome
Richard II, King of England, 7, 97–101, 102–4, 107–12
Richard III (Richard of Gloucester), King of England, 177, 183
Robertson, Kellie, 3, 11n5
Roman de la Rose (Romance of the Rose). *See* Guillaume de Lorris; Jean de Meun

Sandler, Lucy Freeman, 146, 147, 149–50, 152, 154–55, 158
Sand, Alexa, 146–47, 153, 156
Sfondrato, Paolo Emilio, Cardinal, 276–77, 278, 279, 283n25
Sheba, Queen of, 74, 82–83
Solomon, King, 74, 82–83, 182
Spinario (Roman statue), 270
Stacions of Rome, 268–69, 273–75, 276, 278–80

Trevisa, John, 3–4
Les Trois dames qui troverent un vit (The Three Ladies Who Found a Prick), 17, 22–27

Venus: allegorical figure in *Roman de la Rose*, 9, 230, 233, 235, 237, 238–42; as chess piece, 248; Roman statue of, 268, 270–73, *271*, 271–73, 277–79, 281n8
vitremyte: etymology and obscure meaning of, 42; object in "Monk's Tale," 39–51

Walsingham, Thomas, 98–99, 101

Zenobia, 39–51

Bradbury, Nancy. *Medieval Women and Their Objects.*
E-book, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9222733.
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