

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND EVERYDAY LIFE
IN THE LONG FIFTEENTH CENTURY
(1350–1570)

NEW COMMUNITIES OF INTERPRETATION
CONTEXTS, STRATEGIES, AND PROCESSES OF RELIGIOUS
TRANSFORMATION IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN EUROPE

VOLUME 2

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570)

Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation

Edited by

IAN JOHNSON *and*

ANA MARIA S. A. RODRIGUES

BREPOLS

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IAN JOHNSON AND
ANA MARIA S. A. RODRIGUES

Introduction

Interpreting Changes in Daily Religious Practice and Changes of Interpretation in the 'Long Fifteenth Century'

A chief intention of this book is, by looking at religious practices in the context of everyday life, to explore and add range to understandings of transitions and changes in religious life in late medieval and early modern Europe and to make these understandings more nuanced and broader than those currently available. The essays in this collection accordingly bring to light and analyse continuities and shifts in daily religious practices across Europe — from Portugal to Hungary and from the Balkans to the British Isles — in the 'transition' from the Middle Ages to the early modern period. While some of these changes, such as the increasing use of rosaries and the Europe-wide turning of secular

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folk to the *Ars moriendi*, were the consequences and symptoms of the rise of a more personal and interiorized faith, other changes had different causes. These included the spreading of the Reformation over Europe, the expulsion or compulsory conversion of the Jews in the Iberian peninsula, the emigration of Bohemian Hussites from their native land to southern Hungary, and the conquest of large portions of eastern Christianity by the Turks — all of which forced people, who all too often suddenly found that they had become religious minorities, to adopt and adapt new ways of living and new strategies for understanding, safeguarding, and expressing their religiosity.

A challenging accumulation of varied yet converging evidence from the ‘long fifteenth century’ (1350–1570) suggests that all around Europe religious practices did not simply spread — they themselves changed in the very processes of effecting change. Often, they became intensified and more personal — hence the multiplication of books, leaflets, images and also other types of material objects (such as rosaries) whose production seems to have been prompted by an array of significant and revealing demands and issues. Such religious tools and their accompanying (self-)disciplinary behaviours correspondingly supported and modified daily devotions in their own telling ways.

The essays in this volume give special attention to the different religious rhythms and ways in which religious and lay people’s hours, days, weeks, months, years, and lives were structured; the dynamic materiality of religious tools and devotional rituals; the institutional and social contexts for religious gestures and behaviours; the social dimension of religious life and the various forms of socialization and social behaviours connected with them; the dynamics within and amongst written texts, images and oral culture, and the intervention of spiritual and ecclesiastical guidance at crucial moments of human existence, especially death.

These essays have their origins in an international colloquium entitled ‘Religious Practices and Everyday Life (1350–1570)’, hosted by the University of Lisbon in March 2016 as part of the ongoing programme of activities under the umbrella of the European Union-funded COST Action 1301, *New Communities of Interpretation: Contexts, Strategies and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, which ran from September 2013 to September 2017. This COST Action involved over 300 researchers from twenty-four countries. Its remit was to re-examine, and open up dialogues about, the traditional religious, cultural, social, linguistic, and geographical rifts and connections of late medieval and early modern Europe, as well as the common national narratives that have influenced and distorted (and continued to influence and distort) the construction and maintenance of historical identities and beliefs.

The essays in this volume therefore develop the philosophy and approach of the COST Action by modifying and adding scholarship on religious change in the ‘long fifteenth century’. The Action’s ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ spells out the context for this:

In spite of the pivotal importance of the analysis of the long fifteenth century as a turning point in European history, the period is relatively understudied in its complexity, multiplicity and fluidity, i.e. as a period in which the simultaneous presence of tradition and innovation and old and new media and modes of communication, offered multiple and divergent options for the formation of religious and cultural identities.¹

Echoing further the words and ambitions of the Action's 'Memorandum of Understanding', the studies in this collection cast a spectrum of new yet profoundly historical light on themes of seminal relevance to present-day European society — doing so by analysing patterns of inclusion and exclusion, and examining shifts in hierarchic and non-hierarchic relations articulated through religious practices in the lives of groups and individuals.² The academic team assembled for this enterprise (featuring contributors with institutional affiliations in the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, and the United Kingdom) is internationally European as well as interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in its methodology. Individual studies offer fresh perspectives and a compelling set of approaches to social, religious, and cultural change. It is hoped that, as a collection, their particular multiple interconnectivities may help to give a bigger, more vivid, and nuanced picture of the nature and significance of changing religious practices during this period. Our contributors go beyond issues of indoctrination and beyond confessional and other binary oppositions (although they do not ignore them). They also add to discrete disciplinary strands in their own right, such as, for example, the religious history of medieval Christendom from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century; developments in medieval and early modern religious literary forms; the changing status and roles of European vernacular languages (both in themselves and in their relationships with Latin); and crucial changes in late medieval and early modern book culture. More importantly, however, our contributors share a common recognition of the need to create new, more capacious, and self-aware European narratives, not least by rethinking existing modern national narratives of late medieval and early modern history and culture. They set about this by taking account of the mobility and agency of people, ideas, languages, texts, and a whole host of different cultural forms, social cross-currents, and religious practices.³

The collection starts with three essays focusing on life in religious orders. In 'Religious Practices of Regular Canons of St Augustine in the

1 'Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of a European Concerted Research Action designated as COST Action: New Communities of Interpretation: Contexts, Strategies and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe' (Brussels: COST Association, 2013), accessible at: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/IS1301/#tabs{Name:overview}>, p. 5.

2 See 'Memorandum of Understanding', p. 2.

3 See 'Memorandum of Understanding', p. 6.

Czech Lands: The Statutes of Roudnice’, Adéla Ebersonová investigates the rules and customs governing the conduct of the Czech canons in the Middle Ages, and provides an examination of the implications of the official *consuetudines* (customs) for the structures and dynamics of everyday social and individual living. The Roudnice *consuetudines* would prove immensely influential, spreading to what is now modern-day Poland, Slovakia, Germany, and Austria. The next essay does not discuss a phenomenon spreading across territories but one with two comparable instantiations in different parts of Europe, namely Catalonia and England. In ‘The Devotional Book in Context and Use: Catalan Poor Clares and English Birgittines: Spaces, Performance, and Memory’, David Carrillo-Rangel, Blanca Gari, and Nuria Jornet-Benito bring together the Poor Clares of Barcelona and the sisters of the convent of the Birgittine Order of Syon Abbey (just outside London) with regard to the performative and spatial contexts in which devotional manuscripts interacted with the lives of communities and individuals. In the next essay, ‘Literacy, Books, and the Community: Textual Evidence from a Portuguese Dominican Nunnery’, another case study centred on written materials produced for women religious, Gilberto Coralejo Moiteiro takes care to place the use of written materials by female congregations in a broader European context, with special consideration being given to the female branch of the Dominicans and the telling case of a foundation chronicle penned by a woman author aiming not just to authorize the history of the community but also to shape its future agenda, identity, and corporate consciousness.

Moving now from the cloister to the everyday life of the laity, the next group of studies commences with a pair of essays on traditions of prayer beads. Monika Saczyńska-Vercamer’s ‘Change and Continuity in Lay Devotion as Evidenced by Prayer Beads in Medieval Poland and Central Europe’ traces the complex dialogic between, on the one hand, the material use of prayer beads in devotional exercises and, on the other, the changes in the forms of prayer and of the contemplative exercises that typically accompanied them. Here we find a narrative of constant adjustment and flexibility that testifies to the versatility of a stable and widespread yet minutely evolving tradition. Continuing with the theme of the rosary and the prayerful telling of beads, Erminia Ardissino presents, in ‘A Daily Devotion of the Long Fifteenth Century: Italian Literature on the Rosary’, a history of Italian rosary tradition, paying particular attention to the authoritative texts informing it. She then extends her study to a discussion of how vernacular poets responded creatively to this tradition. Such texts are an eloquent guide to the possibilities of this tradition in its construction of a deeply personal sensibility governing the daily religious lives of laypeople, male and female, of various social and education conditions.

Another personal material medium for the exercise of an individual religious sensibility on a daily basis was the prayer book, and in our next chapter, Jan Dienstbier’s ‘The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady and Books of Private Devotion in Post-Hussite Bohemia’, the codex in question is the remarkable illustrated prayer book of a monarch famously preoccupied with the clash of

orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Here, however, we turn from the fraught public sphere to a more personal level of spiritual interiority and daily devotions. This particular essay, like others in this volume, devotes space to examining relationships between text and image; it also represents a groundbreaking intervention in the study of somewhat neglected post-Hussite (as opposed to pre-Hussite) manuscripts supporting practices of private devotion.

The Bohemian Hussites were, of course, heavily influenced by English Wycliffites — the very people whom the ill-starred Bishop of Chichester, Reginald Pecock, sought to bring round to orthodoxy through his programme of vernacular argument and exposition of mainstream doctrine. ‘The “Goostly Chaffare” of Reginald Pecock: Everyday Craft, Commerce, and Custom Meet Syllogistic Polemic in Fifteenth-Century London’, by Ian Johnson, gives an account of how and why Pecock inserted into his hyper-rationalistic manuals and treatises arguments invoking the occupational and social behaviours of his intended lay audience, whom he sought to turn into rudimentary vernacular theologians and philosophers. This implicit brokerage between the lay and the learned (with Pecock as go-between) attempted to license lay adjudication of high clerical matter through everyday secular skills and knowledge. Unfortunately for Pecock, however, this enterprise of vernacular dissemination failed spectacularly. Such was not the case somewhat later in Lithuania when, in the sixteenth century, the first books in the Lithuanian language were printed as a response to the broader European Reformation. In ‘The Reformation and the First Book in the Lithuanian Language’, Dalia Marija Stanciene discusses how the first Lithuanian book was not merely a Lithuanian Catechism but also provided Lithuanian grammar and linguistic terminology, as well as marking the birth of secular printed Lithuanian poetry, music, and history. The publication of this book was also the foundation stone of the written and literary standardization of the Lithuanian language. It is immensely valuable that this highly important historical material is now available to international modern academe in the current European *lingua franca* of English.

The next section of the volume consists of a quartet of essays on the topic of death, or, to be more accurate, the practices with which the individual and society prepared for death and attempted to maximize the possibility of salvation. The first two essays in this grouping deal with the extremely important international literary tradition of the so-called ‘Arts of Dying’. Delphine Mercuzot’s ‘Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*’ discusses the motivations and opportunities observed by the ‘Father of English printing’, William Caxton, when he translated and published two different versions of the *Ars moriendi*, *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye* (1490) and *The Craft for to Die* (1491). These two editions, both Caxton’s own translations from the French, reveal how, as the fifteenth century wore on, religious rites surrounding death were intensifying and becoming more personal. This meant that, through the *Artes moriendi*, the crucial moment of death was being inscribed more and more into the fabric of everyday life as the inalienable responsibility of

each individual Christian. The individual nature of this inescapable mortal burden is also discussed in “‘The Kingdom of Heaven Cannot Be Denied to You Justly Because You Have Fought Correctly’: Tracing the Evolution of *Ars Moriendi* Literature in the Fifteenth Century’. Here, Joost Robbe assesses three *ars moriendi* texts of the 1400s side by side. Focusing on the interaction and the agency of the ‘stock characters’ (in particular the dying person) in his trio of exemplary texts, Robbe shows how the development of the *ars moriendi* genre in the fifteenth century reflects a crucial late medieval shift towards an understanding of death predicated upon the autonomous responsibility and self-consciousness of the individual undergoing preparation for death. This approach, he concludes, conceivably represents the foundation of modern Western attitudes towards mortality.

Another late medieval tradition configured to help individuals cope with the challenges of mortality and damnable sin is discussed in Daniela Rywíková’s ‘Death Multiplied: The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead in Bohemian Art in the Context of Late Medieval Religious Practice’. This reconsideration of the internationally widespread Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead shows in vivid detail how late medieval death was never reduced to a unitary phenomenon confined to the extinction of one individual life. When, in the examples interpreted by Rywíková, the living and the dead encounter each other, we are given shockingly salutary reminders of just how permeable the barrier between this world and the next was for the late medieval imagination. As with the case of the *ars moriendi* genre, the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead became part of daily life — a reminder that although salvation could never be assured in advance, it should always be the object of fervent hope.

In the next essay, ‘*De praeparatione ad mortem*: The Dying and Death of Charles V (1500–1558)’ by Nikola Samardžić, the universal theme of how to die well becomes all the more personal by being attached to a famous name. Here, Samardžić, rethinking the remarkable mortal trajectory traced by one of the most powerful and intriguing personalities of the early modern period, Emperor Charles V, contextualizes the life, dying, and death of this monumental European figure within broader intellectual and religious developments (such as the influence of Erasmus of Rotterdam).

The final section of the book considers the various plights, identities, and practices of communities negotiating the boundaries and overlaps between different religions and/or different sectarian identities and/or affiliations. An array of extraordinary religious and cultural blends is the subject of ‘The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity in the Balkans during the Sixteenth Century’ by Vladimir Abramović and Haris Dajč, who give a fascinating account of how, in the wake of the Ottoman conquest, secret Christian practices and incomplete Islamization, to say nothing of remarkable hybrid mixtures of Christian and Muslim customs, informed social and religious life in the Balkans in the sixteenth century. It would appear that some hybrid customs survived right up until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1922.

The next essay in this section, Marcell Sebök's 'Traditions and Transitions: Examples of Parallel Practices from a Sixteenth-Century Central European Region,' addresses some rather different manifestations of how social, cultural, and religious practices interacted amongst different communities. Framing his investigation within a somewhat more theoretical approach than that taken by most of the essays in this volume, Sebök reconsiders both periodization and confessional/ideological paradigm shifts. His case study of Szepes county in the Kingdom of Hungary sheds light on coexisting traditions, in which something as specific as a single hymn may reveal a spectrum of informing affiliations at once humanist, Catholic, Melancthonian, and Lutheran.

In 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Everyday Religious Life in Southern Hungary before 1526 in the Light of Supplications to the Holy See,' Melina Rokai takes us through a remarkable corpus of documents disclosing a wealth of interactions between the Catholic faithful of southern Hungary and the institution of the papacy. This relationship was articulated through an astonishing variety of petitions focusing on such issues as the absolution from sin; absolution from excommunication; supplication for forgiveness of sins in advance of committing them, or even absolutions from oaths and covenants.

The book closes with an illuminating drawing-together of the threads of the preceding essays in the form of Géraldine Veysseyre's afterword, 'Books and Objects Supporting Quotidian Devotion: Conclusions and Prospects for Investigating Daily Religious Practices During the "Long Fifteenth Century"'. Here, it is pointed out that the variety of accessible and comparable case studies of the 'long fifteenth century' in the book should, it is hoped, provide specialists from different areas with opportunities to compare and contrast their own materials and methods. Suggestions are also made here as to how research in this field may be carried forward in the future, be it in terms of materials, themes, or methods.

It is the hope of the editors of this volume that, throughout this collection, much new light will have been shed on theoretical and methodological issues relevant to bridging the gaps between, on the one hand, extant documents and objects and, on the other hand, the social and material contexts in which they were created and the daily settings in which they were used and manipulated. By recovering and analysing the cultural dynamics and connections amongst power, knowledge, and practices in their everyday religious manifestations, the studies in this book, for all the variety of their materials and provenance, contribute to a common transnational endeavour to reconsider and enrich our understanding of one of the most critical phases of Europe's cultural history. At the same time, whether taken individually or in concert, they reconsider and at times challenge existing narratives of the development of (early) modern identities that still, all too often, dominate the self-understanding and recurrent beliefs of contemporary European society.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life

The Monastic Experience

Religious Practices of the Canons Regular of St Augustine in the Czech Lands

The Statutes of Roudnice

The Order of the Canons Regular of St Augustine

Canons regular are priests living together in a community under a rule (in Latin *regula*) and usually taking the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. While the clerical state is optional to monks, it is essential for canons. The first official reform of the canonical life was undertaken at the time of the Emperor Charlemagne and his son Louis the Pious. During the Synods of Aachen (816–819), a strict division between monks and canons was constituted and Chrodegang, the Bishop of Metz, wrote the first rule for the canons called *Regula canonicorum*.¹ This Rule was based on the description of the early Church in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles; it also built on

¹ For the complete text of the Rule, see *S. Chrodegangi Metensis episcopi (742–766) Regula Canonicorum*, ed. by Schmitz, newly edited in *The Chrodegang Rules*, ed. and trans. by Bertram.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, *New Communities of Interpretation*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 23–48

the Rules of Augustine and Benedict. The Rule of Chrodegang was elevated to the status of law in the entire Carolingian Empire and it was introduced into all cathedral churches.²

The second important reform culminated at the Lateran Synod of 1059, where the rules for the life of canons regular were approved by the Apostolic See. According to the new rules, the canons were not allowed to have any private property and they were to sleep and eat together at their houses. All communities of clerics that subjected themselves to these regulations were designated as *canonici regulares*, canons regular, because they were to live according to the *regula*, the Rule.³ A strict division between monks and canons was expressed by Pope Urban II (1088–1099).⁴ He distinguished between *ordo monasticus* and *ordo canonicus*, linking the monks to the role of praying Mary and the canons to that of her caring sister, Martha.⁵

Among the group of the canons regular, one of the most significant Order are the Canons Regular of St Augustine (in Latin *Canonici Regulares S. Augustini* or *Sacer et Apostolicus Ordo Canonicorum Regularium S. Augustini*), known in short as the Augustinian Canons. The process of the formation of the Order took centuries. Since the Canons Regular of St Augustine living at the Lateran in Rome were approved at the Lateran Synod in 1059, this year can be considered as the official beginning of this Order. The new Order grew rapidly and spread to many European countries, first to France, Germany, and Switzerland. The reform undertaken by the Lateran Synod was adopted by particular canonries without any central direction. There were large differences between individual reform circles, sharing only the ideals of *vita apostolica* and *vita communis*. The houses of the Canons Regular slowly grouped themselves together into various congregations.

The Order prospered mainly because of the high number of parish churches in its possession, which played a central role in the identity of the Order throughout its history.⁶ From the beginning, the Order also paid great attention to public education. Many canonries assumed the patronage of local schools, including their supervision, and elite schools of the Order rapidly became leading institutions of European culture.⁷ The Order soon took a

2 For a detailed description of the Rule of Chrodegang, see Claussen, 'Practical Exegesis', pp. 119–46, including references to further literature on this topic.

3 For the origin of the Canons Regular, see Andenna, 'Certa fixaque et sufficiens regula', pp. 223–59.

4 Fuhrmann, *Papst Urban II. und der Stand der Regularkanoniker*, esp. pp. 6–7, and Becker, *Papst Urban II.*, pp. 401–13.

5 This division is described in detail in Fonseca, 'Monaci e canonici alla ricerca di una identità', pp. 203–22. See also Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought*, pp. 35–43.

6 See Nichols, 'The Augustinian Canons and their Parish Churches', pp. 313–37.

7 See Orme, 'The Augustinian Canons and Education', pp. 213–32.

prominent role in the intellectual life of the Church and gave birth to spiritual movements, as for example the reformed Windesheim Congregation, the home of Luther, and the spiritual movement known as the *Devotio Moderna* in the fifteenth-century Netherlands.⁸

The Order of the Canons Regular of St Augustine in the Czech Lands

The first house of the Canons Regular of St Augustine in Bohemia was founded by the Prague Bishop John IV of Dražice in Roudnice in 1333 (Figure 1.1). Bishop John had decided to bring this Order to the Czech lands because he had become acquainted with the Augustinian Canons of the congregation of St Ruf during his long stay at the papal court in Avignon. Originally, he wanted to found the new canonry in Prague, but due to the opposition of the city council, he decided to build it in Roudnice nad Labem, an old seat of the bishops of Prague. The canonry including the church was built in the Gothic style and was influenced by the French style, because Master Wilhelm of Avignon participated in the construction. The canonry was founded specifically as a Czech house, only for Czech-speaking canons with both parents of Czech origin, as is also written in its foundation charter:

Nequaquam tamen ad prefatum collegium dicti cenobii alterius nationis aliquem recipi admittimus, nisi sit Bohemus de utroque parente idiomatis bohemicæ ortum trahens [...] nam magistra rerum experientia nos docet, quod eidem bohemicæ gentis alie nationes [...] sunt infeste, quod sicut duo contraria in uno subiecto simul esse non possunt, sic nationes sibi contrarie in uno monasterio nequaquam esse possunt.⁹

(Only those can be admitted to the canonry that are Czech from both Czech-speaking parents [...] because experience, the teacher of wisdom, has taught us that foreign nations [...] are hostile to the Czech nation and since two opposites cannot be in one entity, nations in conflict cannot be together in one monastery.)

The canonry in Roudnice soon became very influential, and the Order spread rapidly over Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. Within sixty years, eleven houses were founded in the Czech lands (Jaroměř (1349), Karlov in Prague (1350),

8 See Bölling, *Reform vor der Reformation* and Girke-Schreiber, 'Die böhmische *Devotio moderna*', pp. 81–91. For detailed information on the *Devotio Moderna* movement, see Post, *The Modern Devotion*; *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings*, ed. by Van Engen; and Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life*.

9 *Regesta diplomatica nec non epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae. Pars III, annorum 1311–1333*, ed. by Emler, p. 782.



Figure 1.1. Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fol. 202^v. Photo: National Library of the Czech Republic. Reproduced with permission.

Kladsko (1350), Sadská (1362), Rokycany (1363), Třeboň (1367), Lanškroun (1371), Šternberk (1371), Fulnek (1389), Prostějov (1391), and Borovany (1455)). In addition, Czech houses also had their filiations in neighbouring countries. The more important foundations included the canonries in Dürnstein in Lower Austria, St Dorothea in Vienna, in Neunkirchen in Bavaria, in Kazimierz near Cracow, and Glatz in Poland.

The Order was very influential and the canonries soon became important centres of cultural, intellectual, and spiritual life in the Czech lands. From its foundation, the canonry in Roudnice had close contacts with bishops and archbishops of Prague (John IV of Dražice, Ernest of Pardubice, John of Jenštejn) and the Order was supported by Czech kings as well. There was also a hypothesis that Roudnice was one of the centres of the *Devotio Moderna* movement, but there is no specific evidence for the connections and mutual influences between Roudnice and Geert Groote, the founder and main protagonist of this movement.¹⁰

Extensive libraries were gathered in all these canonries and hundreds of manuscripts have survived until the present day. The mother canonry in Roudnice had an immense library, but most of the manuscripts were destroyed. Nevertheless, almost 170 medieval manuscripts have survived.¹¹ The biggest extant library collection is that of the Třeboň canonry (almost 300 medieval manuscripts preserved).¹² From the other libraries of the Order, only small parts or fragments have survived.

The prosperity and growing power of the Augustinian Canons in the Czech lands lasted for only ninety years. During the Hussite Wars (1419–1434), long religious conflicts between Hussites and Catholics, the majority of the religious houses were destroyed and the canons went into exile in Poland, Germany, and Austria, taking some of their manuscripts with them. After the Hussite Wars, once hostilities had ceased, most of the canons returned and some canonries were restored. Nevertheless, the previous power and influence of the Order were never recovered.¹³

10 Post, *The Modern Devotion*, pp. 224–25. See also Łatak, 'Regula św. Augustyna w nurcie religijnym devotio modernae' (The Rule of St Augustine and the Religious Movement of Devotio Moderna), pp. 45–56.

11 The library in Roudnice was researched in detail in: *Ubi est finis huius libri deus scit*, ed. by Dragoun, Doležalová, and Ebersonová.

12 Dragoun, Ebersonová, and Doležalová, *Středověké knihovny augustiniánských kanonií v Třeboni a v Borovanech* (Medieval Libraries of Augustinian Canonries in Třeboň and Borovany).

13 The history of the Order in Central Europe is described in Röhrig, *Die Stifte der Augustiner-Chorherren in Österreich, Südtirol und Polen*. For more detail on the history of the Order in the Czech lands, see Marrou, *Svatý Augustin* (St Augustine).

The Rule of St Augustine

The history and particularly the spread of Augustinian Canons are closely connected with the religious practices of the Order. The customs and rules not only determined the daily life and practices of the communities, but also reflected the relations between individual canonries and congregations. The Order of Augustinian Canons had two sets of rules — the Rule of St Augustine and the statutes (in Latin *statuta, consuetudines, or constitutiones*).¹⁴ The basic text by which the Order was governed was the Rule of St Augustine, which (in contrast to the statutes) was common and uniform for all the houses.

The Rule of Augustine¹⁵ is the oldest monastic rule in the Western Church. The set of ancient texts known in the Middle Ages as the *Regula sancti Augustini* expresses the ideas of St Augustine (354–430) about living in a religious community in mutual love. The observance of the Rule was approved for the Canons Regular by the Lateran Synod of 1059.¹⁶ The *Praeceptum*¹⁷ used by canons regular is much briefer than other monastic rules. It is divided into eight chapters.¹⁸ Its most important message is the love of God and the love of one's neighbour as the centre of Christian life.

The Rule of St Augustine lacks the detailed descriptions contained in the Rule of St Benedict. The emphasis of the Rule is on living together in unity and mutual love, which is connected with the Christian virtues of chastity, poverty, humility, and obedience. The love of God is reflected in the love of one's neighbour through practical charitable activities, highlighting the return to the biblical tradition and the simple way of life of the early Christians. The Rule governs the apportionment of labour, prayer in common, contemplation, fasting, abstinence, care of the sick, silence, and reading during meals. The text mentions only the basic rules for life in the community while omitting many practical aspects of its common life.

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- 14 For details, see Melville, 'Regeln – Consuetudines-Texte – Statuten', pp. 5–38, and Fonseca, 'Secundum beati Augustini Regulam', pp. 39–52, also summarizing earlier bibliography on this topic.
- 15 On the Rule of St Augustine, see Verheijen, *La Règle de saint Augustin. 1. Tradition manuscrite*; Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule* and *Regula Sancti Augustini*, ed. by Melville and Müller.
- 16 See Dereine, 'Vie Commune, Règle de Saint Augustin et Chanoines Réguliers au XIe siècle', pp. 365–406.
- 17 Edition of *Praeceptum* see in Verheijen, *La Règle de saint Augustin. 1. Tradition manuscrite*, pp. 417–37.
- 18 I. *De fine et fundamento vitae communis*, II. *De oratione*, III. *De frugalitate et mortificatione*, IV. *De custodia castitatis et fraternae correctione*, V. *De his quibus utitur transitura necessitas eorumque custodibus*, VI. *De petenda venia et offensis condonandis*, VII. *De regendi oboediendique ratione*, VIII. *De regulae observantia*.

The Statutes

As the Rule was very short, it did not contain sufficient practical instructions for the requirements of everyday life at the canonries. It soon became necessary to complement, clarify, and make it more specific. Therefore, the statutes were written. These regulations started to be regarded as almost equal to the Rule itself and became a unique document on life in the houses of the Canons Regular of St Augustine.

The statutes were not sanctioned by a central authority. Since the Order of Augustinian Canons was divided into many independent congregations without central direction, every congregation had its own version of the statutes; in some cases, there were also differences between individual canonries in a single congregation. The statutes of the major and more influential houses of the Order frequently spread and were adopted by less important canonries. The main idea of communal life was still the same in all statutes, but practical details were different, depending on the particular situation of the canonry.

In Central Europe, the authoritative statutes were those of Roudnice (in Latin *Consuetudines Rudnicenses*).¹⁹ Thanks to the support of the Emperor Charles IV (1316–1378) and the first Archbishop of Prague, Ernest of Pardubice (1343–1364), these customs soon spread not only to newly founded canonries, but also to already existing houses. In 1398, the Archbishop of Prague Olbram of Škvorec decided that the statutes of Roudnice should be used in all canonries of Augustinian Canons in Bohemia.²⁰ In addition, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464) used the Roudnice customs for measuring the quality of the observance of canonical houses in the province of Salzburg during visitations.²¹ The canons of Roudnice were also entrusted with visiting other canonical houses, not only in the Czech lands, but also beyond their borders. In the end, the statutes of Roudnice were utilized in all the canonries in Bohemia and Moravia and they were adopted by many canonries in today's Poland, Slovakia, Germany, and Austria as well. In spite of the evident importance of the Roudnice statutes, many questions relating to their origin and spread remain unanswered, and a modern edition and translation of the text are still missing.²² A detailed study of this text is needed; it would bring new information to light about the history of the Order in Central Europe

19 The statutes of Roudnice were examined in Ebersonová and Klima, 'Roudnická statuta' (The Statutes of Roudnice), pp. 187–205.

20 See Krafl, Mutlová, and Stehlíková, *Řeholní kanovníci sv. Augustina v Lanškrouně* (The Canons Regular of St Augustine in Lanškroun), p. 41.

21 See Zibermayr, *Die Legation des Kardinals Nikolaus Cusanus und die Ordensreform in der Kirchenprovinz Salzburg*. For the wider context, see *Nicholas of Cusa*, ed. by Christianson and Izbicki.

22 The author is currently working on a commented edition and translation of the statutes of Roudnice. Ebersonová, *Roudnická statuta* (The Statutes of Roudnice).

and about the religious movements in this region. The following pages will discuss the issues connected with the origin of these statutes, their form and content, as well as their influence and impact.

Research into the origin of the statutes of Roudnice is complicated, because the majority of the various statutes still remain without a modern critical edition and they are only accessible as manuscripts or early printed books.²³ There are dozens of different types of the statutes, creating an intertextual network. Newly written statutes were always influenced by those that already existed, and new statutes themselves became models for later statutes. In addition, the religious, political, and even the economic influence of the canonries was often reflected in the spread of their normative texts.

In the case of the canonry in Roudnice, the situation was specific. The canonry had been founded as an independent house and it had never been incorporated into any congregation. There is no evidence of close contacts with any congregation in Italy, France, or Germany, from where a model for the statutes could have been adopted either. In addition, it was originally founded only for Czechs and likewise its statutes were created especially for the Czech environment. The statutes of Roudnice were unique and the founder of the canonry in Roudnice, Bishop John IV of Dražice, is likely to have been actively involved in their preparation. However, they were clearly not written from scratch; they show obvious similarities with other statutes and it cannot be excluded that they followed a specific model.

The former hypothesis that the Roudnice statutes were taken from the canonry of St Peter in Pavia has been refuted.²⁴ There are clear similarities with the statutes of St Ruf in Avignon, where Bishop John IV spent eleven years shortly before the foundation of the canonry in Roudnice. Two chapters are identical and seven chapters are very similar. However, there are even more similar statutes. Those of the canonry in Marbach in Alsace have six identical chapters and fourteen very similar ones.²⁵ Unfortunately, the evidence ends there. There is no proof of contacts between Roudnice and Marbach.

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- 23 Two compendia of the statutes of Augustinian Canons were printed in the eighteenth century: *Miscellaneorum, quae ex codicibus mss. collegit liber*, ed. by Duellius; *Vetus disciplina canonicorum regularium et saecularium*, ed. by Amort. Some statutes already have a modern edition, e.g. *Die Consuetudines des Augustiner-Chorherrenstiftes Marbach im Elsass (12. Jahrhundert)*, ed. by Siegwart; *Carrier de Belleuse, Coutumier du XI siècle de l'Ordre de Saint-Ruf en usage à la cathédrale de Maguelone; Constitutiones canonicorum regularium ordinis Arroasiensis*, ed. by Milis; *Consuetudines canonicorum regularium Springiersbacenses-Rodenses*, ed. by Weinfurter; *Liber Ordinis Sancti Victoris Parisiensis*, ed. by Jocqué and Milis.
- 24 This hypothesis is presented in Zibermayr, 'Zur Geschichte der Raudnitzer Reform', pp. 323–53. For a detailed comparison of the statutes of Roudnice and Pavia, see Fonseca, 'Roudnice e Mortara (Il ms. XIX B 3 di Praga i il cod. B 28 di Pavia)', pp. 273–86.
- 25 Research into the origin of the statutes of Roudnice was initiated by Kadlec, 'Začátky kláštera augustiniánských kanovníků v Roudnici' ('The Beginnings of the Monastery of Augustinian Canons in Roudnice'), pp. 65–86.

It can be justly assumed that the statutes of Roudnice were inspired by the statutes of the congregation of St Ruf, to which the canonry in Marbach belonged.²⁶ A model surely existed, but the text of the Roudnice statutes was modified for the specific Czech environment.²⁷

The text of the statutes of Roudnice has been preserved in ten manuscripts.²⁸ The oldest one is Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fols 11^v–36^r.²⁹ This manuscript was created in the canonry in Roudnice, and the text of the statutes was written shortly after the foundation of the canonry in 1333, probably in the second third of the fourteenth century. The content and the structure of the manuscript indicate that it could be a Chapter book,³⁰ because it contains various materials that the canons considered to be useful to consult regularly. There is a mixture of monastic rules and institutional documents. The content of the manuscript is written on its front pastedown:

Regula beati Augustini. Statuta canonicorum regularium monasterii Rudnicensis. Martirologium sive kalendarium. Dicta sanctorum patrum de vita et honestate clericorum. Sermo beati Bernardi de corpore et sanguine domini. Tractatus magistri Rychardi super canonem misse. Tractatus magistri Odonis de penitencia. Constitutiones concilii Maguntinensis. Tractatus de obediencia. Conscriptio super fundacione monasterii et pontis in Rudnicz.

(The Rule of St Augustine. Statutes of the Canons Regular of the monastery in Roudnice. Martyrology or calendar. Words of the Holy Fathers about the life and honour of the clerics. A sermon of St Bernard

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- 26 See Dereine, 'Saint-Ruf et ses coutumes aux XIe et XIIe siècles', pp. 161–82, esp. pp. 177–81.
- 27 On the question of the Czechness of the canonry in Roudnice, see Ebersonová, 'Knihovny kanonií v Roudnici a v Sadské' (The Libraries of the Canonries in Roudnice and Sadská), pp. 65–70, and 'Diplomatář kláštera blahoslavené Panny Marie řeholnické kanovníků řádu sv. Augustina v Roudnici' (The Diplomatarium of the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Canons Regular of the Order of St Augustine in Roudnice), ed. by Emler, pp. 12–13.
- 28 Klosterneuburg, Monastery, MS Cod. 269, fols 324^{rb}–330^{vb}; Klosterneuburg, Monastery Archive, St Dorothea, MS D 7, fols 107^r–124^v; Lublin, Library of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, MS III 608, pp. 49^a–73^b; Munich, Bavarian State Library, MS Clm 7840, fols 34^{va}–42^{va}; Munich, Bavarian State Library, MS Clm 7702, fols 97^r–112^f; Olomouc, Research Library in Olomouc, MS M II 72, fols 1^v–8^v; Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fols 11^{va}–36^{rb}; Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS I E 13, fols I^a–I^b; Wrocław, University Library, MS I Q 131, fols 100^r–112 bis^v; Wrocław, University Library, MS IV F 199, fols 21^{rb}–29^{vb} (the text is not complete in all of them). The Roudnice statutes were also incorporated into the aforementioned compendia of the seventeenth century: *Miscellaneorum, quae ex codicibus mss. collegit liber II*, ed. by Duellius, pp. 335–67; *Vetus disciplina canonicorum regularium et saecularium I*, ed. by Amort, pp. 505–23.
- 29 For a detailed description of this codex, see Dragoun and Ebersonová, 'Soupis roudnických a sadských rukopisí' (The List of the Manuscripts from Roudnice and Sadská), pp. 511–15.
- 30 On the Chapter books, see Lemaitre, 'Liber Capituli: Le Livre du chapitre, des origines au XVIe siècle', pp. 625–48, Andenna, 'Certa fixaque et sufficiens regula', pp. 232–33, and Bonde and Maines, 'Consuetudines in Context', p. 181.

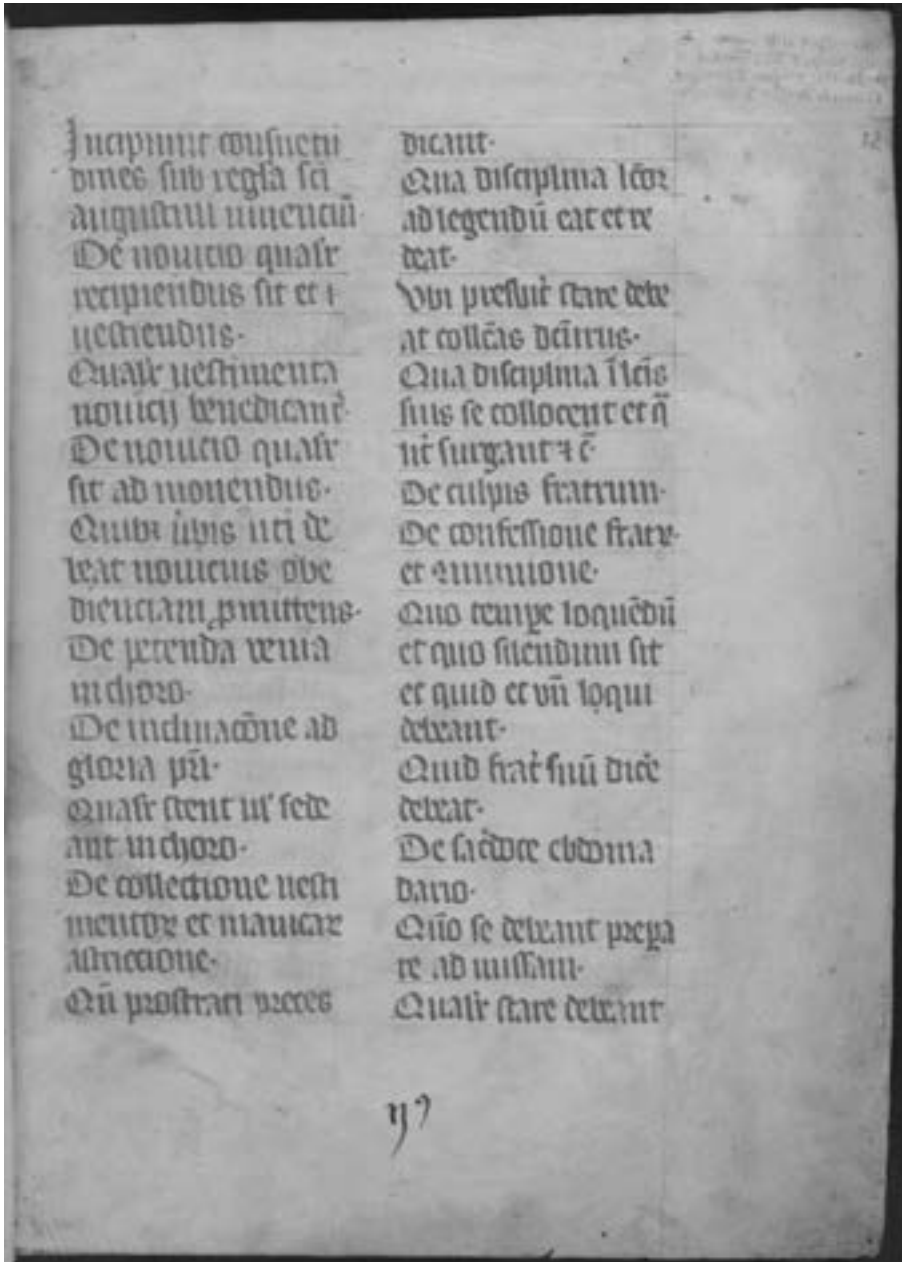


Figure 1.2. Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fol. 12r.
Photo: National Library of the Czech Republic. Reproduced with permission.

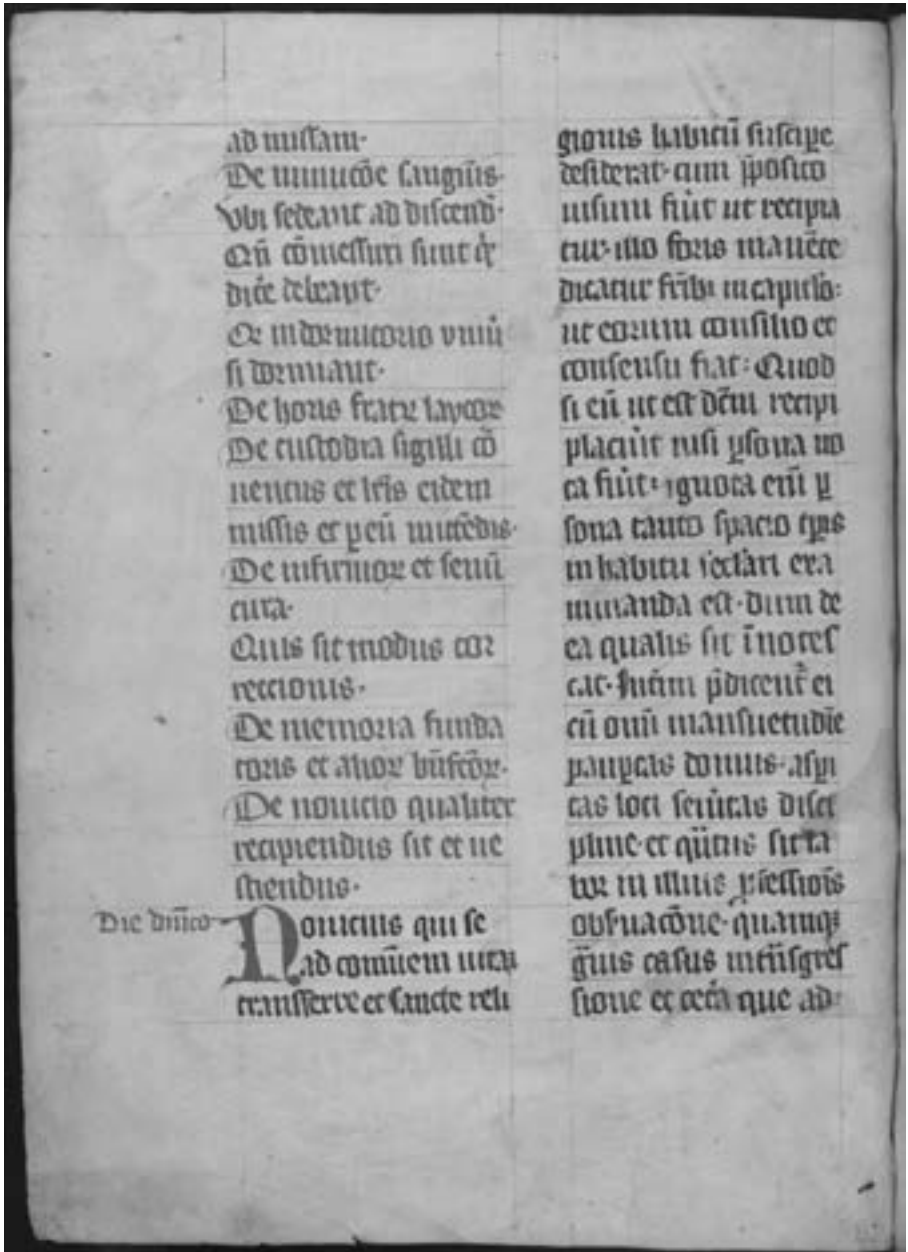


Figure 1.3. Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fol. 12r.

Photo: National Library of the Czech Republic. Reproduced with permission.

on the body and blood of the Lord. A treatise by Master Richard on the Canon of the Mass. A treatise by Master Odo on penance. Constitutions of the Council of Mainz. A treatise on obedience. Writing about the foundation of the monastery and the bridge in Roudnice.)

It also comprises some texts that are not mentioned in the table of contents: various prayers, confraternity pacts, the statutes of the diocese of Prague, and the necrology of the canonry, containing the dates of death of the canons and other people connected to Roudnice. The manuscript begins with the Rule of St Augustine, after which the text of the statutes is written. The statutes open with the Prologue (fols 11^{va}–11^{vb}), followed by the rubricated table of contents (fols 12^{ra}–12^{va}, Figures 1.2 and 1.3), and finally the text itself (fols 12^{va}–36^{rb}). The statutes of Roudnice are divided into thirty-two chapters, but the contents include only twenty-eight chapters.³¹ The author was not fully systematic, and in some cases, the headings of the chapters only remotely denote the subject of the actual text:

- I. De novicio qualiter recipiendus sit et vestiendus
- II. Qualiter vestimenta novicii benedicantur
- III. De recepcione noviciorum ad professionem
- IV. Quibus verbis uti debeat novicius obedienciam promittens
- V. De novicio qualiter sit admonendus
- VI. De petenda venia in choro
- VII. De inclinacione ad Gloria Patri
- VIII. Qualiter stent vel sedeant in choro
- IX. De colleccione vestimentorum et manicarum adstriccione
- X. Quando prostrati preces dicant
- XI. Qua disciplina lector ad legendum eat et redeat
- XII. Ubi presbiter stare debeat collectas dicturus
- XIII. Qua disciplina in lectis suis se collocent et qualiter surgant et post hoc quid faciant
- XIV. De culpis fratrum
- XV. De confessione fratrum et comunione
- XVI. Quo tempore loquendum et quo silendum sit et quid et unde loqui debeant
- XVII. Quid frater suum dicere debeat
- XVIII. De sacerdote ebdomadario
- XIX. Quomodo se debeant preparare ad missam
- XX. Qualiter stare debeant ad missam
- XXI. De minutione sanguinis

³¹ Chapters III (*De recepcione noviciorum ad professionem*), XXX. (*De memoria parentum nostrorum*), XXXI. (*De conservacione et commodacione librorum*), and XXXII. (*De fraternitate tribuenda*) are not included in the content. Moreover, the first five chapters are written in a different order.

- XXII. Ubi sedeant ad discendum
- XXIII. Quando commessuri sunt quid dicere debeant
- XXIV. Quod in dormitorio universi dormiant
- XXV. De horis fratrum laicorum
- XXVI. De custodia sigilli conventus et litteris eidem missis et per eum mittendis
- XXVII. De infirmorum et senum cura
- XXVIII. Quis modus sit correccionis
- XXIX. De memoria fundatoris et aliorum benefactorum
- XXX. De memoria parentum nostrorum
- XXXI. De conservacione et commodacione librorum
- XXXII. De fraternitate tribuenda

- (I. How a novice should be received and dressed
- II. How the clothing of the novice is blessed
- III. About the admission of the novices to regular vows
- IV. What words a novice should use when promising obedience
- V. How a novice should be admonished
- VI. About asking for forgiveness in the choir
- VII. About bowing during 'Glory Be to the Father'
- VIII. How to stand and sit in the choir
- IX. About the collection of clothing and holding the sleeves
- X. How to say prayers during prostration
- XI. How a lector should come to the reading and how he should return
- XII. Where the priest should stand when saying the prayers
- XIII. In which manner they should go to bed and how they should get up and what they should do later
- XIV. About the faults of the brothers
- XV. About the confession of the brothers and the communion
- XVI. When they should speak and when they should keep silent and what they should say and where
- XVII. What a brother can denote as his
- XVIII. About the hebdomadary priest
- XIX. How to prepare for the Mass
- XX. How to stand during the Mass
- XXI. About bloodletting
- XXII. Where they should sit during study
- XXIII. What to say when they are going to eat
- XXIV. They should all sleep in one dormitory
- XXV. About the hours of lay brothers
- XXVI. About guarding the seal of the convent and about letters sent to the convent and sent by it
- XXVII. About the care of the sick and old
- XXVIII. What the manner of correction should be
- XXIX. About the memory of the founder and other benefactors

- XXX. About the memory of our parents
 XXXI. About the conservation and storage of books
 XXXII. About granting the brotherhood)

The Rule of St Augustine and the statutes of the canonry were read daily in the Chapter. The margins of the folios contain short notes specifying the day of the week on which the particular passage was read (Figure 1.3).³² Since the text of the Rule was divided into seven parts and the statutes into twenty-one parts, these two basic sets of rules were read every four weeks.

The entire text of the Rule and statutes in the manuscript Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3 is very well preserved and written in calligraphic Gothic minuscule. The text is clearly arranged, the headings and important parts of the text are rubricated,³³ and the speeches and movements of individual persons are often described in astonishing detail. The structure and arrangement of some chapters are similar to those in liturgical books. Introductory words or instructions (*oracio*, *psalmus*, *responsorium*, and *versus*), and usually also sentences describing the movements or important acts of persons are mostly rubricated. For example, when the admission of a novice is described, the prayer is introduced by the rubricated word *oracio*. The word *nomen*, with rubricated 'N', is written instead of the specific name of the novice, which the priest was meant to fill in when reading the prayer. The word *bene+dicere* has a red cross in the middle, which means that the priest was blessing the novice with the sign of the cross while reading the word:

Oracio:³⁴ **A**desto Domine supplicacionibus nostris et hunc famulum tuum — **N**omen — bene+dicere dignare, cui in tuo sancto nomine habitum religionis sacre inponimus, ut te largiente et devotus in ecclesia persistere et vitam percipere mereatur eternam. **P**er Dominum nostrum et cetera.³⁵

(Prayer: O Lord, hear our prayers and be pleased to bless this servant of yours — Name — whom we clothe in your holy name with the habit of holy religion, so that by your help he would devotedly remain loyal to the Church and receive eternal life. Through our Lord and so on.)

The text is written with a clear structure, but it must be borne in mind that the matters described in it were well known to both the writer and his readers. Therefore, many things are not explicitly stated in the text. The writer, knowing that all the readers were familiar with the general character of living in the

32 The days are written in the usual order: *die Dominico*, *feria secunda*, *feria tertia*, *feria quarta*, *feria quinta*, *feria sexta*, and *sabbato*.

33 For rubrics as a part of an interactive text, see Vršecká, 'The Language and Style of Latin Rubrics in Medieval Liturgical Easter Drama', pp. 268–80.

34 All the citations of the text of the statutes have been taken from Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3. The letters written in bold are rubricated in this manuscript.

35 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fol. 14^b.

canonry, does not mention many specific details of which we only have a vague idea.

Important parts of the life of the canons are described throughout the text of the statutes.³⁶ Various aspects of the daily routine are discussed in particular chapters, with varying degrees of detail.

The first five chapters describe the reception of the novices. After some preliminary investigation, a candidate was introduced to the brotherhood assembled in the Chapter and, with the consent of all the members of the community, he was accepted into the novitiate. His qualities and behaviour were examined and he was taught all the important parts of the life in the canonry. Novices lived in a separate part of the house. They studied the Rule of St Augustine and the statutes in detail, and they learnt to recite and sing the Divine Office. At the end of the novitiate, the members of the canonry decided whether the candidate was suitable and, if so, he was accepted. The formal profession of the novice is described in detail. If he changed his mind during the year, he could resume his secular habit and go home. If he decided to stay in the canonry, he was vested into the new habit and he was led to the Chapter, where, after admonitions, he made his profession.

The day of the canons revolved around the liturgy and choral office. The statutes of Roudnice have no separate chapter devoted to the daily prayers; these are described throughout the text. The Divine Office determined the religious rhythm and the structure of the day, and the organization of the daily life of the members of communities was governed by an elaborate system of rites and ceremonies. A certain number of services had to be performed every twenty-four hours, and every day was determined by the rhythm of the canonical hours (Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline). The specific form of these services varied depending on whether it was a common or ferial day, a Sunday or a Saint's Day, but the adequate performance of these services was the most important thing to be considered, overshadowing the rest of the monastic occupations, such as sleep, meals, daily work, or study. The life of the canons was characterized by strict adherence to all the rules connected with the daily prayers and services.

The rules for the dormitory were very strict. All the canons except for the old or sick members of the community had to sleep in one common dormitory.³⁷ In the morning and in the evening, clothes had to be changed in

36 The content of the statutes is partly described in Ebersonová, *Roudnická statuta* (The Statutes of Roudnice); Neumann, *Prameny k dějinám duchovenstva v době předhusitské a Husově* (Sources for the History of the Clergy in the Pre-Hussite Period and the Period of John Hus), esp. pp. 71–76; short notes can also be found in Kadlec, *Klášter augustiniánských kanovníků v Třeboni* (The Monastery of Augustinian Canons in Třeboň), esp. pp. 42–45.

37 The Archbishop of Prague Ernest of Pardubice asked the Pope for the partition of the dormitory. (See 'Diplomatář kláštera blahoslavené Panny Marie řeholních kanovníků řádu sv. Augustina v Roudnici' (The Diplomatarium of the Monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Canons Regular of the Order of St Augustine in Roudnice), ed. by Emler, pp. 18–19).

private — no one could see any naked part of someone else's body. At night, no one was permitted to speak, so as not to disturb others. However, it was possible to read, write, and study at night, which is important evidence of the intellectual and scientific orientation of the Order:

Si autem quis scribere vel legere in dormitorio voluerit, absque omni strepitu fieri concedimus, tamen hoc summo studio custodiat, ne quis inquietet dormientes.³⁸ [...] Omnes simul in dormitorio, nisi quem infirmitas aut senectus id facere prohibuerit, dormiant. [...] Lucerna in eodem dormitorio noctis tempore usque mane iugiter ardeat. Nichil denique inhonestum aut indecens geratur in dormitorio ab aliquo nec quisque aliquem inquietare presumat.³⁹

(If someone wants to write or read in the dormitory, it can be done, yet without any noise and with an endeavour not to disturb anyone sleeping. [...] All of them, unless hindered by some disease or old age, should sleep in one dormitory. [...] In the dormitory, a lamp should be lit throughout the night incessantly until the morning. Nobody should do anything dishonest or indecent in the dormitory and nobody should disturb others.)

Surprisingly enough, the Roudnice statutes do not mention anything about the specific composition of the diet. It was probably standard.⁴⁰ On the other side, the manner of eating in the refectory is described clearly. Everyone had his own seat at the table. Every meal was started by a prayer; during the meal, it was not allowed to speak and a lector would read from Scripture. They ate only modestly:

Quando commessuri sunt, tacto a priore cimbalo, lotis manibus cum reverencia refectorium intrabunt, ibique stantes singuli in loco suo coram tabulis, preposito vel priore, subpriore, vel absentibus eis seniore ad principalem mensam accedente et 'benedicite' inchoante, cuncti reliqua ut est moris prosequantur.⁴¹

(When they are going to eat, the prior rings the bell and the brothers, having washed their hands, respectfully enter the refectory. There they stand at the tables, everyone at his own place: the provost, the prior, the sub-prior, or during their absence, an older member of the

Pope Clement VI in his bull of 12 September 1352 agreed and granted a dispensation from the constitution of Benedict XII (*Ad decorem ecclesiae*, 15 May 1339). Consequently, the dormitories in Roudnice, Kladsko, Jaroměř, and at Karlov in Prague were partitioned (*Acta Clementis VI., pontificis Romani, 1342–1352*, ed. by Klicman, no. 1055).

38 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fol. 30^{va}.

39 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fols 32^{rb} and 32^{va}.

40 For detailed information on the diet of Augustinian Canons, see Postles, "The Regular Canons and the Use of Food, c. 1200–1350", pp. 233–49.

41 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fols 28^{rb} and 28^{va}.

community, comes to the main table and begins with 'Bless', and all the brothers continue with the rest, according to the custom.)

The clothing of the canons is described in detail. The canons in Roudnice used a black tunic with a *sarrocium* (a long stripe of white cloth, worn from the right shoulder to the left side). In winter, they would wear an *almutium* (a fur hood-like shoulder cape). In summer, they would wear a *mozetta* (a short elbow-length sartorial vestment) instead of the *almutium*. The statutes emphasize that the cloth had to cover the whole body. Only on very warm days was it allowed to uncover one's feet, lower arms, and head:

In lectis suis cum summa disciplina se collocent nec vestem prius exuant quam coopertorium usque ad cubitos trahant. [...] **C**aveant eciam ne in publico pedes nudi appareant. **Q**uantumlibet calorem aliquando senciant, tamen numquam plus corporis sui detegant quam pedes brachia et caput.⁴²

(They should go to bed with the greatest discipline and they should not get undressed until they have pulled the blanket up to their elbows. [...] They should be careful not to show naked feet in public. Even if they feel warm, they should not expose more than their feet, lower arms, and head.)

There are also references to health and diseases. Personal hygiene is described only briefly: everyone must wash every day and have a bath every two weeks. Bloodletting is mentioned only briefly, but there were strict rules for it. Diseases were also part of the life of the community, and there was a special room for the sick and very old canons. All the members of the community had a duty to visit sick brothers and support them by reading the Scriptures:

Debet a prelato mansio infirmorum ac senum intra claustrum canonicorum fieri, ut suam possint aptissime tollerare imbecillitatem. [...] **E**rga quos oportet ut ceteri fratres magnam exhibeant caritatem.⁴³

(The prior must prepare in the house of the canons a room for the sick and old so that they may the better endure their weakness. [...] It is required that other brothers show great charity towards them.)

The proper conduct of the canons had already been mentioned at the beginning of the text, where the behaviour of the novices is described. Christian virtues are emphasized throughout the text. During daily activities, *silencium* was kept. Every day, however, some time was reserved for conversation amongst the members of the community. In the evening, all the canons would meet in

42 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fols 20^{va} and 20^{vb}.

43 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fols 33^{ra} and 33^{rb}.

the refectory and everyone was supposed to drink, even if he was not thirsty at that moment:

Subsequenter signo per priorem vel cantorem vel alium ad bibicionem dato, omnes rectorium intrabunt et sive sitim quis habeat vel non habeat ire tamen cum aliis non dimittat. Ibique sacerdos ebdomadarius vel prior benediccionem dabit: 'Potum servorum suorum' etc.⁴⁴

(Subsequently, after the prior or cantor or someone else has given them a sign to drink, they will all enter the refectory. And no matter if somebody is thirsty or not, he should not omit to go with the others. There the hebdomadary priest or the prior will give the blessing: 'Drink of His servants', etc.)

Private property was strictly prohibited and everything was to be shared without any distinction. The word 'my' could only be used in association with 'my father', 'my mother' and 'my fault'.

The last part of the statutes is dedicated to the preservation of the memory of the founder of the canony, the parents of the canons, and the canony's benefactors. For this purpose, the manuscript containing the statutes also includes a necrology with the names of these people. Canons had a duty to preserve their memory and to pray for their souls:

Capitulari ordinacione decrevimus in nostro monasterio observandum ut singulis annis post festum Omnium sanctorum, die apto quo id fieri poterit, animarum parentum nostrorum memoria post maiores vigiliis lectas et missam defunctorum solempniter cantatam perpetuo habeatur.⁴⁵

(We have decided by the decree of the Chapter that our canony should commemorate the souls of our parents every year, after the Feast of All Saints, on a suitable day when it can happen, after reading the main vigils and the festive sung Mass for the dead.)

From these examples, it is evident that the content of the statutes of Roudnice is standard, unsurprising, and very similar to other statutes, especially those of the congregation of St Ruf. In contrast with those statutes, the customs of Roudnice are substantially shorter, with their length being only about one tenth of the statutes of Marbach. The Roudnice statutes lack some important parts: the inner hierarchy of the community and the rights and obligations of the various offices in the canony are not described, and are only sometimes incidentally mentioned. In other statutes, including the possible model for the statutes of Roudnice, these instructions are an important part of the text, with many chapters being devoted to them.

44 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fol. 30^{vb}.

45 Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIX B 3, fols 35^{ra} and 35^{rb}.

It can be justifiably supposed that the reason for the brevity of the statutes of Roudnice was the smaller number of the canons in Czech houses (in Roudnice, for example, there were only twelve canons at the beginning) and the fact that many details were in the competence of the abbot. Moreover, as mentioned above, the author of the statutes was writing for readers who knew the many details of the life together. Therefore, many important points are only mentioned in passing or completely omitted.

Despite this fact, the Roudnice statutes were of great importance in Central Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and they were used not only in all the canonries in Bohemia and Moravia, but also in many houses in Silesia, Slovakia, Poland,⁴⁶ Germany, and Austria.⁴⁷ The reasons for this enormous expansion are still not completely clear, but one of them might be the already mentioned fact that Roudnice was supported from its beginning by the bishops and archbishops of Prague and also the Emperor Charles IV favoured the Order of Augustinian Canons. The evidence indicates that the wide spread and influence of these customs were caused by the strong political and cultural influence of the canonry in Roudnice, rather than by the actual text of the statutes.

As the text of the statutes spread, it was modified. Already in the second half of the fourteenth century, it was subject to further examination. A commentary on the statutes that complements, clarifies, and makes the text more specific for newly accepted canons was written in Roudnice by its prior Peter, who acquired the name of Clarificator. The treatise is called *Collectio super statuta canonicorum regularium sive Dietarius observancie regularis*.⁴⁸ This text comments on particular chapters of the statutes and expands some topics, describing life in the canonry and the daily obligations of individual members of the community in detail. The proper behaviour of novices and canons is described as well; the Christian virtues of *oboedientia*, *humilitas*, *paupertas spiritualis*, and *imitatio et amicitia Christi* (obedience, humility, poverty of spirit, and imitation and friendship of Christ) are emphasized.

The text of the Roudnice statutes was extended and refined, especially in German-speaking countries. In Austria, the centres of the so-called Roudnice reform were the canonries in Dürnstein and St Dorothea in Vienna; the influence

46 See Więzik, 'Najstarsze statuty (konstytucje) kanoników regularnych laterańskich obediencji krakowskiej' (The Oldest Statutes (Constitutions) of the Canons Regular of Lateran from Cracow), pp. 407–41; Łatak and Nalbach, *Ze studiów nad kulturą umysłową kanoników regularnych Cracowskiej prepozytury Bożego Ciała w XV i XVI wieku* (From the Studies on the Intellectual Culture of Augustinian Canons in Provostry of Corpus Christi in Cracow in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries), esp. pp. 59–101.

47 See Fenzl, 'Die Raudnitzer Reform' and Katzler, 'Von Statuten und Visitationen'.

48 This text was spread widely, especially in Poland and German-speaking countries. It has survived in eight manuscripts and it was also printed in Cracow in 1618 (*Regula beatissimi patris Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis*, ed. by Łoniewski). There is no critical edition.

of the statutes of Roudnice is also seen in the canonries in Klosterneuburg,⁴⁹ Herzogenburg, and St Florian. In Germany, the reform was represented mainly by the canonries in Neunkirchen am Brand,⁵⁰ Langenzenn bei Fürth, and Indersdorf.⁵¹

After the decline of the Order in the Czech lands after the Hussite Wars, when Roudnice itself was no longer a centre of vigour, its development continued in Austria and Germany.⁵² Gradually, the statutes originating in Roudnice were expanded, the text of individual chapters was modified, and a whole new book, called *liber officialis*, was added.

Conclusion

Members of religious communities were bound together by a common way of life and adhered to a written rule and a set of customs. There were many groups of religious customs across religious communities, and many types of religious practices in particular orders. The Order of Augustinian Canons was characterized by a number of independent canonries or congregations and thus also by dozens of different statutes. This study has attempted to gather, compare, and analyse the daily religious practices of the Order of Augustinian Canons in the Czech lands.

The customs are ambiguous texts, because they tend to reflect an ideal rather than the reality.⁵³ Very few religious houses adhered to every detail of their written documents. On the other hand, within the community there must have existed unwritten rules and customs, which were preserved in the minds of its members and cannot be recovered now. Such ambiguity and lack of illumination are reflected also in the statutes of Roudnice, where many important things remained unwritten.

The statutes of Roudnice were very important in Central Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They soon spread from the mother canonry to many canonries not only in the Czech lands, but also in Silesia, Slovakia, Poland, Germany, and Austria. A detailed examination of these customs can contribute not only to our knowledge of the daily routine of the communities of Augustinian Canons, but also to our knowledge of the history of the Augustinian Canons and their role in the intellectual and spiritual life of the Czech lands. Detailed research into the connections between various copies of the text used in various institutions could also bring to light new information on modifications and transformations of monastic customs and religious practices.

49 Fenzl, 'Die Raudnitzer Reform' and Höslinger, 'Wittingau und Forbes'.

50 Miekisch, *Das Augustiner-Chorherrenstift Neunkirchen am Brand*.

51 Haberkern, *Funken aus alter Glut. Johannes von Indersdorf*, pp. 252–53.

52 For the development of the statutes of Roudnice in German-speaking countries, see *Die Wiener Konstitutionen für Regulierte Augustiner Chorherren in Österreich im 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Fasching, and Katzler, 'Si regulares habent, consuetudines pariter et ceremonias bene degestas', pp. 186–200.

53 See Cochelin, 'Customaries as Inspirational Sources', pp. 27–72.

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The Devotional Book in Context and Use

*Catalan Poor Clares and English Birgittines: Spaces, Performance, and Memory**

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 49–75

The Object in its Context

In recent years, great progress has been made in the different fields related to the ‘materiality’ and ‘spatiality’ of objects¹ that were previously barely explored from this theoretical perspective. Today, there is evident interest in the study of the material aspects of objects, in the web of meanings generated by the context of their use, their specific locations and performative functions, and in how this web of meanings defines a given space.² Research on books, the history of reading, and manuscripts is no exception to this progress;³ recent studies take into account the object itself, showing how, in its materiality, the manuscript or book speaks through the marks, whether textual or not, that the different processes of production, manipulation, and use have left on it. Less frequently, the latest studies have also benefited from studying the complementary sources produced in relation to the object-manuscript, which include inventories of convents, delivery notes, testaments, and donations. These, and other documents that describe the object, situate the object-manuscript in its spatial context, and provide information about its function. In certain exceptional cases, we possess information from both channels, that is, both the object in its materiality and other sources that contextualize it. In such cases, it is possible to perform a deeper analysis in which information from both the manuscript and the sources about it complement one another.

In the work presented here, we pursue this orientation in order to address, firstly, the study of the manuscripts in question, and secondly, the sources that divulge information about the object and its context, thus providing a deeper understanding about the manuscript-object.⁴ Furthermore, with this contribution we want to establish the hypothesis of a possible transferral of evidence from one manuscript to another and from one context to another, taking into account that the function of manuscripts as ‘material things’ is attached to certain devotional practices that, despite the different environments

1 Bynum, *Christian Materiality*.

2 Lavan, Swift, and Putzeys, eds, *Objects in Context*. In recent years, research on space has rediscovered and re-used the challenging theories put forward in the 1970s by scholars as H. Lefebvre. In this work, Lefebvre invites us to consider the meanings of the term ‘space’ in history going beyond geographical boundaries. Lefebvre, ‘La production de l’espace’. More recent contributions to the theory of space have tried to push this seminal thesis forward by looking for a more complex definition of the term ‘space’. The major contributions to this redefinition of space are the awareness of the weight of experience, the use, perception, practices, movement or even gestures of its users as generating a non-objective space and one that is demarcated by both material and imagined borders.

3 Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment*; Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*; and Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in Late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts*.

4 In addition, this paper is part of an ongoing long-term research project on digital humanities, ‘Spiritual Landscapes’, which has one line of research called “The interior monastery” that tackles this subject via various subprojects: <<http://www.ub.edu/proyectopaisajes/index.php/research-lines/inner-nunnery>> [accessed 10 October 2017].

in which they were produced, were in many ways similar. Thus, we experiment with two geographical areas of the Christian West, both of which had late medieval monastic contexts in which feminine spirituality flourished. First, we will engage with a female convent of the order of the Poor Clares of Barcelona, Catalonia, and then analyse a convent of the Birgittine Order, Syon Abbey in England. Both centres yield extraordinarily rich information of different kinds concerning similar devotional practices for analysis. In order to establish parameters for this comparative analysis that will allow us to detect similarities in performative and spatial functions, we have chosen two manuscripts, one from each convent (a diurnal and a martyrology), together with all the complementary documentary information that we were able to find in archival sources. By undertaking this analysis, we address in both cases the study of the object-manuscript as linked to a specific space and to a set of specific devotional practices. By 'space', we mean a specific material space, one that not only situates the object in precise locations in the monastery, but also a space that changes with use over a period of time. We also, however, want to consider the mental space, one that transcends the borders of the convent and weaves a family and social network of promotion and patronage through the collective memory of the community.⁵ By 'practices', we mean gestures and liturgical rites that interact with the manuscript and the uses assigned to it.⁶ Spatiality and performativity are the two axes of this study.

Before beginning the comparative study of both manuscripts, a brief explanation of the two contexts in which they were found is required. The monastery of Sant Antoni i Santa Clara presents us with a community founded in Barcelona in 1236. It is one of the oldest Poor Clare convents of the Iberian peninsula (alongside those of Pamplona, Zaragoza, and Burgos), and was the first in Catalan territory. These earliest monasteries were founded in the orbit of Damianite communities and progressively defined their juridical status based on Hugolino's Constitutions. Later, they adopted the rule of Pope Innocent IV and were then standardized under the Urbanist rule (1263).

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- 5 We use the term 'collective memory' as an equivalent to the medieval term *memoria rerum*. Collective memory is a problematic concept since it refers to contemporary or at least modern societies, and sometimes has been doubted, for instance by Gedi and Elam in 'Collective Memory – What is it?', where they argue against one of the classic works promoting the concept of collective memory, Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*. *Memoria rerum* is rather a group of things shared in common or memories that are experienced and remembered by individuals engaging with them by integrating them into their own particular stories. A comprehensive discussion of the term can be found in: Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 24–59. A similar distinction is made by Walter Benjamin exploring the term 'collective memory' before the birth of contemporary societies in terms of storytelling, when a link existed between the story and a lived experience, an epic wisdom based on accepted moral assumptions, as expounded in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. by Eiland and Jennings, pp. 143–66.
- 6 In the same sense as Rudy, but on liturgical performance as creator of memory as well, see Henriot, 'Les clercs, l'espace et la mémoire.'

In addition to its antiquity, Sant Antoni i Santa Clara of Barcelona also has a legend surrounding it that links its foundation directly to the wishes of Saint Clare herself who, the story tells, sent two relatives and disciples to Barcelona who arrived miraculously by small boat from Italy. This legend solidifies the sanctity acquired in life and in death by one of them, Agnès de Peranda, the first abbess. In any case, behind the foundation and beyond the possible connection with the Italian Damianites, the sources reveal a group of penitent women (*sorores penitentium*) that, in fact, demanded of the pope to be constituted 'sub regula et ordine pauperum monialium inclusarum sancti Damiani'. The importance and vitality of this first community meant that at the end of the thirteenth century and in the first half of the fourteenth century they were able to promote and collaborate in the foundation of other Poor Clare communities, such as Santa Maria de Pedralbes in 1327 in Barcelona, amongst others. However, in 1513, in the context of the observant reform, the community of Poor Clares of Sant Antoni i Santa Clara changed to the Benedictine rule.⁷

As with all other convents of Poor Clares, this was a female cloistered community assisted by beneficiary chaplains and some *conversi*. It was under the authority of the abbess, save for the intervention of monks who occasionally assisted in the administration of some sacraments, and except for the control exercised by the Franciscan authorities (provincial ministers). The spaces in which the female community intersected with monks or chaplains were the church, the sacristy, and the choirs. Intersection in these spaces allowed them to communicate in different ways, either visually and/or acoustically. Doors, windows, and turnstiles (revolving doors to prevent prying eyes from seeing anything on the other side), all had an important role in these interrelations. Only a few manuscripts remain in the modern monastery of Sant Antoni i Santa Clara in Barcelona. Others have been dispersed and are now found in other libraries, such as the library of the neighbouring Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria of Montserrat. Nevertheless, the community of nuns still retains a rich archival collection that documents the existence of the manuscript containing the Diurnal discussed here as well as others, and that describes and situates them in specific locations, thereby telling us about the use of the manuscripts in the devotional and liturgical practices of the convent.

The history of Syon Abbey is very different to that of St Antoni i Santa Clara, not only because of its affiliation to a different order, but also because of its different historical circumstances. Syon Abbey was founded in 1415 by Henry V, the first profession taking place in 1420. Syon reached its peak just before the English Reformation, and following the Reformation the community went into exile, wandering across Europe through the Low

7 On the history of this community, see Jornet-Benito, *El monestir de Sant Antoni de Barcelona*; Jornet-Benito, 'Sant Antoni i Santa Clara de Barcelona, 1513', and Jornet-Benito, 'Female Mendicant Spirituality in Catalan Territory'.

Countries (1559–1580), to Rouen (1580–1594), and to Lisbon (1594–1861), to return in the end to England, staying there until its closure in 2011.⁸ These changes affect the history and the memory of the house, as can be observed in its documents. The monastery belonged to the Order of the Most Holy Saviour, founded by Birgitta of Sweden, from whom they took the qualifier of ‘Birgittine.’⁹ In one of her visions, Birgitta received the rule of the order that determined that it had to be a double order, constituted of a community of nuns and a smaller one of monks and friars. These male members had to devote their lives to preaching and to the spiritual care of the nuns, who made up the majority of the order. Both communities lived in the same complex but were strictly separated and could only communicate through a system of windows and turnstiles. Each of the cloistered spaces had a library and other dependencies, with a shared church where both choirs sang next to each other. Access to both cloistered spaces was only possible via the church.¹⁰ A great deal of texts has survived, including the inventory of the library of the monks of Syon, which has allowed us to determine many volumes to which the community had access. However, in the case of the manuscripts found at Syon, it is more difficult to reconstruct their location and use. Instead, this must be deduced through their contents and other indirect indications, such as references to specific liturgies of the community in treatises of spiritual instruction, in the specific additions to the rule, and in rubrics in breviaries or books of hours, amongst others.

The comparison that we want to establish here between the Poor Clares of Sant Antoni of Barcelona and the Birgittines of Syon is put forward as an initial example to illustrate a methodological approach that should prove useful for other ongoing and potential studies. This is an experimental approach to the practices and the liturgical performativity of both communities in order to determine their capacity to build spaces linked to their collective memories. Usually, the specific spaces in which memory plays a fundamental role go uninvestigated in monastic studies. We believe that we can elucidate some new hypotheses relating to the study of the object in terms of its context, identity, and memory, and that we can demonstrate the enriching contributions of comparative work through these particular case studies.

8 For a brief account of these “wanderings” see Jones, *Syon Abbey 1415–2015: England’s Last Medieval Monastery*, pp. 53–116.

9 Syon Abbey has been the object of several monographs covering its history. We mention here only those aspects of its medieval history: Tait, *A Fair Place*; Jones, *Syon Abbey 1415–2015: England’s Last Medieval Monastery*; *Syon Abbey and its Books*, ed. by Jones and Walsham.

10 This arrangement followed that outlined by the rule of the order. For an English translation of the first version of the rule, before it was submitted to the papacy, see ‘The Rule of the Saviour’, *The Revelations of St Birgitta of Sweden*, trans. by Searby and ed. by Morris, pp. 109–47; for the Latin critical edition of the different versions of the rule, see Birgitta of Sweden, *Opera Minora I: Regula Salvatoris*, ed. by Eklund.

Sant Antoni i Santa Clara of Barcelona: The Diurnal

Taking into account the monastery of Poor Clares, what stands out in their archives is the presence of multiple liturgical manuscripts that could be connected to the collective memory of the community. These texts are mentioned repeatedly in the inventory, and more generally in the documentation of the monastic archive. For instance, a significant number of inventories have survived from the time of the Poor Clares, most produced at the beginning of the mandates of the different abbesses, and an even larger number of inventories of the sacristy from the times of both the Poor Clares and the Benedictines, specially tailored for each sacristy and written by a sacristaness at the end of their mandate. In these inventories of the sacristy, a significant number of liturgical books are registered and described in detail, alongside descriptions of altar ornaments and liturgical clothing. As a whole, these inventories indicate where the books were kept and their use. Even if the books tend to end up in the custody of the sacristy later on, they can also be found on altars, in the chapels of the church, and in the choir or other areas of the monastery, such as the cloister, the chapter hall, or the refectory.¹¹ In some cases, these manuscripts have physically survived. The inventories of the convent, on the other hand, describe and note the possessions of the whole of the enclosure (including the sacristy), and are an invaluable source for everyday life in the convent, with descriptions, for instance, of the objects to be found in the kitchen.

One particular example we want to highlight in relation to the liturgical books associated with the community's memory is the existence of one Diurnal that is mentioned in the inventories of the sacristy and the convent of Sant Antoni of Barcelona from the mid-fourteenth century onwards. The first time it appears is in the general convent inventory of 19 August 1358.¹² From 1389, the Diurnal appears in the sacristy's inventories as a part of the 'church's books' ('Item que ha en l'esgleya' or 'los libres de l'esgleya') and located 'a la porta del torn', next to the turnstile. This turnstile was obviously not at the entrance of the monastery and it was probably the one separating the interior and exterior sacristies. It is mentioned in two inventories, from the years 1454 and 1461, that the Diurnal is 'fermat a la porta del torn', meaning 'attached to the turnstile'.¹³ From the sixteenth century onwards, when the community of Poor Clares adopted the Benedictine rule, the Diurnal continued to appear in

11 Garí and Jornet-Benito, 'El objeto en su contexto'.

12 The inventory from 1358 apparently locates the Diurnal 'a la porta del reffetor' (we consider this to be a mistake made by the copyist). Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de convent (1358), plec 813, no. 16, fol. 5. From 1366 onwards it is again located at 'la porta del torn'. Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de convent (1366), plec 813, no. 17, fol. 11; and in the inventory from 1399 it is also located at 'la porta del torn'. Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de convent (1399), plec 813, no. 18, fol. 14.

13 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1454), vol. 31, no. 9, fol. 9; Inventari de sagristia (1461), no. 11, fol. 8^v.



Figure 2.1. *Ordenaciones* (constitutions) of the monastery of Sant Antoni i Santa Clara of Barcelona. Montserrat, Arxiu del Monestir de Sant Benet de Montserrat, Fons del Monestir de Santa Clara de Barcelona (AMSBM/MSCB), *Ordenaciones religiosas de la provincia de Tarragona* (1617). Reproduced with permission. Photo: Blanca Gari and Núria Jornet.

the inventories but had been relocated. In 1534, when mentioning the books located in the choir, it is said that the book was in the possession of ‘vicària’ (vice-abbess) Toda.¹⁴ By 1544, the text was kept in the custody of the sacristy with five breviaries in ‘hun armari qui està all costat dell Arxiu’¹⁵ (a cabinet next to the Archive). This change in location probably indicates a change in the function of the manuscript to one more similar to that of a breviary.

All these indications, both of place and mode, give us interesting information for our study: first, this *Diurnal* was, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, an essential object for the community’s liturgy. It was a living book that went daily from the hands of the nuns to those of the friars and chaplains to accompany

14 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, *Inventari de sagristia* (1534), no. 24, fol. 37.

15 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, *Inventari de sagristia* (1544), no. 10, fol. 27.



Figure 2.2. Diurnal of the monastery of Sant Antoni i Santa Clara of Barcelona. Montserrat, Biblioteca de l'Abadia de Montserrat (BAM), Ms. 13. Diurnal, Original binding. Reproduced with permission. Photo: Blanca Garí and Núria Jornet.

and fix the daily liturgy of the hours. Secondly, the book was, until the sixteenth century, attached to the turnstile's door, which functioned as both a connecting and separating space between nuns and chaplains, and was 'fermat', that is, literally attached to it. This is not the only occasion on which the inventories show this link between object and performative space with the object secured by a device to attach it to a specific location, with this device sometimes being described as a chain. For instance, the convent inventory of 1337 mentions one book as follows: 'l'libre de Vices e de Virtuts qui està fermat davant l'altar'¹⁶ (The Book of Vices and Virtues attached in front of the altar) and the inventory of 1422 adds 'hun Breviari fermat en lo Capítol'¹⁷ (a chained Breviary in the Chapter). In the sacristy's inventories of 1406, it is specified that in the church there are 'V saltiris fermats ab cadenes'¹⁸ (V psalters with chains).¹⁸ Additionally, in documentation from other Catalan convents of Poor Clares of the same period in time, such

16 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de convent (1337), plec 813, no. 21, fol. 6.

17 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de convent (1422), plec 813, no. 20, fol. 7^v.

18 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1406), vol. 31 no. 3, fol. 5.

as Santa Maria of Pedralbes or Santa Clara of Manresa, books are mentioned as being chained to where they were used.¹⁹ Proof of this common practice in the Catalan Poor Clare convents is a book from more modern times kept in the monastery of Sant Antoni that contains the *Ordenacions* ('constitutions') of the monastery and whose cover shows the remains of a chain that was evidently used to affix it to a specific place now unknown to us.

The preservation up until today of some of the manuscripts mentioned in the inventories allows us to perform a deep analysis of the material by comparing description and function as stated in the archival sources with the surviving Diurnal, which we can be sure is, in all likelihood, the one mentioned in the inventories. The manuscript, which shows signs of having been made in the mid-fourteenth century by the Poor Clare community in Barcelona, still retains its original binding of wooden planks covered in leather painted in gold and blue.²⁰

The book is a codex of 135 parchment folios adorned with capital letters decorated with red and blue filigree, with signatures and titles in red; it has musical notation at the beginning of the antiphons and responsories and also in the Office of the Dead. It is composed of:

Item 1 – Pascal table in Catalan (fol. 2^v)

Item 2 – Calendar (fols 3–8^v) Franciscan-Clarian and Catalan, in which the triad of the order's saints (Francis, Clare, Anthony of Padua) appear along with autochthonous saints (Jordi, Eulalia of Barcelona). At the end of each month some brief rhymed verses for the 'diebus aegyptiacis', 'dies mali' or the 'fateful days'²¹ are included; these are also present in many medieval liturgical calendars that allude to the supposed days when God sent the Plagues to Egypt (hence their name).²² While reading each verse, it is possible to see one or two numbers indicating the fateful days in each month of the calendar (one at the start of the

19 For instance, in an inventory from Pedralbes a breviary 'qui astà en cadena en la capela de Sancta Helisabet' (Barcelona, Arxiu Històric del Real Monestir de Santa Maria de Pedralbes, Lligall, Inventaris, no. 137), and in a testament donation to Santa Clara of Manresa it is established that the donated book, a Catalan translation of the New Testament carefully illuminated, 'cum quadam catena ferrea firmetur et iugatur ac ponatur in coro nostro dicti monasterii' (Manresa, AHCM, Llibre particular del Convent de Santa Clara 1383–1401, 28 de diciembre 1397, fols 141^r–142^v).

20 Montserrat, BAM, MS 13.

21 Alexandre Olivar does not identify these verses in this tradition, but he does allude to 'some liturgical and medicinal verses by Hugh of Lincoln' ('unos versos litúrgicos y medicinales de Hug de Lincoln'): Olivar, *Catàleg dels manuscrits de la Biblioteca del Monestir de Montserrat*, p. 21.

22 Honorio of Autun was the first to establish the adjective 'egipciaco' in the twelfth century to name those days of great misfortune. About the origin of the idea and its tradition, see: Hennig, 'Versus de mensibus'. For the Catalan area there is an analysis of this unique element of the calendar: Puigvert i Planagumà, 'De diebus aegyptiacis'. Usually, apart from the verses themselves, signs and abbreviations can also be found directly in the calendar next to the fateful days.

month, another at the end), that repeat themselves with different variants and which allow for an interesting mnemonic reading:²³ for instance, for the month of September: ‘Tercia setembris, et quarta dabunt mala membris’ (The third and the fourth of September will cause harm to one’s members).²⁴ The sentences used in our manuscript match the those in a Breviary, ‘ad usum fratrum minorum’, for the convent of Santa Chiara of Siena, made around the year 1460²⁵ (in a similar monastic context that makes interesting connections between both areas possible).

Item 3 – Chapters of Saint Gabriel and Saint Clare (fol. 9),

Item 4 – Office of the Body of Christ (fols 13–14^v), Proper of the time (fols 15–75^v);

Item 5 – Proper of the saints (fols 76–107);²⁶

Item 6 – Common of the saints (fols 107–14);²⁷

Item 7 – Litanies of the saints (including for Francis, Clare and Elisabeth) (fols 114^v–117);

Item 8 – Office of the Franciscans ‘ad visitandum infirmum in extremaun-
cione’ (fols 117^v–131);

Item 9 – Office ‘Beate Mariae in sabbato’ (fols 131^v–133);

Item 10 – Prayers for the dead.

The manuscript ends with the words ‘ffinito libro sit la gloria Christo Amen. Qui scripsit scribat semper cum Domino vivat.’²⁸

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- 23 Suárez González, ‘A propósito de los días aciagos en un calendario medieval calagurritano’.
- 24 In September the fateful days will be: 3 September (direct calculation) and 26 September (counting backwards by seven from the last day of the month). It is principally the first date that has been transmitted in the medieval manuscripts. This is not the case for the second (normally the 21st).
- 25 Argenziano, ‘L’iconografia del “Breviarium fratrum Minorum”’. In this case, the structure of the codex is: calendar, psalter, breviary (in this last case with the Office suitable for the time, the one proper for the saints, the one for the Virgin and the ‘orde commendationis anime’). We can see how this is assimilated in our manuscript specifically in the breviary part and in the inclusion of this final chapter related to the office of the dead and the liturgy and funerary ritual. The Italian manuscript integrates an important iconographic component. This does not happen in our case.
- 26 In which appear, amongst others: Agnès, blessed Clare; the two Antonys, the Confessor (of the monastery), and the Abbot (who appears to have been added at a later date, probably also in the sixteenth century).
- 27 Where there is the reference to the ‘aniversario dedicationis ecclesie’ (fol. 113^v).
- 28 We have followed closely the codicological description of Alexander Olivar in his catalogue of the Montserrat library: Olivar, *Catàleg dels manuscrits de la Biblioteca del Monestir de Montserrat*, pp. 21–23 and p. 147. The manuscript also appears in the catalogue of Father Albareda, ‘Manuscrits de la Biblioteca de Montserrat’, p. 22. Cordiolani also includes it in his compendium of manuscripts of the ecclesiastical count in the libraries of Catalonia: ‘Inventaire des manuscrits de comput ecclésiastique conservés dans les bibliothèques de Catalogne’, p. 380.

It is interesting to highlight textual characteristics that connect the manuscript with the recipient community. On one hand, insertions and corrections feminize the text where necessary, because a copyist would have transcribed the model text with almost no variation. For instance, *ancilla tua* (fol. 130) or *sororis tua* (fol. 130^v) between the lines; or *fratres*, erased and changed to *sorores* (fol. 121^v). On the other hand, this personalization process with intercalated additions is especially obvious within the Calendar, written in the same hand that wrote the rest of the codex and referring to particular demises and suffrages related to the community for whom the text was copied or commissioned. Among those we can find nuns from the early years of the community, like Guillerma of Vic or Ròmia of Tossa; lay *conversi* of the monastery, like Guillem Ferran and Pere of Forn; benefactors and patrons, like Ramon Marquet, Ramon of Banyeres, and Pere of Bages; and a generic reference to the nuns' families — the 'officium pro patribus et matribus sororum'. All these inclusions show the construction of the process of memory linked to the performative use of the manuscript by the community.

This practice of 'corporate memory' is completed by the contribution of other manuscripts that have not been preserved, but that are mentioned in the sacristy's inventories. For instance, we can classify in this category books mentioned such as 'libres ha obs de les dones con són al trànsit'²⁹ (books that are used when the women are about to die) or 'libres que servexen con las dones són la mort' (books that are used when the women are dead).³⁰ These appear after the initial years of the Poor Clare community, and in more than one copy (usually four) at the lectern or in the cantor's cabinet, in the choir, with a 'libre de santa Margarita' (book of Saint Margaret) and a 'libre del plant de sent Bernat' (book of the lament of Saint Bernard) and next to the recipients (*bassins*) of extreme unction. These books allow us to observe a rich funerary ritual for the nuns, notably linked to chant.

For the construction of memory, we find those manuscripts with names that hint at a form of martyrology or necrology destined to commemorate and remember the deceased nuns. For instance, the 'libre de les dones mortes' (book of the dead women)³¹ is mentioned in another inventory as the 'libra en lo qual scriuen les monges mortes' (book in which the dead nuns are

29 For instance, 'IIII libres que servexen ha obs de les dones con són al trànsit' Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1389), vol. 31, no. 2, fol. 3^v.

30 For instance, 'quatre libres que servexen con les dones són a la mort' Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1419), vol. 31, no. 5, fol. 6.

31 For instance, 'I libre de les dones mortes' Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1406), vol. 31, no. 3, fol. 14; 'I libre de les dones mortes' Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1410), vol. 31, no. 4, fol. 8^v. This typology is also present in the convent's inventories. For example: 'I libra de nunciar les mortes' Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de convent (1358), plec 813, no. 16, fol. 5.

written), or by similar expressions in others.³² These documents reveal a series of practices that would go on to be maintained, with significant variations, in the Benedictine era of the community, when the inventory continues, this time in the sacristy: the ‘llibres que servexan a les cantores el dia dels mors e quant se mor alguna monja’³³ (books that the chanters use for the day of the dead and when any nun dies) or the ‘libre del plany, i dos o tres llibres que serveixen com se mor alguna monja’³⁴ (book of the lament, and two or three books that are used when any nun dies), or when it appears for the last time, as the ‘libre en què escriuen les mortes’ (book in which the dead are written),³⁵ among the books of the choir of 1534, matching the last appearance of the Diurnal in the same choir and before its relocation to the breviaries cabinet.

The Diurnal, created by the community in a period of consolidation of its patrimony, communal and social, highlights one of the most important functions of medieval monastic liturgies.³⁶ This function consists of the preservation of the memory of the community and that of their relatives, friends and benefactors, whose names can be invoked in the liturgy and even remembered in the space of the monastic church through its tombs. Inside the Diurnal, the funerary liturgy and intercession for the dead through prayers recited and chanted by the community play essential roles amongst other liturgical and ritual aspects that include different times and spaces, for instance, the accompaniment of the dying, during and after the administration of the preparatory sacraments, and the obsequies.³⁷ In this way the intercessionary function of the community is stressed. Its privileged ‘connection’ with the afterlife and the memory of the dead is sustained and evoked through prayers.

The ways in which Agnès, the first abbess, is remembered in the manuscript deserves some attention. She was the founder of the community, venerated as a saint, and her obit on 17 September 1281 in the calendar reads: ‘Agnès abbatissa prima istius monasterii et mater nostra’ (Agnès, first abbess of this monastery and our mother). The obit unifies the concepts of ‘first abbess’ with ‘mother’, creating a shared way of remembering her that equates her figure with that of Saint Clare. In the same way, references to the devotion to Saint Clare are significant too, like that present in the margins of fol. 130^v at the end of the Office of the

32 ‘I libra en lo qual scriuen les monges mortes’ Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1438), vol. 31, no. 8, fol. 11 v; ‘I libre en lo qual escriuen les monges mortes’ Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1454), vol. 31, no. 9, fol. 9; ‘un libra en lo qual scriuen les monges mortes’ Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1461), no. 11, fol. 8^v.

33 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1581), no. 31, fol. 18^v–19.

34 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1585), no. 32, fol. 4.

35 Montserrat, AMSBM/MSCB, Inventari de sagristia (1534), no. 24, fol. 36.

36 Susan Boynton, in her study of the liturgical practices of Farfa Abbey, concludes that the liturgical books and the liturgical performance that they channel shed light not only on a whole daily and yearly ritual cycle of the community that occupies most of the time of monks/nuns, but also on their relations and ways to express and consolidate their multiple identities. Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity*.

37 Baldó; Pavón, *El Oficio de Difuntos en la Edad Media*.

Dead under the form of a prayer: — ‘ac beatissime virginis tue Clare’, inscribed on what seems to be a rosary; or the inclusion of the chapters of the Feast of Saint Clare several times in the text. This is a link to Saint Clare of Assisi that can be seen in the foundational legend of the monastery, most probably born of oral tradition in the community and written down in the chronicles, according to which both founders of the monastery, Agnès of Peranda, first abbess, and Clara of Janua or ‘of Porta’, were disciples and relatives of the Italian saint.³⁸

In short, the Diurnal’s function during the time of the Poor Clares was within the monastic space in a location that connected and allowed the interaction between the community of women and the ministers, between the interior and exterior sacristy, attached to the turnstile’s door and spanning from one side to the other of the cloistered communities. This space linked the nuns through liturgy with the social universe from which they came and for which they acted as mediators. The relocation of the Diurnal in the sixteenth century, at least from 1544 onwards, to the sacristy’s cabinet next to the monastic archive, might perhaps hint at a change in the function or importance of this manuscript in the community that was now embracing the Benedictine rule. Maybe it is not such a coincidence that this happened alongside the disappearance of the inventories that explicitly mention this book as destined to register and commemorate the dead nuns, ‘libre en què escriuen les mortes’.

The Birgittines of Syon Abbey

There are several sources from Syon Abbey that talk about the memory and the memorial practices of the community, and in doing so highlight a network of relationships with members of other religious houses, anchoresses, vowesses, donors, benefactors, and other members of the clergy and the laity inspired by the figure of the founder of the order, Birgitta of Sweden.³⁹ These sources consist of books of hours or other liturgical books with ownership notes and added obits to the calendar;⁴⁰ devotional treatises and books with the same

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- 38 See also, for this foundational legend and their two feminine protagonists, Jornet-Benito, ‘Inés de Peranda i Clara de Janua’.
- 39 We use here the form “Birgitta” instead of the anglicized Bridget; following the form adopted by the normative English translation, *The Revelations of St Birgitta of Sweden*, trans. by Searby and ed. by Morris.
- 40 Such books are, for instance, Oxford, Bodl. Lib., MS Auct. D. 4. 7. and Brussels, Bibl. Royale, IV 481, both belonging to Eleanor Fettyplace, whose sister Elizabeth was professed at the Benedictine abbey of Amesbury. The first quoted manuscript includes her obit. For the Fettyplace family and its relations to Syon, see Eler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England*, Chapter 4, ‘Orthodoxy: the Fettyplace Sisters’, pp. 85–100. Syon books passed from one generation to another, and the annotations in the calendar were kept rather than erased. For instance, Syon Abbey MS 2, now Exeter University Library MS 262, bears different annotations commemorating events, like the ninth profession in October 1427, or

kind of inscriptions;⁴¹ devotional books written for the nuns or commissioned for the benefit of lay women;⁴² wills;⁴³ letters of confraternity;⁴⁴ registers;⁴⁵ or even liturgical books for the commemoration of the dead.

One of these documents is the martyrology, or ‘martiloge’, now kept in London at the British Library, shelf mark MS Additional 22285.⁴⁶ The document, probably originating in the mid-fifteenth century, has been widely studied by Birgittine scholars, because of the information contained in its necrology about dead members of the order as well as benefactors. It is a parchment manuscript of 193 leaves. Its name defines the contents and the function of the book: a martyrology is a type of source used for the commemoration of the dead. It can be described as a necrology, meaning a book in which the dead are inserted into the daily liturgy to be remembered on the anniversary of their deaths,⁴⁷ quite distinct to an obituary, in which ‘the dates relate to an annual commemoration of a deceased person which was not necessarily related to the day of his or her death’.⁴⁸ The name

the obit of a man called ‘Willelmi Bo...’ which has been interpreted as William Bowes, a relative of one of the sisters, ‘Anna Bowys’. See Collins, *The Bridgettine Breviary of Syon Abbey*, p. xlvi and Aungier, *The History and Antiquities of Syon Monastery*, pp. 54–56.

- 41 For instance, Oxford, Bold. Lib., Rawl. C 941 and Aberdeen, UL, 134 containing the treatise *The Myroure of Oure Ladye* composed for the Birgittine nuns and explaining their office. The colophon of the book is a request for prayers for the scribe, Richard Taylor, addressing the future owner of the books by her initials, which are filled in in the second manuscript as Elizabeth Monton. The same scribe would later be working in a devotional book with connections to Syon Abbey, now kept at British Library, MS Harley 494, which has been recently edited: Barratt, *Anne Bulkeley and Her Book*.
- 42 An example of this would be Symon Wynter’s work as translator and compiler of *The Life of St Jerome* for Margaret, Duchess of Clarence. For an edition of the text, see Waters, ‘The Life of St Jerome’; for similar relationships between women and Syon Abbey, see Bainbridge, ‘Syon Abbey’.
- 43 For instance, Jane Fowler bequeathed to Syon Abbey a book and 100 marks, requesting to be buried there. See Weaver and Beardwood, eds, *Some Oxfordshire Wills*.
- 44 It seems that Syon Abbey did not particularly engage in this practice, judging by the scarce survival of material letters, only those of John Talbot, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, St Albans and Durham. See Cockburn, King, and McDonnell, eds, *A History of the County of Middlesex*, pp. 182, 191, with further references.
- 45 The library register of the brothers has survived and it reflects accurately the name of the donor of each book. It has been edited by Vincent Gillespie: see Gillespie and Doyle, eds, *Syon Abbey*.
- 46 The added materials and the obits have been edited recently: see Gejrot, ed., *The Martiloge of Syon Abbey*.
- 47 Obituaries and necrologies-martyrologies need to be distinguished from other such commemorative documents like the Liber Vitae, where both the names of the living and the dead are included. Moreover, obituaries and necrologies present a list of the dead in a calendar, and not merely in a list. For a definition of these kinds of documents, see Huyghebaert and Lemaitre, *Les Documents Nécrologiques*.
- 48 Keats-Rohan, ‘Testimonies of the Living Dead’, p. 169. However, there are both kinds of contents in the document. By ‘obituary’ should be understood a brief added section dealing with annual services of commemoration, which occupies a very small part of the manuscript, and which was not related to the main function of the manuscript. Hence, we would define the martyrology of Syon Abbey as a necrology.

derives from the Latin *martirologium*, an account of individual martyrs arranged around a calendar, and in this case seems to follow the model of the French monk Usuard, a Benedictine monk of the ninth century.⁴⁹ The dissemination and production of martyrologies has its roots in the early Middle Ages, when Canon 69 of the Council of Aachen was established in 816 as part of the Rule of Saint Benedict, 'the reading of the names of the day from a martyrology' after prime.⁵⁰ The names of the dead would also be read at that point, and the term 'martyrology' went on to acquire the meaning of 'necrology', which in fact is a modern word with no equivalent in medieval times. Syon Abbey was not the only monastic house in England following this tradition, but it was relatively uncommon to adopt this mixed document (the reading of the martyrology along with that of the names of the dead from the same manuscript) for a newly established house.⁵¹ The Birgittine rule established that the brothers of the order would follow the use of the diocese, hence Syon Abbey followed the use of Sarum, where a reading of the martyrology after prime was established, even if details of how this rite was conducted or if it included a reading of the names of the dead are not always clear.⁵²

The manuscript retains its original medieval binding of boards on loose sheepskin and is composed of two kinds of material, those original to a 'common' and older Usard-martyrology, possibly bought or donated to the abbey and then customized, and contents that have been added, which form a set of texts concerning the memory of the community, including the necrology. Its use would be as follows: first, the reading of the martyrology for the day, then the obits of the deceased members in the necrology accompanied by prayers. Mixing these kinds of documents, that is liturgical and devotional

49 Dubois, ed., *Le Martyrologe d'Usuard*.

50 Keats-Rohan, 'Testimonies of the Living Dead', p. 168.

51 Other surviving similar examples in England are the Durham Liber Vitae, now London BL MS Cotton Domitian vii; the Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey, now BL MS Stowe 944; the Thorney Liber Vitae, now BL MS Add 40000, and the Martyrology of Usuard from Abingdon Abbey, now Cambridge, CCC MS 57. All of them have their origin in the early Middle Ages, and in some cases, like the Durham Liber Vitae, they were still in use in the fifteenth century. Of these, only the Martyrology from Abingdon Abbey would have had a function similar to that from Syon; the others, even if they include added materials related to the liturgy and the history of the community (which seems an important element in this kind of document), are Liber Vitae, which means that the names are not initially grouped around a calendar and that both the living and the dead were written down in them. The Cambridge manuscript is quite different, since the obits are written down in the margins of the different entries of the martyrology. The layout of the Syon exemplar is quite different, since it adds a system for arranging the dead around a structured calendar page, which, as whole, covers all the days of the year. For a complete description of CCC 57, see 'Abingdon Benedictine Collection with Martyrology' <<https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/xd738fw2393>> [accessed 10 January 2017].

52 For a comprehensive account of the liturgy in medieval England, see Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England*.

content with self-referencing texts, is quite usual.⁵³ Thus, the contents of the manuscript as a whole are especially relevant to this research:⁵⁴

Item 1 – A certificate concerning the authenticity of the relics of Saint Birgitta (fol. 1), pasted in the back flyleaf.

Item 2 – A list of the abbesses and confessors general in different hands (fol. 2^r).

Item 3 – A remark on some ceremonies of commemoration (fols 3^r–4^v).

Item 4 – A brief text about the correct use of the words *kalendae*, *nonae*, and *idus* (fol. 4^v).

Item 5 – A calendar with additions in the margins concerning Syon, in different hands, and obits that have been erased and moved to the main necrology (fols 5^r–10^v).⁵⁵

Item 6 – A bookmark with the forms of the words used in the ceremony, made by pasting two pieces of parchment together (fols 11–12).⁵⁶

Item 7 – A series of texts related to the book itself, its use, and the history of the community, which have been distributed into chapters. These texts are: Chapter 1, notes on the way the martyrology has to be read (fol. 13); Chapter 2, a brief account of the foundation of the monastery (fols 14^r–15^r); Chapter 3, a revision of the previous texts about the ceremonies of commemoration of the abbey (fols 15^v–16^r); Chapter 4, an explanation of the problems caused by the celebration of these offices (fols 16^r–16^v); Chapter 5, the revision once again of these offices (fol. 16^v); Chapter 6, further notes on one of the offices and further modification of the commemoration of the dead on a daily basis (fol. 17^r); Chapter 7, a description of a specific ceremony for commemorating the benefactors of the library (fols 17^v–18^r).

Item 8 – The Latin and English forms of obedience to be taken by new members (fols 18^v–20^r).

Item 9 – A note about the burials in the cross-aisles of the abbey church (fol. 21^r).

Item 10 – The necrology or list of obits arranged around a calendar begins in a layout in which every page covers four days, up to the whole year executed by different hands, covering almost the whole time-period in which the book was in use (fols 21^v–69^v).

53 For other examples see Geuenich, 'A Survey of the Early Medieval Confraternity Books from the Continent'; Gullick, 'The Make-Up of the Liber Vitae'; *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey*, ed. by Keynes; Thacker, 'Aethelwold and Abingdon', pp. 54–55; *The Thorney Liber Vitae*, ed. by Rollason, and Keats-Rohan, 'Testimonies of the Living Dead'.

54 A full description of the contents of the manuscripts can be found in Gejrot, ed., *The Martiloge of Syon Abbey*.

55 These erased obits have been transcribed and compared with the main necrology by Claes Gejrot with the help of ultra-violet light. Gejrot, ed., *The Martiloge of Syon Abbey*, pp. 43–49.

56 For a description of the use of the bookmark, see Gejrot, ed., *The Martiloge of Syon Abbey*, pp. 207–08.

- Item 11 – A list of benefactors is added after the necrology section (fols 70^r–71^v).
- Item 12 – A note about the offices for benefactors is written next (fol. 72). Then there are several blank pages headed ‘Nomina generalium benefactorum’ (fols 73^r–76^v).
- Item 13 – The martyrology proper, that is the life of the martyrs to be read each day, which continues almost until the end of the manuscript. It consists of heavily modified entries with added lessons in the top and lower margins, presumably to be read as part of the ceremony, and with annotations as reminders of on which days obits should be read (fols 77^r–188^r).⁵⁷
- Item 14 – There is an addition, just taking the central part of the manuscript, a bifolium containing ‘preces in capitulo’ (fols 94^r–95^v). The fact that there is a tab pasted onto folio 94 suggests that this office was part of the ceremony and that it needed to be located easily. There is a second bookmark, numbered 120–23, possibly intended for the end of the reading of the martyrology.⁵⁸
- Item 15 – The brothers’ absolution on the feast of Saint Birgitta’s canonization immediately after the last entry of the martyrology (fol. 188^r).
- Item 16 – Prayers in chapter similar but not identical to Item 14 (fol. 188^v).
- Item 17 – A list of the burials in the monastery, written in different hands which suggests that the lists were frequently updated (fols 189^r–192^r).
- Item 18 – Notes regarding the history of the community in Lisbon pasted at the end (fol. 193^r).

Several features deserve attention. Firstly, the fact that different hands updated different sections of the document over a period of time that goes beyond the exile from England caused by the English Reformation; secondly, the self-referencing contents added to other related ceremonies for the commemoration of the dead, referring to the use of the book, including its main purpose and its annotations for the liturgy; thirdly, the obits themselves and the way in which they are written; and finally, the mixing of items regarding the history and rules of the community. The place and time of the reading of the book and the references concerning the burial of the members of the community also probably deserve some analysis regarding the use and context of the book.

As we have seen before, the brothers of Syon Abbey were tied to the use of the diocese, thus the most probable time and use of the book would have been after prime in the Chapter Room. However, in the detailed account about the

57 About the nature and function of the lessons, which are not related to the contents of the martyrology entry, see Gillespie, ‘*Sacerdotis predicacio operibus confirmanda est*: The Lections in the Latin Martiloge of the Syon Brethren’.

58 For the use of this bookmark and a detailed description, see Gejrot, ed., *The Martiloge of Syon Abbey*, p. 13.

use of the book in the manuscript, in the section dealing with the benefactors of the library there is an annotation that warrants further attention. It is stated that this office was agreed upon by both communities, that is the brothers and the sisters, and that the name of one benefactor, magister Thomas, should be added in both martyrologies.⁵⁹ This reveals that the use of a martyrology for commemorating deaths was common to both communities, but that the sisters' copy has not survived. However, the sisters, according to the Rule, followed their own liturgy, received in a vision by Birgitta. The rule outlines many of the tasks and duties of the sisters, but somehow neglects or forgets about the brothers. At the beginning of Item 7, it is said that the martyrology should be read after *De Profundis*,⁶⁰ a psalm normally used for commemoration of the dead. Following the rule, there was a reading of this text at Terce in a ceremony specific to the Birgittine order:

Fossa quedam in monasterio instar sepulchri loco debito habeatur cotidie aperta, ad quam post terciam omni die festo et priuato ergedientur sorores. Et eiciente abbatissa modicum terre duobus digitis legant psalmum 'De profundis' cum collecta sub hac forma: [...] Feretrum quoque, cui modicum terre superimponitur, ante ingressum ecclesie iugiter statuatur, ubi ab ingredientibus semper videri possit, ut videntes hoc memoriam mortis in mente habeant et legant in cordibus suis, quod terra sunt et in terram reuertentur.⁶¹

(In a suitable place in the abbey there should be a hole in the ground like a grave left open every day. The sisters should go out to it after terce on both feast days and ordinary days. The abbess should toss a bit of earth into it while they recite the psalm *De Profundis* with the following collect prayer. [...]. A bier on which a bit of earth has been placed should also be left outside the entrance of the church to be always on display for those entering. In this way, when they see it, they may be reminded of death and say in their hearts that all things are dust and to dust they shall return.)⁶²

The rule does not mention a specific ceremony for remembering the dead with the use of a martyrology, nor does it specify the place where the ceremony should take place, other than that it should be at an open grave, the location of which is not given. The breviaries of the abbey also reflect this ceremony, but also without mentioning where it took place. Collins notes in his edition that in a printed copy of the breviary dated to 1697 there is a rubric that states that

59 Gejrot, ed., *The Martiloge of Syon Abbey*, pp. 68–69.

60 'Martilogium legatur post *De profundis* cotidie exceptis duobus diebus ante pascha et die pentecostes' (The Martiloge is to be read after *De profundis* except for two days before Easter and Whit Sunday), Gejrot, ed., *The Martiloge of Syon Abbey*, pp. 50–51.

61 Birgitta of Sweden, *Opera Minora*, ed. by Eklund, p. 132.

62 *The Revelations of St Birgitta of Sweden*, trans. by Searby and ed. by Morris, pp. 143–44.

the ceremony should take place after terce ‘extra chorum’ (outside the choir),⁶³ but it was printed in Landshut, Germany, and might refer to the customs of the German Birgittines. Another account of the ceremony can be found in *The Syon Additions for the Sisters*, a corpus of legislative texts complementing the rule and its application specifically at Syon Abbey. In this description of the ceremony, it is stated that ‘The hour of teer ended, þei schal make their inclynacions, and go in procession wyse to the graue’, adding that the *De Profundis* ceremony should be followed by the reading of the obits ‘yf [if] ther be any in the martilage on the morne.’⁶⁴ It seems plausible to assume that the bier and the open grave were in the same place, as can be understood from a close reading of *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, which is a gloss of the Birgittine liturgy composed for the benefit of the nuns:

Ye haue in the monastery a beer & a graue to be contynually in your syghte. The beer in mynde of dethe. & the graue. in mynde of the laste dome. [...] And therfore eche day after tyerce. ye go to thys graue. to brynge your dethe. and youre dome to mynde. or ye begynne to speke. or to be occupied aboute eny other thyng. that ye shulde nothyng say ne do all the day after.⁶⁵

(You have in the monastery a bier and a grave, to be continually in your sight: the bier a reminder of death and the grave a reminder of the Last Judgement. [...] And therefore each day after Terce go to this grave to bring your death and your judgement to mind before you begin to speak or to be occupied about any other thing, so that you should do nothing or say nothing for the whole day afterwards.)

Both the grave and the bier need to be continually in the nuns’ sight. When they proceed to the grave after Terce, each needs to remember what both things symbolize: the grave symbolizes the Last Judgement, and the bier, death.

It seems clear that both martyrologies were updated with the same information. The fact that the brothers could have followed a similar arrangement besides the tie to the use of the diocese has been suggested and thoroughly analysed by Vincent Gillespie, who concludes that it is probable that the ceremony of the brothers would have taken place also after Terce, and consequently, the ‘preces in capitulo’ in the manuscript are just a translation of the ceremony at prime in the chapter-house.⁶⁶ In the *Responsiones Vadstenenses*, in which

63 *The Bridgettine Breviary of Syon Abbey*, ed. by Collins, p. 27, note 1–1.

64 Hogg, ed., *The Rewyll of Seynt Sauioure*, p. 114.

65 *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, ed. by Blunt, p. 142.

66 Gillespie, ‘*Sacerdotis predicacio operibus confirmanda est*: The Lectons in the Latin Martilage of the Syon Brethren’. His analysis discusses several sources, some of them quoted in this paper.

there are a number of letters exchanged with Vadstena, the mother house of Syon, concerning doubts about the application of the rule, there is a question that sheds light on the location of the ceremony. It confirms that a bier was placed at the brothers' entrance to the monastery, while for the sisters the bier was placed before the entrance to the choir.⁶⁷ It seems probable that at least the ceremony for the martyrology for the sisters took place near the entrance to the church, and in all likelihood the ceremony for the brothers would have taken place similarly. The concepts of 'open grave' and 'bier' are mixed in a single location.

It is noteworthy that the obits of the members of the monastery while in exile often state the exact location of the burial. This should be linked to the fact that a list of the burials in the abbey has been added to the contents of the book and kept updated, just as the obits were. It seems that knowing the place of the burial was important for the users of the book. A similar list possibly existed in the sisters' exemplar. The layout of the page also deserves some attention. It is formed of two columns, each headed by the location of the grave. For the brothers these are 'iuxta gerras' (near the grate), and 'prope murum' (near the wall), and then follows the list, numbered to the left with even numbers and to the right with odd numbers. The same happens for the sisters, who are buried 'iuxta ianuam earum' (near their door), 'iuxta guerras' (near the railing) or 'prope murum' (near the wall).⁶⁸ The list is also distributed in two columns and numbered in the same way. The lists start again with different names but with identical numbering. Stuart Forbes has linked this system to the findings of the archaeological excavations that took place on the site of monastic church, where evidence of human remains was found in the vaults in the north and south sides. Forbes reconstructs where these graves may have been located.⁶⁹ These burial vaults add up to fifteen pairs on each side, which would correspond to the sides or spaces destined for the burial of the brothers, south side, and sisters, north side. The numbers on the list would then form a referencing system, indicating the precise location of the tomb. Then, if the ceremony had taken place near the entrance of the church, after the liturgy, or near the entrance of the monastery, the names of the dead, when read aloud in the ceremony, would have easily been linked with the location in which they were buried in the abbey church, and would even be remembered when they were abroad, tying the individual with the church, in the liturgy, and embodying their memory with that of the liturgical space.

67 *Responsiones Vadstenenses*, ed. by Andersson, pp. 126–28.

68 London, BL MS Add. 22285, fols 189^r–192^r.

69 Forbes, 'The Birgittine Abbey of Syon.'

Conclusions: Spaces, Performance, and Memory

Some important considerations can be deduced from the comparison of the manuscripts of Sant Antoni of Barcelona and Syon Abbey related to the link between space, performativity, and memory in the proposed examples.

First, the liturgy and prayer manuscripts in general — specifically the Diurnal and the Martyrology — show the creation process of the community's identity, fundamentally represented by the daily use of manuscripts containing a Calendar in which the collective memory related to the origins, benefactors, nuns, special devotions, etc. is constructed. The manuscripts analysed above are framed in a set of liturgical works, such as offices of the dead and necrologies, which reinforce each other's function in the monastic community as elements of evocation, commemoration, support, and reinforcement of the corporate identity — the community itself and their networks of social projection.⁷⁰ The mentioning of the dead in a liturgical context has a fundamental role in the preservation of their memory in the community and stresses the reciprocity with the world of the living, a reciprocity in which the monastic praying community takes the role of mediator. However, the dead and the living are linked not only through prayer but also in the way in which bodies and gestures signify space.⁷¹ By comparing both manuscripts, we can prove with all certainty that the link between memory and liturgy acts beyond the walls of the monastery as a social bonding agent.⁷²

Secondly, in both cases we can establish an interesting relationship between the female and male communities as a response to the needs established by the *cura monialium* in different (but, at the same time, similar) ways. Despite the possible differences between the double monastery of the Birgittines (under the authority of the abbess) and the female monastery of the Poor Clares with a small serving community of monks (also under the authority of the abbess), in both cases the manuscripts destined for commemoration create a circulating memory, by the physical exchange of the book (Poor Clares) or its duplication (Birgittines) — a memory captured in a process in which it was forever updated.

70 *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Brenner, Cohen, and Franklin-Brown. For the concept of “corporate identity” linked with the processes of construction of memory, see Burton, ‘Constructing a Corporate Identity’.

71 Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and Their Meanings*, pp. 240–41.

72 This intimate and living relationship has been defended by recent investigations into the high Medieval Ages, for instance by Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages*, Chapter 4, ‘Exchange and Interaction between the Living and the Dead in Early Medieval Society’, pp. 77–92. But it can also be applied to the late Middle Ages, when even if the office of the dead was generalized, it coexisted alongside other forms of more intimate commemoration of special significance for the community, see for instance Gordon and Marshall, *The Place of the Dead* and also Henriët, ‘Les clercs, l’espace et la mémoire’.

Thirdly, the link between the symbolic and practical manuscript, its performative use, its custody, and the location in which it was used is confirmed. Through different channels, and because the data obtained support the suggestion, the objects (the manuscripts related to the construction of memory) show a strong connection with the place in which they were used. In the case of Sant Antoni, the multiple texts of the inventories that show the practice of 'attaching' the manuscripts, on occasion literally with chains, to the places in which they were used prove this and stress the bond of the object with its performative space. We do not have similar information for Syon Abbey. What we do have are references and allusions to use of the manuscript in a specific location and the placement of the manuscript can be deduced through indirect references in the liturgy's treatises and glosses. What is more, the book includes spatial references to burials of members of the community in the church, and even during the period of exile the book specifies more or less exactly where the burial of the exiled member is, establishing a clear link between the interior lived space and the physical place of the liturgy.

Finally, it is fitting to reflect upon the memory of what we could call 'the founding mothers'. The concept is ambiguous and has different connotations in both monasteries. On the one hand, in the case of the Poor Clares of Sant Antoni, the Diurnal and inventories commemorate Agnès, the first abbess, as a saint, and one of the two nuns who, coming from Italy, supported the petitions of the community of 'penitent women' of Barcelona for a foundational papal bull from Rome. Besides, some of these inventories register on their covers the 'coixins de santa Agnès' (the pillows of Agnès). This way the inventories become, beyond their materiality, ways of remembering Agnès, the founder, considered a saint. Agnès appears explicitly as a 'mother' for the community in the intercalated necrology in the Diurnal calendar, and she shares this symbolic function with Saint Clare, who is remembered and revered as a mother as well. Then again, Syon Abbey is a royal foundation and there is not an equivalent figure to that of Agnès. The object of remembrance and reverence is Birgitta, the saintly founder of the order. Her revelations are added to the prayer books or devotional treatises and were, probably, read daily. Her example occupies a central role in some of the works written by monks and distributed in print, and even in the writing found in the margins of various manuscripts one can find her name in red ink alongside Jesus and Mary.

To sum up, the initial idea of this study was that the liturgical manuscripts as 'material things' can bear the marks of similar devotional practices and interact with contexts similar in use, despite the diversity of environments in which they are produced. To argue our point, we have analysed manuscripts originating from different geographical areas, and have compared them, when possible, to complementary sources related to them. These sources allow us to determine their spatial context and their function. We can state, as a conclusion to our analysis, that it is possible to transfer evidence between manuscripts and from one context to another, in our case from the Poor Clares of Sant Antoni of Barcelona to the Birgittines of Syon Abbey, and vice versa. We are

convinced that a more general comparative analysis from this perspective would greatly enrich our capacity to comprehend phenomena such as the construction of collective memory in the monastic communities of Europe.

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Literacy, Books, and the Community

Textual Evidence from a Portuguese Dominican Nunnery

The purpose of this essay is to establish the role of texts and literacy in a late medieval Dominican nunnery, as well as the contribution of literary skills to the Reform movement. Empirical evidence shows that the spiritual economy of female Dominican convents was strengthened by an unprecedented usage of texts, which appear to have been crucial for the life of these communities. The use of written material increased dramatically. Non-liturgical texts were written mainly in the Portuguese vernacular, while Latin was employed almost exclusively for liturgical texts. For Portugal, the better-documented case is the Nunnery of Jesus in Aveiro. However, there is evidence of other female congregations having adopted similar practices. It will become clear that events in Portugal were consistent with those described by several authors in other Christian territories, particularly when it came to the female branch of the Order of Preachers.

The Nunnery of Jesus

In 1461, Pope Pius II gave permission for the establishment of a female monastic community in Aveiro (Diocese of Coimbra). According to the papal document, the request had been submitted by Beatriz Leitoa and Mécia Pereira, who were allowed to start a community of six women, with enough assets to cover their

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 77–97

keep.¹ They emulated the customs observed in the Convent of Salvador (Our Saviour), formed in Lisbon in 1392, another Observant female community that followed the Order of Saint Dominic.

Insight into the Nunnery of Jesus' early history can be gained from the first-hand experience of a nun, as narrated in a chronicle she wrote between 1513 and 1525.² This text, where the chronicler crystallized the memory of her community, highlighted a set of individual, intertwining stories of people who devoted themselves to a religious lifestyle in the mid-fifteenth century. The trajectories of those women, though presented as unique by the chronicler, illustrate traits which are not exclusive to the nunnery's history. The following is a description of the essential highlights in such accounts, based on two case studies.

The first is that of Beatriz Leitoa (1426–1480). Little is known about her family. As an orphan, she was raised at the court of Isabel of Urgell (duchess of Coimbra, 1429–1449). Beatriz married Diogo de Ataíde, a nobleman in the service of the duke of Coimbra — Infante Dom Pedro (regent of Portugal, 1439–1449) — who was also the main nobleman in the duchess's retinue. When Pedro's house was extinguished upon his death in the Battle of Alfarrobeira (1449), the couple relocated to a house near Aveiro. Diogo de Ataíde died in 1453, leaving his wife with their two underage daughters, Catarina and Maria de Ataíde. Beatriz reignited her connection with the Observant Dominicans at the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Misericórdia in Aveiro, with which the couple had maintained close ties.³ Since Beatriz wished to devote herself to a religious lifestyle, and also with the advice of Friar João de Guimarães, prior of the Dominicans, she decided to acquire land next to the friars' monastery in order to establish a place of worship that she — along with her two daughters — would herself join in 1458.⁴

In that same year, Dona Mécia Pereira, daughter of the lord of Feira, lost her husband, Martim Mendes de Berredo, who died serving the king on a diplomatic mission to France. The Aveiro Dominicans provided spiritual comfort to the lady, introducing her to Beatriz's project.⁵ Mécia Pereira immediately voiced her intention to join. In 1459, the noblewoman acquired assets in Aveiro; she wished both to expand the community and provide it

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- 1 This work has been financially supported by the Institute for Medieval Studies of the Nova University of Lisbon in the scope of its strategic project UID/HIS/00749/2013. 'A Bula de Pio II', ed. by Madahil.
 - 2 Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS COD 9, fols 1^r–110^v: *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil. The author's name is unknown, but she was undoubtedly part of the community. For more on the dating and authorship of this chronicle, see Sobral, 'A Vida da Princesa Santa Joana'.
 - 3 On Diogo de Ataíde and his connection to the Observant Dominicans, see Maria de Lurdes Rosa, 'Exercício do Poder e Salvação da Alma'.
 - 4 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 1–13.
 - 5 See Coakley, 'Friars as Confidants of Holy Women', and Coakley, 'Gender and Authority of the Friars'.

with better conditions, so it might house more women. However, she carried out this process from her home at Santa Maria da Feira, as if she wished to prepare her ingress under 'safe' conditions. Indeed, she would only relocate to the nunnery in 1460, just a year before the bull founding the Nunnery of Jesus was released.⁶

The project's foundations had been laid. But just what did these women have in mind as their way of life? For sure, the relative uncertainty regarding the community's origin is tied to its lack of an institutional profile early in its history. The scarcity of documents regarding the nunnery may very well be suggestive of the lifestyle these women adopted. It is possible that they were somewhat reluctant to unveil their way of life in face of social suspicion towards models of religious life which were considered to allow women too much autonomy. The nunnery was shaped as a *beatério* (a group of devout women), a *recolhimento* (an enclosure for contemplation), an *oratório* (oratory), or a *beguinaria* (a beguine community). The last of these definitions was the one chosen by the chronicler to describe the circumstances under which the aforementioned prior João de Guimarães issued the following warning, as decisions were being taken about the community's future:

[...] que mais servico de deus era entõ ao presente e seria pera os tẽpos viindoyros e mayormẽte pera molheres de nobre geeracõ e nõ de muita Idade como entõce erã e ao depois poderiã vñir . mais certa e segura vida era a de Religiã e ordẽ . que beguinaria na qual muitas vezes costuma cõtecer periõgos de Infamia e grãdes erros.⁷

([...] that it would be in the best service of God, both now and in the future — especially (concerning) the noble women still in their youth, like themselves and those who may follow them — to consider a life of religion and order (as professed nuns) as being more proper and certain than life as beguines, which frequently involves risks to a woman's honour and leads to grave mistakes.)

The project was similar to others developed from the twelfth century onwards in late medieval Flanders,⁸ Italy,⁹ and the Iberian peninsula.¹⁰ At the time, small groups of women, living in their homes and providing for their own livelihood, tended to organize themselves around beguine communities of a semi-monastic nature, in an attempt to shield themselves from accusations of

6 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 15–22.

7 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 25.

8 The bibliography for the beguines in the Netherlands is quite extensive. An example is Simons, *Cities of Ladies*.

9 Cf. Barone, 'Società e Religiosità Femminile'.

10 Miura Andrades, 'Beatas y Beaterios Andaluces'; Miura Andrades, 'Algunas Notas sobre las Beatas Andaluzas'; Miura Andrades, *Frailas, Monjas y Conventos*; and Muñoz Fernández, *Beatas y Santas Neocastellanas*.

heresy. Many of these groups would later evolve into Dominican nunneries.¹¹ Something similar seems to have happened in Aveiro, with the community soon adopting the monastic Rule of St Augustine under the patronage of the Observant branch of the Order of Preachers.

On its foundation in Aveiro the nunnery took in eight women. This small group would later increase in a sustainable fashion. Between 1461 and 1480 (the year in which the first prioress, Beatriz Leitoa, passed away), twenty-nine religious women professed. During the short tenure of Dona Leonor de Meneses (1480–1482) as prioress, only three women took their vows. Finally, fifty-three religious women professed during the long rule of Maria de Ataíde (1482–1525). Altogether, eighty-five women entered the nunnery — excluding two sisters who had previously professed at the Dominican Convent of Salvador of Lisbon in 1464. The number does not account either for Dona Teresa Pereira, sister of the nunnery's founder Mécia Pereira, who joined the group in the same year, or for Dona Joana, daughter of King Afonso V, who joined the nunnery in 1472, since neither of them ever professed.¹²

The presence of this honourable lady (deceased in 1490 in *fama sanctitatis*), the assurance of a lifestyle consistent with the newest spiritual trends, and the enthusiasm that such Observant movements were able to generate within the elites are three possible explanations for the increasing appeal of the Nunnery of Jesus for those wishing to enter a religious life. The social background of the Aveiro Dominicans indicates that this nunnery was a nationwide institution favoured by women of noble ancestry. It attracted the most influential lineages of the kingdom, which were tied by kinship to one another.¹³ The status attained by these connections and the considerable protection that it enjoyed — royal, noble, ecclesiastical, and monastic — explains the significance of its future role in the expansion of the Observant movement in Portugal. Between the end of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century, the Nunnery of Jesus became the epicentre of reform of the female branch of the Dominican Order in Portugal. Several nuns would leave Aveiro not only to reform old nunneries,¹⁴ but also to found new ones.¹⁵

11 On the Portuguese case, see Fontes, 'A Pobre Vida no Feminino'; Fontes, 'Reclusão, Eremitismo e Espaço urbano', and Andrade, 'Beatas'.

12 Cf. Moiteiro, 'As Dominicanas de Aveiro', pp. 325–67.

13 Moiteiro, 'As Dominicanas de Aveiro', pp. 20–26.

14 S. Domingos das Donas (Santarém, 1513) and Corpus Christi (Vila Nova de Gaia, 1542).

Cf. *Ordens Religiosas em Portugal*, ed. by Sousa, Pina, Andrade, and Santos, pp. 393–94.

15 Nunneries of St.^a Ana (Leiria, 1498), Nossa Senhora da Saudação (Montemor-o-Novo, 1513), Anunciada and Nossa Senhora da Rosa (Lisbon, 1515 and 1519, respectively), Nossa Senhora do Paraíso (Évora, 1516) and S. João Baptista (Setúbal, 1529). On the other hand, religious women also left the Nunnery of Paraíso in order to found St.^a Catarina de Sena (Évora, 1516) and Nossa Senhora da Consolação (Eivas, 1528): *Ordens Religiosas em Portugal*, ed. by Sousa, Pina, Andrade, and Santos, pp. 394–402.

Normative Speech

In recent decades, several historians have focused on the issue of female literacy in the late Middle Ages.¹⁶ These historians have stressed not only the emerging role of written materials as complementary to oral communication,¹⁷ but also the contribution of women to the secularization of culture. Josephine A. Koster reassesses the medieval concept of 'literate', which was traditionally associated with Latin literacy. She goes so far as to suggest that this concept should also comprise the vernacular.¹⁸

David N. Bell's study of the English case analysed the literacy level among nuns in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. It focused on the different methods for acquiring and writing texts, as well as on the different typologies of text: between liturgical books written in Latin and non-liturgical books (mostly written in the vernacular), and between original and translated works. He also discriminated between different literacy levels among the nuns, based on the diverse reading and writing skills evidenced.¹⁹ Katherine Gill confirms this trend with evidence from Italian nunneries. She introduced the concept of 'literary institutions' in order to describe the active involvement of religious women in the several dimensions of literary production and consumption. According to the author, nuns had a truly leading role in the development of religious literature in the vernacular.²⁰

The Order of Preachers is notable for its intimate relationship with the word, through activities such as preaching, university teaching, and the inquisition. Marie-Luise Ehrenschtndtner argued that social and cultural exchanges between the two branches of the Dominican Order resulted in the establishment of distinct but complementary roles.²¹ Friars devoted themselves to study and preaching, while nuns were committed to prayer. This approach was justified by the friars' inability to focus properly on their prayers, since they were frequently summoned out of their convents. Correct knowledge of Latin was crucial for religious women, since they were expected to go through the liturgy with the utmost care. Still, the vernacular became widespread in contexts unrelated to the Divine Office from quite early on. In the German province, since the end of the thirteenth century the vernacular

16 See Wogan-Browne's approach to this issue in 'Analytical Survey 5', and, more recently, *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, ed. by Blanton, O'Mara, and Stoop and *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Kansas City Dialogue*, ed. by Blanton, O'Mara, and Stoop.

17 Cf. Briggs, 'Literacy, Reading, and Writing'.

18 Koster, "I Have Travelled a Good Deal in Norfolk".

19 Bell, *What Nuns Read*. Based on the later, and extensive, bibliography produced on the subject the author has recently reassessed the findings of his own work, in Bell, 'What Nuns Read: The State of the Question'.

20 Gill, 'Women and the Production of Religious Literature'.

21 Ehrenschtndtner, 'Puellae Litteratae', p. 51.

had been employed beyond the choir for constitutions and sermons relating to the Eucharist. In the fifteenth century, the effort of Observant movements to incorporate the leading principles of religious life resulted in an even more assiduous use of the vernacular, as with the readings carried out in the refectory.²² The author justified the use of the mother tongue with its potential for a more direct, personal strain of spirituality.²³

The early Dominican constitutions (1221) mention the admission of *puellae litteratae*, who were able to read liturgical texts. In this document, St Dominic distinguished the *moniales litteratae* from the *sorores illiteratae et laicae*, who were required to memorize nothing but the main prayers.²⁴ Still, the later constitutions authored by Humbert of Romans (1259) envisaged that novices in general should possess a modicum of intellectual skills. Choir nuns were distinct from converts in their literary skills, the former essentially being expected to carry out the liturgy, while the latter were primarily assigned with manual tasks. Still, members of either group could be required to perform any of these services.

The *Constituições* (*Constitutions*)²⁵ and the *Livro dos Ofícios* (*Book of Offices*)²⁶ are examples of vernacular texts used by the Portuguese Dominicans. They allude to a school for novices, in which newcomers would become familiar with different aspects of monastic life, particularly the liturgy, which should be performed without flaw.²⁷ A demand for the fine performance of hymns and readings justified the creation of offices such as those of singer and reader, as well as the *correctrix mense*, responsible for reading in the refectory. To the latter was assigned the planning, organization, and safekeeping of liturgical implements and books.

The *Livro dos Ofícios* advised nunneries to maintain specific lesson books for both the chapter-house and the refectory, in addition to those employed in the choir. It suggested a number of books, the most relevant being the *Regra* (*Rule*) and the *Constituições*. In fact, these texts — usually in Portuguese translation — were compiled as codices in both Aveiro and Évora together

22 Ehrenschwendtner, 'Puellae Litteratae', pp. 52–54.

23 Ehrenschwendtner, 'Puellae Litteratae', p. 60.

24 Ehrenschwendtner, 'Puellae Litteratae', pp. 54–57.

25 Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS COD 18, fols 86^r–112^r. This vernacular version of the *Constitutions* was copied by a nun called Margarida Pinheira in the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Latin text of the *Constitutions* by Humbert of Romans was finished in 1259. The testimony of Aveiro was edited in 'Constituições', by Madahil. All references to the work in this article refer to this particular edition.

26 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 41^r–101^v. This manuscript dating from 1537 belonged to the Dominican nunnery of Nossa Senhora do Paraíso in Évora. The *Livro dos Ofícios* was a translation and adaptation of the *Liber de Instructione Officialium Fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum* for the female branch of the Order of Preachers. It was written by Humbert of Romans between 1257 and 1267.

27 'Constituições', ed. by Madahil, pp. 301–02. Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 49^v and 59^v.

with hagiographies and other normative treatises, such as the *Exposição da Regra* (*Exposition of the Rule*).²⁸ In 1510, Margarida Pinheira and Maria de Ataíde, both of the Aveiro nunnery, copied the *Vida de Santo Agostinho* (*Life of Saint Augustine*)²⁹ and the *Sermões de Santo Agostinho aos Frades Eremitas* (*Augustine's Sermons to the Hermit Friars*).³⁰ Margarida Pinheira copied another version of the *Vida de Santo Agostinho*, which was included in the same codex as the *Regra* and the *Constituições*.³¹ These codices are notable for their high-quality calligraphy, some of their features deriving from the needs associated with public reading.

The *Livro dos Ofícios* advised nunneries to preserve all legislative updates issued by the higher officers of the Order of Preachers, though it is unknown whether these norms were put into practice. From the viewpoint of the regulations, these documents were essential and were expected to be studied and observed by the communities. Most importantly, every single normative text included a clause mandating its reading on a regular basis, which justified the acquisition of those texts by the nunneries.³² The *Constituições* were expected to be read ‘... hũa vez . ou duas . ou mais no ano em linguagem: porque per Jnorancaja . nom se faca outra cousa contrayra do que sta scripto’ (at least once or twice a year, in the Chapter, in the vernacular language; this should prevent any wrongdoings caused by ignorance).³³

The *Livro dos Ofícios*' section on books is clearly focused on liturgical texts. Such attention stems from the central role of the Divine Office in nunneries associated with the second branch of the Order of Preachers. In addition to controlling the nuns' behaviour, the sentries and the dormitory sentinel were charged with the preservation of books.³⁴ The same concern also explains the fact that the nuns responsible for keeping the habits were also required to produce protective covers for the books.³⁵ In turn, the singer was allowed the

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- 28 Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS COD 18, fols 1^r–84^r, and Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 96^r–212^r. This is the translation of the Latin text, whose authorship is generally ascribed to Hugh of St Victor (1096–1141), an Augustinian canon regular; Jean Châtillon, however, in ‘Un Commentaire Anonyme de la Règle de Saint Augustin’, credited it to Letbert, an abbot in the Monastery of St Rufus, who would have written it between 1100 and 1110.
- 29 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados, no. 219, fols 1^r–16^r. A different version of the *Vida de Santo Agostinho* was copied by Margarida Pinheira (Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS COD 18, fols 113^r–53^r). Cf. Sobral, ‘Santo Agostinho em Aveiro’.
- 30 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados, no. 219, fols 17^r–105^r. Cf. Sobral, ‘Santo Agostinho em Aveiro’. The *Sermoes ad Fratres in Eremitis* were produced within the Order of Hermits of Saint Augustine in the first half of the fourteenth century. Cf. Saak, ‘The Creation of Augustinian Identity in the Later Middle Ages’, and Saak, ‘The Creation of Augustinian Identity in the Later Middle Ages II’.
- 31 Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS COD 18, fols 113^r–53^r. Cf. Sobral, ‘Santo Agostinho em Aveiro’.
- 32 ‘Constituições’, ed. by Madahil, p. 292.
- 33 ‘Constituições’, ed. by Madahil, p. 312.
- 34 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 70^v and 73^r.
- 35 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fol. 101^v.

liberty to select the texts, minding the sequence of the liturgical year. Aside from the church and the choir, the infirmary too was required to have books and serve as another reading space.³⁶ The *Livro dos Ofícios* also proposed readings aimed at preaching, to instil devotion and promote meditation. It suggested a training programme specific to the mistress of novices, incorporating liturgical training with the reading and analysis of moral and didactic texts reserved for reading during meals. The selection proposed favoured the ‘classics’ of the Christian monastic tradition, while less ancient works were also included — as may be interpreted by the allusion to ‘original books’.³⁷

The models offered in the *Livro dos Ofícios* echo those of many monastic libraries: the lives and words of the Desert Fathers, represented by Pseudo-Hieronymus’s *Vitae Patrum* and the *Colações dos Santos Padres* (*Conferences of the Desert Fathers*) by John Cassian. Nuns would thus have access to the hagiographies of the earliest men and women in religious life. They were expected to complement those books with readings from the *Paixões e Lendas dos Santos* (*Passions and Legends of the Saints*). The list reserved a special place for authors from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, particularly those associated with speculative mysticism: Hugh of St Victor, *Da Ciência* (*Of Science*); St Bernard, *Dos Graus da Soberba* (*The Steps of Humility and Pride*) and *Amando Deus* (*On Loving God*); or Hugh de Fouilloy, *De Claustro Animae* (*The Cloister of the Soul*). These texts on monastic spirituality, written within a reform context, appear alongside several other important books aimed at infusing the soul with divine love (e.g. *Confissões* (*The Confessions*) of St Augustine; *Meditações e Orações* (*Meditations and Prayers*) by St Anselm; and *Meditações* (*Meditations*) by Pseudo-Bernardus), as well as didactic treatises such as the *Livro dos Pecados e Virtudes* (*Book of Sins and Virtues*). The texts recommended in the *Livro dos Ofícios* end with the *Sagradas Escrituras* (the *Holy Scriptures*), most particularly the *Livro das Lamentações* (*Book of Lamentations*), and, for reading during Lent, the Sermons of the Saints and the Passion.³⁸ The many allusions to reading demonstrate that the skills of Dominican nuns were expected to meet normative requirements. The ability to write was another demand, different from that of reading.

The *Livro dos Ofícios* is quite liberal in its definition of duties that required usage of the written word. The prioress was advised to write down her task schedule for the community.³⁹ The sub-prioress was obliged to provide the provincial or general with regular updates, in writing, on the nunnery’s condition.⁴⁰ The singer was to take note of the masses requested of the convent, to inform the nunneries of obits among the nuns — asking for suffrages for their

36 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 88^r–91^r.

37 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fol. 86^v.

38 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 57^r–57^v, and 86^r–86^v.

39 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 42^v–43^r.

40 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fol. 45^v.

souls — and to organize the offices for the week.⁴¹ The sacristan was assigned the task of maintaining a written inventory of liturgical implements.⁴² Should the nunnery have someone designated specifically to the management of its safe, that person was also in charge of maintaining a register of debit and credit. The same task was also demanded of the procurator and the barn keeper.⁴³

The *Livro dos Offícios* also encouraged the mistress of novices to teach her pupils how to record their sins in writing as a *machina memorialis* preparing them for confession.⁴⁴ The nuns might also take to writing as a way of occupying some of their time. The mistress of novices was advised to tell them: ‘ho tempo quando tẽ licença pera fallar nom deuẽ estar oçiosas: mas leam ho escreuam ou Rezem: ou pẽsem em coussas proueitossas’ (In those moments when you are given leave to talk, it is best to avoid laziness. Read, write, pray, or think of fruitful things).⁴⁵ The *Livro dos Offícios* goes as far as to include the role of scribe among those reserved for the nuns.⁴⁶

Finally, it must be stressed that Observance required strict attention to the precepts of reclusion. This explains why correspondence was forbidden, unless properly authorized.⁴⁷ The *Constituições* defined harsh penalties for those who transgressed this canonical order.⁴⁸ While this example may refer to a forbidden act, it also reveals an attempt to control certain writing practices.

What I have described so far applied also to the religious women of German-speaking territories, the Dominicans in particular. Upon being subjected to reform projects, the nunneries in question were enhanced with schools dedicated to the training of novices, according to a curriculum in which Latin was not overlooked. Female convents thus acquired many books, resulting in surprisingly large libraries: this has led Anne Winston-Allen to speak of a ‘literary explosion.’⁴⁹ This phenomenon was kindled by intense book circulation, not only among Dominican Observant convents, but also other orders. The literary activities of German nuns were not limited to acquiring books; nuns also transcribed, illuminated, rebound, translated, and composed texts for both internal and external use. The nature of the books that framed such ‘literary institutions’ was dictated by both liturgical needs and the lessons to be read in the refectory. They were devotional texts, treatises on

41 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 60^v–61^v.

42 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fol. 68^r.

43 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fols 74^v–75^r, 79^r, and 95^r.

44 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fol. 55^v.

45 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fol. 54^v.

46 Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, MS Livros Iluminados 152, fol. 72^v.

47 ‘Constituições’, ed. by Madahil, p. 298.

48 ‘Constituições’, ed. by Madahil, p. 305.

49 Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, p. 171. According to the author, over 80 per cent of manuscripts in the libraries of Observant convents had been written or acquired in the period following the Reformation. Even though only 10 per cent of convents in that region were part of the Observant movement, around 90 per cent of manuscripts belonging to German convents come from this small group of reformed religious houses.

asceticism, sermon collections, and chronicles, most of which were written in the vernacular. This was actually encouraged by the nuns' spiritual leaders. Much as was happening in male communities, nuns considered mastery of letters to be an instrument for spiritual progress, conducive to good behaviour and a blessed life.⁵⁰

The Community's Collective Memory

The literacy levels of the Aveiro nunnery ought to be placed somewhere between oral and textual.⁵¹ These categories should provide a better understanding of the framework underlying the Dominicans' cultural expression. Several passages from the *Crónica da Fundação* (*Chronicle of Foundation*) — penned by a nun whose first name remains unknown, but who witnessed the facts narrated — reveal a deeply intimate relationship with the written word. At the same time, such narratives reveal glimpses of vivid memory, rich with devotional and liturgical contexts, and laid forth by the monastic community's interpreter with notable accuracy. In fact, the culture under analysis was oral in nature — understandably dependent upon the written word for long-term memory — and very well honed as such, being based on abilities of memorization much greater than ours. The written word was used on a much more normative basis. The chronicle is extensive and dotted with multiple quotations. Most of them are extracts from the Bible, some in Latin and associated with the Liturgy of the Hours.⁵² The main doubt arising is whether they were generated from memory, from cooperation between nuns, or from direct textual reference. Another plausible explanation lies in the role of the Dominican friars, to whom — under the light of doctrine — the text would have been submitted for review.⁵³

Regardless of the work methods of the Aveiro chronicler, it is important to understand the environment surrounding her community, as far as its relationship with the written word goes. Her words remain the most accessible means to interpret that environment by sifting through the text for evidence which might place the Dominicans within the framework of a specific 'literary system'. In fact, the *Crónica da Fundação* is overflowing with

50 Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, pp. 169–204. On female convents, see Roest, 'A Textual Community in the Making'; and Roest, 'Ignorantia est Mater Omnium Malorum'. On male convents, see Carvalho, *Nobres Leteras ... Ferosos Volumes*; Sobral, 'Os Lóios e os Livros'; Fontes, 'Frei João Álvares'; and Gomes, 'Leituras e Espiritualidade'.

51 According to the theory in Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, pp. 7–9, and Stock, 'Orality, Literacy, and the Sense of the Past'.

52 Cf. the list of written sources identified by Moiteiro, 'As Dominicanas de Aveiro', pp. 207–09.

53 Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles*, pp. 176, 190–91. The author is referring to the monitoring that sisters were subjected to by their spiritual leaders. The latter not only chose the reading materials but also intervened in the transcription, reading, and proofreading of texts.

references to literary contexts. As the reader advances through the text, a succession of testimonials places the protagonists within erudite environments. This is evidence of the value attributed to literary skills. The chronicle also features a considerable number of references to other texts. Episodes and contexts pointing to these women's proximity to cultured, literate circles of religious men are frequent. These men are portrayed as being honest, wise, and holy. The mediating role of the Aveiro Dominican friars is very relevant for understanding these statements. Women who entered a religious life would keep a close connection to friars noteworthy for their authority on religious topics.⁵⁴ On referring to Diogo de Ataíde and the Dominicans,⁵⁵ the chronicler speaks of virtue and wisdom. Such was, in fact, her concept of sanctity, judging from the qualities she ascribed to the holy women living in her nunnery. According to this chronicler, Beatriz Leitoa, Mécia Pereira, Catarina de Ataíde, and Infanta Joana had all been invested with the gift of the Holy Spirit, which infused them with unusual wisdom. This manifested itself in the way they talked, taking by surprise all those who heard them, even the most educated of people.

Whether or not it was a consequence of family relations or the Dominican influence, the connections established between these women outlined veritable 'epistolary networks', suggesting familiarity with written communication. Still, the act of writing did not prevent personal contact. However, due to the restraint expected of women at this time, these contacts frequently took place through third parties — usually people credited with a virtuous nature.⁵⁶

The daily lives of these nuns were based on a series of written media, which required learning, the honing of skills and compliance with certain literacy levels. The Dominican friars, led by Friar João de Guimarães, visited the nunnery frequently, taking part in the key events of monastic life. The friars' guidance was spiritual in nature, focusing mainly on the celebration of rites. The norms were particularly demanding as to the celebration of sacraments, homilies, the liturgy of the hours, chapters, and meals. Nuns were instructed to excel in their performance. The chronicler highlighted the Dominicans' rigorous overseeing of the performance of liturgical ceremonies and rituals involving song and prayer — both from memory and from the reading of texts.

54 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 9, 18, 33, 125–26.

55 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 5–6.

56 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 11, 16, 18, 20, 66, 100, 106, 131. In spite of the chronicler's assurances that such letters were written by the protagonists, these claims might be taken as mere literary devices rather than historically proven facts. Still, there is empirical evidence in the form of signatures on some of the letters, albeit not for the writing of the letters *per se*. Such is the case with the letters autographed by the Infanta, reproduced by Madahil in 'Cartas da Infanta Santa Joana.' Some letters by the prioress of the Nunnery of Jesus, Dona Maria de Ataíde, are preserved in Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional – Torre do Tombo, MS Corpo Cronológico, dated between 1502 and 1525. Cf. Moiteiro, 'As Dominicanas de Aveiro', pp. 172–73.

The development of a given set of skills was essential for carrying out these duties. Thus, Friar João de Guimarães assigned specific roles to some of the nuns, which involved literary and even artistic skills — writing, illuminating, and teaching. These tasks also required the ability to read. The celebration of liturgy involved the writing of books and quires, which performers might refer to for the words and musical notes of the hymns. These documents were also to include images, so as to simplify the understanding and memorization of words. The convent was expected to be equipped with choir books (psalteries, antiphonals, missals, breviaries) and documents to support the lessons taught at the chapters and during meals.

The chronicler provides a meticulous description of the nun's literary skills; this concern was surely a result of the importance the Dominicans attributed to such skills. Professed nuns required knowledge of both Latin and vernacular texts, if they were to celebrate liturgies or teach lessons during meals in a proficient manner. The Dominican friars dealt out the most rudimentary tasks required for daily monastic life. They intended to provide the young community with some autonomy, particularly regarding their ability to carry out the duties required by the choir. This explains why Beatriz Leitoa's daughters, Catarina de Ataíde and Maria de Ataíde, were taught to read and then assigned to teach their illiterate brethren. Indeed, this information is highlighted by the chronicler in a different passage of the *Crónica da Fundação*. While describing the distribution of duties among the nuns, the chronicler confirms that Mécia Pereira had insisted they learn how to copy books.⁵⁷ This statement is corroborated in the nunnery's *Livro dos Benfeitores* (*Book of Benefactors*):⁵⁸ 'mandou insynar a escreuer duas jrmaans, fylhas ambas da madre Britys Leytoa, que depouys jnsynaram outras' (She had two sisters, the daughters of the professed nun Beatriz Leitoa, taught how to read. These two later taught others).⁵⁹ In another passage, when writing of the premature death of Catarina de Ataíde, the chronicler provided even more detail on this matter:

Aprêdera a escrever lyvros e canto cõ sua Irmã Maria datayde . e âbas escreviam e aquele tẽpo lyvros pera ho Coro . E ella escrevia e tiinha entõ Comecado ho myssall sanctoral de Canto que nõ pode acabar. Tiinha Ja por materias scripto hũu myssal rreado pera a stante . E hũu salteyro meação tanbẽ destãte.⁶⁰

(She had learned with her sister Maria de Ataíde how to write books and sing. By then, both were writing books for the Choir. She had begun

57 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 32.

58 This document is currently in Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Reservados, MS COD. 12978. It has been edited by Gomes dos Santos, *O Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro*, II, 490–502.

59 Gomes dos Santos, *O Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro*, II, p. 495.

60 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 46.

work on the missal, on the lives of saints, which was left unfinished. Previously, she had written a missal and a psalter.)

The *Crónica da Fundação* implies that Beatriz Velha had already acquired literacy skills, which in turn allowed her to teach Grácia Álvares to read. The latter was a good student, as she was able to study singing with Isabel Luís in order to perform better the Divine Office. The need for choir books encouraged the sisters to seek knowledge. They learned how to copy liturgical books and illuminate them — a task performed with the aid of the Dominican friar Pero Dias de Évora.⁶¹ When referring to the works which Beatriz Leitoa had executed in the nunnery, so as to accommodate Princess Joana better, the chronicler pointed out the existence of a space dedicated to the *scriptorium*: ‘Casa que agora he scriptorio’ (the house which is now a scriptorium).⁶²

As she wrote about Infanta Dona Joana, whose life occupies the second half of the *Crónica da Fundação*, the chronicler states, resorting to hagiographical *topoi*, that

Emtrando a dita Senhora Ifante Na hydade de nove e dez ãnos . Comecou a sse demonstrar ã ella hũu maravilhoso Resplendor de amor de deus . E leixãdo outros desẽfadamẽtos que a dita Idade Requere . Comecou cõ grãde atento aprẽder leteras e querer entẽder Latỹ . E saber gramatyca .⁶³

(As the said Lady Infanta became nine or ten, God’s wonderful love began to manifest itself through her. Leaving behind other activities fit for her age, she began to learn the letters, wanting with the utmost zeal to understand Latin and grammar.)

This passage associated the love of God with mastery of letters, seen as a privileged channel of contact with the divine.

The young Infanta’s spiritual precociousness and willingness to surround herself with fervent believers amazed the Court. She learned from her chaplain⁶⁴ to pray the Divine Office according to the Roman tradition. He had translated it for her, ‘porque cõ mais gosto entendẽdo o ho Rezasse’ (so she would pray the more willingly as she understood it).⁶⁵ This reference to a translation notwithstanding, the chronicler asserted that Joana knew Latin, which drew her nearer the highest ecclesiastical institutions. Apparently,

61 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 39–41.

62 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 109.

63 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 77–78.

64 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 108: ‘[...] homẽ velho per Idade . devoto e muito amigo de deus . Leterado e bẽ entendido e dilligẽte ã seu oficio . que toda sua Capela Regia e ordenava . o qual fora Capelã moor da Rainha sua madre . honesto e de muito boa fama’ ([...] an elderly man, devout and very loving of God, proficient in letters, skilled and diligent in the matters of his office, who was in charge of the royal chapel. He had served as principal chaplain for her mother, the queen. Honest and of high reputation).

65 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 80.

since her arrival at the nunnery, the Infanta limited her social contact to those laypeople and ecclesiastical authorities whose topics of conversation were the Holy Scriptures and God's affairs.⁶⁶

In addition to reading, the Infanta also produced her own writings. She would take notes of her sins, so as not to forget them on confession day.⁶⁷ According to the *Crónica da Fundação*, she penned her own will,⁶⁸ because as the daughter of a king she did not need a notary.⁶⁹

However, not every sister could read. The chronicler stressed this reality in some passages, thus revealing literate hierarchies within the community. One such case was that of Grácia Álvares, who was taught by Beatriz Velha. In the final section of the *Crónica da Fundação*, when describing God's signs announcing the end of the Infanta's life, a vision is narrated. Though one of the sisters having these visions is unnamed in the text, the description betrays the need to set her apart from the others, in view of her modest literacy levels. Still, her lack of literacy skills did not diminish her, since her behaviour had been constantly flawless.⁷⁰

In addition to such references to literacy skills, the *Crónica* contains numerous other references to books and contexts of reading. According to the various examples given, the religious women excelled in their use of written media, both individually and, most especially, within the community. The chronicler describes the thorough process of spiritual preparation endured by Dona Mécia Pereira, who spent the Pentecost immediately after her admission to the nunnery 'ē continuada pendēca . lycā . e oracā' (in uninterrupted penance, devoted to reading and prayer).⁷¹ During her last days, and in spite of severe illness, she always required a supply of books, so that visitors might read to her.⁷² The prioress, Dona Beatriz, 'certas horas as faziia leer E star ē oracō . de dia . e muito mais de nocte . na qual nō aviã de Ir aas camas . Sē primeyro tēer Rezado ho salteyro e vyda de nossa Senhora' (urged the nuns to pray during the day, but even more so at night; they were not to retire without first having read the Psalms and the Life of Our Lady).⁷³ Upon falling ill, her daughter, Catarina de Ataíde, 'mãdou lhe leessē a payxã do Senhor . E acabada que lhe rrezassē ho salteyro tã alto que o podesse bē ouvir . e êtender' (asked for the Passion of the Lord and the Psalms to be read out loud, so she might listen and understand it properly).⁷⁴ Princess Joana always wept copiously 'lêedo meditãdo a paixam de nosso salvador . E ouvindo a preegar

66 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 118–19.

67 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 138.

68 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 153.

69 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 154.

70 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 144.

71 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 22.

72 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 35.

73 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 14.

74 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 47.

e leer' (when she read and reflected on the Passion, or whenever she heard someone preach or read it).⁷⁵ Comparing the princess to Christ, who had entrusted his disciples with words of enlightenment during the Last Supper, the chronicler recalled the words of advice which Joana directed towards the sisters, 'seguido a postumeyra doctrina do Senhor que ã sua santa vida amyude liia e Rezava [...] ' (professing the last doctrine of the Lord, which she read and prayed to frequently[...]).⁷⁶ She asked the sisters to read her the Passion when agonizing on her deathbed. At this request, the prioress, Maria de Ataíde, read to her from the missal.⁷⁷ Before joining the nunnery, Leonor de Meneses spent every day locked in her oratory. There, she attended mass and 'despẽdia todos seus tẽpos em oracoẽs Rezãdo as oras Canonycas e officio divinal que muito bẽ sabiia e outras devacões e meditacões orãdo e lãedo' (devoted all her time to praying the Canonical Hours and the Divine Office, which she knew by heart. She also read and recited other devotions and meditations).⁷⁸ Joana's illness took its toll on the sisters; but the Infanta herself tried to comfort them, saying: 'Fyca vos muita e boa lyvrraria cõ que poderees tomar cõssollacõ e prazer spiritual' (You shall take solace and spiritual bliss from the good library I am leaving you).⁷⁹ Maria de Ataíde witnessed one of the prophetic visions relating to Joana's death, as put down by the chronicler: one night, while lying on her bed, Maria de Ataíde saw the princess standing at the choir, wearing the most dazzling of gowns and reciting lessons on martyrs and the death of saints, singing in a very clear voice. She then heard a voice coming from the high altar of the church and 'logo ho lyvro per que a dita Senhora leera se carrava e a Senhora Iffante muỹ taste e supytamẽte desaparecia e era levada' (the book the Lady was reading from was immediately closed. Rapidly and all at once the Lady Infanta vanished and was taken away).⁸⁰

The initial insufficiency of books was gradually compensated for by the nunnery's own scriptorium. Later, as more and more high-profile ladies joined the nunnery, the community started to benefit from the generosity of the wealthier sisters and their families, who donated books. Leonor de Meneses took with her to Aveiro a 'livraria muỹ syngular' (very particular library) she had acquired with the money from her father's bequest.⁸¹ Infanta Joana was extremely committed to the acquisition of books, sermon collections and texts in both Latin and the vernacular, though her preference was for the former,

75 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 86. On the significance of tears in this hagiography, see Moiteiro, 'As Lágrimas na Hagiografia.'

76 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 160.

77 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 165–66.

78 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 88.

79 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 160.

80 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 142–43.

81 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 99.

as the chronicler confirms.⁸² Joana purchased a breviary and a diurnal from the Dominican friars of Benfca (an Observant convent near Lisbon)⁸³ and presented the nunnery with a Latin copy of the *Arbor Vitae Crucifixae Jesu* by Ubertino da Casale, printed in 1485.⁸⁴ According to the *Livro dos Benfeitores*, sisters Mécia Pereira, Leonor de Meneses, Clara da Silva, and Filipa Caldeira took breviaries, psalters, diurnals, and missals to the nunnery.⁸⁵

The sisters were not alone in providing books for the nunnery. Their relatives and devotees, most of whom came from clerical and courtly spheres, donated numerous assets to the nunnery, including land and property. Examples of this are ceremonial objects such as paintings and sculptures, vestments, liturgical implements, and books.⁸⁶ Queen Leonor (1458–1525), for instance, offered a 1495 translation of Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi*,⁸⁷ the printing of which she had sponsored.⁸⁸ Francisco Jusarte, clergyman and solicitor for King Manuel and for the Nunnery of Jesus at the Papal court, who was the uncle of Sister Mécia Jusarte, donated a missal and some breviaries to the nunnery.⁸⁹

Judging by the statements found in the *Crónica da Fundação* and the material evidence provided by the books that have survived until the present day, the *Livro dos Benfeitores* did not register every volume in the nunnery's library.⁹⁰ A simple reading of the *Manuscritos do Museu de Aveiro* (*Manuscripts from the Aveiro Museum*) catalogue will illustrate the importance of these books for monastic life, due to their usage over a long period. This largely accounts for their survival.⁹¹ Examples of these books include antiphonaries and processions copied by Maria de Ataíde,⁹² Leonor de Meneses,⁹³ and

82 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, pp. 140–41.

83 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 120.

84 See Carvalho, 'Acheegas ao Estudo da Influência da *Arbor Vitae Crucifixae*', p. 65; and Carvalho, 'Do Recomendado ao Lido', p. 11.

85 Moiteiro, 'As Dominicanas de Aveiro', p. 179.

86 Moiteiro, 'As Dominicanas de Aveiro', pp. 179, 368–80.

87 Gomes dos Santos, *O Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro*, II, 498.

88 On Queen Leonor's sponsorship of the printing of devotional books, see Sá, *De Princesa a Rainha-Velha*, pp. 167–69.

89 Gomes dos Santos, *O Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro*, II, 500.

90 The library is alluded to in the *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 163, when the Infanta, already bedridden, bids her physicians to go and rest. The latter, who did not wish to leave her side, moved to the 'library house'.

91 On the liturgical books preserved, see the *Manuscritos do Museu de Aveiro* catalogue, ed. by Gonçalves, as well as Corbin, 'Les Livres Liturgiques d'Aveiro'; Gomes dos Santos, *O Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro*, I, 164–66, and Júnior, 'Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro: Tesouros Musicais'.

92 Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS ANTF 26 (dated 1488). This manuscript was written jointly with Isabel Luís.

93 Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS ANTF 40 (dated 1480–1482).

Isabel Luís.⁹⁴ The latter copied at least eight books, which most rightly earned her the epithet of a considerably productive copyist, according to the entry that concerns her in the necrology appended to the *Crónica da Fundação*.⁹⁵

Late medieval attempts to expand literacy and introduce the vernacular, which involved laypeople and religious men and women as well, should be seen as relating to a ceaseless search for spiritually nurturing material. Empirical evidence suggests that the role played by letters within the religious system should be given renewed importance. According to this framework, Christian life ought to be founded on knowledge of sacred things; and this knowledge benefited from education and study, activities that naturally depended on the devotees' literacy skills.⁹⁶

The Aveiro Dominican nuns absorbed and nurtured this religious atmosphere. The Observant reform of which they were part is essential for an understanding of the important role played by the acquisition and development of literacy skills, which served the purpose of change. The most compelling source of evidence for this for the purposes of this essay is the *Crónica da Fundação* itself. Its female author provides an unequalled demonstration of her mastery of literacy skills, most notably in how she articulates a long narrative and resorts to discursive strategies of a rhetorical kind.⁹⁷ The text clearly shows the chronicler's intention to cater for an audience seeking a religious life with which to identify and commit to, at both a rational and an emotional level. She gave her sisters a history of their community, which was her community as well. It is a history of sainthood, a vehicle for the assimilation and the reproduction of behavioural standards. It is also a text that gives meaning to the history that she intended would follow thereafter, so that the community itself might continue the narrative.

94 Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS COD 15 (dated 1491) and Aveiro, Museu de Aveiro, MS ANTF 4, 8, 9, 19 and 39 (dated 1489). Cf. the following by Cardoso: 'A Iluminura de Maria de Ataíde e Isabel Luís no Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro (c. 1465–1500)'; 'Os Processionários Quatrocentistas de Isabel Luís'; and 'Iluminar no Feminino: o *Scriptorium* do Mosteiro de Jesus de Aveiro'.

95 *Crónica da Fundação*, ed. by Madahil, p. 247: 'No anno do Senhor de mil quinhentos quarenta e dois . vinte e um dias do mes de junho faleçeo e se foe pera nosso Senhor a muy virtuosa e sancta madre isabel luys a qual no principio e fundamêto deste moesteyro trabalhou e o ajudou a fundar e assy servio sempre esta casa e a ordê escrevêdo muitos lyvros e fazêdo muito sancta Vida...' (In the year of our Lord one thousand, five hundred and forty two, on the twenty first day of June, the wholly virtuous and holy mother Isabel Luís passed away and joined the Lord. She had served in this nunnery since its inception, and thus always served this house and the Order, writing many books and leading the holiest of lives ...).

96 Cf. Roest, 'A Textual Community in the Making'; Roest, '*Ignorantia est Mater Omnium Malorum*'; Carvalho, *Nobres Leteras... Ferosos Volumes*; Sobral, 'Os Lóios e os Livros'; Fontes, 'Frei João Álvares'; Gomes, 'Leituras e Espiritualidade'.

97 As evidenced in Moiteiro, 'Texto e Experiência Religiosa Feminina'.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life

The Laity

Change and Continuity in Lay Devotion as Evidenced by Prayer Beads in Medieval Poland and Central Europe

A particularly interesting opportunity presents itself to modern scholarship through the possibility of observing — from behaviours associated with prayer beads — both the continuity of a certain devotional practice and simultaneously the changeability of its form. Since the adoption of prayer beads by Christianity, the fundamental idea of their use has remained unchanged: that is, repeating prayers along with pious contemplation. At the same time, over the centuries the prayers themselves, the details of the devout texts, and even the shape of the artefacts have undergone changes.

Medieval devotional practices which used various types of prayer beads have not so far been studied in Polish historiography. Attention has focused solely on rosaries — but these were only one type of prayer beads and they did not appear until the end of the Middle Ages. There are studies on the confraternities of the rosary, its iconography, and the conditions associated with the emergence of the rosary as a type of prayer.¹ The items themselves

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- 1 See Pieróg, 'Geneza i rozwój bractw różańcowych w Polsce do roku 1604' (The Origin and Development of Brotherhoods of the Rosary in Poland before 1604); Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image); Kochaniewicz, *Wkład dominikanów w rozwój modlitwy różańcowej* (Contribution of the Dominicans into the Development of the Rosary).

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 101–128

or the surviving remains associated with their production, as found during archaeological excavations, have already been described in other publications.² Similarly, prayer beads are mentioned by authors of studies about inventories and lists of possessions.³ However, there are no studies dedicated to prayer beads in a wider context, or to the development of this particular prayer practice and the typology of the prayer beads themselves in Poland and Central Europe. Furthermore, there are no reflections on the nature of this phenomenon. This essay aims to draw attention to these topics, using examples from the territory of Poland and its neighbours.

It was in the period after the crusades that prayer beads came to Europe from the Islamic world (where they had already been in use since the seventh century). They became a part of Christian devotional practices.⁴ Series of prayers, which initially were recited during contemplation, consisted of psalms or the repeated recitation of the *Pater noster*. Reciting a common prayer was easier for worshippers: thus it was this form that gained popularity, and the prayer beads associated with it were named *paternoster*. By the twelfth century, there were people who practised a daily ritual which consisted in repeating the *Ave Maria* 150 times. In addition, Marian psalters, similar to the Psalms of David, started to appear, which consisted of prayers dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The oldest examples of such works come from the twelfth century: the *Psalterium Beatae Mariae Virginis* of Pontigny, the *Psalterium* of monk Theophilus from Saint-Aubin, and Saint Anselm's *Psalterium*.⁵ In the mid-thirteenth century, the new religious practice, already popular, gained new elements. There was a tendency to replace prayers with contemplation on the life of Christ and Mary. A vital role in such contemplation was ascribed to Mary the Mother of Christ, and she was also viewed as having participated in the Passion of Christ. At the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Marian psalters started to appear consisting of 150 *Ave Marias* preceded by antiphons.⁶ Also, a new name for prayer beads appeared — *avemaria* — a clear association with using such prayer beads

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- 2 For instance: Borkowski and Gierczak, 'W kwestii produkcji różańców i kości do gry w późnośredniowiecznym Wrocławiu' (On the Production of Rosaries and Dice in Late Medieval Wrocław), pp. 221–28; Jaworski, 'Ślady obróbki surowca kościanego i rogowego' (Traces of Bone and Antler Working), pp. 70–92.
 - 3 For instance: Goliński, *Wrocławskie spisy zastawów, długów i mienia żydowskiego z 1453 roku* (Inventories of Pledges, Debts and Jewish Assets From the Year 1453 From Wrocław).
 - 4 This study is limited to the western Christian tradition. The presence of prayer beads in Orthodox Church culture requires separate studies.
 - 5 *Psaletorium Beatae Mariae*, pp. 189–99; Monk Theophilus *Psaletorium Beatae Mariae*, pp. 57–70; (Pseudo-Anselm) *Psalterium Beatae Mariae*, pp. 254–56. Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland*, II, 15–16, 79–98; Kochaniewicz, *Wkład dominikanów w rozwój modlitwy różańcowej* (Contribution of the Dominicans into the Development of the Rosary), p. 225.
 - 6 Kochaniewicz, *Wkład dominikanów w rozwój modlitwy różańcowej* (Contribution of the Dominicans into the Development of the Rosary), p. 228.

to repeat that particular prayer. The next stage was the formation in the fifteenth century of the rosary prayer and the rosary itself, which will be discussed later in more detail.

In Poland, prayer beads appeared relatively early. On a tombstone from the mid-fourteenth century there is a depiction of Bolko II, Duke of Ziębice (German: *Münsterberg*) and his wife Duchess Jutta. The duchess is holding in her hands a string of prayer beads (long, open, with even-sized beads, ending with a tassel). Jerzy Kęłbowski, in his study on Silesian sepulchral art, assumed that the tombstone was made immediately after the Duke and the Duchess's death. The work commenced after the death of Duke Bolko (died 1341), and when Duchess Jutta died in 1342, the design was changed and a tombstone for the ducal couple was created.⁷ It is the first known depiction of the artefact in the territory of Poland, and at the same time the first known case of using that symbolic motif in Silesian sepulchral art.⁸ According to Gisling Ritz, the first depiction of prayer beads in European sepulchral art is the image on the tombstone of Wirichon and Agnes of Treuchtlingen from 1349.⁹ We do not know exactly when the Silesian tombstone was made, so it is not possible to state whether it is older than the Franconian one. In any case it is certain that the image of the string of prayer beads in Duchess Jutta's hands is one of the oldest images of its type in European art.

This is not the only depiction of prayer beads on the tombstones of the Silesian Piasts. A *paternoster* was also carved on the gravestone of Duchess Matilda of Brunswick, wife of Duke Henryk of Głogów (German: *Glogau*) (died 1318). The gravestone was created around 1390. Duchess Matilda is holding in her hands a medium-to-long string of prayer beads, in which all the beads are identical in size and contain no additional ornaments or dividers.¹⁰ Another example is the tombstone of Waclaw I (Wenceslaus I), Duke of Legnica (German: *Liegnitz*) (died 1364) and his wife Anna (died 1367) from Saints Peter and Paul Church in Legnica. That work of art is dated to somewhere between the first and second quarter of the fifteenth century, possibly a bit later. The Duchess is holding in her hands a rather long string of even-sized beads separated with various pendants, including a coral branch.¹¹ Strings

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- 7 Henryków, post-Cistercian church, a Silesian sculptor; see Kęłbowski, *Pomniki Piastów śląskich* (Monuments of the Silesian Piasts), pp. 108–14, figure 34. According to the author, the gravestone was made immediately after the ducal couple's death. The work commenced after Bolko's death (in 1341), and when Duchess Jutta died in 1342, following a change of the design, a gravestone for both the Duke and the Duchess was created; see Kęłbowski, *Pomniki Piastów śląskich* (Monuments of the Silesian Piasts), pp. 110–11.
- 8 Kęłbowski, *Pomniki Piastów śląskich* (Monuments of the Silesian Piasts), p. 113.
- 9 St James's Church in Heidenheim, Central Franconia; see Ritz, 'Der Rosenkrantz', p. 64.
- 10 See J. Kęłbowski, *Pomniki Piastów śląskich* (Monuments of the Silesian Piasts), pp. 167–74, figures 97–99.
- 11 See Kęłbowski, *Pomniki Piastów śląskich* (Monuments of the Silesian Piasts), pp. 174–78, figures 100 and 105.



Figure 4.1. The tombstone of Bolko II, Duke of Ziębice and his wife Duchess Jutta, mid-fourteenth century, Henryków, Silesia, Poland, the post-Cistercian church, a Silesian sculptor. Photo: Michał Kurzej.

of prayer beads depicted on gravestones had a symbolic meaning — they emphasized the piety of the depicted person.¹²

Representations of prayer beads also appear in the illuminations of the *Vita beatae Hedwigis* (Polish: *Legenda obrazowa św. Jadwigi*) in the oldest codex of that cycle — the Hedwig Codex. The Codex was produced in 1353 on the order of Ludwik I (Ludwig I), Duke of Legnica and Brzeg (German: *Liegnitz* and *Brieg*) (died 1398) and his wife Agnieszka (Agnes) (died 1362) for St Hedwig's collegiate church in Brzeg by the scribe Mikołaj Pruzia (*Nicolaus Pruzia* or *Pruzio*, Nicolaus of Prussia).¹³ The cycle of sixty-one illuminations

12 Cieński, 'Z symboliki ikonograficznej śląskich nagrobków' (The Iconographic Symbolism of the Silesian Piasts' Gravestones), pp. 57, 58; Kęłowski, *Pomniki Piastów śląskich* (Monuments of the Silesian Piasts), p. 113.

13 The *Hedwig Codex* (in Polish: *Kodeks brzeski*) is currently kept in Malibu (California), Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, file no. 83. MN.126, MS Ludwig XI 7. The *Codex* contains: the genealogy of St Hedwig (fols 2^v–8^v); her family tree (fols 9^v–10^r); *Vita maior* (fols 13^r–140^r); *Vita minor* (fols 140^r–148^r); the prayer to St Hedwig (fol. 148^v); the canonization bull (fols 149^r–158^v); the sermon of Pope Clement IV on the canonization (fols 158^v–164^r); the interpretation of the Saint's name (fols 164^r–165^r); four homilies of St Bernard of Clairvaux on the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary (fols 168^r–203^v), and the letter of Nicholas of Posen (Mikołaj z Poznania) to Duke Ludwig I of Brieg

is strictly associated with the texts of the *Vita maior*, the *Vita minor*, and the description of Saint Hedwig's miracles.¹⁴ In two miniatures from the Hedwig Codex: *Hedwig does not feel cold standing barefoot in church* (fol. 30^v) and *Hedwig praying to Saints Lawrence and Bartholomew and blessing the sick with a statue of the Virgin Mary* (fol. 46^v), the duchess is holding in her hands a long, open string of even-sized prayer beads.¹⁵ She is depicted with identical prayer beads, but this time fastened to her robe (the duchess is also holding a small book and a statue of the Madonna and Child), on fol. 12^v: *Saint Hedwig standing before the throne of heavenly glory adored by the founders – Duke Ludwig I of Liegnitz and Brieg and Duchess Agnes*.¹⁶ In the last of these miniatures, the long string of prayer beads is in fact one of the attributes of a pious duchess. It should be added that neither the *Vita maior* nor the *Vita minor* mention prayer beads. According to her hagiographers, Duchess Hedwig used other items: reliquaries and, her favourite, a statue of the Virgin Mary.¹⁷

In view of the use of the symbol of prayer beads in works of art (gravestones, illuminations), we may speculate that already at that time prayer beads were well-known in Silesia and possibly in other Polish territories. Furthermore, prayer beads must have been items clearly associated with devotional practices, since they represented piety and were used as its symbol.

Statutes of confraternities from the fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries from the territory of Poland confirm the practice of repeating many times certain prayers (*Pater Noster*, *Ave Maria*) on various occasions and with different intentions. Let us examine some examples. The statute of the fraternity of parish priests from the Oświęcim (German: *Auschwitz*) district (1378) provided for repeating the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* 100 times each for the intention of a deceased brother, as well as saying each of these prayers thirty times on the octave of his death.¹⁸ Piotr (Peter), the Bishop of Cracow,

(fols 204^r). The manuscript has been the subject of research interest since the nineteenth century. The first modern monograph on the manuscript was published by Gottschalk, 'Die älteste Bilderhandschrift mit den Quellen zum Leben der hl. Hedwig', pp. 61–161. *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, 309–11 (including bibliography review), III, figures 845–50. On the commissioning of the *Codex* see the recently published research of Kaczmarek, 'Okoliczności powstania i twórca Kodeksu lubińskiego' (The Circumstances of Creation and the Author of the Hedwig Codex), pp. 51–81. Edition of the *Codex* (facsimile of the text, Latin edition, German translation and commentaries): *Der Hedwigs-Codex von 1353 Sammlung Ludwig*, ed. by Braunfels and others.

14 Wąsowicz, *Legenda śląska* (The Silesian Legend), p. 5 n. 1.

15 *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, 309–11. Miniatures reprinted in: Wąsowicz, *Legenda śląska* (The Silesian Legend), figure 20 and 28.

16 Wąsowicz, *Legenda śląska* (The Silesian Legend), p. 23; *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, III, figure 846, p. 451.

17 According to the hagiography, the Duchess always carried the statue, held it during prayer, and even used it to bless the sick, *Vita maior*, p. 541.

18 *Zbiór dokumentów katedry i diecezji krakowskiej* (Collection of Documents of Cracow's Cathedral and Diocese), ed. by Kuraś, I, no. 73, p. 107.



Figure 4.2. Hedwig Codex, Silesia, Poland: Hedwig praying to Saints Lawrence and Bartholomew and blessing the sick with a statute of the Virgin Mary. Los Angeles, Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XI 7 (83.MN.126), fol. 46^v. 1353. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

when founding the confraternity of weavers in St Barbara's chapel in St Mary's Church in Cracow (1404), ordered its members to pray the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* fifteen times on certain occasions.¹⁹ Another bishop of Cracow, Wojciech Jastrzębiec, when founding the confraternity of weavers in Radom (1423), advised the confrères to pray the *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* 50 times during vigils and penance masses and for the intention of the deceased on Ember Days in St John the Baptist's Church in Radom.²⁰ We may speculate that in such practices, in order to facilitate the counting down of the prayers, people used prayer beads with a suitable number of beads. However, it is possible that there was only one person — a leader of the prayer — who held the string of beads in his or her hands.

Prayer beads appear in written records from the territory of Poland at the end of the fourteenth century. Interestingly the first mention already provides us with the Polish name of that artefact — *pacierz*.²¹ It is a Polonized version of the Latin word *paternoster*. However, we should not forget that the term *Pater Noster* has several different meanings: primarily it is the name of one of the most important prayers; next, that of a prayer in general; and also the name of the item used when repeatedly saying the 'Our Father' prayer.²² The Polonization of the term was generally associated with the process of adopting the 'Our Father' prayer for the purposes of elementary religious practices (in a way, it was a consequence of that process), where knowing the *Pater Noster* became one of the basic obligations for each Christian. Thus the emergence of a vernacular equivalent of the word *paternoster* should not be solely associated with the reception and popularization of the prayer beads used for repeating that prayer.

The word *pacierz* could also mean 'beads' or a 'necklace'. Therefore, a statement from 1404 by a certain Janusz that he did not steal from a certain Jagnieszka (Agnes) any *pacierz*, may refer either to prayer beads or to a necklace;²³ while *pacierz* (alias *paternoster*) with both these words used in the same source, are definitely referring to an item used for devotional practices in a note from 1440.²⁴ The Polish term *pacierz* is also used in later records.²⁵

19 *Zbiór dokumentów katedry i diecezji krakowskiej* (Collection of Documents of Cracow's Cathedral and Diocese), ed. by Kuraś, I, no. 163, p. 288.

20 *Zbiór dokumentów katedry i diecezji krakowskiej* (Collection of Documents of Cracow's Cathedral and Diocese), ed. by Kuraś, II, no. 245.

21 *Księgi sądowe łączyckie od 1385 do 1419* (Łęczeca Court Records from 1385 until 1419), part 2, no. 4786 (year 1393).

22 *Słownik staropolski* (Dictionary of Old Polish), ed. by Urbańczyk, VI, 3.

23 *Wielkopolskie rotty sądowe XIV–XV wieku* (Court Oaths from Greater Poland from the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries), III: *Roty kościańskie* (Court Oaths from Kościan), ed. by Kowalewicz and Kuraszkiewicz, no. 247.

24 'Wyciągi z najdawniejszych ksiąg sądowych ziemi krakowskiej' (Excerpts from the Older Court Records of the Cracow Land), ed. by Helcel, II, no. 2820.

25 For instance: *Acta officii consistorialis Leopoloensis antiquissima*, ed. by Rolny, I, no. 2256 (year 1488); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 346, footnote 1, p. 131 (year 1545).

An interesting contribution to studies on the popularization of devotional practices with the use of prayer beads is the case of the nickname of one burgher family from the town of Środa in Wielkopolska (Greater Poland region) who were related to the Poznań patricians. On 25 April 1422, a certain *Petrus Paczerz de Szroda dicto 'Pater Noster', laicus Poznanensis diocesis* received full absolution *in articulo mortis*.²⁶ It may well be that the same person is mentioned several more times in the records. On 13 November 1423, the vicar general of Poznań founded the collegiate church in Środa (Greater Poland), and the chief *collator* of the first *altaria* of All Saints in that collegiate church was *Petrus Paczerz et sui successore*.²⁷ The same person is most likely referred to in two other notes from 1427 and 1433.²⁸ (Most probably, the son of the said Piotr Pacierz was a Poznań merchant named Jan Pacierz.²⁹)

Thus, in the fifteenth century we had a family which called themselves 'Pacierz'/'Pater Noster', although we do not know how this moniker came to be or in what circumstances or for what reasons it was given to or adopted by that family. Did it derive from the term for prayer beads *paternoster*? Was the first person called *Pacierz/Pater Noster* a particularly pious man, conspicuous — perhaps — for ostentatiously wearing a string of prayer beads? Or was it possibly the fact that using prayer beads was so novel and unusual in Środa at that time that the men using them clearly stood out from the rest of the townspeople? It is possible that the 'Pacierz'/'Pater Noster' nickname became attached to a person known for his great piety demonstrated through frequent prayers (the term *pacierz* in its general meaning denoting a prayer). Finally, the nickname may have appeared for other reasons: for instance because the first representative of the 'Pacierz' family may have been an importer or manufacturer of prayer beads *paternosters*.

In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Poland, prayer beads were primarily called *pater noster*.³⁰ However, other less common names were also used:

26 *Bullarium Poloniae*, ed. by Sulikowska-Kurasiowa, Kuraś, and Wajs, IV, no. 1031.

27 *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski* (Diplomatic Codex of Greater Poland), ed. by Gąsiorowski and Jasiński, VIII, no. 978, p. 281.

28 *Wielkopolskie rotty sądowe XIV–XV w.* (Court Oaths from Greater Poland from the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries), II: *Roty pyzdrowskie* (Court Oaths from Pyzdry), ed. by Kowalewicz and Kuraszkiwicz, no. 834 (year 1427): *Petrus Paczerz de Szroda*; *Stadtbuch von Posen*, ed. by Warschauer, I, no. 601, p. 216 (year 1432): *Petrus Paczers*.

29 Jan Pacierz was the alderman of the guild of cloth cutters in the years 1444–1446 and in 1447 a town councillor; Mika, 'Studia nad patrycjatem poznańskim w wiekach średnich' (Studies on the Poznań Patricians in the Middle Ages), p. 37.

30 *Cracovia artificum 1300–1500*, ed. by Ptaśnik, no. 340, p. 102 (year 1439); *Księga wójtowska krakowska 1442–1443 / Registrum domini advocate Cracoviensis 1442–1443*, ed. by Niwiński, Jelonek-Litewka, and Litewka, no. 42, no. 59, no. 143, no. 861, no. 1377 (all annotations from 1442); *Cracovia artificum. Supplementa 1441–1450*, ed. by Przybyszewski, no. 542 (year 1442); *Rachunki królewskie z lat 1471–1472 i 1476–1478* (Royal Accounts from 1471–1472 and 1476–1478), ed. by Gawęda, Perzanowski, and Strzelecka, p. 171 (years 1476–1477); *Cracovia*

orarium,³¹ *oraculum*,³² *legibulum*,³³ and later *rosarium*.³⁴ The latter term — standing for a string of prayer beads — appeared in Europe in the second half of the fifteenth century. The name itself was known earlier, but until then referred to a set of Marian prayers.

The oldest Marian sign in Christian symbolism was a rose.³⁵ Hence the term *rosarium* (which refers to a rosebush, a rose garden, or a rose wreath), on a symbolic level, is strictly associated with the Virgin Mary. In the twelfth century, people started to use the word *rosarium* as a name for a set of prayers offered to the Virgin Mary. Literary evidence for the creative fluidity of these two designations comes from tales of a monk who prayed so devoutly in front of the image of the Virgin Mary that she finally appeared before him and started to weave a wreath from his prayers (*Ave Marias*), which, as they were spoken, miraculously materialized in the form of roses. Subsequently the Virgin crowned the monk's head with the wreath of roses.³⁶ This legend illustrates the essence of the prayer (*Ave Maria*), given as a gift for the *sacrum*, being returned to the praying person as a gift from the *sacrum*.

In the late Middle Ages the most popular devotional practice comprising the repetition of prayers gradually became the rosary prayer; it also became associated with the string of beads, which itself was referred to as a rosary. The shaping of the formula of the rosary prayer was influenced by the coexistence of two practices associated with monastic devotion: both the daily repetition of a series of prayers in accordance with the Rule and, also, a contemplation on the life of Christ, in particular his Passion. Around 1409, Dominic of Prussia (c. 1382–1460),³⁷ a Carthusian novice in Trier, created

artificum 1300–1500, ed. by Ptašnik, no. 854 (year 1483); no. 865 (year 1483); no. 1146 (year 1494); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptašnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 192 (year 1510).

- 31 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptašnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 568, p. 208 (year 1524).
- 32 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptašnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 1085, p. 417 (year 1542).
- 33 *Acta officii consistorialis Leopoloensis antiquissima*, ed. by Rolny, no. 2256 (year 1488); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptašnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 1118, pp. 428, 429, 430 (year 1544); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptašnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 1471 (year 1547).
- 34 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptašnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 973 (year 1539).
- 35 Forstner, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej* (The World of Christian Symbolism), pp. 192–93. The oldest association of the rose symbol with the Virgin Mary is believed to be the passage from Sedulius's *Carmen paschale* Seduliusza (c. 430). See Coelius Sedulius, 'Carmen paschale', book II. 28–31, pp. 595–96: *Et velut e spinis mollis rosa surgit acutis / Nil, quod laedat, habens, matremque obscurat honore: / Sic Evae de stripe sacra veniente Maria, / Virginis antiquae facinus nova virgo piaret*. On Sedulius see Altaner and Stüber, *Patrologia*, p. 539.
- 36 See Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image), p. 9.
- 37 He joined the order in 1410 in Trier. Beginning in 1415 and for several years thereafter he stayed in the newly-founded charterhouse in Marienfloss (Metz diocese); see Aubert, 'Dominique de Prisse', cols 619–21.

the prayer entitled *Clausulae vitae Christi*. It consisted of repeating the *Ave Maria* 50 times, where each *Ave Maria* was linked to one event from the life of Christ in the form of a short sentence, which was to be meditated upon after saying the prayer.³⁸ This type of prayer was adopted in Carthusian monasteries. Adolf of Essen (c. 1350–1439),³⁹ the abbot of the Carthusian monastery in Trier and the propagator of the prayer in his treatise *De commendatione Rosarii* (1434), named it *rosarium*, a term which was already known and used to refer to a set of Marian prayers. In the years 1435–1445, Dominic of Prussia developed his prayer by increasing the number of *Ave Maria* repetitions to 150 (i.e. to the number of the psalms) and adding the corresponding number of events for contemplation. He named that formula of prayer *Psalterium Marianum*. This prayer was propagated not only by the Carthusians but also the Benedictines. It became increasingly popular in the second half of the fifteenth century, and its advocate was a Dominican monk, Alain de la Roche (c. 1428–1475).⁴⁰ According to Alain de la Roche, the main sense and aim of the prayer was the contemplation associated with repeating *Ave Maria* 150 times. He divided the meditations into three parts: the first — joyful — dedicated to the contemplation of the mystery of the incarnation; the second — sorrowful — concerning the Passion of Christ; and the third one — glorious — dedicated to the resurrected Christ. Alain named the formula of the prayer which he propagated *Psalterium Christi et Mariae*, whereas in his opinion such names as *corona*, *sertum*, or *rosarium* were too secular in their associations and thus did not reflect the sense of the devotional formula he had created. The prayer could be said while kneeling, sitting, standing, or even walking; also, it could be prayed at different times and in different places. It was a spiritual exercise consisting of contemplating the Incarnation of God and the Redemption of mankind. It also became a plea for salvation and graces, for strengthening one's faith, and a prayer for other people, both living and deceased.⁴¹

Alain de la Roche's formula, i.e. 150 *Ave Maria* and 150 mysteries corresponding to individual prayers, was complicated and difficult to remember. In the work *Unserer Lieben Frauen Psalter* (1483; Ulm, Swabia (*Schwaben*)) the number of mysteries was reduced to 15.⁴² Each was to consist of repeating the *Ave Maria*

38 These were: fourteen events from Jesus' childhood, six associated with his public activity, twenty-two concerned the Passion of Christ, and seven his Resurrection. The sentences were published by: Esser, 'Rosenkranzklauseln des Dominikus von Preussen', pp. 413–16 and Meersseman, *Der Hymnos Akathistos im Abendland*, II, 150–53.

39 Autore, 'Adolphe d'Essen', col. 582; Reis, 'Adolf von Essen', pp. 86–87.

40 Coulon, 'Alain de la Roche', cols 1306–12; Walz, 'Alanus de Rupe (de la Roche)', cols 194–95.

41 See Kochaniewicz, *Wkład dominikanów w rozwój modlitwy różańcowej* (Contribution of the Dominicans into the Development of the Rosary), pp. 232–33; Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image), pp. 10–11.

42 The selected mysteries were: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Presentation, and the Finding in the Temple; then: the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, and the Crucifixion; and finally the

ten times. This abridged formula — being much simpler — became the most commonly propagated among the faithful.⁴³

Alain de la Roche was in favour of calling the rosary prayer a *psalterium*. That name was also used later, and in written records from the fifteenth century it appears interchangeably with the term used by Adolf of Essen — *rosarium*. Only gradually did the term for describing a prayer consisting in repeated recitations of *Ave Maria* and contemplation become fixed as *rosarium* and its equivalents in vernacular languages.

The form of the rosary prayer propagated by the Dominicans was not the only one. There was a prayer associated with St Bridget that consisted of sixty-three *Ave Marias*, prayed to honour the number of years which — according to the legend — corresponded with the length of Mary's life, along with seven *Pater Nosters* and the *Credo* repeated six times. Supposedly this was the formula of prayer used by St Bernardino of Siena. This prayer was to be said with the use of a string of the correct number of beads. According to other legends, Mary lived seventy-two or seventy-three years: hence in some cases the *Ave Maria* was repeated that many times. The Franciscans practised prayer in the formula created by John of Capistrano, consisting of six decades of *Ave Maria* and *Pater Noster*; the prayer ended with *Pater Noster*, three *Ave Marias*, and the *Credo*. However, the Franciscans also knew a rosary consisting of seven parts which referred to the cult of the Seven Joys of Mary.⁴⁴

The rosary prayer started gaining popularity in Europe in the 1470s. At the same time, confraternities of the rosary start to appear. In 1475, the abbot of the Dominican monastery in Cologne, Jacob Sprenger, founded a confraternity of the rosary.⁴⁵ The next year, it was officially recognized by the papal legate, Alessandro of Frola, who confirmed the confraternity's statute and gave forty days indulgence for praying the rosary. Pope Sixtus IV, in the bull *Pastoris aeternis* (1478), confirmed the statutes of the confraternities of Cologne and gave indulgences to its members as well as to members of other future

Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Death of Mary, and the Last Judgement. There were also other variants of the fifteen mysteries.

43 Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image), p. 12.

44 These were: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, the Finding in the Temple, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. In other versions, there were also other events: the Presentation, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and the Assumption. The number of the Joys of Mary varied (five, seven, but in some versions: twelve, fifteen, twenty, or more). The cult of the Seven Joys of Mary was supported by the Franciscans and was often associated with the corresponding cult of the Seven Sorrows of Mary. See Delehaye, 'Vierge aux sept glaives', pp. 333–52; Speakman Sutch and van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', pp. 252–78.

45 Alain de la Roche in 1464 added to the rituals of the confraternity of the Virgin Mary and St Dominic, which was affiliated with the monastery in Douai, the custom of a daily prayer of his *Psalterium Marianum*, and before his death (1475) proposed the establishment of a new Marian confraternity. Kochaniewicz, *Wkład dominikanów w rozwój modlitwy różańcowej* (Contribution of the Dominicans into the Development of the Rosary), p. 230.

confraternities.⁴⁶ Confraternities of the rosary quickly appeared in Silesia. In Wrocław (German: *Breslau*), a confraternity affiliated with St Adalbert's Church was founded on 12 January 1481.⁴⁷ In 1489, confraternities of the rosary were founded in Brzeg (German: *Brieg*), Paczków (German: *Patschkau*), and Świdnica (German: *Schweidnitz*).⁴⁸ In 1499, there was a confraternity in Gdańsk (German: *Danzig*).⁴⁹ Three years earlier (1496), a confraternity was present in Nieszawa (Cuiavia region), and in 1509, in Brodnica (German: *Strasburg in Westpreußen*, in Chełmno Land).⁵⁰ There was a confraternity of the rosary in Opatowiec in Lesser Poland at the end of the fifteenth century (before 1497–June 1498).⁵¹

The date for the founding of the confraternity of the rosary in Cracow is not clear. The archives of the Dominicans in Cracow contain three documents from October 1484 which mention the grant by Pope Innocent VIII of the indulgence *in articulo mortis* to all members of Dominican confraternities, also to those belonging to the confraternity of the rosary or the psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*qui sunt de Confraternitate Rosarii aut Psalterii Glorioso Virgini Marie*).⁵² King Casimir IV Jagiellon, in his letter of 1492 to the general of the Dominican Order, requested to have people sent to promote the rosary prayer, but the first book of the confraternity of the rosary in Cracow dates from 1585. It is not likely that the confraternity of the rosary was actually founded in Cracow only at the end of the sixteenth century. The facts of the existence of the oldest convent of the Dominicans in Poland, who were indeed the propagators of this religious practice; the intensive international contacts of that town (including, among others, with Silesia); previous mentioned documents dated 1484; and furthermore the fact of a founding of the rosary's confraternity in Opatowiec by the Dominicans, when taken together, allow us to speculate that the practice of the rosary prayer itself must have been known in Cracow relatively early, as were the confraternities of the rosary and the associated benefits. Therefore, I believe that the confraternity of the rosary was founded in Cracow rather early, and that the documents kept in the Dominicans' archive should probably be associated with that

46 Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image), pp. 13–14; Kochaniewicz, *Wkład dominikanów w rozwój modlitwy różańcowej* (Contribution of the Dominicans into the Development of the Rosary), p. 234.

47 Blasel, 'Studien zur Geschichte der Rosenkranzbruderschaft bei St Adalbert zu Breslau', p. 23.

48 Pieróg, *Geneza i rozwój bractw różańcowych* (The Origin and Development of Brotherhoods of the Rosary), p. 16; citation after Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image), pp. 17 and 110.

49 Simson, *Der Artushof in Danzig und seine Bruderschaften, die Bänken*, p. 49.

50 Pieróg, 'Geneza i rozwój bractw różańcowych' (The Origin and Development of Brotherhoods of the Rosary), p. 19, after Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image), pp. 18 and 110.

51 Gałuszka, 'Dominikanie w Krakowie czy w Opatowcu' (Dominicans in Cracow or Opatowiec).

52 Cracow, the Archives of the Dominicans, parchment no. 167, no. 168, no. 169.

confraternity. However, if this is the case, how should we interpret King Casimir IV Jagiellon's request from 1492? Should it be taken as a request to renew the activity of the confraternity, to further the popularization of the rosary, or indeed to introduce that form of prayer? This problem requires a separate study. In any case, regardless of the specific date for the founding of the confraternity of the rosary in Cracow, this prayer was surely known and practised by the inhabitants of the town, as evidenced by the prayer beads mentioned in inventories and wills from the fifteenth and mid-sixteenth century (including rosaries from the first half of the sixteenth century).

From the Middle Ages, we come across different types of prayer beads, which were associated with the different religious practices for which they were used. On the monuments mentioned earlier from around the mid-fourteenth century — the gravestone of Duchess Jutta and the *Vita beate Hedwigis* — long open strings of beads were depicted. In Central European iconography one also finds other depictions of relatively short open strings of prayer beads with tassels on both ends.

On fol. 69^v of the breviary of Jan of Středa (Johannes von Neumarkt), Bishop of Litomyšl (German: *Leitomischl*) from the second half of the fourteenth century, one sees presented in the initial 'G' the scene of the Annunciation.⁵³ The Virgin Mary is holding in her hands a short open string of even-sized prayer beads with tassels on both ends.

We can see a similar string of prayer beads in a later painting, *Madonna with Child and Angels* (the so-called *Madonna in the Chamber*, c. 1450).⁵⁴ Inside the chamber, above the *lavobo*, there is a shelf with a hanging string of prayer beads made of red even-sized beads finished with a tassel.

Open strings of prayer beads contained rings or bands. Among items pawned to the Wrocław Jews in the mid-fifteenth century there were: a string 'mit eynem silberynn fyngerleyn' (with a silver 'finger'), another had 'an silberynne fyngerlyn' (on a silver 'finger') and a gold ring 'an dem paternoster' (on a paternoster).⁵⁵ Such strings of prayer beads were hung on the thumb, and after saying the prayers (*Ave Maria*, *Pater Noster*) they were shifted to the next finger.

Another form were relatively short, closed strings of beads with one (or two) larger beads or a cross. An elaborate version consisted of longer strings,

53 A breviary with a Czech provenance. Prague, National Museum, file XIII A 12. Brodský, *Katalog iluminovaných rukopisů Knihovny Národního Muzea v Praze* (Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts of the National Museum Library in Prague), no. 137, pp. 158–63, figures 167, XXVI.

54 This painting is currently kept in the National Museum of Wrocław, inventory No. XI-230; *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Painting in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, 298–300, III, figure CIII. See Labuda, 'Problemy ikonografii i funkcji wrocławskiego obrazu "Madonna w Komnacie"' (The Problem of Iconography and Function of the Wrocław Painting 'Madonna in the Chamber'), pp. 327–58.

55 Goliński, *Wrocławskie spisy zastawów* (Inventories of Pledges From Wrocław), p. 100.



Figure 4.3. The breviary of Jan of Středa, Bishop of Litomyšl, the second half of the fourteenth century, folio 69^v: the initial G the scene of the Annunciation; Prague National Museum, file XIII A 12. After Brodský, *Katalog iluminovaných rukopisů Knihovny Národního Muzea v Praze*, fig. XXVI.

made of fifty or more beads. Usually they were plain, without internal divisions and ornaments. At the end of the fifteenth century, as the rosary prayer was becoming more complex, the decades of small beads were separated by larger beads (for praying the *Pater Noster*); there were also additional beads for saying the *Credo*, and a cross was hung at the end. The most complex form was the *psalterium*. This type of prayer beads was made of 150 smaller and fifteen larger beads, which corresponded with the full number of prayers. This form of prayer beads was used particularly at the end of the fifteenth century, although it never gained much popularity.

We can see different forms of prayer beads on the votive panel *Ecce Homo*, painted in Gdańsk c. 1500 as a commission from the mayor (*Bürgermeister*) of Gdańsk, Jan Ferber. At the bottom of the scene in which Pontius Pilate presents a scourged Christ to the people, there is a kneeling image of Jan Farber along with his family. He is holding in his hands a rather short string of white, even-sized prayer beads with a decorative pendant on the end, while the women are holding very long strings with even-sized beads, and one of them is decorated with a large globe or a plaque with some image and the other one with two rings or bands.⁵⁶

The beads were painted with much attention to detail. Perhaps the artist was depicting authentic items that actually belonged to the Ferbers. If so, then the mayor's string of beads consisted of thirty beads (would this be a *paternoster*?), while his wife's is of seventy red beads separated with white beads (so it could be a rosary in the longer form of seven decades, a Franciscan rosary?), and his daughter's has 100 beads, although it is not fully visible with part of it hidden in the folds of her robe (perhaps it is a *psalterium*?).

Nevertheless, it would be difficult to state unequivocally which types of prayer beads were being depicted by the artist. More specific information is provided by written records, but they are rather rare. Information about the possession of prayer beads can be found in many inventories of assets and lists of personal belongings. However, they are usually limited to a simple mention of prayer beads or the number of strings with a specification of the material from which the beads were made.

Among the prayer beads pawned to the Jews in Wrocław and seized in 1453, the largest number constituted items made of coral. There were also strings consisting of mixed beads made from different materials: jet,⁵⁷ silver and pearls, as well as strings of amber, and possibly some made only of pearls. Some strings had an additional pearl bead, and a cross or two.⁵⁸ Could these be prayer beads similar to those depicted half a century later in the hands of

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- 56 Warsaw, National Museum, inventory Śr.77. See Dobrzeński, *Malarstwo tablicowe. Katalog zbiorów* (Panel Painting: A Catalogue), catalogue no. 46, pp. 166–67; *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, III, figures 784, 785. The painting comes from St Balthazar's Chapel in St Mary's Church. From the same chapel there are two other — earlier — paintings commissioned by Ferber that are called the Large Pentaptych (1480–84) and the Small Pentaptych (c. 1485). On both panels, the Ferber women have very long strings of prayer beads with even-sized beads, which they are either holding in their hands or wearing fastened to their belts. The Large Pentaptych – Warsaw, National Museum Śr. no. 327; *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, 169–70, III, figure 770. The so-called Small Pentaptych – Warsaw, National Museum inventory Śr.272; *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, 168–69, III, figure 769.
- 57 A string of prayer beads made of jet is also named among the possessions of Cracow burghers; see *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 118, p. 429 (year 1544).
- 58 Goliński, *Wrocławskie spisy zastawów* (Inventories of Pledges From Wrocław), pp. 98–100.



Figure 4.4. *Ecce Homo*, c. 1500, Gdańsk, St Mary's Church, an unknown painter from Gdańsk; Warsaw, National Museum, inventory Śr. no. 77. Photo: Teresa Żółtowska-Huszczka / Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie.

Jan Ferber in the *Ecce Homo* panel? It is possible. One string of prayer beads is described in more detail — it was a *paternoster* with a globe bearing a devotional image — the ‘face of God’ (Gotes antlicz).⁵⁹

Archaeological excavations in Wrocław have yielded evidence confirming the local production of prayer beads from animal bones.⁶⁰ These were probably intended for the general public, for those not very wealthy customers or for clients who wanted to preserve an image of modesty. Who knows, perhaps the first of the Pacierz family described above, the one who earned them that nickname, imported such prayer beads.

Among the possessions of Cracow burghers in the fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries there were strings of prayer beads made of coral,⁶¹ amber,⁶² aloe,⁶³ gilded silver,⁶⁴ and jade.⁶⁵ Individual beads on one string could be made from different materials. In such cases — we may assume — different material was used to make beads dividing respective decades or used for one larger bead or a decorative pendant. The enhanced beads could be made from silver or gilded silver,⁶⁶ or could be decorated with a painted or carved image with a religious content. One such example is the string of crystal beads ‘cum imaginae argentee deaurate.’⁶⁷ The inventory of possessions of

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- 59 Goliński, *Wrocławskie spisy zastawów* (Inventories of Pledges From Wrocław), p. 99.
- 60 Borkowski and Gierczak, ‘W kwestii produkcji różańców i kości do gry’ (On the Production of Rosaries and Dice in Late Medieval Wrocław), pp. 221–28, Jaworski, ‘Ślady obróbki surowca kościanego i rogowego’ (Traces of Bone and Antler Working), pp. 70–92.
- 61 *Cracovia artificum. Supplementa 1441–1450*, ed. by Przybyszewski, no. 542 (year 1442); *Cracovia artificum 1300–1500*, ed. by Ptaśnik, no. 865, p. 263 (year 1483); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 192 (year 1510); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 973 (year 1539). On the symbolism of coral see Kobieliński, ‘Magiczne i symboliczne znaczenie koralu’ (Magical and Symbolic Meaning of Coral), pp. 325–42.
- 62 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 118, pp. 428, 429 (year 1544).
- 63 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 118, p. 428 (year 1544). This string of prayer beads was most probably made of agarwood (*Aquilaria agallocha*) cultivated in the East. It is exactly the same tree as the Biblical aloe. Its decayed wood was used to produce small amounts of a precious aromatic resin. Due to its high price, the resin (in a liquid or powdered form) was mixed with other fragrances, in particular with myrrh; see Forstner, *Świat symboliki chrześcijańskiej* (The World of Christian Symbolism), p. 223.
- 64 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 118, p. 429 (year 1544).
- 65 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 118, p. 428.
- 66 *Cracovia artificum 1300–1500*, ed. by Ptaśnik, no. 340, p. 102 (year 1439); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 568, p. 208 (year 1524); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 973, p. 368 (year 1539); *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 118, pp. 428, 429 (year 1544). Most probably also: *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 346, footnote 1, p. 131 (year 1545).
- 67 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 1085 (year 1542).

Anna Salomon, daughter of Seweryn Betman, widow of Stanisław Salomon, the Cracow town councillor and secretary to Queen Bona, which was drawn up on 14 and 15 December 1547, contains descriptions of the prayer beads which she owned. The inventory enumerates three strings, each consisting of fifty beads. Two of them each had six silver gilded globes and one had seven globes made of silver and they were also gilded. In addition, one string probably contained a pendant with the image of St Sebastian.⁶⁸ These prayer beads can be identified as rosaries. Five silver-plated globes for praying the *Pater Noster* divide fifty beads into even decades, and the sixth globe is for praying the *Credo*. In the case of the string with seven globes — the seventh globe could also be intended for saying a separate prayer.

The inventory of possessions of the late Felicja ‘Wylgyanowe’, drawn up on 13 October 1524, enumerates among the assets a string ‘cum 6 argenteis fibulis deauratis.’⁶⁹ In the inventory of belongings from the house of Piotr Wedelicjusz (Petrus Vedelicus / Petrus de Oborniki) drawn up on 26 March 1544, among the many prayer beads one had six silver globes and also another, seventh, silver globe larger than the other six.⁷⁰ In the case of both inventories the exact number of beads which made up each string of prayer beads was not mentioned. These also could be rosaries (five decades of beads and additional beads for additional prayers). However, if we assume that gilded globes separated decades of beads for praying *Ave Marias*, then — perhaps — these were rosaries with sixty and seventy beads (Franciscan rosaries). It is only a hypothesis, since there is not enough information to confirm it. Yet, making such an assumption is possible, in particular in the case of Piotr Wedelicjusz, who had at home a rather large collection of devotional items, including ten strings of prayer beads made of different materials, and they also had additional globes.⁷¹ In addition to the aforementioned string with seven globes, Wedelicjusz had strings with one globe (for instance: ‘legibula de burstyn cum pomo argenteo inaurato’). One could speculatively ask if these strings could be similar to that held by Jan Ferber in the *Ecce Homo* painting (see Figure 4.4)? Yet, descriptions from Wedelicjusz’s house suggest that they varied not just in material but also in the arrangement of the beads, which clearly suggests that they were strings of prayer beads intended for saying different sets of prayers. Such an interpretation also partly explains

68 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 1471, p. 601.

69 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 568, p. 208.

70 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 1118, p. 428. For Piotr Wedelicjusz (died in 1543), royal physician, Cracow’s town councillor, and professor of the Cracow Academy (*Academia Cracoviensis*) see Miaskowski, *Piotr Wedelicjusz z Obornik* (Piotr Wedelicjusz of Obornik); Marciniak, ‘Cztery podręczniki medyczne Piotra Wedelicjusza z Obornik’ (Four Medieval Medical Handbooks of Piotr Wedelicjusz of Obornik), pp. 425–35; Noga, *Krakowska rada miejska w XVI wieku* (The Cracow Town Council in the Sixteenth Century), pp. 125, 143, 349–50.

71 *Cracovia artificum 1501–1550*, collected by Ptaśnik and ed. by Friedberg, no. 1118, pp. 427–32.

the large number of prayer beads mentioned in the inventory — that these were simply different types of prayer beads with different uses.

Prayer beads were also used in different contexts. The first and the most obvious function was as an aid in the multiple repetitions of prayers, as well as in the contemplation of Biblical events. Such prayer could take place in various places and on various occasions.

Let me once again refer to the miniature from the breviary of the Bishop of Litomyśl, Jan of Středa (second half of the fourteenth century), where, in the Annunciation scene, the Virgin Mary is shown holding in her hands a short string of prayer beads. On the table next to the Holy Virgin there is an open prayer book (see Figure 4.3). In this typical depiction of the Annunciation we can also identify evidence of daily life, since she is a pious woman captured in the intimate moment of private prayer — a prayer in which she could use the help of threaded beads, a prayer performed in the comfort of her home, in a private room, or perhaps some other secluded space dedicated to religious practices.

Another space in which private prayer was practised was sacral space. This is the situation in which we see St Hedwig depicted in the miniatures of the *Vita beate Hedwigis* in the *Hedwig Codex* (in Polish *Kodeks brzeski*; 1353). The Duchess is presented in moments of religious trance, kneeling before the altar, holding in her hands a long open string of even-sized prayer beads (see Figure 4.2). Hedwig is praying in a church, but not during liturgical rites.

Private prayer in a sacral space could also take place during the liturgy. The practice of private prayer with the use of praying beads (a rosary) during Mass was something known at the end of the fifteenth century, particularly among the members of confraternities of the rosary.⁷² In the following image, The Ten Commandments Tablet, in the quarter depicting the third commandment ‘Remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy’, the part referring to this positive behaviour shows people gathered during Mass. The priest is giving a sermon. One person, a woman, is simultaneously listening and praying, sliding her prayer beads on the thread.⁷³

Private prayer, accompanied by a string of prayer beads, also took place in public, but outside sacred space and time. Let us refer again to the *Vita beate Hedwigis* as an example, but this time to a miniature from a later copy,

72 Schenk, *Udział ludu w ofierze Mszy Świętej* (The Participation of the People in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass), p. 30, footnote 103.

73 *The Ten Commandments Tablet* (in Polish: *Tablica Dziesięciorga Przykazań*), 1480–1490, done by a Low German painter working in Gdańsk, originally in the St Mary’s Church in Gdańsk (Warsaw, National Museum, inventory Śr. 36) See Dobrzeńiecki, *Malarstwo tablicowe. Katalog zbiorów* (Panel Painting: A Catalogue), catalogue no. 47, pp. 168–75 (figure 47 IX); *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, 170–71, III, figure 775.



Figure 4.5. The Third Commandment ‘Remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy’ from The Ten Commandments Tablet, 1480–1490, Gdańsk, St Mary’s Church, an unknown painter from Gdańsk; Warsaw, National Museum, inventory fol. 58r. Photo: Teresa Żółtowska-Huszcza / Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie.

from the *Hornig Codex* (the *Breslau codex*), which was made in 1451.⁷⁴ On fol. 58^v: *Pilgrims going to Saint Hedwig’s grave in Trebnitz*, we can see that one

74 Currently Wrocław, Wrocław University Library, file No. IV F 192. The Codex written in Middle Low German (*Mittelniederdeutsch*), was made in Wrocław in 1451. The founder was Wrocław town councillor Antonius Hornig and the scribe — Piotr Freytag of Brieg. It contains: *Spaeculum genealogiae S. Hedwigis* (fol. 1^r–4^v), *Vita maior* (fols 7^r–95^v), *Vita minor* (fols 95^v–101^r), prayer to St Hedwig (fol. 101^v), canonization bull (fols 101^v–109^v), the sermon of Pope Clement IV on the canonization (fols 109^v–114^v), the letter of Nicholas of Posen (Mikołaj z Poznania) to Duke Ludwig I of Brieg (fols 114^v–116^v), and hymns about St Hedwig, and prayers to the Virgin Mary (fols 117^v–120^v). From the wealth of literature, the following publications should be highlighted: Gromadzki, ‘Średniowieczne cykła obrazowe z legendą o św. Jadwidze’ (Medieval Illustrated Cycles with Saint Hedwig’s Legend), pp. 310–19; Gromadzki, ‘Die Miniaturen des Hedwig-Bilderzyklus in sog. Horing-Kodex der Breslauer Universitätsbibliothek’, pp. 183–93; Grunewald, ‘Die Hedwig-Bilder Zyklus des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit’, pp. 69–106. For a set of miniatures from the *Hedwig Codex* and the *Hornig Codex* see: Wąsowicz, *Legenda śląska* (The Silesian Legend). For a facsimile of the manuscript with the transcript of the text, translation into Polish and German, and commentaries, see *Legenda o św. Jadwidze / Legende der hl. Hedwig*, ed. and trans. by Ehlert; see also *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, 428–29, figures 921–24.



Figure 4.6. *Hornig Codex*, Silesia, Poland, 1451, fol. 58^v: Pilgrims going to Saint Hedwig's grave in Trzebnica (German: *Trebnitz*), Wrocław, Wrocław University Library, file No. IV F 192 (after *Legenda o św. Jadwidze / Legende der hl. Hedwig*).

of the pilgrims is holding prayer beads.⁷⁵ So, this is a case of uniting different religious practices: a pilgrimage and praying the rosary.

The ritual of repeating prayers could also be performed by a community, for instance a confraternity. Repeating the same prayers many times for communal intentions (e.g. for a deceased member) was an obligation of confraternity's members, as evidenced by the previous examples of provisions set out in statutes (second half of the fourteenth century – first half of the fifteenth century). The last quarter of the fifteenth century saw the development of brotherhoods of the rosary. Praying with prayer beads (in this case with a particular type of them — a rosary), gained the status of an institutionalized communal practice. Members of such confraternities were obliged to pray the Rosary for their own good and for the good of their brothers. They were also ordered to carry a rosary with them. It usually was fastened to a belt (or alternatively was worn around the neck).⁷⁶

75 The text and drawings were based on a lost copy of the *Legend* from 1380 made on the order of Ruprecht I of Leignitz, nephew of Ludwig I, who commissioned the *Hedwig Codex* of 1353; see *Malarstwo gotyckie w Polsce* (Gothic Paintings in Poland), ed. by Labuda and Secomska, II, p428–29, III, figure 922, p. 477.

76 Zalewska, *Modlitwa i obraz* (Prayer and Image), pp. 13 and 15.

Prayer beads, in particular those made of expensive materials, could be treated not only as objects used for praying but also as luxury items, used as ostentatious dress accessories and symbols of one's wealth. Religious functions did not exclude social functions, i.e. in this case creating one's image. The aim of such ostentatiousness could be to display wealth — through a string of prayer beads made from precious or exotic materials. Ostentatiousness could also consist of demonstrating signs of one's piety (expressed both individually or within a community — a confraternity). Any string of prayer beads could be used for such purposes, but the social statement was additionally stressed by unusual prayer beads, particularly large or expensive ones, or, on the contrary, exaggeratedly modest ones.

Thus, prayer beads also functioned in a symbolic context, and on several levels: family life, social statement, religious practice, and visual art. Fastened to a confrère's belt they served as an emblem of one's belonging to a certain community or confraternity, as well as indicating one's religious practices; they were a sign for public display as well as an identification mark (for a member of a confraternity or a very pious individual). It was also an 'internal' mark, prompting a person to constant spiritual exercise. Prayer beads, understood as one's 'private' mark, were not only specific to members of a confraternity of the rosary (such confraternities started to emerge only in the end of the fifteenth century). We can see their use in that context in much earlier imagery, e.g. as an attribute of Saint Hedwig of Silesia — fastened to her robe. Similar meaning can be attributed to the string of prayer beads held by a pilgrim going to this saint's grave (a miniature from the *Hornig Codex* — see Figure 4.6) — a mark of, and a reminder for, constant prayer during pilgrimage, as well as stressing the atonement intrinsic to the nature of pilgrimage.

In medieval visual art, a string of prayer beads held by a man or woman always indicated that person's piety, notwithstanding any other (additional) contexts or meanings. Such symbolic meaning is attributed to a string of prayer beads held by a person who commissioned a votive panel and members of his/her family; prayer beads held by a saint, or a person who is not praying but performing other religious practices (e.g. a pilgrimage); or strings of prayer beads placed in the hands of the deceased (for instance on gravestones, epitaphs), and primarily, prayer beads held by the Virgin Mary.

The above-mentioned examples, in particular the iconographic ones, suggest the adoption of a certain sequence in which the practice and manner of praying with prayer beads as well as the artefacts themselves developed over time. Initially there were straight and open strings of beads (long or short), then ones that were closed and varied in length, and gradually also strings with a complex internal organization (with beads in different sizes). We should also note that some types of prayer beads appear in the iconography over longer periods (short, open string of beads; see the painting *Madonna in the Chamber*). However, that pattern is based on a small amount of information and can here only serve as a preliminary hypothesis. Definitely, the critical moment was the invention of the rosary prayer and the associated

artefact. It was a revolutionary change, although we should not forget that it consisted in shifting accents rather than introducing actual 'novelties'. Certain elements, already practised, were used and developed further: the routine of spiritual exercise consisting of repeating prayers together with contemplation (sequences of *Pater noster*, *Ave Maria*, psalms); the use of a specific artefact (*paternoster*, *avemaria*, *psalterium*); finally, the model of a communal devotion (a confraternity). All these elements were given a unified form and organized content. At the same time, while the rosary prayer was taking its shape, other prayers appeared, consisting of more *Ave Maria* repetitions, which were to be accompanied by devout contemplations (on the life of Mary, the Seven Joys of Mary).

In the practice of praying with the use of prayer beads, we can see on the one hand the continuity of that spiritual exercise in medieval devotion, which in its basic form survived from the moment of its adoption into Christian culture until the end of the Middle Ages (and beyond, up to modern times). On the other hand, there were constant changes in the form of new sets of prayers and associated contemplations. Therefore, this was a case of a continuance of an unchanged concept of a devotional practice with a simultaneous changeability of specific content. This phenomenon also stands as proof of the capacity and, in a way, of the 'plasticity' of the practice of using prayer beads. Furthermore, such constant change is evidence of the evolution of a practice, which, once adopted, was gradually adjusted to the changing religious needs of people in the late Middle Ages.

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A Daily Devotion of the Long Fifteenth Century

Italian Literature on the Rosary

After its definition at the end of the fifteenth century, thanks to the prolific activity of the French Dominican Alanus de la Rupe (or de la Roche), the rosary spread widely across Europe, becoming one of the most practised forms of domestic devotion in Catholic areas.¹ Despite being violently attacked by Reformers, this religious practice not only endured but prospered, particularly following the institution of an official feast day in its honour in 1572.² Eventually it became one of the most distinctive and important aspects of Catholic devotion.³

No single reason lies behind the success of the rosary: many different aspects of European culture came together in the affirmation of this Marian practice. Above all, it was promoted by the new role played by laypeople in religious activities. Religious life at the end of the medieval period was

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- 1 On the 'making' of the rosary and its history see Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose*; Barile, *Il rosario, salterio della Vergine*; Miller, *Beads and Prayers*; *Il rosario tra devozione e riflessione*, ed. by Barile; Ardissino, 'Literary and Emblematic Versions of a Domestic Devotion'.
 - 2 On the Protestant rejection of the Rosary among other devotions, see Caravale, *Forbidden Prayer*.
 - 3 On the Rosary as a distinct aspect of Reformed Catholicism, see Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, NCI 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 129–150

becoming more independent of ecclesiastical decision making — although not in opposition to it — and the development of the *Devotio moderna* and of the confraternities offered the laity a means of becoming more active in church life.⁴ Consequently a new demand for devotional practices which could be conducted without clerical leadership spread throughout Europe. The rosary responded to this need because it is not a sacramental act, even if it appears to reflect closely sacramental aspects of Jesus's life; it is not a liturgical ceremony, even if it has many rules that make its practice similar to a liturgical act; it is well suited to community worship, but can also be recited at home in solitude. Therefore, the rosary effectively met the needs of the people creating confraternities, who sought to respond to the desire for greater spirituality in everyday communal and domestic life.⁵

There can be no doubt that the diffusion of the rosary was also greatly encouraged by print, the transformative new tool of communication. This medium, which marked the first step towards mass culture, caused a 'revolution', also in religious attitudes. In its earliest forms the printed book was mainly religious, and a large proportion of the books produced in the first wave of printing activity were devotional. The rosary benefited early from the new medium: Alanus's work, the *Apologeticus, sive tractatus responsorius de Psalterio Beatae Virginis Mariae*, had already been printed in Lübeck by around 1480, and it was reprinted several times in various other European cities in the following decades.⁶ The rosary enjoyed widespread print success, as will be seen for Italy, and was produced in beautiful illustrated editions with evocative images which undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of the devotion.

Moreover, the increasing prominence of vernacular languages reinforced their use in prayers and religious practice. Even in Catholic countries, where the liturgy remained in Latin after the Reformation, a need was felt for greater participation and understanding on the part of the populace, which could be achieved only through the use of the vernacular. The rosary responded to this need, for the repetitive prayers of the *Ave Maria* (*Hail Mary*, recited 150 times) and *Pater noster* (recited fifteen times) could be said in Latin or in the vernacular. In addition, the rosary requires fifteen meditations corresponding to fifteen events of the lives of Christ and Mary, which were only said in the

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- 4 For the participation of laypeople in religious activities, especially in Italy, works by Meersseman are still useful: *Ordo fraternitatis*, 'Le confraternite laicali in Italia dal Quattrocento al Seicento', 'La riforma delle confraternite laicali in Italia prima del Concilio di Trento'. See also Tanner, *The Church in the Later Middle Ages*.
- 5 Mitchell writes: 'the rosary itself — whose mysteries are mainly biblical and whose origins are closely connected to the psalmody and Hours embodied in the primer tradition — came to be regarded as a kind of "devotional alternative" to participation in parish life and the sacramental liturgy'. Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, p. 179. On Italian confraternities, see *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, ed. by Terpstra; Rosenthal, *Kings of the Street*; *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Wisch and Ahl.
- 6 Lübeck: Printer of Fliscus (Lucas Brandis?), c. 1480.

vernacular.⁷ It is important also to consider that the repetitive prayers are taken from the Gospels: the *oratio dominica*, the only prayer taught by Jesus, and the *salutatio angelica*, a collection of the greetings addressed to the Virgin Mary (by the angel at the Annunciation and by her cousin Elizabeth, when Mary visited her).⁸ Thus, the repetitive parts of the rosary were made up of particularly significant prayers, biblical texts in Latin or in the vernacular, and provided an effectual counterpoint to meditative aspects of the devotion.

Moreover, the rosary had been (a century after its initial rise) associated with the victory of the Holy League at Lepanto in 1571. Pope Pius V attributed the military success to the prayers of the rosary confraternities in Rome, and the following year Pope Gregory XIII created the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on the anniversary of the battle (7 October, or the first Sunday of October). The devotion was therefore connected with Catholic identity, above all Catholic identity within the post-Tridentine Roman Church. As Mitchell argues in his *The Mystery of the Rosary*, the rosary 'survived and flourished because it was able to absorb the reframings of reform, representation, ritual, religious identity, and devotion that came to characterize early modern Catholicism and that have continued to shape Catholic piety and practice to the present day.'⁹

The rosary can also be understood as corresponding to a new anthropological turn which developed in the modern era: recent research on the Renaissance has underlined the new place played by emotions in literature, music, art, theatre, and religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁰ In the meditations of the rosary the central tenets and mysteries of the Christian faith are conveyed using stories of a family, and stories of one woman in particular, who bears the difficulties of a pregnancy outside marriage alone, and of a man who piously helps her and the child. Basic elements of this devotion also centre around the different events of this child's life (his suffering as he becomes a man, the support of friends, male and female) and finally the glorification of a woman, Mary, loved and praised by all for her mercy. Thus, the mysteries of faith are brought closer to the innermost feelings of believers. As Mitchell succinctly states: 'On a simpler level, they remind us of the grandeur and

7 Translations of the two prayers already existed at the end of the fifteenth century. For the Italian, see the translation of the *salutatio angelica* in Marco dal Monte Santa Maria, *Tabula de la salute*; the *oratio dominica* in Italian was already recorded in the twelfth-century *Memoriali bolognesi*.

8 This second prayer was shorter than the one recited today, which was implemented in the fifteenth century. The commentaries, included in the publication on the Rosary I saw (for instance that by Alberto da Castello), prove that the prayer was at that time limited to the two greetings.

9 Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, p. 3.

10 See for instance: *Emotions, Passions, and Power in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Ricciardelli and Zorzi; Broomhall, *Early Modern Emotions*.

misery of human life, challenging us to make sense of our personal histories, even if they are littered with interruptions, failures, doubts, and disasters.¹¹

In Italy, the focus of my research, the rosary spread very quickly, thanks to the rapid growth of the Dominican order and the activity of its friars. The first confraternities were created in the early 1480s in some of the peninsula's principal cities: Venice, Florence, Bologna, Rome, and Naples. The number of confraternities of the rosary increased so significantly that it would be impossible to map their development fully, and many survive to this day. Other orders created similar devotions (the Crown of the Seven Joys of Mary of the Franciscans, the Crown of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin created by the Servites), which were less popular, but nonetheless are proof of how this form of devotion corresponded to the needs and mentalities of the time.¹²

The diffusion of the rosary in the Italian Renaissance is shown by many publications preserved in archives and libraries, and by pictures of Our Lady of the Rosary present in churches across Italy. Printing activity related to the devotion was continuous during the early modern period across the peninsula, starting at the end of the fifteenth century and lasting throughout the sixteenth century (and into the following centuries). We divide the print production from this long sixteenth century into three periods of roughly forty years each, corresponding to developments in the diffusion of the rosary and the nature of extant printing records.

The first period is mainly characterized by the institution of confraternities, with editions of *Statuta* and of books instructing readers about the devotion (its history, how to practise it, indulgences that might be obtained, a list of the meditations, and miracles generated). A second period may be identified starting in 1521 when Alberto da Castello published his *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria* in Venice. A bestseller of the time, it enjoyed more than forty editions during the sixteenth century.¹³ It was at this time the most profound publication on the rosary, enriched by a multitude of images to aid meditation, and it displaced all previous works on the topic (*statuta* of new confraternities continue to be issued until the end of the century and afterwards). Its lasting success was only surpassed half a century later in 1573, when, after the proclamation of the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, a new bestseller was produced: the *Rosario della sacratissima Vergine Maria*, composed by an Italian Dominican, Andrea Gianetti of Salò, with the meditations on Christ's life taken from the works of the famous Spanish preacher, Luis de Granada, whose work had been promoted in Italy by St Charles Borromeo.¹⁴ This publication, known as Luis de Granada's *Rosario*, adorned with fifteen

11 Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, p. 4.

12 For these other 'rosaries', see Cecchin, 'Le corone dei sette gaudi e dei sette dolori', pp. 184–212.

13 Alberto da Castello, *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fol. 6^r. On this bestseller, see Fattori, 'Frate Alberto da Castello'.

14 Luis de Granada, *Rosario della sacratissima Vergine Maria*.

pictures, and the feast's proclamation may be considered to mark the beginning of the third period, characterized by a variety of publications on the rosary: collections of sermons, other *statuta* and publications on the topic, together with a large number of poetry collections and a few narrative poems.¹⁵ It was a thriving period for all devotional, biblical, and religious subjects, favoured by the reform of the Catholic Church following the Council of Trent. Among these various subjects, the rosary played an important role.

The Foundation Period

The *Statuta* of the Italian confraternities of the rosary are generally modelled on the constitutions of one particular confraternity created in Cologne in 1475.¹⁶ The publications record that the devotion was created by Saint Dominic as the 'psalterium of the Virgin Mary' and introduced in Cologne, after the preaching of Alanus de la Rupe, by the German Dominican Jacob Sprenger, who founded the local confraternity. The first Italian confraternity of the rosary was created in 1480 at the Dominican convent of Castello in Venice by the German Dominican John of Erford, who had previously preached the devotion across the peninsula. In the very same year another confraternity of the rosary was created in Florence, based on the Dominican convent of San Marco.

The *Statuta* of these first Italian confraternities emphasize, like their model confraternity, that they are an open organization that welcomes the participation of all believers, rich or poor. For example, we read in the *statuta* of the confraternity in Florence:

Ordiniamo che ciascuna persona di qualunque dignità conditione et stato si sia huomini et donne possa entrare et farsi scrivere nella sopradecta confraternita senza alcuno premio et pagamento di cose temporali, ma liberamente sia ricevuto et scripto [...].¹⁷

(We order that every person of whatever dignity, condition and status, men and women, can enter and register in the mentioned confraternity, without fee or prize or payment of temporal things, but freely he/she will be received.)

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- 15 On sermons on the topic, see Ardisino, 'Il rosario nella predicazione tra Cinque e Seicento', pp. 276–97.
- 16 On the first confraternities of the Rosary in Europe and Italy, see the chapters by Meersseman, 'Alano de la Rupe e le origini della Confraternita del Rosario' and 'Le origini della Confraternita del Rosario in Italia e la sua iconografia', in his *Ordo fraternitatis*, pp. 1145–1232.
- 17 *Statuta confraternitatis Psalterii Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Firenze, fol. 2^v. For all documents here quoted I have retained the orthography of the originals, adding only apostrophes and accents, distinguishing *u* and *v*, reducing the capital letters and dividing the words according to the modern use. Translations are all mine.

The Venetian *Statuta* is even more precise:

E azo ordinato che sia una fraternitade de tutta la christianitade. Ne la quale possa intrare tutte le persone ecclesiastiche e seculare richi e poveri, homeni e donne. Ma niuno sia obligato pagare cosa alcuna per intrare ne la dita fraternitade azo che per paupertade o sia in potentia li poveri non siano esclusi.¹⁸

(And we order that it would be a fraternity of the whole of Christianity where all ecclesiastical and secular people can enter, rich and poor, men and women. But nobody should be obliged to pay a fee to enter it, so that the poor cannot be excluded because of poverty.)

This statement, which underlines the principles of openness and equality and the independent nature of the institution, is repeated later in the works by Alberto da Castello and Luis de Granada (even if in this case women are not mentioned; only the rich and poor are specified). The participation of the laity and a notion of equality were basic conditions of this devotion, and probably encouraged its popularity and spread. Mitchell writes:

The confraternities fostered ‘social emotions’, a climate that contributed to the creation of relationships within ‘the social universe as a whole.’ [...] The rosary was seen as a powerful incentive to associational life among the Catholic faithful, and the projects of its confraternities (e.g., feeding the poor, commissioning artworks for the parish church) were likewise understood as communal enterprises.¹⁹

In such ways the rosary helped laypeople to live together, avoiding social conflicts.

The devotion, in the Douai and Cologne confraternities, was initially recommended as a daily prayer, but the first rules in Italian confraternities present it as a weekly devotion. In their second rule, the Venetian *Statuta* state:

Ordinineremo che cadauna persona intrarà in questa fraternitade sia obligata de dire ogne septimana una volta tutto el psalterio o sia rosario de la verzene Maria, zoè cento e cinquanta ave marie e quindici pater nostri. [...] e cossi successive dir sempre uno pater nostro e diese ave marie per fina al dito numero de quindece pater nostri e cento e cinquanta ave marie. E vogliamo per maior comodità de li fratelli e sorelle sia licito a cadauna dividere questo psalterio in tre volte, zoe dir cinque pater nostro e xxxxx ave marie al zorno pur che tutto il salterio sia dito una volta a la septimana da cadauno de questa fraternitade

18 *Statuta confraternitatis Psalterii Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Venezia, fol. 2^r. If the ISTC gives the date of this document as 1500, Meersseman publishes it in his book as dating from 1480: Meersseman, *Ordo fraternitatis*, pp. 115–18.

19 Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, p. 43.

per l'anima sua e de li altri che sono in questa fraternitade per tutto el mondo. [...] Debbe cadauno che dice questo psalterio el quale contiene xv desene de ave marie e xv pater nostri meditare ne la mente sua questi xv misterii infrascripti cioè per ogni x ave marie e uno pater nostro uno misterio.²⁰

(We will order that each person entered into this confraternity will be obliged to say once a week all the psalterium or rosary of the Virgin Mary, that is to say 150 *Hail Marys* and fifteen *Pater nosters*. [...] in this way: to say always a *Pater noster* and ten *Hail Marys*, to the number above said of fifteen *Pater nosters* and 150 *Hail Marys*. And we want for the greater convenience of brothers and sisters to allow to each person to divide this psalterium into three, that is to say five *Pater nosters* and fifty *Hail Marys* every day in order that all the psalterium is said once a week by each member of this confraternity for his/her soul and for that of all others that are in this confraternity all around the world. [...] Let each person that says this psalterium which contains fifteen [times] ten *Hail Marys* and fifteen *Pater nosters* meditate in their mind these fifteen mysteries here mentioned, in this way: one every ten *Hail Marys* and one *Pater noster*.)

The Florentine *Statuta* are similar:

Ordiniamo che ciascuna persona la quale entrata in questa fraternitade sia obligata di dire ogni settimana almeno una volta tutto el psalterio o vero rosario della Vergine Maria, cioè cento cinquanta ave marie et xv pater nostri. In questo modo cioè dire prima uno pater nostro et poi diece ave marie, et così successive dire sempre uno pater nostro et x ave marie per insino al decto numero di xv pater nostri et cento cinquanta ave marie.²¹

(We order that every person who has entered this confraternity should be obliged to say every week at least once all the psalterium or the true rosary of the Virgin Mary, that is 150 *Hail Marys* and fifteen *Pater nosters*. In this way: that is to say first a *Pater noster* and ten *Hail Marys*, until the number of fifteen *Pater nosters* and 150 *Hail Marys*.)

Finally, it was permitted to divide the recitation into three parts, made up of five *Paternosters* and fifty *Aves* each, so that the whole devotion would be recited within a week. The explanation is telling:

anticamente si diceva ogni dì tutto quanto: alla qual consuetudine laudabile exhortiamo ciascuna persona, perché acquistava maggior merito et più indulgentie. Imperò che tante volte l'huomo lo dice, tante volte

20 *Statuta confraternitatis Psalterii Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Venezia, fols 2^r–3^r.

21 *Statuta confraternitatis Psalterii Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Firenze, fol. 3^v.

conseguita la indulgentia che v'è concessa essendo in gratia di Dio. Et chi non lo può dire tutto ogni dì preghiamo che s'ingegni di dire la tertia parte: cioè cinque pater nostri et cinquanta ave marie.²²

(Traditionally it was recited in its entirety everyday; to this praiseworthy habit we exhort everyone, because it acquires more benefits and indulgences. In fact as many times as someone says it, that many do they acquire the indulgence awarded if they are in God's grace. And if someone cannot say it everyday, we exhort them to say one third, that is to say fifteen *Pater nosters* and 150 *Hail Marys*.)

It is interesting to note the handwritten anonymous addition made immediately after this sentence: 'ogni giorno' (every day), suggesting that the devotion was understood by the reader as a daily devotion, and that the prescribed weekly timetable was questioned in Italy. In fact, the issue of daily or weekly recitation is discussed in the translator's prefatory letter ('traslatore [...] di latino in vulgare', 'translator [...] from Latin into the vernacular') to the miscellany by Michel François of Lille (de Insulis), Alanus's first follower. The work was published in Italian in Bologna in 1505, where it is stated, amongst other information, that

quello che si dice nel trattato del beato Alano al terzo cap(itolo), cioè che si debbi dire ogni giorno el rosario, è stato revocato da quel padre el quale ha ritrovato questa divotione, et è ridotto a quel modo cioè si insegna nel primo trattato, cioè che si debbi dir ogni settimana.²³

(What is said in the treatise by the blessed Alanus in the third chapter, that is that the rosary has to be said every day, has been revoked by that father who has found again this devotion, and it is reduced to the way it is taught in the first treatise, that is to be said every week.)

The 'first treatise' mentioned here, is the *Quodlibet* by Michel François (printed in Cologne in 1476), which affirms in chapter four (in Italian translation): 'si debba ogni settimana dire o leggere per sé o per gli altri tre rosari che contengano centocinquanta ave marie et quindici pater nostri. Intervenendo sempre da poi dice ave marie uno pater nostro' (Every week one has to say or read three rosaries which contain 150 *Hail Marys* and fifteen *Pater nosters*, inserting always every ten *Hail Marys* a *Pater noster*); the same is repeated on the following page.²⁴ Michel therefore reduced the

22 *Statuta confraternitatis Psalterii Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Firenze, fol. 4^r.

23 François, *Libro del rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fol. 1^v. The publication by Michel François was the most complete work on the rosary at the time. It consisted in a Latin collection of the *Apologeticus* by Alanus and the *Quodlibet* by Michel. It includes the miracles of the rosary.

24 François, *Libro del rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fols 9^v and 10^r.

regularity imposed by Alanus, but daily recitation was later recommended anew. Mitchell writes:

Precisely when the rosary became a popular (though not universal) daily devotional practice among devout Catholics is difficult to determine, but its use is already mentioned by the English Jesuit Henry Garnet (or Garnett, 1555–1606): ‘euery deuout Catholicke, dailye when he saiethe his beades, doth as it were in a booke read and reuerentlye laieth before his eies [...].’²⁵

If the recitation was missed, there was no penance, with the only consequences of the loss of the spiritual benefits of the recitation (primarily indulgences). However, it was possible for another person to recite the devotion in place of a member, with no loss of spiritual benefits accrued.

The recommendation of weekly recitation is reproduced in the constitutions of other Italian confraternities consulted, as well as in Alberto da Castello’s successful book, which adds:

se qualcuno per sua devotione gli piacesse a dirlo tutto over una delle parti ogni giorno, tanto sarà più laudabile et fruttuoso, dechiarando che tutti gli quendici pater nostri e cento e cinquanta ave marie si dimanda el psalterio; et una delle tre parte, cioè cinque Pater nostri e cinquanta Ave maria si dimanda el rosario della beatissima Vergine Maria.²⁶

(If someone for his/her devotion would like to say it all or just one of its parts every day, it will be more laudable and fruitful, in fact we declare that all the fifteen *Pater nosters* and 150 *Hail Marys* are called psalterium; and one of the three parts, that is five *Pater nosters* and fifty *Hail Marys* is called rosary of the very blessed Virgin Mary.)

Only later, in Luis de Granada’s work, is the devotion recommended as a daily prayer. The Dominican states that, as we need food for the body every day, so we should provide food for the spirit, devoting an hour a day to this devotion:

dovrebbero i devoti del santo Rosario, per gravi occupazioni che tenghino, una breve hora del giorno più commoda per loro e più atta, ridursi nella chiesa commune o nella loro privata stanza, e quivi raccolti devotamente dire una delle tre parti almeno del santo rosario et insieme insieme contemplar ordinatamente i sacri suoi misteri.²⁷

(The devotees of the holy rosary, even when busy with serious occupations, should devote a brief hour of the day, the most convenient for them and the most suitable one, to go in the confraternity’s church or in their private room, and there, concentrated in devotion, they should

25 Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, p. 194.

26 Alberto da Castello, *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fol. 20^{r-v}.

27 Luis de Granada, *Rosario della sacratissima Vergine Maria*, p. 50.

say one of the three parts at least of the holy rosary, and they should contemplate methodically its related sacred mysteries.)

The precise mode of and conditions for the recitation are not fixed: the ninth rule of the Florentine *Statuta* says: 'Concediamo che il decto psalterio et rosario si possa dire per qualunque modo o andando o stando o ginocchioni o in piede o a sedere o come li piace'²⁸ (We grant that the mentioned psalterium and rosary can be said in whatever way either walking or kneeling or standing or sitting or as one likes). Even the work by Michel states: 'Et non è necessario a dirli in ginocchio o in chiesa o insieme o a certa hora o giorno, ma basta haverli dicti tutti o in una volta o in tre nel fine della settimana'²⁹ (And it is not necessary to say it kneeling or in the church or together or at a certain time or on one day, but it will be enough to say it all at once or in three parts through the week).

The benefits to be accrued are indulgences, as clearly declared in the *Statuta* with quotations from papal documents. The other rules concern intercessions to be made for a dead member and official celebrations (which occur four times a year). The *statuta* also include the formula to bless the crowns or objects used to count the *Aves* or *Paters* as part of the rosary recitation. Finally, they lay out the content of the meditations, that is to say the 'mysteries', as they have been known in Italy since this period (*mysterii* in the Florentine *statuta*, and *misterii* in the Venetian ones). There are three types of mystery: 'Gaudioso, doloroso, glorioso' (joyful, sorrowful, glorious); each includes five events, adding up to fifteen mysteries. In the beginning only the final mystery was a contemplation of the glory of paradise, which at the end of the sixteenth century sometimes involved Mary, as it does today.

The *statuta* may contain other texts, such as letters or exhortations. Generally, they include at least one image. A set of three crowns (one regal crown, one of the rosary and one of roses), with the rubric 'Questo è il segno della Compagnia del Rosario della Vergine Maria' (This is the Confraternity of the Rosary's sign), opens the Florentine *Statuta*, followed on the subsequent page by a picture of the Annunciation, with the Angel, Mary, and the dove in a domestic setting. A full-page image of the Virgin Mary standing with her hands together, surrounded by four flying angels, and with two beggars at her feet with crowns in their hands (a friar — a Dominican? — and a layman) is the image which opens the Venetian *Statuta*.

Text and Image

Even if a number of publications accompanied the *Statuta* in what we have called the foundational period of the rosary's life in Italy — such as Alanus'

28 *Statuta confraternitatis Psalterii Beatae Mariae Virginis*, Firenze, fol. 7^r.

29 François, *Libro del rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fol. 9^v.

Apologeticus, published in Bologna in 1500, in a miscellany compiled by Stefano of Piobera, and a translation into Italian of the work by Michel François, published in 1505 as *Libro del Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*,³⁰ — only later did Alberto da Castello's *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, first published in 1521, change the character of Italian rosary publications, initiating a new period in which images and text would be closely interwoven.

Firstly, Alberto recognizes the role of those who initiated rosary devotion. He accepts the legend of Dominic as the devotion's founder, then names Alanus as responsible for recovering the form of veneration, after having a vision of the Virgin Mary, who invited him and all the Dominicans to renew, preach, and disseminate the rosary. He mentions Jacob Sprenger as the founder of the Cologne confraternity, and John of Erford as responsible for its transmission in Italy, not only in the aforementioned cities, but also in Sicily and across the east of the peninsula.

He himself is presented as an innovative force for defining rosary devotion. Wishing to spread worship of the Virgin Mary, he decided to enrich the experience by accompanying every prayer (and not simply the meditations) with an image. Thus, he created a book of 165 images to be meditated upon, for the illiterate, in order to give them the opportunity to reach the spiritual fruit of contemplation:

Acciò che li fideli de Christo che non sanno legere possono havere e conseguire el frutto de esse meditatione, ha procurato ch'elle dovere essere impresse sotto certe figure et imagine, quelle sperimentate, et essere incluse in uno libro manual e portatile.³¹

(So that those faithful to Christ that don't know reading could have and achieve the fruit of the meditations, we have ensured that underneath are engraved certain figures and images, those described, and to be included in a book able to be carried by hand.)

The numerous images are a new and defining feature of this book: it begins with a beautiful frontispiece, and a second full-page image shows the Virgin Mary seated with Christ on her knees, presenting a rosary crown with both hands to the people at her feet, both laypeople and clergy, all of whom kneel holding crowns. Even the story of the rosary's creation and the rules on indulgences are accompanied by images of Saint Dominic or of a pope giving a *Bulla*. In the proem, the author explicitly states that his work is addressed to the illiterate as well as to those who can read: 'E questo non solamente agli litterati, ma etiam alli illetterati et ignoranti et idioti'³² (And this not only for the literate, but also for the unlettered and ignorant and stupid). Each written

30 See note 23.

31 Alberto da Castello, *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fol. 2^{r-v}. This information is given within the prohemium by Antonio Contarini, Venice's patriarch.

32 Alberto da Castello, *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fol. 8^r.

page is framed by ornate decoration, with the subject of the page named in a decorated cartouche. The images themselves are surrounded by rich frames with complex decorations of flowers and angels.

After a description of the rules for rosary devotion, based on those of the Cologne constitutions, and indulgences, he adds a new chapter (written, he says, after Sprenger's death) on the indulgences accorded by Pope Leo X to those who visit five altars in Roman churches and recite five *Pater noster*s and five *Aves*. Each specific church, of which he gives a long list, can afford specific indulgences; for each Roman church, indulgences are listed according to the liturgical calendar.³³ Finally, he gives the *formula* for the blessing of the rosary beads.

The recitation of the rosary is presented as a domestic devotion more than a confraternal devotion. The author recommends reciting the mysteries to children, thus teaching them the rosary. A member of the confraternity should keep the rosary in mind when at home, when walking and travelling, when going to sleep, and when getting up.³⁴ He also recommends carrying the crown on one's person and placing signs of the rosary above the doors of the house. It is clear that the rosary was intended to play a role in each moment of everyday domestic life, and to involve the whole family. It also shaped the relationship between parents and children, acting as a means for transmitting faith, religious practices, and beliefs.

The contemplative text-image combination for each mystery starts at fol. 34 and continues for the majority of the book, offering 165 images in all. The images appear on the verso of each leaf (the left side of the book), while the meditations are printed on the facing recto (the right side of the book); the title is shared between the two pages.³⁵ Opening the book, the subject matter is immediately evident from the cartouche bearing the title, from the image itself, and from the instruction for the recitation of the *Ave* or *Pater*. The meditation always begins with an invitation to the soul of the penitent: 'Contempla qui, anima fedele (or "fedele e devota") come [...]' (Faithful — or faithful and devout — soul, contemplate here how [...]). The meditations composed by Alberto da Castello include not only the fifteen events of Jesus and Mary's lives, which are the mysteries of the rosary, but are concerned with the whole history of salvation, touching, for example, on the biblical prefigurations of Jesus, Mary, and John the Baptist. For example, there is a page devoted to the sanctification of the child Mary while she is still in the womb of her mother Anne. The following meditation, on Mary's birth, is emotionally weighty. These are not properly evangelical events, as they are narrated in the non-canonical Gospels; in any case they belong to the

33 Alberto da Castello, *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fols 24^r–29^r.

34 Alberto da Castello, *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, fol. 8^r.

35 See on these images, Froeschlé-Chopard, 'Image et enseignement dans le *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria* d'Alberto da Castello'.

history of salvation, and they create in the reader (or viewer) a perception of divine operation in the history of human beings. In this figurative process, the reader or viewer is engaged in reconstructing the history of salvation through a hermeneutic process, in order to understand fully the meaning of events that involved human beings at their heart and still involve every Christian believer. Verbal texts and visual representations together effectively create a sacred discourse on salvation. The rosary therefore 'makes everyone, viewers and viewed alike, active participants in a human drama. Painted personages such as Mary, Christ, or the saints are no longer sacred (stereo)types; they are real individuals, with personal histories as palpable, particular, and plebeian as our own.'³⁶

At the end of the work there is an *expositio* of the main prayers, the *Pater noster* and the *Ave Maria*, and retellings of miracles imputed to the saying of the rosary, in large part conversions of sinners.

A similar combination of text and image structures Luis de Granada's work on the rosary edited by the dominican friar Andrea Gianetti. This book shows a complexity far beyond that of the works studied thus far. It starts with a consideration of human beings who, just as plants and flowers need rain from the sky, need grace and spiritual nourishment from God. Therefore, they should address their prayers to heaven, the rosary being one of the most efficacious prayers to recite. Its perfection is derived from its combination of silent and spoken invocations; the spoken prayers (*Ave* and *Pater*) are the most effective, as they are taken from the Gospels, while silent mental prayer is the most perfect, as it considers the mysteries of salvation. Friar Luis, an expert of prayer, describes the rosary as relying 'on the twin powers of interior visualization (personal appropriation of images through meditation) and exterior representation (the creation of images that would stimulate the praying Christian's imagination)'.³⁷

The work itself includes the canonical texts on the rosary, indulgences awarded (including those accorded at Roman churches), and its history — in which the role of Saint Dominic is heavily stressed, particularly his preaching against the Cathars, but the role of later promoters such as Alanus, Jacob, or John is ignored. The rules are largely modelled on the older examples, but the rosary is specifically labelled as a form of devotion particular to the Dominican order alone; every Dominican convent is recommended to have a confraternity of the rosary and a chapel devoted to the Virgin of the Rosary in its church. There is a chapter on the institution of the feast, including the *Breve* issued by Pope Gregory XIII. Finally, a chapter is devoted to the way in which the rosary should be recited, in which the value of both spoken and silent prayer

³⁶ Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, p. 72.

³⁷ Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, p. 74. For Luis de Granada's method for prayer, see his *Trattato dell'oratione, et della meditatione*. On this Spanish Dominican, see Del Campo, *Vida y obra de Fray Luis De Granada* and *Actas de las Jornadas Conmemorativas*, ed. by del Prado.

are considered in depth. Other suggestions for effective meditation are also given, and the virtues needed for effective prayer are listed (humility, patience, charity, penance, disdain for the world, and love for the cross). The style of this chapter is especially noteworthy: a plethora of metaphors and similitudes enriches the text. Luis de Granada, as a well-trained preacher, was an expert in the arts of rhetoric. His facility with rhetoric is clear:

come dalla rosa più d'ogni fior utile più liquori caviamo per uso e diletto della nostra vita; così lambiccando con fuoco di devotione questi sacri misteri non solo acqua e lagrime di compassione n'espriemeremo [...] ma frutti molto maggiori, e più soavi e pretiosi liquori coglieremo da quest'arbor della vita e comporreemo con queste sante meditazioni.³⁸

(As from the rose, the most useful flower, we extract more liqueurs for the use and pleasure of our life; so distilling with the fire of devotion these sacred mysteries, we will extract not only water and tears of compassion [...] but fruits much greater, and sweeter and more precious liqueurs we will derive from this tree of life and we will compose with these holy meditations.)

The friar was evidently well acquainted with the rhetorical figures of *amplificatio* and *descriptio*.³⁹

This ebullient style makes it unsurprising that the following chapter opens with an intricate, full-page image of a rose bush, laden with flowers. Rosary beads are visible among the leaves, connecting five images representing the joyful mysteries (the same tree recurs three times, as each of the three types of mystery is introduced). At the centre of the tree, in an oval cloud the Virgin with child is represented with a rose branch in her right hand. Each mystery is illustrated by a full-page illustration by Adamo Scultori, slightly modified in subsequent editions, the illustrations effectively supporting the working of the imagination during meditation. The image is followed by a long meditation and a short *Orazione*, a prayer addressed to Jesus or Mary, requesting that the supplicant be endowed with the attitude necessary to understand that mystery. The images are therefore just fifteen, but they are extremely accomplished, with properly represented human figures and richly decorative backdrops. The images work as *imagines agentes*, that is, they stimulate the imagination of the viewer, more than merely helping memory. Adamo Scultori was able to create figures that were truly suggestive. The meditations are taken from Granada's *Vita di Christo*, which does not contain images, relying on the impact of words, but here the persuasive power of the text is heightened through image.⁴⁰

38 Luis de Granada, *Rosario della sacratissima Vergine Maria*, p. 53.

39 See Arancibia, 'La funzione delle immagini nel Rosario', p. 182; see also Lopez Muñoz, *Fray Luis de Granada y la retórica*.

40 Luis de Granada, *Meditationi molto deuote sopra alcuni passi, e misterij*, published in Italian translation only in 1607, but issued in Spain in 1563.

After the fifteen mysteries there is an exegesis of the *Pater noster* and a corresponding chapter with seven long prayers to the Virgin Mary. The book enjoyed great success, going through twenty editions within the century, and with several reprints in the subsequent century. The combination of image with text demonstrates well the post-Tridentine emphasis on sacred art as a legitimate route to religious feeling, emotion, and imagination.

Poetry on the Rosary: Francesca Turini Bufalini's 'Rime'

There were a huge number of publications on the rosary in the decades following the proclamation of the feast in 1572. Even the Jesuits produced several works on the rosary, following the Dominican model, mainly intended to teach meditation.⁴¹

We will focus our attention here on another type of book that commented upon and encouraged the use of the rosary: poetry. Among the large amount of Italian verse on spiritual, devotional, religious, or biblical topics written in the sixteenth century, most now forgotten or ignored by literary scholarship, there was a rich vein of sonnets or other poetry on the rosary. Even a few long narrative poems were produced, modelled on chivalric or epic predecessors. Poets and printers responded to the demands of a more literate public that was interested in religious subject matter. Poetry of this kind was considered a useful means of providing behavioural examples as well as serious entertainment, capable of taking the place of romance literature which was considered scandalous by ecclesiastics and therefore often included in lists of forbidden books.⁴²

One notable poetic work on the rosary is the *Rosario della gloriosissima vergine madre di Dio, Maria, avvocata di tutti i peccatori penitenti*, by the Dominican Serafino Razzi, the author of multiple and well-regarded *Laude*.⁴³ In 1583 his brother, Silvano, published his poem in octaves illustrating the fifteen mysteries of the rosary. It is a narrative poem on the history of salvation, divided into fifteen parts (they are not explicitly named as cantos, but each corresponds to a canto of twenty to thirty octaves).⁴⁴

Even more interesting, as a demonstration of female authorship at an authoritative religious level, is the collection of sonnets, octaves, and madrigals

41 The most successful were Gaspar Loarte's *Instruzione et avvertimenti, per meditare i misterii del rosario*, published first in Rome in 1573, and, with more effective use of images, Luca Pinelli's *Libretto d'imagini, e di brevi meditationi sopra i quindici misterii del rosario*, published first in Naples in 1594. It was later reprinted in his collected works, from 1600 on, as *Meditationi utilissime, sopra i quindici misterij del rosario*.

42 For a complete overview of poetry on the Rosary, see Mario Rosa, 'I trionfi del Rosario nella Letteratura religiosa italiana della Controriforma', pp. 298–313.

43 On Razzi's *laude* see Piéjus, *Musique et dévotion à Rome*.

44 Razzi, *Il rosario della gloriosissima vergine madre di Dio*.

on the rosary published in 1595 by Francesca Turini Bufalini (1553–1641).⁴⁵ She lived in central Italy and enjoyed poetic correspondence with notable poets of her time (such as Capoleone Ghelfucci).⁴⁶ She was an experienced poet, the author of both autobiographical works and an epic poem, which has been recently re-edited, *Florio*.⁴⁷ In the dedicatory letter of the *Rime* on the rosary, addressed to Pope Clement VIII, she apologizes for not being acquainted with the Muses, but to be only inspired by ‘semplici rivi di religiosa pietà’ (simple rivers of religious piety), and writing ‘primizie più di pietà che d’ingegno’ (novelties deriving more from piety than from wit). Choosing to write about divine matters, she refuses ‘meretrici ornamenti’ (meretricious ornaments), and prefers ‘vestimenti pietosi di matronal pudicizia’ (pious clothing showing female modesty); she also recognizes that she prefers to meditate and cry, rather than to be praised for an earthly product.

Her collection of poems proves her close familiarity with the Italian poetic tradition, and above all with Petrarch’s and Tasso’s poetry. She uses verses taken from Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* such as: ‘Benedetto sia il giorno, il mese e l’anno’ (1, Blessed is the day, the month and the year), which is taken from *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* (RVF) 61, and ‘Per la pietà del suo Fattore i rai’ (85, Through the mercy of his Maker the rays), which reproduces a line of RVF 3, and ‘Non ha tanti animai la terra o “l cielo”’ (34, Neither the earth nor sky has so many souls), which recalls ‘A qualunque animal ch’alberga in terra’ (RVF 22, To whatever animal living in earth).⁴⁸ She also uses a line from Petrarch’s *Trionfi* (*Triumphus mortis* I, 172), ‘Morte bella pareo nel suo bel viso’, attributed to Mary at her death (139, Death appeared beautiful on her beautiful face).

It is, however, primarily Tasso’s poetry that she imitates, especially in how she addresses poems to the soul or the heart, such as in the lines ‘Rigido cor, se pur qual fosti avanti’ (14, Unbending heart, as you were before), or ‘qual sarà duro cor che non si sfaccia’ (54, Which heart will be so harsh that it will not be undone), which both recall octave 8 of canto III of the *Jerusalem delivered*: ‘Agghiacciato mio cor, [...] Duro mio cor, ché non ti spetri e frangi.’ Elsewhere, she uses the imperative ‘Look’ several times in a sonnet (22), or starts with ‘Mira, alma, mira il tuo Signore e sposo’ (41, Contemplate, soul, contemplate your Lord and bridegroom), which is reminiscent of a sonnet

45 Turini Bufalini, *Rime spirituali*. There is a recent edition edited by Paolo Bà and published in *Letteratura italiana antica*, 9 (2010) 145–223. On the author, see the ‘Atti della giornata di studio su Francesca Turini Bufalini’, with essays by P. Bà, N. Costa-Zalessow, and G. Rossi.

46 Arezzo, Archivio di Stato, MS ANONIMO 179.

47 *Rime di Francesca Turina Bufalini*; Turini Bufalini, *Autobiographical poems*; her narrative poem has been edited by Paolo Bà in *Letteratura italiana antica* (14) 2013, pp. 31–61.

48 I number, from here on, Francesca’s poems with the number they have in the recent edition, from which I quote. I indicate Petrarch’s compositions with the numbers from the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* (= RVF).

of Tasso's sacred poems: 'Alma inferma e dolente'.⁴⁹ Her choice of model is not surprising, for as a poet Tasso best encapsulates the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church at that time.

Francesca's poems on the rosary mirror the order of the devotion: after two introductory sonnets, one devoted to the proposition and the other to the dedicatee Clement VIII, she opens the first part, made up of forty-six sonnets, on the first joyful mystery. The second mystery (sorrowful) starts with a madrigal, and is followed by thirty-seven sonnets on Christ's passion. A *Pianto della Madonna* in twenty octaves (organized in pairs) follows and concludes the sorrowful mystery. Even the third mystery, the glorious mystery, starts with a madrigal and is followed by forty sonnets. At the end a series of twenty-five octaves (grouped in one group of two octaves, seven groups of three octaves, and again a group of two octaves), with the title *Ottave della gloria del paradiso*, close the mystery. Twenty-five more sonnets on the death of her husband follow, but they are not on the rosary theme.

If the form of the composition is unusual, the content is even more surprising. Francesca respects the order of the events followed in all rosaries, but she also dedicates attention to episodes that are not typically considered in earlier rosaries. She starts with the Annunciation and continues with the visit to Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, passes on to Christ's birth, and then pays much attention to the flight into Egypt, the slaughter of the innocents, and the return from Egypt.⁵⁰

It is challenging to identify her source, but her work seems closest to the rosary by Alberto da Castello, which also includes a greater number of events. Yet Francesca tends towards even more detail, and does not consider the prefiguration of the Baptist, as Alberto does. She was certainly familiar not only with the Gospels and other evangelical literature, but probably also with the apocryphal stories of Jesus' childhood.

Furthermore, she details the miracles of Jesus, the calls of the apostles, and the many conversions Christ inspires, particularly that of the Magdalen. The first sonnets of the Passion are devoted to a visit that Jesus made to his mother, while after the resurrection Jesus is said to have first greeted his mother, who was suffering and lamenting alone. For this event, Francesca may have been inspired by Tasso's octaves *Lagrima di Maria Vergine*, published in 1593.⁵¹

Francesca's use of comparisons and descriptions is also novel and interesting: she devotes attention to the passing of the hours of the day or the experiences of the senses: 'Aria fessi più dolce e rugiadosa' (4, the air became sweeter and dewy); 'Qual rugiada in fertile terreno' (5, Like dew on fertile ground);

49 Again, I mark Francesca's poetry with the number from the modern edition; for Tasso's *Rime*, see the edition by Bruno Maier in Tasso, *Opere*, pp. 376–78.

50 Biblical literature published in Italy at the time is so abundant that it would be impossible to find a precise source.

51 Tasso too presents Mary speaking to her son: Tasso, *Lagrima*, ed. by Sacchi.

'Tortora è tal, perduta la compagna | che fa l'aria intonar de la sua pena' (27, The turtle dove is he who, his companion lost, makes the air ring with his grief), are just a few examples of the variety of her poetry.

She pays particular attention to the delicacy of the child Jesus, who is described with cheerful adjectives: 'il bel bambino' (12, the beautiful child); 'il pargoletto Dio' (14, the little baby God), 'dolcissimo bambin' (19, very sweet child), 'tenero infante' (26, tender infant). Some of Francesca's most beautiful verses are devoted to depicting the happiness of the mother before and after the birth:

Qual se di fecondissimo terreno
 scalda un bel seme e li dà vita il sole,
 ne l'alvo virginal l'unica prole
 formossi e crebbe. [...] (7)

In questa umil capanna, anima mia,
 mira la Madre e come il pargoletto
 ne' panni 'nvolge e se lo stringe al petto:
 questo sol mira, ogn'altro aspetto oblia. (15)

Qual immenso piacere, o qual dolcezza
 ebbe Maria quando al virgineo petto
 strinse il vezzoso e caro pargoletto
 e baciò quell'angelica bellezza. (16)

(As in fertile ground
 A beautiful seed is warmed by the sun, and receives life,
 Thus in the virginal womb the only son
 Was formed and grew.)

(In this humble hut, my soul,
 Look at the Mother, as she folds the little child
 In swaddling and she holds him tight to her breast:
 This you should contemplate, forget everything else.)

(What immense joy or sweetness
 Mary had, when to the virginal breast
 She clasped the charming and dear baby,
 And she kissed this angelic beauty.)

Joseph's work appears as a list of domestic everyday activities:

Servi la Madre e 'l suo Figliuol divino;
 scoti la cuna, accendi 'l piccol foco;
 scalda le fasce e gli prepara i bagni. (23)

(You serve the Mother and her divine son;
 You rock the crib, you light a little fire;
 You heat the bands and you prepare the bath for him.)

Francesca is a skilful poet, and her ability is evident throughout the collection. The sonnet on the Magdalen's announcement of the resurrection is exemplary:

Indi se 'n va la bella ambasciatrice,
 ratto, a portar la desiata nova,
 e cerca il vecchio Pietro e lo ritrova,
 che di pianto un ruscel dal core elice.

'Risuscitato è il mio Signor — li dice —
 in forma altera, inusitata e nova,
 io l'ho veduto; io ne ho fatto la prova
 per modo tal ch'il dubitar non lice.' (110)

(Then she goes, the beautiful messenger,
 Swift, to bring the longed-for news,
 And searches for old Peter, and she finds him,
 Who is weeping a river from his heart.

'Resurrected is my Lord' she tells him,
 'In proud form, unfamiliar and new,
 I have seen him; I have seen the proof
 So that nobody can have doubt'.)

The rapidity of the rhythm of these hendecasyllables conveys Magdalene's joy, as she announces the resurrection of her saviour to the Apostles.

In her poems Francesca assumes an attitude that seems to have been acquired by Italians after over a century of familiarity with the rosary, a devotion practised regularly, daily or weekly, in families and larger communities, that shaped the rhythms of the days or weeks of people across Italy.

Conclusion

In Italy, the rosary was only one among many pious practices, but it was perhaps the most popular and widespread form of devotion of all, even as it 'reframed Catholic identity primarily through practices rather than through theological argument or homiletic persuasion', and promoted 'the notion of selfhood based on development of a "deeply internalized and personalized conscience" within each individual person'.⁵²

The Italian Renaissance confraternities of the rosary made their presence felt in the churches of small villages as well as in big cities, showing the profound penetration of a devotion that shaped religious life and, in some ways, social behaviour too. The complementarity of its meditations with the everyday experiences of men and women was encouraged by the media used

52. Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary*, pp. 128 and 91.

for its propagation: images conveying the central figures of the Christian salvation in modern domestic settings, and poetry which speaks of Jesus and Mary using words first used for love poetry. They all contributed to bring the mysteries of faith closer to the sensibility and understanding of Renaissance men and women.

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The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady and Books of Private Devotion in Post-Hussite Bohemia

The instruments of the daily religious practice of the Bohemian Utraquists are not among the best-researched phenomena. Past generations of historians were more interested in the political and social developments of the era, and the artefacts of late medieval piety were thoroughly studied only if they were deemed worthy in terms of artistic quality. Although research has recently become more orientated towards the notion of medieval art as a means of communication, paintings, sculptures, and illuminated manuscripts are often primarily analysed as instruments of political and religious propaganda rather than as humble instruments of private devotion.¹ In any case, Bohemian prayer books have received much less attention than similar manuscripts elsewhere.² While there are studies dedicated to rare surviving examples of private devotional books of the pre-Hussite period, the diverse post-Hussite material remains largely neglected.³ This is striking even in comparison with

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- 1 See Horníčková, 'Images and Visual Culture'; Bartlová, 'Artistic Form'; Bartlová, *Pravda zvítězila* (Truth Prevailed).
 - 2 The literature concerning western European prayer books is relatively rich: see, for example, Wieck, *The Book of Hours*; König and Bartz, *Das Stundenbuch*; Kuper, 'Handschriften für das privat Gebet'; Duffy, *Marking the Hours*.
 - 3 For examples of pre-Hussite Bohemian prayer books, see Alexander, 'A Book of Hours'; Brauer, 'The Prague Hours'; Studničková, 'Hodiny o přeslavné panně Marii' (Hours of the Most Glorious Virgin Mary).

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 151–173

other examples of Bohemian book culture, such as the voluminous illuminated graduals often commissioned by urban literary fraternities.⁴ In what follows, I will try to show some research possibilities orientated towards post-Hussite manuscripts of private devotion. As a focal point for my observations, I have chosen the prayer book that once belonged to the Bohemian king, George of Poděbrady.

The King and his Prayer Book

The prayer book was given to the king by his second wife, the Bohemian queen Joanna of Rožmitál, at Christmas in 1466. These circumstances are recorded in the manuscript itself on fols 1^v–2^r. King George, who ruled between 1458 and 1471, was the only Utraquist ruler of the Bohemian Kingdom.⁵ He was raised in an important family of the high nobility. Both his father and uncle were respected leaders of the Hussite party. Family ties contributed to the steep and successful career trajectory of the young Lord of Poděbrady, and he became the head of the Utraquist party. He can be counted among the moderate Utraquists, inclined to religious compromise, and as such he was an acceptable leader even for many members of the Catholic minority in the country. George of Poděbrady thus became the steward of the kingdom and effectively ruled instead of the minor King Ladislaus the Posthumous. Later, after the premature death of the young king, George himself was elected to the throne.

George's second wife, Joanna of Rožmitál, came, like the king, from an important family of the high nobility, the lords of Blatná and Rožmitál. Unlike the lords of Kunštát, the lords of Rožmitál were Catholics. It seems that the queen retained her religion even after her marriage to the future king in 1450, but her denomination is still a contentious issue among researchers.⁶ On the one hand, the queen served her husband as a mediator between the Catholic and the Utraquist parties. On the other hand, as the consort of the 'heretic' king, the pope excommunicated her from the Church together with her husband and all their offspring. Moreover, all her children were initially brought up as Utraquists. The Utraquism of the king and his family was, in any case, tolerant, and the king himself had no problem attending masses and processions performed by Utraquist as well as Catholic priests. His own chaplain was a Cistercian monk and former parish priest in the Catholic royal city of Kadaň.⁷ On the other hand, George of Poděbrady remained a staunch defender of the Utraquist faith, even at the cost of rupture with the

4 See the recent survey by Graham, *Bohemian and Moravian Graduals*.

5 For details about his life and rule, see Odložilík, *The Hussite King*.

6 Zilynská, 'Dvůr krále Jiřího' (The Court of George of Poděbrady), p. 33.

7 Zilynská, 'Dvůr krále Jiřího' (The Court of George of Poděbrady), p. 31.

pope, which threatened his personal position and led to lengthy military confrontations at the end of his life.

The boundaries between Utraquism and Catholicism were relatively thin at the time. However, both faiths were bitterly divided over their differences. It is important to note that Utraquists agreed with Catholics on many beliefs that were later rejected by the Reformation of the sixteenth century: both sides respected the saints, the Virgin Mary, agreed on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the power of the sacraments, and held to the celibacy of the priests. They disagreed, however, over the importance of communion from the chalice for the laity, communion for children, and the concepts of indulgences and Purgatory. Some differences existed also over the use of art for the decoration of sacred spaces. It would seem, however, that older research was perhaps too pessimistic about the presence of paintings and statues in Utraquist churches.⁸

The prayer book of George of Poděbrady is not unknown to literature dealing with post-Hussite art, but it has remained overshadowed by other manuscripts. The main reason is that it has been inaccessible, in private hands, or on the art market. The Czech scholars who wrote about the manuscript could only make use of a few poor quality, old black and white reproductions. The chief source of our knowledge about its existence was an extensive article by Jaroslav Pešina, who noticed the prayer book in the 1950s and managed to obtain its complete photographic documentation on a microfilm.⁹ After an auction in 1958, the manuscript again disappeared from the eyes of researchers, whose only remedy was to return to Pešina's article and the images he had reproduced. This situation has fortunately changed, due to the recent move to digitize collections of manuscripts. A couple of years ago, when I examined the digitized manuscripts of the Pierpont Morgan Library, I accidentally discovered that the supposedly lost manuscript is now in the possession of the library and has been partially digitized. The rediscovery of the prayer book thus opens new possibilities for its better evaluation.¹⁰

The manuscript (New York, Morgan Library, MS M.921) consists of 156 parchment sheets. During its rebinding in the eighteenth century its size was cut down to approximately 15 × 9 cm. This corresponds well to other manuscripts of similar character. For example, the prayer book of King Ladislaus the Posthumous (NKP (= National Library of the Czech Republic), MS Teplá Ms.c. 87), which, as I shall demonstrate below, was created in the

8 For an up-to-date overview, see Horníčková, 'Images and Visual Culture'.

9 Pešina, 'Modlitební kniha' (The Prayer Book). Pešina's documentation of the manuscript is probably lost. I have not been able to locate the images in his bequest deposited at the Charles University.

10 It seems that more Czech authors have also noticed that the manuscript has resurfaced: see Bartlová, *Pravda zvítězila* (Truth Prevailed), p. 207 n. 33. Nevertheless, nobody has attempted to revise our knowledge about it. I would like to thank Robert Novotný for his help with obtaining the full photographic documentation of the manuscript.

same illuminators' workshop as George's prayer book, is 11.5 × 8 cm in size.¹¹ The text of George's prayer book is in Czech, and the vast majority of it was probably written by a single scribe, including the dedication of the book by the queen to the king on fols 1^v–2^r. The sole exceptions are the later owners' notes on the flyleaf and fol. 156^r (in German and English, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and the sentence on fol. 2^r giving the ancestry of the late Queen Joanna (Czech, perhaps of the sixteenth century). As attested by the handwriting, the only addition from the era contemporary with George is the text on fol. 1^r, a prayer labelled *Before the Battle*.¹² It is likely that this addition was added to the book during the king's life. The prayer corresponds to his situation in the years after he was given the book. Just a day before Christmas of 1466, Pope Paul II proclaimed George a heretic, formally deposed him from the throne, and called for a crusade against him and his subjects. The Czech king had to resist his opponents on all sides and take part in several military campaigns, despite the deteriorating state of his health. He certainly had enough reasons to add an additional prayer matching his situation. Logically, the prayer demonstrates that the queen's gift was probably well used.

The Decoration and its Authors

The decoration of the prayer book is relatively rich. It consists of six full-page illuminations and five figurative initials, as well as numerous ornamental initials, pen-work flourishes, and illuminated ornamental margins. Several illuminators were clearly involved, although they cooperated closely, perhaps even within a single workshop. At least two distinctive artists can be identified within the enterprise.

The first artist created the large full-page illuminations (fols 2^v, 5^v, 11^v, 32^v, 95^r, 138^v), which appear on sheets sewn into the manuscript after its completion, but before it was donated to the king. This is evident from the arrangement of the sheets in the manuscript and the dedication written on fol. 2^r, whereas on the back of the same page is a full-page illumination of the Madonna standing on the crescent.¹³ On the other hand, the backs of other full-page illuminations remained blank; therefore their commission seems to be a late decision of Queen Joanna to create an even more splendid manuscript than the one she had previously planned.

Jaroslav Pešina believed that the illuminator who painted the full-page images might be identical to Valentin Noh, a painter originating from Jindřichův

11 Studničková, 'Modlitební kniha' (Prayerbook).

12 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 1^r: 'przed boyem'.

13 I wish to thank Milada Studničková, whom I consulted over the arrangement of the sheets in the manuscript.



Figure 6.1. Prayer book of George of Poděbrady, fol. 12^r, Prague, 1466, The Morgan Library, MS M.92. Courtesy of The Morgan Library & Museum. Gift: Fellows, with funds from the Belle da Costa Greene Fund, 1965.

Hradec, who lived and worked in Prague.¹⁴ His work is attested mainly in slightly later manuscripts from the seventies of the fifteenth century, such as the antiphonary of Kutná Hora (NKP, XXIII A 2) dated to 1471. On the basis of the current knowledge of George's prayer book, I can confirm Pešina's conjecture. Of the two possibilities offered by him, namely, that the prayer book is a direct precursor of Valentin Noh's style or that it is directly his own work, I am inclined to the second option. I base my opinion on the comparisons of the prayer book with illuminations in the other manuscripts decorated by Valentin Noh. In the prayer book, he clearly did not create only full-page images, but he also participated in the decoration of at least one figural initial, the image of the king kneeling before enthroned Christ on fol. 12^r (see Figure 6.1).

This contains the unusual iconography of the king's gaze fixed to the red shining heart and the small head within it that are both placed in front of Christ's chest (see Figure 6.2). Close stylistical similarities exist between this illumination and the illumination of St Sigismund on fol. 221^v of the Hours of Sigismund Spahn of Bernstein (NKP, XII H 3B), which were decorated in Noh's workshop around 1477. The saint's face and the face of Christ, with far-sighted eyes and a club-shaped nose, are practically identical. Notably, similarities exist also with other images by Valentin Noh in the antiphonary of Kutná Hora. The prestigious commission of a prayer book for George of Poděbrady can therefore be added to Valentin Noh's oeuvre.

What makes Valentin Noh's full-page illuminations look so novel and unfamiliar in the context of earlier Bohemian production, as well as of the rest of the manuscript, is that they closely emulate contemporary German prints. Specifically, the Madonna standing on the crescent on fol. 2^v is a free copy of the engraving L.79 by Master E. S.¹⁵ In this particular case, Valentin Noh did not slavishly copy the engraving but rather reworked it using another print by the same engraver. The complicated fold of the drapery falling over the left hand of the Virgin was copied from Master E. S.'s engraving L.164 depicting St Barbara, while other features, such as the overall composition, the position of the crescent, Mary's hair, or Christ's body point to L.79. Similarly, the Agony in the Garden on fol. 5^v is a relatively close copy of engraving L.37 of the same subject by Master E. S. This time, Valentin Noh meticulously copied many details of his model, such as the crack in the plank of a fence surrounding the garden or the position of the sleeping apostles. The image of the Crucifixion on fol. 128^v copies another engraving supposedly designed by Master E. S. but known only from the later copy by Israhel van Meckenem under number G.106.¹⁶ The image of the Annunciation on fol. 95^r is another composite. The angel was created after

14 Pešina, 'Modlitební kniha' (The Prayer Book), p. 142. See also Pešina, 'Studie o malířství' (Study About the Painting), pp. 219–20 and Krása, 'Knižní malířství' (Manuscript Illumination), for more information about Valentin Noh.

15 All engravings are reproduced in Höfler, *Der Meister E.S.*

16 Höfler, *Der Meister E.S.*, p. 79 and p. 296.



Figure 6.2. Prayer book of George of Poděbrady, fol. 12^r (detail), Prague, 1466, The Morgan Library, MS M.921. Courtesy of The Morgan Library & Museum. Gift: Fellows, with funds from the Belle da Costa Greene Fund, 1965.

the engraving L.10 of Master E. S., as can be seen by the identically arranged folds of drapery falling from the angel's left leg. The draperies of the kneeling Virgin Mary show that her figure was modelled after the image of St Barbara in the depiction of her martyrdom in engraving L.161. Finally, the Pentecost on fol. 11^v seems to be modelled after an anonymous German single-leaf woodcut TIB 162.587–2 now preserved in London Guildhall Library.¹⁷

17 'German Single Leaf Woodcuts Before 1500', ed. by Field, p. 189. This identification is not as sure as the others, but the position of Mary's left leg, the veil on her head, and the overall arrangement of the apostles seems to point to this print. It is also possible that the woodcut is just a copy of another lost work, perhaps again by Master E.S.

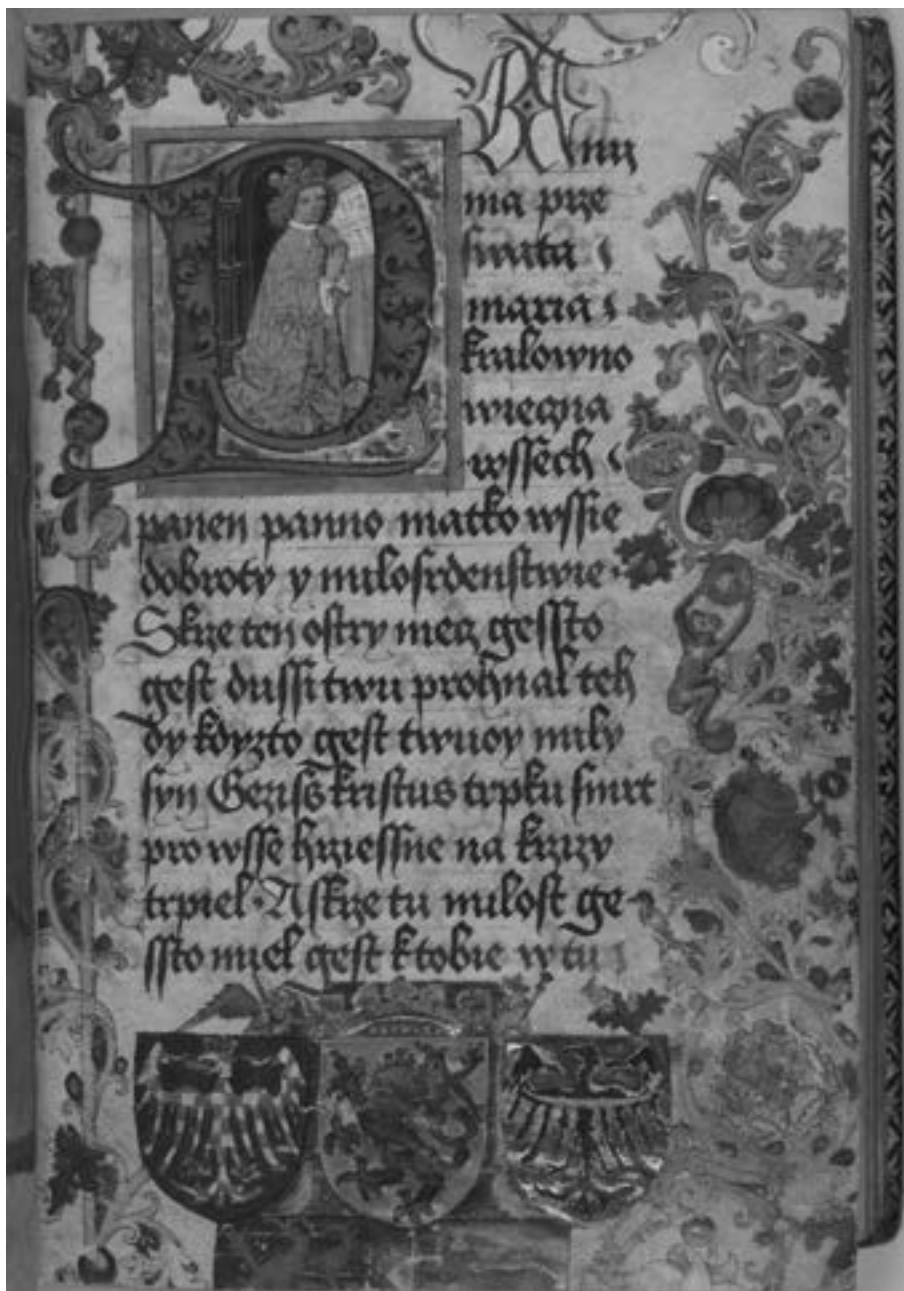


Figure 6.3. Prayer book of George of Poděbrady, fol. 3r, Prague, 1466, The Morgan Library, MS M.921. Courtesy of The Morgan Library & Museum. Gift: Fellows, with funds from the Belle da Costa Greene Fund, 1965.

Apart from those by Valentin Noh, some illuminations were created by another artist of distinctive individuality. The second artist probably created both the initials depicting the praying king on fols 3^r (see Figure 6.3) and 33^r (see Figure 6.4), and he was also responsible for the form of decoration in the borders. The two figurative initials recall, unlike the works of Valentin Noh, an older artistic tradition rooted in the pre-Hussite period. Jaroslav Pešina and later researchers such as Josef Krása identified this illuminator with the so-called Master of the Schellenberg Bible, an anonymous painter named after his main eponymous work, created in 1440.¹⁸ This illuminator was apparently active in Prague during a long period stretching from the 1440s to the 1460s.

Close similarities exist between the prayer book of King George and another prayer book decorated by this anonymous master for King Ladislaus the Posthumous.¹⁹ The young, prematurely deceased king was George's direct predecessor on the Czech throne. The Latin manuscript of Ladislaus's prayer book was originally produced in Austria around 1450, probably in the Benedictine monastery of Melk, where more manuscripts were written for the young king. Slightly later, presumably in the years 1453–1454, when Ladislaus visited Bohemia for the first time (and certainly before the autumn of 1457, when he arrived in Prague for the second time just a month before his death), this Austrian part of the prayer book was enlarged, probably in Prague, by the addition of the Psalter of St Jerome and other religious texts. It is the decoration of the Bohemian part that is associated with the Master of the Schellenberg Bible. Most notably of all, this Master created the illuminated initial on fol. 93^v with the depiction of Ladislaus praying. It is precisely this illumination that is similar to the illuminations on fols 3^r and 33^r of the prayer book of George of Poděbrady. The illuminations are characterized by a fine rendition of the faces, carefully modelled using shadows and smooth transitions of colour tones. This 'soft' rendering, slightly different from the sharper graphic approach of Valentin Noh, was characteristic of the older tradition of Prague painting. This tradition goes back to the so-called 'beautiful style' that flourished in the early fifteenth century before the Hussite Wars started in 1419.

The overall forms of the depiction of the two kings probably stem from this artistic tradition. The same image of a kneeling and praying owner had appeared already in the prayer book of an unknown Bohemian queen or princess.²⁰ The similarities do not seem to be random: in all cases, the donor kneels before the open book, which rests on a small lectern draped with a cover. In both the prayer book of King George and the prayer book of the

18 Prague, Strah. knih., MS D.G.III.15. See Pešina, 'Studie o malířství' (Study About the Painting), pp. 196–98; Krása, 'Knižní malířství' (Manuscript Illumination), pp. 395–97, Stejskal and Voit, *Illuminované rukopisy* (Illuminated Manuscripts), pp. 31–32 and 62–64.

19 Prague, NKP, MS Teplá Ms.c. 87. For its description see Studničková, 'Modlitební kniha' (Prayerbook).

20 Prague, KNM, V H 36, fol. 77^r. Brauer, 'The Prague Hours', pp. 516–18 identifies the owner rather unconvincingly as Anne of Bohemia, the wife of the English King Richard II.

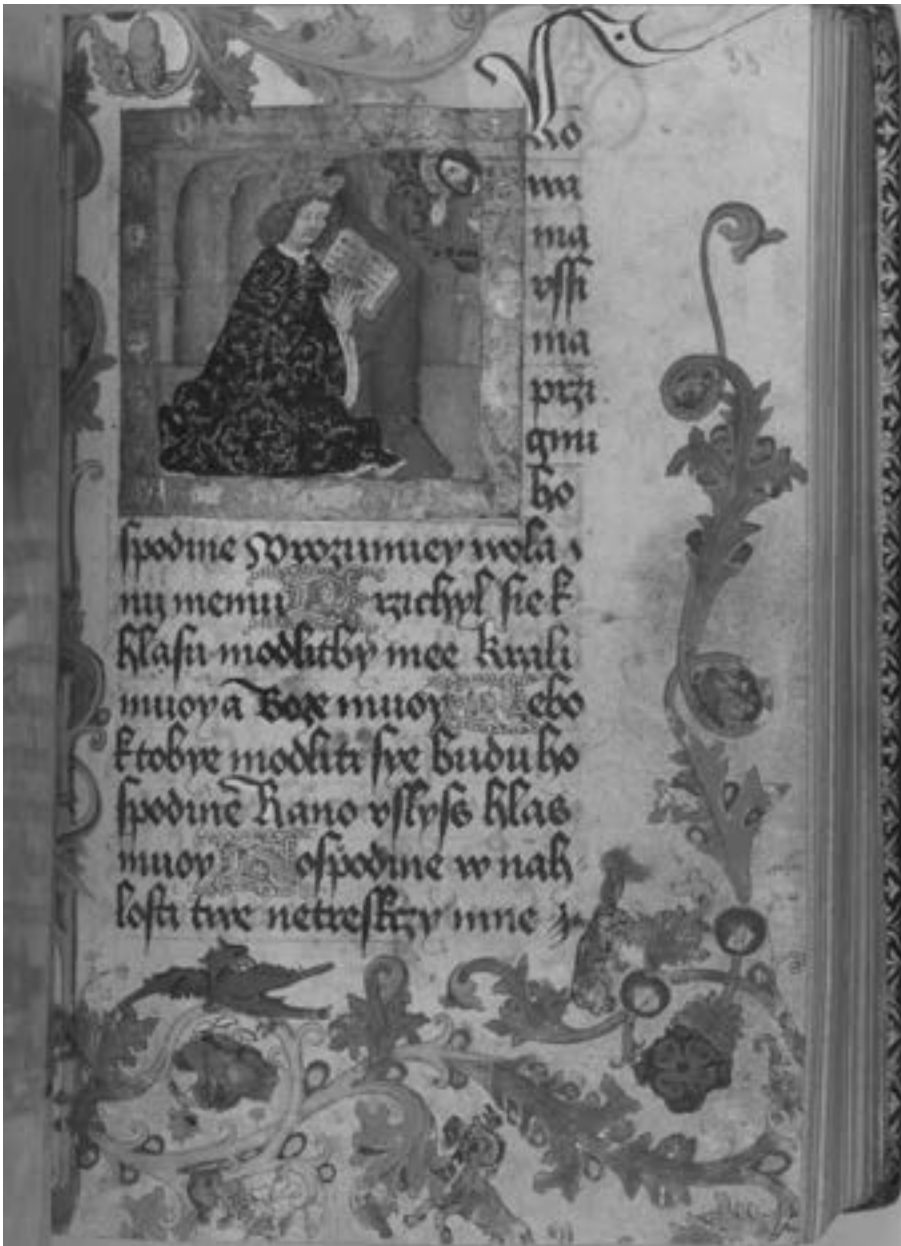


Figure 6.4. Prayer book of George of Poděbrady, fol. 33r, Prague, 1466, The Morgan Library, MS M.921. Courtesy of The Morgan Library & Museum. Gift: Fellows, with funds from the Belle da Costa Greene Fund, 1965.

unknown Bohemian queen or princess, the illuminator tried to inscribe real letters in the open books, whose meaning is hard to decipher due to later damage but which in fact repeat incipits of the prayers written on the same page.²¹ Moreover, all illuminations combine a golden background with a monochrome colour rendering of the initial itself. Hence, if this conjecture is correct, it means that in Prague workshops there must have existed a well-tried figural type of representation of the donor, which was readily applied in various privately commissioned prayer books. This type was transmitted from at least the 1390s. Such a finding is fully in accordance with the older hypothesis that the Master of the Schellenberg Bible followed the tradition of illuminators working for Wenceslas IV and the wider circle of his courtiers.²²

The attribution to the workshop of the Master of the Schellenberg Bible is confirmed also by the form of the marginal decoration. A comparison of the rich foliage on fol. 3^r of George's prayer book and on fol. 93^r of Ladislaus's prayer book is particularly revealing. The same type of plant ornament with relatively thick stems and wide acanthus leaves can be found in both. The birds sitting on the coats of arms of lands controlled by George are identical to the bird sitting next to the folded towel on fol. 93^r of Ladislaus's book. In both manuscripts there are identically depicted realistic flies as well as other animals, especially deer. The flowers blossoming among the acanthus leaves are identical, just like the golden balls which decorate some acanthus stems in both books. Close resemblances extend also to the marginal decoration of other books illuminated by the Schellenberg Master, such as the Schellenberg Bible itself.²³

Because similar, albeit slightly different, decorative foliage appears also in the later works of Valentin Noh, it is possible to entertain the idea that he was a pupil of the older Master of the Schellenberg Bible. Nevertheless, this question is difficult to solve on the basis of one single manuscript. The situation is probably made more complicated by the presence of another, less skilled, illuminator participating in the book alongside the two distinctive masters. This is visible in the crude illumination on fol. 94^v depicting the king praying before the Virgin Mary. The extensive use of black line to define the shapes could point to another anonymous illuminator active in Prague during the 1450s. This anonymous artist decorated the Latin Old Testament in the Prague National Library. In particular, it should be noted that the decoration of the first initial of the Book of Genesis of this manuscript is similar to the

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- 21 On fol. 3^r there is a small inscription in the king's book: 'Pa/ni/ma // prz(e)/swa/(ta)' ('My most saint Lady'), and on fol. 33^r: 'Slov/a ma/ ussima/ pr(zijmi) // Hosp/odine/ uroz/ (umiey)' (Lord, let your ears accept my words and understand them). In both examples the miniature text repeats the incipits of the prayers.
- 22 Krása, 'Knižní malířství' (Manuscript Illumination), p. 395 pointed to the anonymous Master of the Martyrology of Gerona. With the same illuminator Studničková, 'Modlitební kniha' (Prayerbook), pp. 213–15 connected the decoration of the Hours NKP, XVII H 30.
- 23 Prague, Strah. knih., MS D.G.III.15, fol. 1^v.

image on fol. 94^v of the prayer book.²⁴ In any case, there is no doubt that the decoration of the prayer book of King George was created in the workshops of Prague illuminators.

The Image of the King and Visual Propaganda of the Post-Hussite Period

The above finding has some importance in the light of the question posed by Pešina and others as to how much the illuminations represent the real likeness of George of Poděbrady. The small pictures in the prayer book could be the only preserved depictions of the Hussite king undoubtedly created during his life. Today, another depiction of the king is seen to be as more authentic. It is derived from the so-called *Hazmburg Codex*.²⁵ This manuscript, created after 1526 and perhaps even as late as the 1540s, is a copy from a gallery of Bohemian monarchs, which was painted in Prague Castle and perished in the great fire of 1541. Given the style of the clothing of the rulers depicted and the fact that King Louis (d. 1526) is portrayed as an adult man with a beard, the gallery itself is unlikely to have been created before the 1520s. This kind of portrayal of Louis appears only around the mid-1520s. Even though one can speculate that the *Hazmburg Codex* and the lost gallery reflected some earlier tradition, such as the lost statue of King George at Týn Church, the appearance of King George as a robust man with a characteristic moustache is ultimately a product of the *Hazmburg Codex*.

This characteristic is missing in all illuminations of the prayer book. The difference between the two types has led some scholars to conclude that Ladislaus the Posthumous is portrayed in George's book.²⁶ This theory, however, is hardly robust. Not only was the young king not a fluent Czech speaker, which means he would probably not have chosen this language as a means of personal piety, but it is also difficult to assume that the book would have been completed almost ten years after his death. Moreover, the heraldic decoration on fol. 3^r of George's book, which seems to be contemporary with the king's image, does not contain coats of arms of lands ruled by Ladislaus but not ruled by George. This is the case of the Duchy of Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary, although these coats of arms regularly appear in other Ladislaus's manuscripts.²⁷

24 Prague, NKP, IA 52, fol. 4^r. Stejskal and Voit, *Illuminované rukopisy* (Illuminated Manuscript), p. 64.

25 Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. 8043 Han, see also discussion of the codex in Zágora, 'Jiří z Poděbrad' (George of Poděbrady).

26 Macek, 'Jiří z Poděbrad' (George of Poděbrady), p. 187.

27 Studničková, 'Modlitební kniha' (Prayerbook), pp. 88–89. The heraldic decoration, on the other hand, perfectly reflects the arrangement of coats of arms on the great seal of King George of Poděbrady. Even the birds sitting on the coats of arms are almost identical with

Therefore, unlike Pešina and others, I believe that the illuminations in the prayer book depict the king's real, albeit slightly idealized, likeness around the year 1466. The tradition of the Hazmburg manuscript has simply a lower authenticity than the personal prayer book of the king himself. It would be hard to imagine that Prague painters had no opportunity to see George of Poděbrady, who had resided in the same city since he became the steward of the kingdom in the late 1440s. Moreover, he did not live in the remote Prague Castle but in the King's Palace in Prague Old Town itself, and he regularly attended masses and religious processions in the city. The king's portraits in the book, created probably by three different artists, agree on the same set of features: George is depicted as a smooth-shaven, middle-aged man with thick cheeks and sloping lips. In all depictions he has long curly brown hair, which also appears on the damaged statue of the king originating from the gate of the royal town of Slaný.²⁸

The depiction of the king in the prayer book is not just a minor detail, but also plays an important role in any discussion about the character of artistic production during the post-Hussite period. Surviving paintings are seen as polemics between the Catholics and the Utraquists. Such theories are often based on the assumption that the paintings allegedly contain crypto-portraits of the steward of the kingdom and the later King George. The most prominent example of this approach to post-Hussite art is the interpretation of the central panel of the Rajhrad Altar with its depiction of the Crucifixion. The figure with the characteristic moustache on the panel was identified with George of Poděbrady on the basis of the tradition transmitted by the Hazmburg Codex.²⁹ A long-haired young man standing beside the good centurion in the Rajhrad Crucifixion supposedly represents the young King Ladislav Pohrobek (Ladislav the Posthumous), who allegedly encouraged the steward, the future King George, to renounce his heresies. However, if the depictions in the prayer book are true, then they, along with the crude and damaged statue in Slaný, indicate that the king's likeness did not necessarily depend on his moustache. According to this view, the seeming likeness of the soldier on the Rajhrad altarpiece and the king in the painting is more akin to the romanticism of the nineteenth century than it would be to real medieval religious propaganda. This is also the case with another alleged portrait of George, in this case depicted as a companion of Herod, on the wing of the altar of St John the Baptist at

birds on the seal.

- 28 The statue is reproduced in Zágora, 'Jiří z Poděbrad' (George of Poděbrady).
 29 Bartlová, *Poctivé obrazy* (Honest Images), pp. 323–24; Bartlová, *Pravda zvítězila* (Truth Prevailed), p. 191, Bartlová, 'Sigismundus Rex', p. 403. A different solution of 'crypto-portraits' in the altarpiece was offered by Franzen, 'Catholic Media', who dates the altarpiece to around 1440 and not to the 1450s like Bartlová. See also Franzen in Boehm and Fajt, *Prague*, pp. 319–21.

Zátoň (now National Gallery, Prague).³⁰ At the very least, both examples give due warning that the analysis of religious images should treat the problem of George's 'characteristic' moustache much more carefully.

Relations between Text and Image

Previous scholarship on the prayer book has concentrated mainly on its decoration and practically omitted its relation to the text. To explore these relations, we need to examine the contents of the book more closely. As I have already indicated, the text proper begins only after the additional prayer against enemies (fol. 1^r) and the dedication of Queen Joanna (fols 1^v–2^r). The first prayer addresses the Virgin Mary (fols 3^r–10^v), and the first folio of this prayer bears the most elaborate decoration in the book, with a figurative initial accompanied by a heraldic representation of George's lands (fol. 3^r). The splendour of this page is heightened further by an adjacent full-page illumination by Valentin Noh (fol. 2^v). The topic of Noh's image, the Madonna standing on the crescent, corresponds to the contents of the prayer. The image serves to turn the attention of the reader to 'the holiest Mother and the eternal Queen' as Mary is invoked in the first sentence of the prayer. The presence of an angel who holds, together with a small image of a king, a crown over the Bohemian coat of arms seems to point to the divine protection of the kingdom. If the king leads his subjects to venerate God's honour, as it is written in the dedication of Queen Joanna, he can hope that a guardian angel will protect not only him but also his kingdom. This is symbolized by another pair of complementary images. While the king holds the sceptre, a symbol of royal power, the angel holds the sword, a symbol of justice and protection.

As with the introductory image of the Madonna, other full-page illuminations closely correspond to the text of the prayer book. Thus, the Agony in the Garden on fol. 5^v refers to the text on fol. 6^r, which calls upon the Mother of God to help the devotee in the name of the painful trials Jesus undertook for the sake of mankind. The Saviour's prayer on the Mount of Olives is specifically mentioned among them:

Napominam tie mila matko bozie skrze tu preteskliwu hodinu wniezto
Syn tuoy mily na oliwetske horze klecze Bohu otczy se pomodlil prose
Mohloliby to kterak byti aby kalich geho krwe prolitiece minul.³¹

(I beg you, sweet Mother of God, through the most sorrowful hour
in which your beloved Son knelt on the Mount of Olives in order to

30 This identification has an even longer scholarly tradition than the identification of George on the altarpiece of Rajhrad: see Bartlová, *Poctivé obrazy* (Honest Images), p. 275 for details.

31 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 6^r.

pray to his Father, asking him whether it could be that the chalice of his blood might not be spilt.)

The initial prayer to the Virgin Mary is followed by the Seven Penitential Psalms (fols 12^r–27^v). Again, a full-page illumination of the Pentecost refers to the first sentence of the prayer, which turns to the Holy Ghost: ‘Swateho ducha milost racz byti s nami. Amen’³² (May the grace of the Holy Ghost be with us. Amen).

The short set of Seven Penitential Psalms was amongst the most popular medieval prayers and was almost a compulsory accompaniment of various Books of Hours.³³ The figurative initial of the king kneeling before the enthroned Christ is in accordance with the common depiction normally chosen for this set of prayers.³⁴ Despite this, the illuminator combined the traditional motif of the Eucharist, sometimes also present in pictures accompanying the Seven Penitential Psalms, in a novel way. This takes the form of another small face and a ray of light emerging from the wound in the chest of the seated Christ. The Seven Penitential Psalms are followed by the Psalter of St Jerome (fols 33^r–52^v), which appears after a brief description of various principles of the Christian faith (fols 27^v–31^r). The full-page image of St Jerome on fol. 32^v presumably helped the reader to locate this set of short prayers easily. An introductory comment was written in the rubric for these psalms on fols 31^r–31^v just before the image of St Jerome and the image featuring the kneeling king. This says a lot about the function of the image: the introductory text was probably not thought to be important for the daily usage of the reader, so it appears before the image. The reason probably is that it contains merely an explanation of how and why to pray and not a prayer per se. The set of short prayers attributed to St Jerome was popular, because it was designed for those who could not pray the whole sequence of psalms or Marian Hours. The introductory text explicitly names the sick, pilgrims, and those who fight against their enemies among those who might benefit from Jerome’s psalter and hope for salvation, even if their prayers constitute a much shorter office than that of the others.³⁵

The prayer book of King George continues with two independent prayers, one directed to the omnipotent God (fols 52^v–53^r) and the other to the Lamb of God (in other words the *Agnus Dei*, fols 53^v–55^r). These prayers precede a litany (fols 55^r–58^v). The text of the litany does not differ from other examples common in Bohemia — the list of saints contains, besides early Christian

32 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 30^r.

33 König and Bartz, *Das Stundenbuch*, pp. 30–31. The popularity of these prayers is attested by more Bohemian prayer books, e.g. Prague, NKP, XVII H 30, fols 19^r–37^v or Prague, NKP, MS Teplá Ms.c. 87, fols 50^v–59^v.

34 Wieck, *The Book of Hours*, p. 97.

35 One can find the same explanation (written in Latin) in the prayer book of King Ladislaus, Prague, NKP, MS Teplá Ms.c. 87, fols 90^r–90^v.

martyrs and Bohemian saints, early Christian fathers, and even St Francis of Assisi, although contemporary Franciscan devotion was not popular among Utraquists. On the following folios additional shorter prayers appear, most of them addressed simply to 'the Lord' or 'Jesus Christ'. But there are also prayers addressed to the Virgin Mary, such as 'O bright Mother of God'.³⁶ A special position is occupied by the prayer on fols 78^v–79^r, which is introduced by an illuminated figure of a king drawn with a golden line, although the size of the initial is modest in comparison with the other depictions of him. The prayer is introduced by a short explanation of its importance:

Tato Modlitba gest nalezena w Geruzalemye w Caple swate marzie kdyzto Pan Kristus syn Bozii biczowan gest a gest welmi uziteczna.³⁷

(This prayer was found in Jerusalem in the Chapel of St Mary Magdalene, at the place where the Son of God was flagellated. The prayer is very useful.)

Further prayers dedicated to the Virgin Mary follow, as well as the prayer dedicated to a 'Holy Angel' (swatemu Angelu) on fols 80^v–81^r. The book includes also special prayers, which were to be read by the owner before the Holy Communion (fols 81^r–83^r) as well as afterwards (fols 83^r–85^v). After a short retelling of Christ's stay in Bethany shortly before his Passion (fols 87^v–94^v), the last substantial block of text, the shortened Hours of the Virgin, begins (fols 94^v–153^v). Again, the illumination with the praying king, this time kneeling before the Madonna and Child, defines the beginning of an important set of prayers. The accompanying full-page illumination of the Annunciation corresponds to the common decoration of prayers said during Matins and reflects the angelic greeting written just before the first psalm.³⁸ The last full-page illumination, featuring the Crucifixion (fol. 138^v), was reserved for Vespers. Again, there is a strong connection with the text, as the last prayer before Vespers contains a reference to the moment when the crucified Christ entrusted Mary to his favourite disciple John. The whole book concludes with a few short prayers addressing the Lord directly on fols 154^r–55^v.

From the above-mentioned summary, it follows that the decoration of George's prayer book is by no means accidental. The images are closely intertwined with the text. Important textual units are signalled by the initials with the kneeling ruler. In three cases, the king turns towards the object of his devotion, God himself on fols 12^r and 33^r, and the Virgin Mary on fol. 94^v. Similarly, the segmentation of the book is emphasized by full-page illuminations, which enabled the user to leaf through the book quickly and find the most

36 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 74^v: 'O presstiajna matko Bozie' (Oh, the merriest mother of God).

37 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 77^v.

38 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 96^r: 'Zdrawa Maria milosti plna hospodin s tebu' (Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you).

important prayers. It is not surprising that the most elaborate decoration appears at the beginning of the shorter prayers like the introductory prayer to the Virgin Mary, the Seven Penitential Psalms, and the Psalter of St Jerome. The busy king seemingly did not have too much time to spend marking the Hours. This is reflected by the shortening of the Hours of the Virgin and the fact that only Matins and Vespers are indicated by larger illuminations. The Office of the Hours, already adapted to the needs of the laity, was further shortened and rearranged in the prayer book of King George to serve its busy owner. The system of decoration also reflects this fact. On the other hand, it seems that there was an already-established pictorial tradition — as can be demonstrated by the decoration of the Psalter of St Jerome. It is no wonder that the images of the kneeling King George on fol. 33^r and King Ladislaus on fol. 93^r of his book are so similar and that both kings adore the Lord who appears to them in a cloud: they represent products of the same workshop on the same subject.

The Text: Between Utraquism and Catholicism

Finally, I shall turn my attention to the text itself. This is the most difficult task, as I am able to provide only a rather preliminary and scattered sample of comparisons with limited claims to universal relevance. This is due to the lack of scholarship in the field. Not only is there no comprehensive survey of Bohemian private devotional books — there is not even a rudimentary list. Moreover, some examples already mentioned in published scholarship are difficult to consult as they are in private hands and it is difficult to access their documentation. My comparisons, unfortunately, reflect this fact.

In Bohemia, the tradition of Books of Hours used by the laity dates back at least to the time of Charles IV who, in his autobiography, mentions how he learned to pray the cycle of the Hours during his youth in France.³⁹ The prayer books of laymen, translated into the Czech language, are preserved from the end of the fourteenth century, as are the previously mentioned Book of Hours belonging to an unknown Bohemian queen or princess and a Book of Hours that belonged to an unknown woman.⁴⁰ The popularity of private prayer books flourished also in the aftermath of the Hussite Wars: it seems that they were commissioned by devout Utraquists as well as Catholics. The owners were not only the members of the royal family or the highest aristocracy but included burghers, as exemplified by the Book of Hours written for the Chotěšov burgess Johanka.⁴¹

39 Brauer, 'The Prague Hours', p. 500.

40 Prague, KNM, MS V H 36; NKP, MS XVII H 30. The second manuscript is slightly later (circa 1400–1410) than the first; see Studničková, 'Hodiny o přeslavné Panně Marii' (Hours of the Most Glorious Virgin Mary).

41 Prague, KNM, MS XVI G 31.

The variety of these books is remarkable. Unlike the situation in Western Europe, it is not easy to classify them. It seems that the cycle of Marian Hours was not as dominant in Bohemia as elsewhere. In addition to clear outliers, such as the Oxford prayer book of King Wenceslas IV, the contents of which are based on the office compiled to honour St Mathew, the Marian Office is missing even in other important manuscripts, such as in the Czech prayer book of John of Rosenberg.⁴² Nevertheless, in Bohemia, the Hours of the Virgin Mary together with the Seven Penitential Psalms still featured as the most frequent contents in devotional manuscripts intended for the personal use of the laity, as in the West. Somewhat differently, it seems that some of the typical parts of the Hours as they appeared in Western manuscripts were less popular. This is the case with the Hours of the Holy Cross, which are, as far as I know, included only in the Latin *orationale* commissioned by the Silesian clerk Sigismund Spahn of Bernstein.⁴³ However, any generalization is difficult at this point, given the incomplete and uncertain nature of published scholarship in this area. It also seems that the Office of the Dead appears only rarely in Bohemian prayer books, but it is difficult to say whether this relates to the Utraquist rejection of Purgatory.⁴⁴

The individual Czech prayers were mostly derived from Latin versions. So far, only a little work has been done on the development of individual translations. From a limited comparison of various manuscripts, it seems that there were several versions of individual translations. As an example, I compare the beginning of the Hours in the two oldest extant Bohemian prayer books — the book of the unknown Bohemian queen or princess and the Book of Hours belonging to an unknown Czech woman. Both translations seem to be closely related:

Hospodyne rty mogle otewrzy. At usta ma zwyestugy chwalu twu. Boze ku poczatku memu przyhleday. Hospodyne ku pomocy mey pospyey.⁴⁵

(Lord, please open my lips so that my mouth may proclaim your praise.
God, please consider my origin. Lord, please hurry up to help me.)

Hospodyne rty mee otewrzy. A usta ma budu zwyestowaty chwalu twu. Boze ku pomocy me przyrzy. Hospodyne ku pomozeny memu pospyess.⁴⁶

(Lord, please open my lips. And my mouth will proclaim your praise.
God, please consider aiding me. Lord, please hurry up to help me.)

42 Prague, NKP, MS XVII J 8.

43 Prague, NKP, MS XIII H 3b, fols 1^r–44^v.

44 To resolve this question, one would need to make a thorough survey of the preserved manuscripts.

45 Prague, KNM, MS V H 36, fols 2^r–2^v.

46 Prague, NKP, MS XVII H 30, fol. 2^f.

The prayer book of George of Poděbrady uses almost the same words as the second version above, referring more to help than origin:

Hospodine rty me otewrzy. A usta ma zwiestugy chwalu twu. Boze ku pomoczi me wzezri. Hospodine mie ku pomocy pospiess.⁴⁷

(Lord, please open my lips. And my mouth proclaims the praise of God. Lord, please consider aiding me. Lord, please hurry up to help me.)

A similar choice of words appears in another Utraquist Book of Hours written in the 1480s:

Hospodine otewrzesz rty mee a usta ma zwiestugitt chwalu twu. Boze ku pomocy mee wezri. Hospodine aby mi pomohl pospiess.⁴⁸

(Lord, please open my lips. And let my mouth proclaim the praise of God. Lord, please consider aiding me. Lord, please hurry up to help me.)

The changes reflect the development of the language and the translations over time, rather than the denomination of the owner:

O pane gezukryste genz toto swate tielo s slawne panny brzicha przigial.⁴⁹

(O Lord Jesus, who has accepted this holy body from glorious Virgin Mary's belly.)

Pane gezu criste genz toto przeswate tielo slawnee panny marige ziwota przigial sy.⁵⁰

(O Lord Jesus, who has accepted this most holy body from glorious Virgin Mary's belly.)

While the first quotation comes from the prayer book of John of Rosebnerg, the second belongs to the prayer book of George of Poděbrady. The same prayer was apparently popular among both Catholics and Utraquists. Yet it is remarkable that it comes with a different justification as to why it is important to say this particular prayer. While the text in the book of Rosenberg promises two thousand years of indulgences that believers can gain, when they recite the prayer during the moment of the consecration of the holy host, the text in the book of King George says something else.⁵¹ It states that the prayer was found in the Chapel of Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem, at the

47 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fols 94^v–96^r.

48 Prague, NKP, MS XVII G 3, fol. 11^v.

49 Prague, NKP, MS XVII J 8, fol. 30^v.

50 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 78^r.

51 Prague, NKP, MS XVII J 8, fols 30^r–30^v.

place where Christ was whipped, and all that is said is that the prayer is 'a very useful one'.⁵²

Thus, there is a notable difference between the prayer book of George of Poděbrady and similar manuscripts belonging to Catholics. While in the prayer books of John of Rosenberg or Ladislaus the Posthumous the descriptions of the prayers speak freely about indulgences promised for reciting given prayers, nothing like that is mentioned in the prayer book of George of Poděbrady and other undoubtedly Utraquist prayer books.⁵³ The rejection of the economy of indulgences counted among the oldest demands of the Hussite reformation. It is not surprising that it still played an important role in the second half of the fifteenth century. It seems that an explanation proclaiming the possible indulgences one can get by reciting certain prayers was not attractive even to the highly moderate Utraquist or his wife.

In this essay I have tried to shed light on a few possible lines of interpretation of the rediscovered prayer book. The manuscript owned by King George is not only a remarkable artefact interlinking text and image, but also a specific example of a distinctive genre of private devotional literature. Its importance is bolstered all the more because it came from an environment where prayer books were rather individual products and not the result of mass production as in the Netherlands or northern France. As such, the diverse corpus of surviving Bohemian prayer books has much to offer and it surely contains much that is of interest about private devotion in a society divided by religion. Unfortunately, no systematic research has ever been undertaken on this corpus. It is to be hoped that we will be able to fill this gap in future.⁵⁴

52 New York, Morgan Libr., MS M.921, fol. 77^v: 'Tato Modlitba gest nalezena w Geruzalemye w Caple swate marzie kdyzto Pan kristus syn Bozii biczowan gest a gest welmi uziteczna' (This prayer has been found in Jerusalem, in the chapel of Saint Mary, where the Lord Christ, the son of God, was flagellated. And it is a very useful prayer).

53 See for example Prague, NKP, MS Teplá Ms.c. 87, fol. 121^v: 'Beatus Gregorius Papa Quatuordecim milia annorum dedit omnibus fidelibus devote oracione subscriptis dicentibus', i.e. 'The Blessed Pope St Gregory has given (an indulgence worth) fourteen thousand years to all worshippers devoutly uttering the prayer written below'. For Utraquist prayer books, see Brno, Moravská zems. knih., MS MK 113, which comes from the second half of the fifteenth century.

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The 'Goostly Chaffare' of Reginald Pecock

Everyday Craft, Commerce, and Custom Meet Syllogistic Polemic in Fifteenth-Century London

In mid-fifteenth-century England, Reginald Pecock, Bishop of Chichester, attempted, in a universalizing array of some thirty or so interlinked vernacular tracts and manuals (of which only half a dozen survive to the present day), to recodify the entirety of Christian doctrine and catechesis in his own new multi-textual system of seven 'matters' and four 'tables'. This somewhat megalomaniac recodification aimed to cater to the diverse capacities and situations of all Christians in England, whatever their education.¹ Pecock's prime political, rather than general, purpose, however, was to confound the

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- 1 For general studies on Pecock, see Scase, *Reginald Pecock*; Green, *Bishop Reginald Pecock*; Brockwell, *Bishop Reginald Pecock and the Lancastrian Church*, and Campbell, *The Call to Read*. For developments in the fifteenth-century English Church as a context for the religious literary culture of the time, see Gillespie, 'Chichele's Church'. Campbell's monograph as a whole, covering the construction of Pecock's audience and the expectation that it should be able to exercise reason in educating itself, often provides useful context and parallels for this essay.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, *New Communities of Interpretation*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 175–199

Lollards and to win them back from their errors by reasoning with them in the vernacular. Aware of his audience, be it heterodox or the mainstream majority, Pecock appealed to their common social and occupational experience to win them over and to teach them the rudimentary vernacular theology that he wished them to master and obey. Parallels with the world of work and social and economic transactions — which are the focus of this essay — festoon his texts. Indeed, Pecock was keen to characterize his entire programme as a form of spiritual merchandise, ‘goostly chaffare’, for the profit and ease of the people of England:

[H]ow schulde a man bring people of englonde into wil forto bye or to freely receyue and haue precieuse and profitable chaffre, which he had fett fer from opire cuntrees bizonde þe see for her profite and eese, but if he wolde denounce and proclame þat he had such chaffre, and which were þe preciosite and þe profitablenes of hit, for loue and zeel which he had into her good and availe; And 3it herbi and herfore ouzte not þis man be holde a proud avaunter of him silf or of his chaffare. Wherefore, if y be in like caas of my goostly chaffare, no man putte me so liztli in þe defaute of which, god, þou knowist, y canne not in no wise fynde my silf gilty.²

(How should a man bring people of England into wanting to buy or freely to receive and have precious and profitable merchandise which he had fetched far from other countries beyond the sea for their profit and ease, unless he would announce and proclaim that he had such merchandise, and what the preciousness/value and advantageous usefulness/profitability of it might be, on account of the love and zeal which he had towards their good and advantage/avail? And yet hereby and herefore this man ought not to be held a proud vaunter of himself or of his merchandise. Wherefore, if I may be held to be such concerning my spiritual merchandise, no man should so lightly put me at fault for that of which, God, you know, I cannot in any way find myself guilty.)

Just because Pecock uses this mercantile image so hyperbolically, this does not mean that the ideology of the mercantile should be taken as a universal prism through which to understand his overall works. It is nevertheless relevant, however, to observe and interpret the occasions on which he makes use of occupational parallels and everyday experience to teach the laity not only the contents of doctrine but also its methodology. On this particular occasion, Reginald allows himself to vaunt his wares, because the benefits of his ‘goostly chaffare’ (spiritual merchandise) are so great, and also because his motivation for advertising it is not his own profit but the ‘loue and zeel’ (love

2. Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. by Hitchcock, p. 83. See Campbell, *Call to Read*, pp. 237–43 not only for discussion of this passage but also for Pecock’s endeavour to cultivate social, educational, and amicable relations between clergy and laity. For the latter, see also pp. 223–31.

and zeal) that he has for the 'good and availle' (good and advantageousness/avail) of his congregation of spiritual customers. This 'goostly chaffare' is of such great value that no amount of hyperbole spent in advertising it is false. In a sense, Pecock is protected from his own personal bumptiousness by the value and profitability of everything that he wishes to communicate throughout his oeuvre. It is appropriate too that he should declare before his God that he cannot find himself guilty of inappropriate vaunting, simply because his merchandise is so valuable. This declaration must be taken at face value, simply because it is unthinkable that Pecock would knowingly have committed blasphemy in uttering it.

Tragically, however, for all his ambition and optimism, Pecock's project backfired spectacularly: he found himself accused of heresy; his works were consigned to public burning; he lost his bishopric, and he died imprisoned in Thorney Abbey in the Fens of East Anglia soon afterwards.³ Why did things go so badly wrong? Pecock had undoubtedly made more than his fair share of enemies in the Church establishment. It certainly did not help him that in 1447 in London he had delivered a scandalously received sermon proclaiming that bishops were not required to preach and had other priorities in their working duties. What seems finally to have undone him, however, was a measure of political bad luck — being caught on the wrong side at the wrong time during a civil war (the War of the Roses, in which the Houses of Lancaster and York competed murderously for the throne). He managed to alienate the Mayor of London, who complained formally to Henry VI of his alleged doctrinal transgressions. A leading magnate, Viscount Beaumont, also took steps to see him put on trial. In late 1457, Pecock endured examination and condemnation on a number of charges (several of which were grotesque exaggerations or outright falsehoods) of bringing the Doctors and Church decrees into question and of writing to the laity in the vernacular on ecclesiastical matters. Only a humiliating public recantation saved him from the flames.

One key factor in Pecock's demise was, of course, that, despite his arguing for orthodoxy and the authority of the Church, he wished to share theology in the vernacular with the laity, albeit from a position of pedagogic dominance. Pecock believed that layfolk were well capable of following theological reason, and he had every confidence that they would understand his arguments, make up their own minds, and, undoubtedly, agree with him.⁴ This approach proved to be perilously over-optimistic. Moreover, Pecock's wholesale rejection, deconstruction, and repackaging into his Tables of Virtues of common doctrinal formats, such as the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Works of Mercy,

3 For the biographical information cited in this essay (and more), see generally Scase, *Reginald Pecock*. See Campbell, *Call to Read*, pp. 148–80, 198–216 for the place of reason and how it relates to Scripture in Pecock's theological and socio-educational scheme.

4 For discussion of Pecock's attitude to managing a potentially critical and lively laity, see Westphall, 'Reconstructing the Mixed Life', esp. pp. 267–70.

and so on, was profoundly alienating, especially to the Church establishment he sought to defend. This alienation was doubtless sharpened, not only by the brash neologizing, the self-advertisingly complicated syntax, the learned jargon, and the relentlessly scholastic methodology of his writings, but also by the endless confidence with which Pecock brashly announced that his works, and the powers of human reason that they glorified, offered greater grounding in divinity and moral law than Holy Scripture itself. Reason, for him, came before the Bible. Reason was all. God never did anything against reason. The Bible embodied and followed divine reason and never opposed it; therefore reason — something all humans could exercise — was greater than the Bible. It is not difficult to see that Pecock was inviting trouble with what he said and how he said it.

In two of his works in particular, the *Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy* and the *Reule of Crysten Religioun*, Pecock inserts into his hyper-rationalistic theologizing some intriguing arguments invoking the occupational and social behaviours and the common experience of his intended lay audience, whom he sought to turn into rudimentary vernacular theologians and philosophers. As we shall see, homely parallels of carting, butchery, goldsmithing, cutlerycraft, falcon-catching, horse mills, shoe leather, and even of the London Midsummer's Eve custom of bringing branches and flowers into the city are worked by Pecock into the flow of his densely technical syllogistic prose in order to service his ongoing argument for the primacy of reason over Scripture and for the accompanying separation of philosophy from divinity.

For Pecock, reason was the defining characteristic of the human soul created in the image of God. This is why, in the *Reule of Crysten Religioun*, he chose to focus his prayer on the reason within the soul rather than on the *affectus*. Addressing the Almighty, Pecock implores him, on behalf of all who would read and hear his work, specifically for the illumination of reason:

PREisable lord and þankeable god aboue alle þingis, siþen þou hast vouched saaf of þyn infinite mercy and pitee, loue and desijr to illumyne and enform vs, and so cleerli and so plenteuously bi lizt of natural resoun in knowing of vs silf in oure soule side and of þee, ffirst þat þou art and aftir what þou art, what þou art in þi noble dignitees and worþinessis, and þat þou art and schalt be to vs in maner of oure eende and final blis, contynue now ferþer, lord, þin illumynacioun, informacioun and techyng, we bisechen þee.⁵

(Praiseworthy Lord and God thankable above all things, since you, of your infinite mercy and pity, have vouched safe a love and desire to illuminate and inform/instruct/direct/inspire us (and so clearly and so plenteously by the light of natural reason) in the knowing of ourselves on the part of our soul and in the knowing of you — first

5 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, pp. 223–24.

that you are, and, after what you are, what you are in your noble dignities and worthinesses, and that you are and shall be to us in the manner of our end and final bliss: continue now further, Lord, your illumination, informing/instruction/direction/inspiration, and teaching, we beseech you.)

The knowledge that reason bestows is knowledge of the self and knowledge of God, his attributes, and his providential, salvific plan for mankind. Reason, however, is not quite all: Pecock acknowledges that some truths may only be disclosed by revelation and not by reason alone, although these truths are nearly always amenable to reason. Most truths are nevertheless accessible through reason, such as the law of nature ('lawe of kynde') which God asks humanity to keep, and from which other laws and truths derive. Truth after truth and the whole law of nature are accessible to the natural light which God has set in souls as the defining quality of their humanity:

In proceding vpon þis mater forto schewe how bi strengþe and lizt of natural resoun men myzte come into knowing, lord, of þi lawe of kynde which þou askist to be kept of men, and into what treuþis of þilk law þey myzt and schulde firste come forto hem knowe, and into what oþere trouþis next, and so in what ordre and processe þey myzt and schulde, if þei wolde, fynde treuþe afir treuþe into tyme þei schulde fynde out al þi lawe of kinde bi natural witt and natural lizt which þou lord god hast sett in her soulis, þus y bigynne.⁶

(In proceeding on this matter in order to show how, by the strength and light of natural reason, men might come to the knowing, Lord, of your law of nature, which you ask to be kept by men, and to what truths of this law they might and should first come in order to know them, and into what other truths next, and so in what order and process they might and should, if they would, find truth after truth, until which time they should find out all your law of nature by natural intelligence and natural light which you, Lord God, have set in their souls, thus I begin.)

Where other religious writers would present progress in divine understanding as a penitential or affective process of ascent, Pecock's ladder of ascent has rungs of reason. God has accordingly placed a book of the judgement ('doom') of reason in the human soul. This book supersedes and precedes the Bible itself, so much so that it may be called 'inward scripture', prior and superior to the mere 'outward Bible':

And ferther thus: If eny man be feerd lest he trespase to God if he make ouer litle of Holi Scripture, which is the outward writing of the Oold

6 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, pp. 224–25.

Testament and of the Newe, y aske whi is he not aferd lest he make ouer litle and apprise ouer litle the inward Scripture of the bifore spoken lawe of kinde written bi God him silf in mannis soule, whanne he made mannis soule to his ymage and liknes? [...] For certis this inward book or Scripture of lawe of kinde is more necessarie to Cristen men, and is more worthi than is the outward Bible and the kunnyng ther of.⁷

(And further thus: if any man is afraid that he may sin against God if he makes too little of Holy Scripture, which is the outward writing of the Old Testament and of the New, I ask why is he not afraid that he may make too little and appreciate too little the inward Scripture of the aforementioned law of nature written by God himself in man's soul when he made man's soul in his image and likeness? [...] For certainly, this inward book or Scripture of the law of nature is more necessary to Christian men, and is more worthy than is the outward Bible and the knowing thereof.)

All humans, as a consequence of carrying this divine book inside themselves and reading, understanding, and interpretatively (re)articulating it, are potential metascriptural (self-) exegetes and theologians simply by exercising their God-given abilities. Interiority itself, in this so-called age of affective piety, is, for Pecock, reason-based. For him, the workings of the soul and the workings of God may be articulated in a divine yet totally human language of reason. Pecock thereby accords a human discourse of reason equivalence with, and even priority over, what may be articulated by or through Scripture.

Such discourse and reason are highly portable and generative. For Pecock, the reason that produces a theological treatise or even a full-blown *summa* in no way differs significantly from the reason exercised daily in the business lives of lawyers and merchants. Given that basic theology is no more difficult than technical issues of law or commerce, the socio-religious domain is opened up to the profound translational effect of theological thought becoming the province of the intelligent layman — or as Pecock puts it:

[Y] haue fonde gentil men of þe layfe to conceive, vndirstonde, reporte and comune þe same maters wiþ ful lital þerto 3ouen to hem enformacioun of þe termes or wordis; [...] and weel y wote þat so myche sotlilte and heizte of witt muste ech weel leerned man in þe kyngis lawe of ynglond, and ech wijs greet mercer, in hise rekenyngis and bargeyns making, haue, howe grete, hize and sutel witt he muste bisette vpon þe hizest maters whiche y write, after þat þe signifyng of þe wordis ben to hem knowun.⁸

(I have found gentlemen of the laity to conceive, understand, report, and share the same matters [i.e. the same matters that Peacock is

7 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, 1, 51–52.

8 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, p. 21.

addressing] with very little information about the terms or words having been given to them; [...] and I know well that each man well learned in the laws of the King of England and each wise great merchant, in making his reckonings/calculations and bargains/deals, must have so much subtlety and such high intelligence, and how great, high, and subtle intelligence he must apply to the highest matters which I write, once the meaning of the words is known to them.)

Such a man of law has the natural intelligence, despite lack of formal education, to understand points of theology, even if their context is lacking; indeed, he can 'conceive, vndirstonde, reporte and comune' (conceive, understand, report, and share) such matters. In careful sequence, the actions expressed in these four verbs progress in stages from identifying reception of texts/ideas to focusing on socially productive discursive action. First of all, 'conceive': conception — productive concept-making; secondly, 'vndirstonde' — deeper comprehension/ingestion; thirdly, 'reporte' — faithful replication of texts/argument/words without interference or distortion in the manner of scholastic *reportatio*; and, fourthly and finally, 'comune' — 'share' — something beyond mere faithful reporting: in other words, the hermeneutic, social, and empowering act of making theological capital communal. This sharing-out is a form of internal brokerage that not only informs but also performatively creates the dynamic of a community of interpretation. And it is all done with tell-tale subtlety, 'sotlilte', normally a stereotypical scholastic quality exclusively reserved to clerks.

Pecock refers to 'ech wijs greet mercer, in hise rekenyngis and bargeyns making' (each wise great merchant, in making his reckonings/calculations and bargains/deals): the adjective 'wijs' (wise) suggests not just know-how but nods towards wisdom, towards *sapientia*. As for 'rekenyngis' (reckonings/calculations), they are analytical, hermeneutic, expert, and require specialist judgement demonstrated by arithmetic. What could be a better model of emotion-free reason than the neutrally deterministic processes, and the psychically numb yet perfect rationality of numerical calculation? Just as the lawyer was portrayed as being able to move (through the staged actions of four verbs) from a readerly interiority of conceiving and understanding to an outward articulating, social communing, and community-making, so too the mercer follows, in his turn, a similar trajectory of action. He moves from lone individual reckoning to socially dynamic bargain-making, a transactional activity of *translatio* in which either goods and other goods, or goods and money, or money and other kinds of money, are valued/priced (that is, interpreted and valorized), converted, made current, and traded by means of an arithmetically rational discourse of exchangeability. The 'witt' necessary to such transactions of 'bargeyns making' (making bargains/deals) is that of the negotiator, requiring linguistic as well as intellectual agility. It is perhaps worth recalling at this point that, in his

Didascalicon, Hugh of St Victor categorizes merchants as practitioners of the art of rhetoric:

Commerce [...] is beyond all doubt a peculiar sort of rhetoric — strictly of its own kind — for eloquence is in the highest degree necessary to it. Thus the man who excels others in fluency of speech is called a *Mercurius*, as being a *mercatorum kirrius* (= *kyrios*) — a very lord among merchants.⁹

The rhetoric of bargain-making entails juggling the terms of a deal with high subtlety and wit. Both the lawyer and the merchant move from actions of personal understanding conceived through reason to actions of social engagement also based on reason. All in all, the skills of lawyers and merchants are conceived by Pecock as requiring some of the same intelligence as clerical disciplines. This compatibility has no little valorizing effect on such laity as credible potential practitioners of rudimentary vernacular theology. In recognizing the rational competence of laypeople in their expert occupational behaviours — behaviours of real social and institutional power and authority — Pecock would broker and empower a measure of divine learning and theologizing within and into a lay community of interpretation, albeit a sacerdotally monitored one.

Let it not be forgotten that, as far as Pecock was concerned, there was God-given virtue in human crafts, because crafts, like the sciences, riches, and institutional offices, constituted so-called ‘under-gracious benefits’ — the lowest and most fundamental category of gifts bestowed upon humanity by the Almighty in the form of natural skills to be exercised through our wits and labour:

His zift to vs of goodis y-gete or maad bi labour of oure natural witt and wil, and of opire powers of þe soule subseruing or vnderseruing to oure witt and to oure wil: which goodis ben sciencis, craftys, housis, cloþis, richchessis, worschipsis, dignitees, officis, fauouris and fames.¹⁰

(His gift to us of goods acquired or made by the labour of our natural intelligence and will, and through other powers of the soul subserving or under-serving our intelligence and our will: which goods are sciences, crafts, houses, clothes, riches, honours, dignities, offices, favours and fames/types of fame/reputation.)

In addition to keeping such company, crafts, in Pecock’s tables, also extend their repertoire so far as to sit alongside such exalted virtues as faith and prudence:

And so feiþ and prudence and also craft mowe be conteynyd in þis now seid maner, and ben so conteynyd withynne þe first poynt of þe first table materialy, wiþ þis þat þei ben also intellectual vertues formaly.¹¹

9 Hugh of St Victor *The Didascalicon*, trans. by Taylor, pp. 76–77.

10 Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. by Hitchcock, p. 87.

11 Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. by Hitchcock, p. 111.

(And so faith and prudence and also craft may be contained in this now said manner, and are so contained within the first point of the first table materially with this that they are also intellectual virtues formally.)

The first point of the First Table, being 'to live learningly', clearly means that faith, prudence, and, of course, craft have both an intellectual and a moral dimension of virtue to them. Reginald's readership would doubtless have taken encouragement from the definitional particularity with which he identifies the very learning of 'eny craft, as masonrye, carpentrye, or eny such oþire' (any craft, such as masonry, or any such other) to be a virtue in itself.¹² Part of the virtuousness of crafts is also to be located in their being instrumental in leading to the exercise of further virtues and thereby the service of God:

Sone [...] to fynde, leerne and to remembre eny craft, for þat it is a meene into eny oþire wel knowun vertu and seruice of god, is a vertu in þe first poynt of þe first table.¹³

(Son [...] to find, learn, and to remember any craft, because it is a means for any other well-known virtue and service of God, is a virtue in the first point of the First Table.)

For sure, in that crafts are virtuous in enabling the community to serve God, they may truly be called a benefit of God:

[S]o it is þat ech leeful and necessarye craft of a comunte, which is for þe profite of þe comunte, and which þe comunte may not wel lack withoute hurte into sum oþire seruice of god þerbi þe bettir to be doon, is a benefete of god.¹⁴

(So it is that each permissible and necessary craft of a community, which is for the profit of the community, and which the community may not well lack without hurt to some other service of God which would be better done thereby, is a benefit of God.)

Pecock's valorization of craft as intrinsic to his Tables puts the occupational virtues exercised by his lay readers into the same system as those virtues exercised by the clergy. For his secular clientele, to know and to exercise one's craft has now become part of the understanding and of the performance of intellectual and moral virtue itself. At the same time, and in the same intellectual motion, Pecock subsumes and recruits the virtuous crafts — and the potentially virtuous craftspeople who would practise them — into his system of Tables. Reginald was clearly confident that right-thinking layfolk would be pleased to consent to their place in his scheme, in which virtue and

12 Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. by Hitchcock, p. 112.

13 Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. by Hitchcock, p. 112.

14 Pecock, *The Donet*, ed. by Hitchcock, p. 112.

occupation combine, and that they would subsequently, of their own free will, be all the more receptive to his teachings.

In his written works, Pecock therefore sets about producing improvements and changes in laypeople's understanding of doctrine and its ways that require their free assent. Intriguingly, he believes that, by over-delivering to the laity intellectually, he will cause them to realize that they cannot compete in matters of wit and learning with the clerks dispensing their doctrine, and that they will as a consequence accept that they need the guidance of clerks and thus absorb their teachings more readily. Pecock optimistically envisages that layfolk, instead of relying exclusively on their own wits, their own books, or (as the Lollards were accused of doing) on Holy Writ, will be willing to be directed in their thinking by 'substantial clerkis' (substantial clerks) whom, significantly, they will also befriend:

Furthermore, thou3 in wrytyng this present book y teche and sette forth mo maters and trouthis of feith than ben nedis necessarie to this now bifore spokun entent and purpos, 3itt therwith no clerk ou3te be displeid, sithen good schal come therbi, and as y hope no greet harme. Forwhi, therbi the seid lay persoonys schulen wel wite and knowe that larger, hizet, and profitabler leernyng and kunning of feith is 3ovun and mynystrid to hem bi this present book, than thei couthen or my3ten come forto learne and fynde bi her owne studyng in her wittis, or in her owne bokis, whiche thei han in grete noumbre, or in the Bible, wherynne thei pretenden forto fynde al thing. Also, therbi thei schulen se how fer the wittis of substantial clerkis passen her wittis in mater of feith, and in ech other mater longyng to the lawe of God, or to Cristen religioun. Also, therbi thei schulen fele hou necessarie and nedeful it is to hem, that substantial clerkis be in scole of logik, philosphie, and dyvynyte, and that thei have frendship and aqueyntaunce with substantial clerkis, to be enfoormed and directid bi tho clerkis, and that ellis thei schulen ful ofte and myche wandre a side fro the eeven rizt wey of trouthe. Therefore it is wel doon that sumwhat more and hizet tretynge be maad to the seid lay persoonys [...].¹⁵

(Furthermore, though in writing this present book I teach and set forth more matters and truths of the faith than are needfully necessary to this aforespoken intent and purpose, yet no clerk ought to be displeased with it, since good shall come thereby, and, as I hope/suppose, no great harm. Wherefore, by this the said laypersons should understand and know well that larger, higher, and more profitable learning and knowledge of the faith are given and administered to them by this present book than they could or might come to learn and find by studying according to their wits, or in their own books (which they have in great number), or in the Bible, in which they claim to find all

15 Pecock, *Reginald Pecock's Book of Faith*, ed. by Morison, pp. 118–19.

things. Also, they should see by this how far the wits of substantial clerks surpass their wits in the matter of faith and in every other matter belonging to the law of God or to the Christian religion. Also, they should thereby feel how necessary and needful it is to them that substantial clerks should be schooled in logic, philosophy, and divinity, and that they should have friendship and acquaintance with substantial clerks, so as to be informed and directed by those clerks, and that otherwise they should very often and very much wander astray from the smooth/uniform/straight right way of truth. Therefore it is well done that a somewhat greater and higher mode of treatment should be made for the said laypersons [...].)

Not only will there be, then, a desirable dependency of the laity on clerks, there will also be inculcated in the laity an invincible knowledge of what may be known and what may not be known by them through their own powers, assisted or unassisted by clergy. Such intellectual intimidation and circumscription of lay discretion through the firm but friendly mastery of the clergy does not mean that Pecock was insincere in promoting bonds of affection between the two groups, or that he would deny the laity a decisive say in the appointment and monitoring of the clergy ministering to them. In fact, Pecock advised the laity to keep a critical eye on their preachers, telling them that they were excused of any faults due to mis-preaching, and that they were also excused from following the teachings of an unsound cleric, once they had realized his errors.¹⁶ For all the academic relentlessness and self-regarding clutter of his prose, his works are suffused with a genuinely unpatronizing warmth, personal care, and fundamental respect for non-clerics. His enthusiastic confidence in the laity's abilities is typical of him.

Such confidence was well placed: we should not underestimate the capacities of the well-to-do urban laity with whom Pecock had mixed for many years. As Master of Whittington College, he had been involved with common-profit book schemes, and was therefore used to engaging with self-assured and well-resourced layfolk with intelligent pastoral demands and no little spiritual ambition.¹⁷ Indeed, one of the most distinctive features of fifteenth-century London religious life was the Church's policy of appointing university-educated 'learned rectors' to parishes so as to meet the needs and expectations of such parishioners.¹⁸ Although these rectors were fiercely orthodox and among the leading figures extirpating dissent from the 1430s

¹⁶ Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, I, 91–92.

¹⁷ See Scase, 'Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter and John Colop's Common-Profit Books'. For a study of mainstream lay spiritual ambition in late medieval England, see Rice, *Lay Piety and Religious Discipline*. See Campbell, *Call to Read*, pp. 27–60 for discussion of the construction and likely capacities of Pecock's historical and implied audiences.

¹⁸ See Lindenbaum, 'London after Arundel' for the information here (and for much more) on the learned London rectors and their broader cultural and ecclesiastical context.

onwards, they nevertheless raised the tone and prestige of the capital's religious life through their preaching, their activities as public intellectuals and social critics, and through their mingling with the civic elite. Unlike Pecock, they did not, however, go anywhere near teaching the rudiments of theology in the vernacular, let alone imparting the ways of syllogistic thinking. Unlike Pecock, they preferred, for doctrinal purposes, the orality of sermons to the provision of textbooks or written treatises. They were, as a rule, not interested in leaving a large legacy of edifying texts for their parishioners or for the wider Church. The writings that were left by them, in the words of Sheila Lindenbaum, 'promoted a distinctive theology: patristic in orientation, free of speculation and doubt, relentlessly focused on the moral life, but cautiously open to affective spirituality'.¹⁹ In general, then, the London rectors were severely out of sympathy with what Reginald Pecock was attempting to do. Several of them were in fact his outright enemies, happy to see him come crashing down.²⁰

These learned rectors were, then, precisely the kind of clerks who would have disapproved of Pecock's recommendation to over-deliver intellectually. Pecock knew all too well about the well-established opposition he faced, and this shows up in his plea to fellow-clerks that they should in their preaching and teaching of the laity demonstrate articles of faith by reason rather than merely repeat prooflessly at second-hand:²¹

And ferthermore, y wole clerkis to have in consideracioun, that not for a thing is famed to be an article of feith, therfore it is an article of feith, but azenward for that it is an article of feith, and proved sufficientli to be such, therfore it is to be bileeved bi feith.²²

(And furthermore, I would wish clerks to bear in mind that it is not because a thing is reputed to be an article of faith that it is therefore an article of faith, but on the contrary, because it is an article of faith, and proved sufficiently to be such, therefore it is to be believed by faith.)

Pecock's advocacy of reason here is not about being nice to the laity by giving them religious freedom. It is about recognizing that articles of faith have to be shown to be rationally demonstrable. It is also about recognizing that, for consent to be meaningful, the laity must be won over freely, and certainly not by violent repression or judicial punishment. Hence his dire warning to the clergy that they must maintain the faith through reason and consent:

[L]ete al the clergie of divinite bese hem silf wiseli in this mater, and kepe her charge and enteresse, leste her necligence schal accuse hem in tyme to

19 Lindenbaum, 'London after Arundel', p. 195.

20 Lindenbaum, 'London after Arundel', pp. 196–97, 203. See also Ball, 'The Opponents of Bishop Pecock'.

21 See Lindenbaum, 'London after Arundel', p. 196.

22 Pecock, *Reginald Pecock's Book of Faith*, ed. by Morison, p. 138.

come, that bi her necligence trewe feith was overthrowe, and men fro it pervertid, and that trewe feith was not sufficientli proved and meyntened bi hem, and bi meenys whiche thei leeven in wrytyng aftir hem, for to bi cleer witt drawe men into consente of trewe feith otherwise than bi fier and swerd or hangement.²³

([L]et all the clergy of divinity busy themselves wisely in this matter, and safeguard their charge/responsibility and concern, lest their negligence shall accuse them in time to come, that by their negligence true faith was overthrown and men perverted from it, and that true faith was not sufficiently proved and maintained by them and by means which they leave in writing after them, in order to draw men by clear intelligence into consenting to the true faith by means other than fire and sword or hanging.)

Face-to-face persuasion and persuasion through written texts are, so Pecock argues, both effective means of proving and sustaining true faith. When Pecock uses the term 'trewe feith' (true faith), it has an added bite, for the 'feith' communicated is 'trewe' not merely for its fidelity or for its veracity, but because it has been palpably demonstrated to be 'trewe', validated through reason. In similar vein, the collocation 'cleer witt' ('cleer' can mean 'bright' and 'shining' as well as 'clear') has a particularly Pecockian flavour to it when one bears in mind his belief, discussed earlier, in the 'natural witt and natural lizt which þou lord god hast sett in her soulis' (natural wits/intelligence and natural light which you, Lord God, have set in their souls).²⁴ In other words, the capabilities of the laity have to be recognized, alongside a prioritizing, above the powers of Scripture, of the powers of reason and of philosophizing intrinsic to the human soul.

Such a prioritization would have offended mainstream ecclesiastic and Lollard alike. To deny the primacy of the Word of God in Holy Writ was, at this time, to court trouble. Pecock, doubtless aware of the risks he was taking (even though he managed to get away with expressing his views for two decades before his eventual demise), aimed to defeat the Lollards by arguing for the separateness of 'Holi Scripture' on one side and 'moral philsofie [*sic*]' on the other — the latter being a matter of reason and therefore prior and superior to Scripture.²⁵ By means of a witty, if laboured, simile, Pecock argues for this separateness by invoking the essential differences between trades — an idea bound to appeal to the fiercely guild-ridden homosocial world of the medieval urban bourgeoisie (in other words, many of Pecock's intended audience), who would gladly have consented to being described as multi-skilled professionals firmly convinced, as a matter of belief and self-identity, of the

23 Pecock, *Reginald Pecock's Book of Faith*, ed. by Morison, p. 139.

24 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, p. 225.

25 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, I, 49.

distinctiveness, separateness, mysteries, and independence of their crafts. In the passage below, Pecoock plays extravagantly with the hermeneutic and rhetorical cliché of ‘grounding’ — a favourite term stereotypically wheeled out by Lollards habitually obsessed with requiring each and every truth and imperative to be explicitly ‘grounded’ in the text of Holy Writ. Here, Pecoock is making a joke at the expense of all those who would ground a truth or a conclusion in Scripture when it has already been sufficiently grounded in the prior law of nature and moral philosophy, in other words in the supremely generative law of reason:

Thei that wolen aske and seie, thus, ‘Where fyndist thou it grondid in Holi Scripture?’ as thouz ellis it is not worthi to be take for trewe, whanne euere eny gouernance or trouthe sufficientli grondid in lawe of kinde and in moral philsophi [*sic*] is affermed and mynystrid to hem, [...] asken tho whilis in lijk maner vnresonabili and lijk vnskilfulli and lijk reprouabili, as if thei wolden aske and seie thus, ‘Where findist thou it grondid in Holi Scripture?’ whanne a treuth and a conclusioun of grammer is affermed and seid to hem: or ellis thus, ‘Where findist thou it grondid in tailour craft?’ whanne that a point or a treuthe and a conclusioun of sadeler craft is affermed, seid, and mynystrid to hem: or ellis thus, ‘Where fyndist thou it grondid in bocheri?’ whanne a point or a treuthe and conclusioun of masonrie is affermed and seid and mynystrid to hem.²⁶

(They who would wish to ask, and say, thus, ‘where do you find it grounded in Holy Scripture?’ as if otherwise it is not worthy to be taken as true whenever any governance or truth sufficiently grounded in the law of nature and in moral philosophy is confirmed and administered to them, [...] ask at the same time unreasonably in a similar manner and with similar wrongfulness and with similar blameworthiness, as if they would ask and say thus, ‘where do you find it grounded in Holy Scripture?’ when a truth and a conclusion of grammar is affirmed and said to them; or else thus, ‘where do you find it grounded in the craft of the tailor?’ when a part/principle or a truth and a conclusion of saddlery is affirmed, said, and administered to them; or else thus, ‘where do you find it grounded in butchery?’ when a part/principle or a truth and conclusion of masonry is affirmed and said and administered to them.)

The territory of pastiche is entered when academic jargon and method are deployed with reference to trades, such as ‘whanne a point or a treuthe and conclusioun of masonrie is affermed and seid and mynystrid to hem’ (when a part/principle or a truth and conclusion of masonry is affirmed and said and administered to them). That conclusions of such frosty-faced

²⁶ Pecoock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, 1, 48–49.

mock-seriousness are entertained as being 'groundid' bathetically 'in tailour craft' (in the craft of the tailor) or 'in bocheri' (in butchery) is, of course, geared to raising a knowing smirk — a smirk to be held and broadened thanks to the extended sequence of predictable question-and-answer cadences that set up a rhythmic alternation of interrogative comic suspense and ever more ludicrous conclusions. Here, Pecock would disarm opponents, making them look uncommonly silly by drawing on false scholarly process, on learned discourse laid on with a (suitably masonic) trowel, and on sheer nonsense. Yet, for all the comic exaggeration, a serious point is being made. For Pecock to cite masonry, butchery, saddlery, and the skill of the tailor in scholastic terms invites such skilled laity into the theological arena on something of their own terms, encouraging them to judge, however light-heartedly, from their own occupational perspective and zone of comfort. It also licenses them to put themselves in a zone previously outside their field of competence. Their religious and doctrinal awareness is now provisionally relocated, albeit by whimsical suggestion with a serious polemical and theological edge, within the personal confidence of their professional *amour propre*.

Pecock further advances his argument concerning the relationship between divinity and philosophy with subtler distinctions, drawing homely attention to procedures shared between crafts which are nevertheless separate. This distinction, witty rather than outright humorous, is intended to illuminate and support Pecock's separation of 'moral philsoophie [*sic*] and the faculte of pure dyvynite or the Holi Scripture' (moral philosophy and the faculty of pure Divinity or Holy Scripture):²⁷

For certis thouȝ the sporiier and the cuteler be leerned in thilk point of goldsmyth craft which is gilding, and therefore thei vsen thilk point and deede and trouthe of goldsmyth craft, ȝit thilk point of gilding is not of her craft, but oonli of goldsmyth craft: and so the craftis ben vnmedlid, thouȝ oon werkman be leerned in hem bothe and vse hem bothe.²⁸

(For certain, although the spurrier/spur-maker and cutler/knife-maker may be learned in this same part/principle of goldsmith craft, that is gilding, and therefore they practise this same part/principle and deed and truth of goldsmith craft, yet the same part/principle of gilding is not of their craft, but only of goldsmith craft: and so the crafts are unmixed, though one workman may be learned in them both and use them both.)

Again, Pecock dissects and orders in scholastic fashion, valorizingly assigning learned terms to crafts: 'learned', 'point', 'trouthe', and the like. The conclusion drawn here is that, just as it is impossible for crafts to share a defining function

27 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, I, 49.

28 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, I, 50.

and form — even though they may share practices and practitioners — so too is it impossible for ‘moral philosophie and the faculte of pure dyvynite’ (moral philosophy and the faculty of pure divinity), on the one hand, and ‘Holi Scripture’, on the other, to share a defining function and form — even though both may share practices and practitioners.

Sometimes Pecock resorts to everyday experience, not to teach theological understanding or skills, but to impart advice on personal spiritual conduct. Having, in the *Reule of Crysten Religioun*, made it very clear that we should all look after our God-given bodies, he adds a qualification: in certain circumstances, each one of us should be prepared to sacrifice bodily health or shorten our lives if there is no other way to serve God. To edify and encourage his audience, Pecock presents a series of homely parallels. For example, a man may walk from London to St Albans ‘ouer heggis and stilis and þornys, boisschis and breris a long tyme’ (over hedges and stiles and thorns, bushes and briars for a long time) and not on the highway, if his overriding motivation on the journey is to chase and catch a falcon worth the massive sum of twenty pounds.²⁹ Bystanders might think him foolish for not taking the main road, failing to realize that he is in fact pursuing a higher goal — a falcon, allegorically representing God’s moral service.

Another example, hard-hearted in its commercial brutality but apt in its entertainment of disagreeable choice, serves to justify a course of spiritual action that may shorten our physical lives. If a man buys a horse for his horse mill and knows that wearing the horse out over ten years rather than cherishing it for twenty would yield much greater returns, then there would be ‘no discrecioun at al’ (no discretion at all) in ‘grettir cherisching’ (greater cherishing).³⁰ And so, poor Dobbin should rightfully go to the knacker’s yard a decade early — for sound spiritual reasons of course: ‘so it is in þis present purpos forto likene oure fleisch or oure bodily lijf to oure mylle hors, and oure vertuouse wirching to oure corn grinding’ (so it is, by this present purpose, to liken our flesh and our bodily life to our mill horse, and our virtuous works/working to grinding our corn).³¹ A less troubling choice is illustrated in Pecock’s subsequent exemplum, which is couched in the spirit of the gamesome wagers and ludic bargains characteristic of medieval popular and literary culture. If a man can win one hundred pounds of gold by walking so much over twenty days that he would wear out a new pair of shoes otherwise lasting sixty days, he would show ‘greet indiscrecioun’ (great indiscretion) by cherishing his shoes (in other words, our fleshly body or our bodily life) so much that he loses the one hundred pounds — in other words forgoing ‘a certeyn perfeccioun of good livyng’ (a certain perfection

29 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, p. 267.

30 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, p. 268.

31 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, p. 268.

of good living) that we have already chosen that cannot be won without such bodily sacrifice.³²

Easy recourse to common experience and common commercial sense also characterizes Pecock's defence, in the *Repressor*, of the diversity of religious orders, which might have seemed to ordinary people like lavish over-provision, when fewer orders would have served just as well. Pecock meets this issue energetically through a simile of market-making in the hospitality industry. For him, a broader diversity of orders encourages a greater range of different types of people into the religious life than would otherwise be the case, just as a town with a greater range of hostelries, diversely catering to the needs and pleasures of a greater range of potential guests, will end up with more customers overall than a town with less choice in fewer inns:

Forwhi what point in chaumbring, stabiling, gardeins, beddis, seruicis of the ostiler (and so in othere thingis) plesith oon gist, plesith not an other; and what point in these thingis offendith oon, plesith weel an other; and therefore where that the more such dyuersyte is had and founde, the more stiring therbi is had to plese manye gistis; and therbi folewingli the mo gistis wolen haue wil forto logge hem in thilk town, more than if ther were fewer dyuersytees, whiche schulde needis be in fewer ynnes. Thanne if this be trewe, and if thou answeere to me thus; y answeere to thee bi lijk skile, that therfore God purueied manye dyuerse religious to be in the chirche, for that bi so greet a dyuersite had in so manye religious (what for dyuersite of outward habit and of inward wering, and of diet, and of waking, and of officiyng, and of sitis, or of placing, and of bilding, and of othere suche manie), the mo of the peple schulde be prouokid and stirid therbi into religioun, than if ther were fewer religious.³³

(Wherefore, what feature of the lodging, stabling, gardens, beds, services of the innkeeper (and of other things) pleases one guest pleases not another; and what feature amongst these things offends one pleases another well; and therefore, wherever the more such diversity is had and found, the more an effort is stirred to please many guests; and thereby consequently the more guests will desire to lodge themselves in this town — more than if there were less variety, which there would necessarily be with fewer inns. If, then, this is true, and if you answer to me thus, I answer you with a similar argument, that God therefore provided many diverse religious orders to be in the Church, because by so great a diversity had in so many orders (be it diversity of outward habit and what is worn underneath, and of diet, and of waking and of

32 Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religioun*, ed. by Greet, p. 268. See Campbell, *Call to Read*, pp. 27–60 for discussion of these three examples from the *Reule*.

33 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, II, 521–22. See Campbell, *Call to Read*, pp. 162–65 for discussion of the formal logical principles operative in this example.

the performance of divine services/offices, and of sites/situations, or of placing/placement, or of buildings, and of many other such things), more of the people should be enticed and stirred thereby into a religious order than if there were fewer religious orders.)

This allegorical marketizing of the orders may, of course, have been appreciated by some layfolk more than others. The simile is, in one sense, tactically unfortunate, because it could be taken as giving the impression that religious orders are founded rather trivially on what individuals find personally agreeable and pleasing, rather than as giving the impression that it intends to create — that a productive diversity of people of various personal temperaments and spiritual capabilities, would, through the aggregate of their own unique contributions, make a much larger contribution to the Church Militant than ever the population of a smaller number of foundations could. Intriguingly, Pecoock deploys a favourite verb of devotional tradition, ‘stiring’, to denote the worldly phenomenon of customer preference. One also wonders if God being described as having ‘*purueied* manye dyuerse religiouns to be in the chirche’ (provided many religious orders to be in the church) is a nod not only to Divine Providence but also to the commercial notion of purveying. Whether or not this is the case, we are on more solid ground with the idea that the greater good is served by individual commercial gain and market diversity, for this had a place in medieval academic tradition. For example, in his *Didascalicon* Hugh of St Victor proclaims that the ‘pursuit of commerce [...] commutes the private good individuals into the common benefit of all.’³⁴ Pecoock follows suit: although the religious orders share the same three principal vows, their diversity, so he claims, produces more good than harm:

[T]hou3 the good of iij. principal vowis be lijke and oon in ech and alle religiouns, 3it the othere plesauntis and eesis of the religiouis persoones, whiche schulde tolle hem into religioun and whiche also schulde make hem the perfitlier and the stablier perfoorme her othere substancial vowis, ben not like and the same in alle religiouns and neither in alle housis of oon religioun.

And thou3 summe harme and yuel cometh thoru3 the hauyng of such now seid multitude, 3it not so greet harme and yuel as is excludid bi the hauyng of so greet multitude; for not so greet harme and yuel as schulde come of this, that so greet multitude of persoones schulde not entre into tho religiouns, neither so myche harme as is the myche good which cometh bi the seid multitude and dyuersitie of religiouns.³⁵

([T]hough the benefits of the three principal vows may be alike and the same in each and all religious orders, yet the other pleasures and

34 Hugh of St Victor, *The Didascalicon*, trans. by Taylor, p. 77.

35 Pecoock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, II, 523–24.

comforts of religious persons, which should attract them into a religious order and which should also make them the more perfectly and the more stably perform their other substantial vows, are not alike and the same in all religious orders, and neither are they so in all houses of the same religious order.

And though some harm and evil come of having such a said multitude, yet it is not such great harm and evil as what is prevented by having so great a multitude; for not such great harm and evil should come of this that so great a multitude of persons would not enter into the religious orders, nor should there be a harm so great as is the great good which comes of the said multitude and the diversity of religious orders.)

It is difficult to know how much credence laypeople would have given to this simile. Presumably, reactions to it would have varied according to pre-existing individual attitudes towards the religious orders. Citizens intermittently resentful of monks and friars may have, grudgingly or not, accepted to a significant extent Pecock's conclusion that diversity produces more good than harm, especially if they were favourably impressed by, or spiritually involved with, prestigious and devotionally formidable newer establishments that had recently diversified the mix of religious foundations in England, such as the Birgittine house of Syon and the Carthusian houses of Mount Grace and Sheen.

We move now from a commercial simile to one, in the *Repressor*, drawing on popular tradition — the custom of 'upland' people ('country' folk) bringing branches and flowers into London for the citizens to decorate their houses on Midsummer's Eve in celebration of the Feast of St John the Baptist. Extrapolating from this custom, Pecock launches into another syllogistic parallel, illustrating that the foundation of all truth and moral law is not Scripture and its authors, but the law of nature and reason implanted by God in the human soul. The simile opens with a direct challenge to readers and hearers to respond personally to this question:

Seie to me, good Sire, and answere herto, whanne men of the cuntre vplond bringen into Londoun in Mydsomer eue braunchis of trees fro Bischopis wode and flouris fro the feeld, and bitaken tho to citeseins of Londoun forto therwith araie her housis, schulen men of Londoun receyuyng and taking tho braunchis, and flouris, seie and holde that tho braunchis grewen out of the cartis whiche brouzten hem to Londoun, and that tho cartis or the hondis of the bringers weren groundis and fundamentis of tho braunchis and flouris? Goddis forbode so lital witt be in her hedis.³⁶

(Say to me, good sir, and answer this: when men from the outside countryside bring into London at Midsummer's Eve branches of trees

36 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, 1, 28. See Campbell, *Call to Read*, pp. 160, 170–71 for discussion of Pecock's deployment of this tradition.

from Bishopswood and flowers from the field, and deliver them to citizens of London to adorn their houses, should the men of London, receiving and taking those branches and flowers, say and maintain that those branches grew out of the carts that brought them to London, and that those carts or the hands of the bringers were the grounds and footings/sources of those branches and flowers? God forbid so little wit be in their heads.)

Clearly, no one would argue against this, especially as Pecock gives away the answer as to what constitutes the true origins of the branches and the flowers — respectively the wood and the field: ‘braunchis of trees *fro Bischopis wode* and *flouris fro the feeld*’ (branches of trees from Bishopswood and flowers from the field). At this point, he could have chosen to wheel on the other half of the parallel — his endemic maxim that Scripture is rooted in the forest or field of reason — but he does not do this yet. Instead, he first complicates the conceit by bringing Christ and his Apostles into it:

Certis, thouȝ Crist and his Apostlis weren now lyuyng at Londoun, and wolden bringe so as is now seid braunchis fro Bischopis wode and flouris fro the feeld into Londoun, and wolden delyuere to men that thei make there with her housis gay, [...] ȝit tho men of Londoun receyuyng so tho braunchis and flouris ouȝten not seie and feele that tho braunchis and flouris grewen out of Cristis hondis, and out of the Apostlis hondis.³⁷

(For sure, though Christ and his Apostles were now living in London and would bring, as was said just now, branches from Bishopswood and flowers from the field into London, and would deliver them to men so that they could make their houses attractive with them, [...] yet those men of London, receiving in this fashion those branches and flowers, ought not to say and feel that those branches and flowers grew out of Christ’s hands, and out of the Apostles’ hands.)

Christ, the author and subject matter of the Bible, together with his own team of inspired primary interpreters/preachers of his Word, his Apostles, are here represented as merely handing on goods that originate elsewhere. Whether or not the flowers growing out of Christ’s hands might, for some, constitute an unfortunate echo of the nails of the Crucifixion, or, for others, represent a decorously positive Langlandian allusion, Pecock intensifies his vignette by asserting that, in doing what they do, Christ and his Apostles are only doing what all humans are capable of doing anyway. What they are doing marks a stage in a process of tracing of origins that may be likened to the stemmatic qualities of trees — from branch back to bough back to trunk back to root back to originary earth, *ground* indeed. Holy Scripture

37 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, 1, 28.

and even Christ Himself, then, have a function on a par with the hands of branch-gatherers:

Forwhi in this dede Crist and the Apostlis diden noon other wise than as othere men mizten and couthen do. But the seid receyuers ouzten seie and holde that tho braunchis grewen out of the bowis vpon whiche thei in Bischopis wode stoden, and tho bowis grewen out of stockis or tronchons, and the tronchons or schaftis grewen out of the roote, and the roote out of the nexte erthe therto upon which and in which the roote is buried, so that neither the cart, neither the hondis of the bringers, neither tho bringers ben the groundis or fundamentis of the braunchis; and in lijk maner the feld is the fundament of tho flouris, and not the hondis of the gaderers, neither tho bringers. Certis, but if ech man wole thus feele in this mater, he is duller than eny man ouzte to be.³⁸

(Wherefore, in this deed, Christ and the Apostles did nothing differently from what other men might and could do. But the said receivers ought to say and maintain that those branches grew out of the boughs upon which they stood in Bishopswood, and those boughs grew out of the stocks or trunks, and the trunks or shafts grew out of the root, and the root out of the neighbouring earth upon which and in which the root is buried, so that neither the cart, nor the hands of the bringers, nor the bringers are the grounds or foundations of the branches; and in like manner the field is the foundation of those flowers, and not the hands of the gatherers nor those bringers. For sure, unless each man would feel the same in this matter, he is duller than any man ought to be.)

Perhaps, in using earthly ground as a metaphor for scriptural ground (itself a metaphor based on earthly ground), Pecock is exercising a kind of academic wit that proves its validity through the commutativity, the reciprocity, of referent and tenor. Note too how Pecock uses alliteration to make his conclusion emphatic — 'the feld is the fundament of tho flouris' (the field is the foundation of those flowers), and to assert the key relationship between field, fundament, and flowers. Here perhaps, Pecock knowingly takes an alliterating collocation common in popular verse, 'feld of flouris' (field of flowers), and modifies it pointedly by inserting the suitably alliterating word 'fundament' — the profound meaning and significance of the 'feld of flouris' — between the alliterating elements of the routine pair: 'the feld is the fundament of tho flouris'. A familiar secular formula is thereby given new life as spiritual *sententia*.

Pecock then proceeds to elaborate and clarify his forest metaphor, combining it with that of the human soul as book. The forest is a rich resource inviting exploration, a place for finding truths and conclusions concerning issues of

38 Pecock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, 1, 28–29.

the holy. He takes care to make the point that ‘needis every wijs man muste graunte and consent that noon of the now seid treuthis and conclusiouns of lawe of kinde is ground in Holi Scripture of the Bible’ (every wise man must necessarily grant and consent that none of the now-said truths and conclusions of the law of nature is grounded in the Holy Scripture of the Bible).³⁹ To be ‘wijs’ (wise) one must accept a Pecoockian line on reason’s doom. Lay free will is accordingly directed by Pecoock’s ‘muste.’ The doublet ‘graunte and consent’ serves as a reminder that Pecoock expects his audience to use their reason and their free will to assent to the natural determinism of reason’s doom.

The forest and the field are the foundation, then, for all truths that may arise from it. It is a forest planted by God in man’s soul, accessible to all who make the effort to find its truths through reason:

[N]oon of the now seid treuthis and conclusiouns of lawe of kinde is ground in Holi Scripture of the Bible, but thei ben groundid in thilk forest of lawe of kinde which God plauntith in mannis soule whanne he makith him to his ymage and likenes. And out of this forest of treuthis mowe be take treuthis and conclusiouns, and be sett into open knowing of the fynder and of othere men.⁴⁰

([N]one of the now-said truths and conclusions of the law of nature is grounded in the Holy Scripture of the Bible, but they are grounded in the same forest of the law of nature which God plants in man’s soul when he makes him after his image and likeness. Out of this forest of truths may truths and conclusions be taken and be set for the open knowing of the finder and of other men.)

The ground is still bookish but it is also more organically earthy. The soul is now a place of growth and harvest rather than one of reading and utterance — though it never stops being so. From this ground grow truths to be sought and found in the forest by human endeavours of reason, endlessly.

Conclusion

Pecoock does not use domestic and occupational similes merely to drive home theological arguments or polemical points about Church politics. His broader intention is to show something more complex and profound: that not only theological discourse but also clerics themselves may to a significant extent be understood, judged, and valorized through the everyday reason and knowledge of layfolk. Pecoock suggestively licenses the laity to absorb and put to use a measure of elevated clerical discourse and also to think about some matters

39 Pecoock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, 1, 29.

40 Pecoock, *The Repressor*, ed. by Babington, 1, 29.

previously reserved to the ordained. He never lets go, however, of sacerdotal authority, and always makes it clear that clerics must remain the intellectual leaders of layfolk and must be obeyed by them. The laity, however, are by no means merely passive. On the contrary, Pecockian *translatio studii* is to be realized through free-willed lay thinking, guided rather than compelled by clerics, let alone enforced by fire, sword, and hanging. It was also, of course, right and proper in Pecock's eyes to laicize a measure of vernacular theology on the authority of a bishop rather than to attempt this illegitimately and without control on the ostensibly scriptural say-so of any number of Lollard *idiotae*.

Though the imaginative syllogisms deployed by Pecock may verge on the playful or fanciful, they nevertheless invoke a radical shift of socio-theological habitus and field in the form of a new community of interpretation. Through the interplay of scholastic discourse and the everyday reason and working knowledge of layfolk, Pecock endeavoured to interpellate a new community of interpretation. Such a shame that it all went so bad. Perhaps, then, it would be appropriate as well as charitable to end with a vignette of the dream that was dashed — Pecock's own personal portrayal of the very community of lay theological engagement and clerical supportiveness that he and his culture failed to establish. His vision of a community, not of divided clergy and laity, but simply of 'peple' (people) loving and learning together, is worked into a prayer in the *Folewer to the Donet*:

But euermore, o lord, grettist loue of men, and grettist desirer þat þi peple schulden loue togidere and leerne togidere þe vij cheef maters of my writyngis deuyssid for lay men, and þat þey schulde speke þerin togidere into eche of hem oþeris edifying, perfoorme þou such work in hem to be excercisid and vsid into þi plesure and into her rewardyng.⁴¹

(But evermore, O Lord, greatest lover of men and greatest desirer that your people should love together and learn together the seven principal matters of my writings devised for laymen, and that they should speak about them together to the edification of each other, give form to such work within them, to be exercised and used to your pleasure and to their reward.)

In this prayed-for community of people teaching each other, the reason through which they would commune is infused by divine grace, for God is besought to 'perfoorm [...] such work' (give form to such work) in them, that is, to help give it active form and effect. Bonds of social affection intertwine with those of reason and grace. Reginald Pecock's prayer, however, went cruelly unanswered. This community, an absent community of interpretation, was never to be.

41 Pecock, *The Folewer*, ed. by Hitchcock, p. 8. See Campbell, *Call to Read*, pp. 84, 231–32, 237–43 for discussion of this passage and recognition of the collaborative lay-clerical fellowship of learning proposed by Pecock.

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The Reformation and the First Book in the Lithuanian Language

Introduction

The ideas of the Reformation influenced the transformation of religious, cultural, social, and political systems. The Reformation was something more than mere religious renewal. It was a force of cultural modernization encouraging people to ponder the meaning of existence, the continuation and modification of traditions, the diversity of religious discourses, the understanding of self-identity, judicial systems of state, and the formation of economic life. While describing the ideological content of the Reformation, Max Weber stresses that although the establishment of a new economic system was not the result of the Reformation, it is nevertheless necessary to understand how religious motives influenced historical development. Therefore, it is essential:

to clarify the part which religious forces have played in forming the developing web of our specifically worldly modern culture, in the complex interaction of innumerable different historical factors. We are thus inquiring only to what extent certain characteristic features of this culture can be imputed to the influence of the Reformation. At the same time we must free ourselves from the idea that it is possible to deduce the Reformation, as a historically necessary result, from certain economic changes. Countless historical circumstances, which cannot be reduced to any economic law,

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and are not susceptible of economic explanation of any sort, especially purely political processes, had to concur in order that the newly created Churches should survive at all.¹

The Reformation changed axiological orientations and eroded the feudal system. Europe made an attempt to realize the idea of universal monarchy by means of a new approach to the relations between Church, society, and state. According to L. Šedvydis:

European states, in order to survive, had to create new regulatory institutes, adjust trade, control their own territories, secure law and pursue the proper functioning of the state for the implementation of sophisticated mechanisms of taxation.²

In order to safeguard statehood, it was necessary to modernize not only the state institutions that were in charge of creating new forms of representation for its constituent estates but also the Church itself. The Reformation initiated changes in the system of religious beliefs that quickly developed itself a close relationship between State and Church by means of which attempts were made to modernize political and social processes. The process of modern state formation needed a capable and reliable state and church officials, whose integrity the majority of population could trust. In the Duchy of Prussia, Protestant clergy became intermediaries between the state bureaucratic centre and its periphery. For state modernization, one of the most important tasks was educational reform.

D. Barasa claims:

In Prussia of Reformation times, the importance of the role of clergymen was well understood. It was realised that the success in the attainment of the Prussian Evangelical Church goals and objectives depended on the clergymen.³

Therefore, the majority of North European states' rulers supported the Reformation approach that saw religious beliefs being associated with politics. A prime example of this is Prince Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, who provided the necessary means and conditions for Martin Luther's enterprise of founding a new Christian theology.

On 31 October 1517, when Luther may have posted his ninety-five theses on a church door in Wittenberg, in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches functioned alongside the Catholic Church. Moreover, freedom of religion was granted to the Tartar and Karaite communities which were imported into the principality by Grand Duke Vytautas at the end of

1 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 49.

2 Šedvydis, 'Preparation of the Ruling Elite', p. 4.

3 Barasa, 'Opportunities for Lutheran Clergy to Educate and Improve Themselves', p. 176.

the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. In the middle of the fifteenth century, Jews started arriving in Lithuania. Freedom of religion was also granted to them. Such coexistence of various beliefs was conducive to the spread of Protestant ideas.

The number of Reformation supporters significantly increased after Mikalojus Radvila the Black, Voivode of Vilnius, Grand Lithuanian Chancellor, and Grand Hetman of Lithuania, converted to the Calvinist faith. Many other Lithuanian grandees followed him in converting to Protestantism.

A particularly significant and positive role in the dissemination of Protestant ideas in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was played by Martinus Mosvidius' *Catechism*, the first printed book in the Lithuanian language, published in Königsberg by Hans Weinreich on 8 January 1547. After the collapse of the Teutonic Knights' state in 1525, the Duchy of Prussia absorbed the lands of Lithuania Minor and Masuria, along with their Lithuanian and Polish inhabitants. Thus, the duchy of Prussia became a state where not only Prussians and Germans lived, but also a large population of Lithuanians from Lithuania Minor and Poles from Masuria.

The Prussian authorities implemented the requirements of the Reformation, taking into account the cultural interests of all national minorities. They demanded that vicars should know and use local languages. The writing and publishing of books in native languages was encouraged and supported. This is why the ideas of the Reformation crossed the borders of Prussia and penetrated into the territories of Lithuania and Poland.

The first Lithuanian printed book marked a great beginning: the new development of the Lithuanian language, grammar, terminology, poetry, and music. It also initiated the standardization of Lithuanian writing and educational reform in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The ruling elite, seeing the success of the Prussian government, was disappointed by the political activity of the Catholic Church and its influence on society. The adherents of the Reformation, supported by Mikalojus Radvila the Black, established a relatively wide network of schools, opened a printing works in Brasta, and made modifications in the juridical and administrative system of the duchy. The Reformation, moreover, had a significant influence on economic reforms in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It also stimulated the development of a palpable national mentality next to the modernization of culture and education.

The Reformation in Lithuania Minor

The last Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, Margrave of Brandenburg Albrecht, converted to Lutheranism on 10 April 1525 in Kraków and, as Duke of Prussia, swore allegiance to the Grand Duke of Lithuania and the King of Poland, Sigismund I. Thus Prussia became a secular state

and a fiefdom of Poland. Its capital was Königsberg.⁴ Albrecht invited famous jurists from Wittenberg University and prominent administrators from Nuremberg and Ansbach to conduct reforms of state and Church. According to Lukšaite:

They had to prepare the reform of state administration and the Church, in order to secularize the Order, reshape the state administration, reform the catechization, modify the Church organization. These objectives were closely intertwined parts of the great reform. The Reformation was chosen as the powerful factor capable of changing relations between society and the Church.⁵

Ongoing administrative reform divided the duchy of Prussia into three major territorial units composed of larger districts (*Hauptamt*) divided into smaller districts (*Amt*). The head of each larger district (known as the *Hauptmann*) was a judge, police chief, and administrative manager. He was also a member of the council of the Duke of Prussia. Towns were the centres of the smaller districts and castles were the official residences of the heads of the larger districts. The core of Lithuania Minor consisted of the districts of Memel (Klaipėda), Tilsit (Tilžė), Ragnit (Ragainė), Insterburg (Įsrute), and Labiau (Labguvos).

The Reformation and accompanying secularization transformed the public and private lives of all social strata. New requirements were made of state and church officials, and the clergy came to be regarded as a profession. Landownership arrangements were modified, giving landlords more economic freedom. Grain, flax, hemp, meat, and leather became the most marketable goods for international trade.

Klaipėda enjoyed a remarkable income from the turnover of goods and used it to build quays, shipyards, warehouses, churches, sawmills, and brick factories. In 1557, cobblers established the first artisan shop. Leather processors followed their example. English, German, and Scandinavian trading ships started to frequent Klaipėda, whose citizens also started trade on the river Nemunas and the Baltic Sea.

An expanding market stimulated not only the growth of the city and surrounding towns but also the increase of crafts there. Appreciating the new geopolitical situation, the Duke of Prussia invited foreign artisans and businessmen to Klaipėda, promising them great economic opportunities and also land for the construction of homes. The majority of newcomers were Dutch; others were Germans, Poles, and Lithuanians from Lithuania Major. Historical sources show that in 1539–1540, there were ninety-two taxed

4 Acta Tomiciana, vol. VII, *De Creato Duce in Prussia*, pp. 215–41.

5 Lukšaite, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 87.

dwelling-houses with landholdings.⁶ Slowly, the economic life of the city was changing, and the number of townspeople increased.

Changes in the rural economy were also noticeable. State farms were rented either to private persons or overseen by hired managers. The Duke of Prussia had the sole right to assign a piece of state land to a person with inheritable rental rights. Other lands belonged to the Church and to the gentry and freemen, who paid relatively small taxes and served in the army.

The rights and freedom of peasants, who worked for landlords, were significantly curtailed. The Reformation restored their hopes for an improved life: in the autumn of 1524, on the German-Austrian border, they began to form squads and a peasants' war started, which soon reached Prussia and then Poland and Lithuania. In Lithuania Minor, the first peasant unrest was documented on 2–3 August 1525 in Kymen, a locality situated between Königsberg and Labiaw. Mobs of approximately 4000 or even 7000 peasants looted castles, arrested landlords, and demanded equality, arguing that, according to the Bible, all people were created equal by God.

In the summer of 1525, Duke Albrecht issued a decree banning peasant gatherings and drinking parties in taverns and inns on holidays. He also forbade peasants to own and carry weapons, which were to be handed over to village elders or landlords. Those disobeying were to be severely punished and their weapons confiscated without compensation.⁷

When the unrest did not subside, in October of the same year Duke Albrecht concentrated his armed forces and ordered the arrest of the peasants' delegation which had arrived for negotiation. He also arrested eighty-seven peasant activists and in Königsberg publicly executed two of their leaders.⁸ Troops were sent to the territories controlled by the rebels in order to make them obey and disperse. The most rebellious were detained and the rest dispersed. In this way, the peasants' rebellion in Prussia was suppressed.

On 21 April 1529 Duke Albrecht confirmed the eternal peace with Poland.⁹ The war came to an end and he then started the process of border demarcation. Major disputes were waged over the poorly inhabited woods on the border with Samogitia. Both sides strove to colonize them. This meant that military conflict continued to be a possibility — which hindered the process of accommodating landlords, villains, and free people. According to Elertas, the duke had a preference for increasing the number of well-to-do farmers as potential draftees loyal to the state.¹⁰ Farms lacked personally dependent peasants; most of them had also for a long time been characterized by limited

6 Elertas, 'The Community of 1538 Signed by the Klaipėda City Stamp', p. 203.

7 Elertas, 'Prussian Manorial Estates on the Žemaitijan Border in 1540', p. 218.

8 Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 103.

9 Codex Diplomaticus, vol. IV, CLXXXVI, p. 257.

10 Elertas, 'Prussian Manorial Estates on the Žemaitijan Border in 1540', p. 291.

ownership. The main requirements for the ownership of such properties were rights, service, loyalty, and efficiency.

Since the potential owners were armed with long lances and had horses, to tax them heavily was a dangerous business. They were therefore allowed to open taverns and inns free of taxation. In addition, they were permitted to lease their horses for the transportation of goods and the towing of ships. Some farms cultivated dairy farming and pig breeding, and a number of farmers got rich and became landlords.

The localities around the Prussian-Lithuanian boarder were covered by a network of taverns, estates, and reformed churches. According to Barasa:

The faith became an excellent tool for social integration and territorial unification. The control of parishioners' behaviour and thinking fostered individual loyalty to the state. Because of the intensive cooperation between Church and state, a confessional spirit penetrated all spheres of life (politics, culture, law, etc.). Social life was in a process of confessionalization. Therefore, in early new times [*sic*] one of its most remarkable elements was the formation of a socially disciplined modern society.¹¹

Education Policy and the Native Language

Duke Albrecht, who supported the ideas of Martin Luther, assumed that education was a matter of ultimate importance to State and Church. The educational system was understood as part of the Church guided by the Reformed authorities. The Church supported all the schools established by the Teutonic Order and instructed the bishops to take care of the maintenance of all schools. Duke Albrecht introduced an additional tax of eight shillings on each family to finance the support of the schools.¹² He too obliged the Church to take care of the whole education system and all schools. Part of the tithes given to the Church was used for teachers' wages.

At each newly built church a new school was also opened. This helped to satisfy the need to update the network of Lutheran churches in the Duchy. Duke Albrecht planned to establish a holistic educational system. First of all, he decided to expand elementary education and then organize the education system overall. Elementary education was aimed at initial literacy sufficient for catechization. School children had to learn to read, write, sing, and understand the fundamentals of grammar and arithmetic. This holistic system was designed to embrace elementary schools, Latin schools in the towns, and the establishment of a university. The mission of the university was to prepare educated people for service to the State, Church, or the education

11 Barasa, 'By Rod and Sword', p. 161.

12 Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažosioje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 193.

system. However, the insufficient number of qualified teachers proved to be an obstacle to the realization of this plan.

Landlords and well-to-do farmers approved of the educational reforms and financially supported the establishment of the university:

For [*sic*] the beginning, it was decided to establish partial schools, the so-called particular schools, which served as a link joining Latin schools and the future university. These newly established schools had to condition youth to university studies.¹³

Information concerning educational reform was promulgated in all territories of the duchy and the project of fund-raising for it united society behind this common aim. On 24 October 1541, Duke Albrecht announced that one particular school, which would serve as a transition to the future university, was to be opened in Königsberg.

Königsberg University, which initially was called Academia, was conceived of as a modern Protestant school in full accord with the principles of Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and Wittenberg University. The key role of the newly reformed university was to prepare educated theologians, jurists, physicians, and teachers. Since Prussia was a multinational state, the university was obliged to prepare university level clergymen capable of speaking the vernacular languages. The newly prepared clergy were to work in Prussia as well as neighbouring countries. Therefore, the university attracted the representatives of various languages and cultures. The Latin language and Lutheran theology had to unite them. Thus, while integrating a multicultural society the university strove to convey not only universal knowledge, as this was the key task of every higher education institution, but at the same time to propagate the Lutheran faith among the various ethnicities of Prussia.¹⁴

However, from the very beginning, official recognition of Königsberg University was a problem. At this time, the medieval doctrine was still functioning that the establishment of any university should be approved either by papal bull or by a decree from the Emperor licensed by the pope's permission. Though the pope did not issue a bull and the Emperor did not issue the decree, on 20 July 1544 Duke Albrecht decided to announce that an Academy would be founded in Königsberg. In the same year, on 17 August, the Academy was opened and inaugurated. 300 students started their studies there.

Six annual university sessions passed, and on 28 March 1560 in Vilnius, the Grand Duke of Lithuania and the King of Poland Sigismund August granted a privilege to Königsberg Academy, conferring on it a status equal to that of

13 Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažajoje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 197.

14 Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažajoje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 200.

the University of Cracow. Like other European universities, the Academy was granted significant autonomy, and its members received judicial immunity, that is, exemption from the jurisdiction of secular and clerical courts. So, the University of Königsberg was born without papal benediction but was 'baptized' by the secular ruler.

The earlier-mentioned problem of teaching-staff shortages at Königsberg Academy was solved thanks to cooperation with Wittenberg University, Martin Luther, and Philip Melanchthon, who sent their best pupils to teach at Königsberg. The Lithuanians Abraham Culvensis (in Lithuanian Abraomas Kulvietis, 1510–1545) and Stanislaus Rapagelanus (in Lithuanian Stanislovas Rapalionis 1485/1500–1545) belonged to the first group of lecturers.

Abraham Culvensis, who was the offspring of members of the Lithuanian landed gentry, studied at the Universities of Cracow, Louvain, Wittenberg, and Siena, emerging from the last of these as a Doctor of Jurisprudence. In 1537, at Wittenberg, as a disciple of Martin Luther, he studied Aristotle and civil law for one academic term. After this, he left for the University of Siena, where he defended a thesis for a doctoral degree *in utroque iuris* on 28–29 November 1540, as the Archiepiscopal Archive of Siena testifies.¹⁵ In sixteenth-century Italy, many famous Catholic cardinals and bishops were involved in the Protestant movement; to avoid the Inquisition, they had to leave Italy. Siena was one of the most prominent centres of Swiss-inspired Protestantism in Italy. During his stay in Siena, Culvensis made the acquaintance of the pioneers of Italian Protestantism Bernardino Ochino and Aonio Paleario.

Back in Vilnius, Culvensis tried to spread Protestant ideas but was prevented from doing so by the Catholic Church. The Bishop of Vilnius approached the Grand Duke of Lithuania and King Sigismund I of Poland, asking for permission to commence legal proceedings against Culvensis for heresy. The king issued an edict to bring Culvensis to the church court, but by this time he had already moved to Prussia, where Duke Albrecht made him an assessor and the rector of Königsberg Particular School,¹⁶ founded in 1542. When it was upgraded to an Academy, Culvensis was appointed to the Chair of Greek Language. At the same institution he also taught Hebrew and commented on the Psalms.

Another product of the Lithuanian gentry, Stanislaus Rapagelanus, was the first theology professor at Königsberg Academy. He studied at Cracow and Wittenberg Universities. His two-year studies at Wittenberg University were supported by Duke Albrecht. On 23 May 1544, he defended his doctoral thesis 'On Repentance', which consisted of twenty-eight articles. The committee was presided over by Martin Luther. Philip Melanchthon, the supervisor of the thesis, was also a member of the committee. The relevant problems of

15 Pociūtė, 'Abraomas Kulvietis in Italy and Lithuania', p. 251.

16 Pociūtė, 'Abraomas Kulvietis in Italy and Lithuania', p. 262.

justification and good deeds were discussed in the defense. Their interpretation led to the disputes between Catholics and Protestants. This discussion was very significant to Lutheran preachers, who had to find employment in other countries. All discussions were carefully protocolled, printed, and promulgated in the Protestant schools. The content of the discussions during the defense was of great importance for Protestant preachers in refuting Catholic dogma. Melancthon recommended Rapagelanus as a candidate for the Königsberg Academy theology professorship.

At the end of the first year of his professorship, Rapagelanus wrote forty-two theses in a *Disputation Concerning the Church and its Features*. In his writings, he disapproved of the worship of the saints, paid masses, celibacy, the vows of monks, the naming of sins during confession, and the absolution of sin by priests. His theses became famous all over Europe as a polemical bone of contention between Catholics and Evangelicals in their attitudes towards the *Ecclesia*.

Along with the Lithuanian professors there were quite a few Lithuanian students at Königsberg Academy, attracted by their famous professorial compatriots. Duke Albrecht assigned seven grants for Lithuanian students. Unfortunately, the activity of Culvensis and Rapagelanus was cut short by their early deaths. Nevertheless, they left a remarkable cultural and scientific legacy. According to Lukšaitė:

Culvensis and Rapagelanus became outstanding figures of their times not only because they managed to obtain the education of the highest profile, absorbed the experience of several cultures and established a lot of contacts with European intellectuals, but also because they understood the native Lithuanian culture and were sensitive to its needs.¹⁷

The education policy of Prussia with regard to spoken language was directed to the use of the vernacular languages. With regard to written discourse, it encouraged the use of Latin. This policy stimulated the appearance of the first printed books in national languages. Martin Luther himself was a great force behind this, by translating the Bible into the German language and publishing it in 1534. By doing this he contributed to the development of the German language generally. Culvensis and Rapagelanus planned to emulate the exploits of their teacher and translate the Bible into Lithuanian, but their early deaths put paid to this. The Canticles are their only surviving biblical translation.

Another developer of the Lithuanian language was Martinus Mosvidius. He matriculated at Königsberg Academy on 1 August 1546. After one year of study, he wrote and published a Catechism in the Lithuanian language.

¹⁷ Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 207.

The First Lithuanian Book

Educational reform in Prussia was carried out by expanding the network of church libraries and schools. It was recommended to priests that they should collect personal libraries according to a list of required books. In different parts of Germany, Duke Albrecht bought a large quantity of postils (biblical commentaries), distributing them, and expanding the network of printing works.

Duke Albrecht invited the typographer Hans Weinreich (1480/1490–1566) from Danzig (Gdansk) to start a printing works in Königsberg. The first Weinreich printing house was opened there in 1524. Later, because of the growing demand for religious and scientific books, Duke Albrecht recruited the famous Hans Lufft (1495–1584) from Wittenberg, who was known as a perfect technical and artistic typographer. He had also been the first publisher of Luther's Bible. In 1549 Lufft opened a branch of Wittenberg's publishing house in Königsberg: it functioned till 1553.

Duke Albrecht was interested in historiographical publications and supported Prussian chroniclers. Accordingly, the Academy of Königsberg became the cultural centre of Prussia. In 1554, the Duke invited the chronicler and publisher Johann Daubmann (?–1573) from Nuremberg to establish a publishing house in the Academy itself. In 1564, he was awarded the monopoly for printing books in German, Latin, Prussian, Polish, and Lithuanian. In 1557, Daubmann visited Vilnius with a collection of books issued at his publishing house.

Paluszak-Bronka and Wronkowska-Dimitrowa emphasize the significance of book publishing for the development of culture in Prussia:

Königsberg, a great centre of printing and publishing activities whose profile was set not only by the needs of the society of Ducal Prussia, but also by the ambitions to reach the readers from the neighboring Polish and Lithuanian lands, exerted significant influence on Lithuanian writing.¹⁸

According to Lukšaitė, the translation of the Bible and other books into the vernacular was the overall feature of the nations that underwent the Reformation. The printing of books and Bibles in the vernacular became widespread.¹⁹ The appearance of the first books in the vernacular had a great cultural importance. The first printed Lithuanian book, the Catechism by Martinus Mosvidius, was not a traditional Catechism. It was rather a universal educational publication. The book included the first poem in the Lithuanian

18 Paluszak-Bronka and Wronkowska-Dimitrowa, 'Nowo Wydany Kancjonal Pruski (Newly Published Prussian Chancellor) (1741) Released by Johann Heinrich Hartung's Publishing House', p. 132.

19 Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 228.

language, a primer with the alphabet, a basic catechism, and eleven religious hymns accompanied by scores. This book served readers as a manual and as a Christian moral code. Mosvidius starts his Catechism with a dedication in Latin to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (*Ad Magnum Ducatum Lituaniae*):

Ad Magnum Ducatum Lituaniae
 Fausta ducum magnorum altrix, Lituania clara,
 Haec mandata Dei, suscipe mente pia,
 Ne te, cum dederis rationes ante tribunal
 Augustum, magni iudicis ira premat.²⁰

(Happy motherland of great lords, famous
 Lithuania, accept the words of God with pure heart
 In order that when you will be called to your great account
 The Judge will not smash you down by his terrible anger.)

The next dedication is directed to the church ministers in Lithuania (*Pastoribus et Ministris Ecclesi Arum in Lituania Gratiam et Pacem*). It criticizes them for preventing ordinary believers from reading the Bible. It exhorts believers to study this catechism, pointing out to them that Lithuanians are insufficiently educated in comparison with other nations and that in some respects they are still pagan. This, so he says, is why he has written this short catechism in the Lithuanian language, at the same time promising to write a longer one.

With the dedications in Latin completed, Mosvidius appeals to Lithuanians and Samogitians with the first printed secular poem in Lithuanian. The poem starts thus:

Broliai, seserys, imkiat mani ir skaitykiat,
 Ir tatai skaitydami permanykiat.
 Mokslo šito tėvai jūsq trokšdavo turėti,
 Ale to negalėjo nè vienu būdu gauti.²¹

(Brothers and sisters, take me and read
 And comprehend what you read.
 Your forefathers longed for this learning.
 But had no means to acquire it.)

Further to this, he entreats his fellow-countrymen to abandon pagan customs and accept his catechism and canticles. In the final part of the poem, Mosvidius depicts a scene in which a pagan Lithuanian and a sorceress ritually eat a rooster. They have no notion of the true faith. Mosvidius also claims, more generally, that a number of Lithuanians have no notion of the true faith either. He asks priests to instruct Samogitians and Lithuanians in the Christian religion.

20 *Catechismvsa prasty Szadei* (Catechism by Martinus Movidius), p. 2.

21 *Catechismvsa prasty Szadei* (Catechism by Martinus Movidius), p. 8.

In the poem, Mosvidius combines Ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric with biblical discourse, also applying the Polish syntactical-intonational versification system based on the similarity of the syntactical structure of lines. This technique involves constantly repeating and similar intonational patterns. In this way Mosvidius created a new style in the use of the Lithuanian language.

The Catechism also presents the first primer in the Lithuanian language, accompanied by an alphabet and reading exercises. Twenty-three capital and twenty-five minuscular letters are displayed. They are distributed into groups of vowels, diphthongs, and consonants. These are the first examples of grammatical terms in Lithuanian. From this primer begins the study of historical linguistics in Lithuania Minor as well as in Greater Lithuania. According to Lukšaitė, the 'Catechism was conceived as a textbook for native language literacy. Thus the author was the pioneer in that enterprise'.²²

The main part of the Catechism consists of five chapters: Decalogue, Credo, Lord's Prayer, Sacraments, and rules issued by a judge. Part five deals with law and speaks about social and moral doctrine. It is an attempt to translate fragments of the Bible and in particular the New Testament into the Lithuanian language.

The final and longest part of the book consists of canticles and their melodies. These were written by Mosvidius in Lithuanian. Most of them are of Catholic origin, and only three of them are Protestant.²³ By publishing his Catechism, Mosvidius initiated the development of the Lithuanian liturgical language.

During the second half of the sixteenth century, Lithuanian Lutherans wrote, translated, and published books necessary to the activity of the Church: catechisms, hymnals, prayer books, theological treatises, sermon books, and Sacred Scripture. In this way, the groundwork for biblical studies was created. As a result, the Reformation greatly expanded the space for the public use of written Lithuanian, initiating it as a written language, and publicizing the need for studying and standardizing it.

Conclusion

The humanitarian and educational policy of the early Reformation period in the Duchy of Prussia initiated the development of the Lithuanian intellectual culture. The educational reforms that started in the Protestant territories served as the impetus for the establishment of schools and a university in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as well as enhancing the Catholic priests' knowledge

22 Lukšaitė, *Reformacija Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje ir Mažojoje Lietuvoje* (Reformation in the Great Duchy of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor), p. 233.

23 Pociūtė, 'Martyno Mažvydo Katekizmas' (Catechism of Martynas Mažvydas), p. 333.

of theology. Events in the Duchy of Prussia influenced the development of education in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Duke Albrecht and the ecclesiastical authorities promoted printed texts, improved printing technologies, and expanded the network of printing works. Catechisms were printed in Lithuanian, Polish, and Prussian and were distributed even beyond the borders of Prussia. Thus, the Reformation fostered the printing of books in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and enhanced the written use of the Lithuanian language. It also initiated a renewal of the Catholic Church in the Grand Duchy and stimulated socio-economic and cultural changes.

A further outcome of the Reformation was that Mosvidius's Catechism was the first step towards formalizing the Christian education of the Lithuanian nation; it had the accompanying aim of eliminating residual pagan customs. It also proved that the Lithuanian language could indeed be used in public, that writing it was feasible, and that its standardization was necessary for its effective use in the service of state and society.

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Preparing for Death and the Afterlife

'The Kingdom of Heaven cannot be denied to you justly because you have fought correctly'

Tracing the Evolution of Ars moriendi Literature in the Fifteenth Century

In the wake of Philippe Ariès' influential works *Western Attitudes toward Death* (1974) and *The Hour of Our Death* (1981), numerous studies have been published about our modern western attitude toward death;¹ however, three recent major studies that (taken together) examine the historical culture of death and dying from 1380 to 1750 have argued that our modern, western attitude towards death actually stems from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.² Taking Ariès' notion of the late medieval 'death of the self'³ as their starting point, they claim it was during this period that the individual learnt to take responsibility for his own death (something we tend to think of as a modern phenomenon). In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe, this new attitude towards death found its literary expression in an extremely popular type of literature, the *ars moriendi* (the art of dying) literature, which offered

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- 1 Primarily in France (McManners, *Death and the Enlightenment*, Vovelle, *La Mort et l'Occident*, Kselman, *Death and the Afterlife*), England (Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, Jupp and Gittings, eds, *Death in England*, Strange, *Death, Grief and Poverty*), and the United States (Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death*, Laderman, *The Sacred Remains*, Prothero, *Purified by Fire*).
 - 2 Atkinson, *The English Ars Moriendi*, Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, and Appleford, *Learning to Die in London*.
 - 3 Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, pp. 95–293.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 217–239

guidance to the dying (and to those well before death) on how to die well. It aimed to lead them to salvation. Such guidance fed into the new mentality of being the architect of one's own salvation and placed new emphasis on the actual moment of physical death as the final reckoning. As such, *ars moriendi* literature is the most iconic expression of death and dying in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe; it offers an informative insight into the 'modern' shift towards an autonomous approach to death.

In this chapter, I focus on three *ars moriendi* texts written in sequence during the fifteenth century: Jean Gerson's *De arte bene moriendi*, dating from c. 1403;⁴ the anonymous *Speculum artis bene moriendi*, dating from the second quarter of the fifteenth century;⁵ and the anonymous *Picture ars moriendi*, dating from the third quarter of the fifteenth century.⁶ These last two texts are now recognized in the research field as the most successful and widely used *ars moriendi* texts in fifteenth-century Europe and form the basis of most current research performed on *ars moriendi* literature.⁷ They are extant as manuscripts and prints (either as typographical books, which are printed with movable type, or block books, which are printed entirely from woodcuts) in Latin and in vernacular translations.

Focusing on these three successive texts makes it possible to trace the evolution of the *ars moriendi* genre throughout the fifteenth century. By analysing the interaction and the agency of the 'stock characters' (in particular the dying person) in the three texts, I aim to show that the evolution of the *ars moriendi* genre in the fifteenth century bears witness to an increasing sense of a composite of individualism, personal responsibility, and spirituality. Firstly, I briefly present the three *ars moriendi* texts. Secondly, I perform a comparative analysis of the three texts. I then conclude by summarizing why the evolution of the *ars moriendi* genre in the fifteenth century bears clear testimony to the late medieval shift towards an autonomous approach to death.

The Three 'Ars moriendi' Texts

Gerson's 'De arte bene moriendi'

The Austrian scholar Rainer Rudolf, who devoted most of his scientific life to the study of the *ars moriendi*, claims that the Parisian theologian Jean

4 *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, ed. by McGuire, p. 180.

5 Palmer, 'Ars moriendi und Totentanz', p. 314. Although this work is frequently attributed to Nikolaus von Dinkelsbühl (c. 1360–1433), the question of authorship is still open (Palmer, 'Ars moriendi und Totentanz', p. 318).

6 Palmer, 'Ars moriendi und Totentanz', p. 321. See also Stevenson, 'The Quincentennial', pp. 1–3, and Chinca, 'Innenraum des anderen', p. 360.

7 Palmer, 'Ars moriendi und Totentanz', with an overview of secondary literature on *ars moriendi* pp. 330–34.

Charlier Gerson (1363–1429) gave the 'most important impetus' to the *ars moriendi* genre with his treatise *De arte bene moriendi* (c. 1403), the third part of his *Opus tripartitum*.⁸ Gerson primarily wrote *De arte bene moriendi* for the parish clergy, whom he wanted to educate with cheap and simple tracts on the basics of the Christian faith.⁹ However, the treatise was met with so much acclamation that the French episcopate deemed it should be used for the education of both priests and laypeople.¹⁰

Gerson begins his *De arte bene moriendi* with the claim that the true friends of the dying are those who are interested in the dying's spiritual, rather than physical, well-being.¹¹ As an experienced educator and pastor, he points out that the attendants of the dying person (hereafter *Moriens*)¹² may expect a reward in terms of their own salvation: 'Quippe nullum est opus misericordie maius sive commodius, quod et tanti apud Deum meriti est, et amplioris frequenter estimatur, quemadmodum persone nostri salvatoris Jhesu Christi si in terris nobiscum degeret impensum servitium corporale' (there is surely no other work of mercy greater, more beneficial, and in the eyes of God more meritorious, and it is often valued more than serving our Saviour Jesus Christ himself with earthly service if he were living on earth amongst us?).¹³ He then turns to *Moriens* himself, to whom he directs a number of *exhortationes*. Firstly, *Moriens* has to submit his will to God, who determines that everyone has to die, since everyone comes into the world only in order to obtain eternal life through meritorious works. Secondly, *Moriens* has to be grateful for God's mercies, especially because he still commands his mental capacities and has not been struck by sudden death. Thirdly, he has to bear his suffering and death willingly as penitence for his sins and surrender to God in faith, to detach his thoughts from the world and direct them completely to God. Finally, he has to ask those attending him (hereafter *amici*) to pray for his salvation. Gerson then recommends that the *amici* ask *Moriens* six questions (*interrogationes*), which can be traced back to the questions to the dying in the *Admonitio morientis* by Anselm of Canterbury

8 Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, p. 65.

9 Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity*, pp. 141, 194.

10 Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, p. 67. See also Falk, *Die deutschen Sterbebüchlein*, p. 16.

11 'Si veraces fidelesque amici cuiuspiam egroti curam diligentius agant pro ipsius vita corporali fragile et defectibili conservanda, exigunt a nobis multo fortius Deus et caritas pro salute sua spirituali sollicitudinem gerere specialem: in hac enim extrema mortis necessitate fidelis probatur amicus' (even though the true friends of a dying person are very concerned to maintain his fragile and defective corporal life, God and charity demand that they should care more for his spiritual life, because the care for the latter in the hour of death really shows who is a true friend) (*Gerson bilingue*, ed. by Ouy, p. 84).

12 Following the English scholarly tradition (e.g. O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*), I call the dying person 'Moriens', even though Gerson himself does not use this term, but instead uses the terms 'egrotus', 'patiens', 'morigerus', and 'infirmus' (*Gerson bilingue*, ed. by Ouy, pp. 84–93). In line with the source texts, I refer to *Moriens* as 'he'.

13 *Gerson bilingue*, ed. by Ouy, p. 84.

(1033–1109).¹⁴ The *amici* should ask *Moriens* if he wishes to do the following: die within the Christian faith as an obedient son of the Church; pray to God for forgiveness of his sins; better his life if he were to recover; confess any as yet unconfessed deadly sins; provide restitution for any illegitimate possessions; forgive all those who hurt him and pray for forgiveness from all those he himself hurt. The *amici* are then directed to administer prayers (*orationes*) to God, Jesus, the Virgin, the angels, and patron saints. Finally, Gerson gives the *amici* some recommendations (*observationes*) on how to apply the treatise. They have to encourage *Moriens* to receive the Eucharist and the Last Unction. If he is in a state of excommunication, they should nevertheless urge him to submit to the authority of the Church. They can also read legends and pious prayers to him, and give him the Ten Commandments and other doctrinal literature as a mirror to examine his conscience. It is also advisable to show him a crucifix or an image of a saint whom he has particularly revered. The *amici* should not give him false hope of recovery, since this can result in his postponing his penitence and ultimately in his eternal damnation. Instead, the *amici* should encourage him to show remorse, repent, and confess. Because the illness of the body often results from the illness of the soul, a medical doctor should not administer medicine to the patient without first referring him to the curator of the soul, i.e. the priest.

According to the aim of the *ars moriendi* (to lead the dying person to salvation), some of the characters in Gerson's treatise are less useful than others. The medical doctor (*medicus*), for instance, seems to be of little use. He receives his (negative) instructions from the pope and is told not to give *Moriens* assistance before his confession.¹⁵ In contrast, the most useful characters are the *veraces amici*, who are urged to help *Moriens* in the prologue and given explicit guidance throughout the treatise, whereas *Moriens*' wife (*uxor*), children (*liberi*), and 'carnal friends' (*amici carnales*) are potentially harmful: 'Nullatenus aut minime, si fieri possit, morienti amici carnales, uxor, liberi vel divitiae ad memoriam reducantur, nisi in quantum id exigit patientis spiritualis sanitas, vel dum alias convenienter id omitti nequit' (if it can be done, one should not at all or as little as possible bring to memory [*Moriens*'] carnal friends, wife, children, and earthly possessions, unless this is necessary for his spiritual health or for some valid reason is impossible to avoid).¹⁶ These characters are negatively portrayed because they attach *Moriens* to the world which he should willingly leave behind. Gerson seems to establish a scene in which some characters draw *Moriens* to salvation whilst other characters drive him away from salvation. The line between them runs through the *amici*, who can be either *veraces* or *carnales*, in other words: 'spiritual friends', who can facilitate his salvation, and 'carnal friends', who can obstruct his salvation.

14 Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, p. 66.

15 The decretal by Pope Innocent III that Gerson alludes to can be found in the twenty-second chapter of the statutes of the Fourth Lateran Council (O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 38).

16 Gerson *bilingue*, ed. by Ouy, p. 90.

As well as this set of characters, Gerson also mentions specific objects that can fulfil a role in the death scenario. In this case, there is also a negative and positive characterization. The 'earthly possessions' (*divitie*) are negatively characterized because — like the *uxor*, *liberi*, and *amici carnales* — they attach *Moriens* to the world, whereas the crucifix and the image of a saint whom *Moriens* has particularly venerated during his life are positively characterized.¹⁷

Finally, Gerson claims that *Moriens*' most important action in the hour of death is to pray. In fact, if time is short, this act of praying — especially to Jesus — should be prioritized: 'Si non omnia premissa dici brevitatis sinat, preponende sunt orationes, illa presertim que Salvatori nostro Jhesu Christo dirigitur' (if lack of time does not permit everything I said before, priority should be given to the prayers, especially the one directed to Our Saviour Jhesus Christ).¹⁸ In this way, Gerson's *ars moriendi* states that the minimal condition for salvation is to pray to Christ before death. Other prayers, the Ten Commandments, and pious legends are recommended but are not entirely necessary for one's salvation.

The 'Speculum artis bene moriendi'

The *Speculum artis bene moriendi* (hereafter *Speculum*) was the most successful *ars moriendi* of the fifteenth century.¹⁹ It is based on Gerson's *De arte bene moriendi*, but the *Speculum* text shows more intellectual ambition, as it contains numerous quotations from the Fathers of the Church and other theological and philosophical authorities. Although the author of the *Speculum* states that the work concerns all Catholics in general and that it is aimed at every good and devout Christian who wants to die well and safely, he specifically invokes the monastic community in the work's introductory sentence by stating that death is horrible not only for laypeople, but also for the religious and the devout.²⁰ Moreover, throughout the work, the reader is addressed as *frater*, which indicates a monastic primary audience.²¹

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- 17 'Presentetur infirmo ymago crucifixi vel ymago alterius sancti quem sanus et incolumis specialiter venerabatur' (the sick should be shown a crucifix or an image of a saint whom he has particularly revered whilst he was healthy and unimpaired) (*Gerson bilingue*, ed. by Ouy, p. 90).
- 18 *Gerson bilingue*, ed. by Ouy, p. 90.
- 19 Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, p. 75.
- 20 'Non solum [mortis transitus] laicis verum etiam religiosis atque devotis difficilis multumque periculosus immo etiam terribilis et horribilis' ([the transition from life to death is] not only difficult, very dangerous, truly horrible and terrible for laypeople but also for the religious and the devout) (*Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a2^r). See also Palmer, 'Ars moriendi und Totentanz', p. 318.
- 21 The reader is addressed as (*charissime*) *frater* in the first chapter, at the beginning of the interrogation in the second chapter, and in the final paragraph of the fifth chapter (cf. Palmer, 'Ars moriendi und Totentanz', p. 318).

The *Speculum* consists of six chapters. The first chapter reflects on the concept of a ‘good death’. The author commends death as the end of all evils and the beginning of everlasting good, and he continues to argue that the appropriate inner attitude towards death involves acceptance and true penitence. The second chapter consists of an elaborate treatise on five deathbed temptations with which the devil puts *Moriens* to the test (unbelief, despair, impatience, vainglory, and attachment to the world). The third chapter consists of an interrogation of the dying, which strongly relies on Gerson’s *interrogationes* described above.²² In the fourth chapter, *Moriens* is encouraged to imitate Christ on the cross by praying, weeping, crying, recommending his soul to God, and giving up his spirit with the words ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’ (Luke 23. 46). It concludes with a selection of prayers. The fifth and sixth chapters are directed at the *amici*. The fifth chapter begins with a lament about man’s indifferent attitude towards death — an attitude ‘quod nimirum ex instinctu dyaboli fieri ortum est’ (that without doubt is due to the instigation of the devil).²³ The remainder of the chapter is almost completely based on Gerson’s *observationes*. Apart from practical advice on how to assist the dying, this chapter also contains Gerson’s warning against giving *Moriens* false hope of recovery, followed by a lament that one seeks medicine for the body more readily than medicine for the soul. The author also mentions more apotropaic practices, such as showing the image of the Virgin and sprinkling holy water:

Item presentetur infirmo imago crucifixi que semper circa infirmos est habenda, vel etiam beate Marie virginis aut alterius sancti, quem pridem sanus venerabatur. Habeantur etiam ibidem aqua benedicta, que super infirmum et alios circumquaque stantes frequenter aspergetur ut sic ab eadem demones compescantur.²⁴

(A crucifix, which one always needs to have near the sick, or also an image of the Holy Virgin Mary or of a saint whom the sick revered when he was healthy should be shown to him. One should also have holy water there, which should frequently be sprinkled on the sick and the bystanders, so that by that water the demons can be held off.)

The sixth chapter starts with a description of a monastic death ritual. The author also laments the fact that, even in religious communities, true friends are scarce: ‘Sed heu sunt paucissimi non solum apud seculares, verum etiam in pluribus religionibus qui huiusmodi scie habeant artem ut in mortis articulo suis proximis fideliter assistant’ (but alas, how few are they, not only in the

22 See also Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, p. 76.

23 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. b2^r. The Quentell Cologne typographical print c. 1498 from which I quote is available online: <http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0002/bsb00025103/images/>.

24 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. b3^{rv}.

world but also in the orders, who know the art to truly assist their fellow men).²⁵ The *Speculum* ends with a variety of liturgical prayers that can be read at the deathbed, such as the *reconciliatio poenitentis ad mortem*, the *profiscere anima christiana*, and the *commendatio anime*.²⁶

The most striking difference between the *Speculum* and Gerson's *De arte bene moriendi* is undoubtedly the inclusion of the deathbed temptations that make up the second chapter. By including these temptations, the *Speculum* author introduces the devil as a new character.²⁷ In the *Speculum*, the devil is introduced as a character who 'with all his might' will try to divert *Moriens* from faith: 'Dyabolus totis viribus hominem in extremis laborantem ab ea [fide] totaliter avertere nititur aut salutem ad dubitandum ea aut aliquibus erroribus ipsum decipere laborat' (the devil will try to divert the dying with all his might from faith so that he can cheat him out of salvation through doubt and error).²⁸ Because of this important development, it is worth looking at the second chapter in more detail. Because salvation without faith is impossible, the first logical step for the devil to take is to tempt *Moriens* to lose his faith.²⁹ As a measure to counter this, the author advises *Moriens* to concentrate on the Creed. He also makes the apotropaic power of the Creed explicit by stating that demons cannot tolerate its sound:

Est autem utile et bonum sicut in quibusdam religionibus fieri solet, ut symbolum fidei circa agonizantes alta dicatur voce pluriesque repetatur, ut per hoc infirmus ad fidei constantiam animetur et ab eo demones qui illud audire nequeunt elongentur.³⁰

(It is also useful and good — as is common in certain religious orders — to read out the Creed in the presence of the dying in a loud voice

25 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. b4^r.

26 O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 40.

27 However, the integration of the devil's temptations in a 'death scenario' is not as original as it may seem. For example, we can see early examples in texts from Berthold of Regensburg (c. 1210–1272) and Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) (Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, p. 13). The devil as a part of the death scenario therefore already had a (monastic) tradition from which the *Speculum* author could draw.

28 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a3^r. As 'erroribus' refers to heresy, the author implicitly stresses the importance of orthodoxy at the end of one's life.

29 'Fides totius salutis nostre extat fundamentum, teste apostolo qui ait: "fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere", unde Augustinus: "fides est omnium bonorum fundamentum et humane salutis initium", et iterum apostolus: "impossibile est sine fide placere Deo", unde Johannes iii: "qui non credit iam iudicatur est"' (faith is the foundation of all salvation, witness the apostle who said: 'other foundation can no man lay (I Corinthians 3. 11); and Augustine: 'Faith is the foundation of all good things and the beginning of salvation for humanity', and again the apostle: 'Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11. 6); and John 3: 'He who doesn't believe [in Christ] is condemned already (John 3. 18)') (*Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a3^r).

30 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a3^v.

and repeatedly, in order to reinvigorate firmness of faith and keep the demons at bay, who are unable to listen to this.)

Here, the author explicitly refers to monastic rituals as guiding examples for deathbed rituals. However, simply concentrating on and reciting the Creed is not sufficient for salvation. *Moriens* should at least implicitly agree with all the teachings of the Catholic Church: the author warns, ‘quam cito in aliquot premissorum errare incipit, tam cito deviet a via vite salutis’ (as soon as one starts to deviate from a single premise, one already deviates from the path of salvation).³¹ The author continues to argue that faith is the most effective weapon against the devil, because faith makes everything possible (Mark 9. 23; Matthew 21. 21), and any sincere prayer will be heard (Matthew 21. 22). Finally, the author reassures *Moriens* by claiming that the devil cannot do anything without his consent: ‘Dyabolus nulli omnino quamdiu liberi arbitrii usum bene dispositum rationi habuerit nisi sponte etiam consenserit aliqua tentatione poterit praevalere’ (the devil cannot force a man to yield to temptation so long as he has use of his reason, unless by his own accord he was willing to consent to him).³² This knowledge is essential for *Moriens*, as it confirms that the devil by himself cannot obstruct his salvation.

The second temptation is despair, which can be seen as the greatest of sins, since it keeps the sinner from penitence and takes away his moral scruples. In order to resist this temptation, *Moriens* has to focus on the image of Christ on the cross, which, according to Pope Innocent III, everybody sees at the moment of death: ‘Quilibet homo tam bonus quam malus antequam anima eius de corpore egradiatur videt Christum in cruce positum’ (everybody, good or bad, is bound to see Christ on the cross before his soul leaves his body).³³ The author makes a case for the validity of repentance ‘at the last moment’ by quoting Ezekiel 33. 12: ‘Quacumque hora peccator ingemuerit, saluus erit’ (at whatever hour the sinner repents, he will be saved).³⁴

The third temptation is impatience. One’s unwillingness to suffer is a sin against God’s love, because he who loves God endures all things. *Moriens* should know that suffering is a necessary condition for his salvation and should

31 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a3^r.

32 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a3^v. In a Dutch vernacular edition, a reference to Ephesians 4. 27 (‘do not give place to the devil’) is added (*Een Scone Leeringe*, ed. by De Geus and others, p. 43).

33 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a3^v. Although Quentell provides the *Liber III de utilitate* [read: *vilitate*] *conditionis humane* as a source, the quotation, as O’Connor rightly remarks, stems from the final chapter of the second book (O’Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 29, with reference to Innocentius III, *De contemptu mundi*, ed. by Migne, col. 736).

34 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a4^r.

remember the words of Pope Gregory: 'Regnum celorum nemo murmurans accipit' (nobody who gripes receives the Kingdom of Heaven).³⁵

The fourth temptation is spiritual pride or complacency, which is more dangerous for the religious and those who have acquired some degree of spiritual perfection. If the devil attacks *Moriens* with this temptation, *Moriens* should act like Anthony, to whom the devil said: 'Anthoni, tu me vicisti, cum enim te volo exaltare, tu te deprimis, et cum te volo deprimere, tu te erigis' (Anthony, you beat me: when I want to exalt you, you humble yourself; when I want to crush you, you raise yourself up).³⁶

The fifth and final temptation is more dangerous for laypeople. It is the temptation to attach oneself to the material world, which relates to Gerson's warning that *Moriens* should not be preoccupied with *uxor, liberi, amici carnales*, and *divitie*. The author of the *Speculum* states that *Moriens* should find comfort in Duns Scotus' (c. 1266–1308) statement that 'si quis infirmus vult mori et plane consentit in mortem ac si eam per se eligisset satisfacit pro omnibus venialibus peccatis immo confert aliquid ad satisfaciendum pro peccatis mortalibus' (if the sick wants to die and fully consents to his death and chooses to die, he will obtain complete absolution of all his venial sins and indeed also some absolution of his mortal sins).³⁷ In other words, he who frees himself from the world and completely resigns to God before he dies will reduce his pains in Purgatory. The author then laments that individuals — whether lay or religious — rarely prepare themselves properly for death during their lifetime, because they hope and believe that there is still time:

Raro autem aliquis secularis vel carnalis etiam religious vult se ad mortem disponere, et quod deterius est, nec quicquam de hac re audire etiam cum iam ipse de facto agonizat sperans se evasurum, quod re vera periculosissimum est in homine christiano, ut dicit cancellarius vel cantor parisiensis.³⁸

(But it rarely happens that a lay person or even a religious person wants to prepare for death, and, what is worse, nobody wants to hear about the subject, even when one is in the real agony of death, because one still hopes to escape death; which is really dangerous for a Christian, as the chancellor of the university of Paris says.)³⁹

35 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a4^v. Cf. Gregorius, *XI. Homiliarum in Evangelia*, liber primus, hom. 19 (Gregorius XI, *Homiliarum in Evangelia*, ed. by Migne, col. 11). See also I Corinthians 13, 7; Luke 21, 19.

36 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a5^v. Cf. *Vita Patrum (Vitae Patrum)*, ed. by Migne, col. 115).

37 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a6^v. The idea is in fact much older. Already in the third century, Tertullian (c. 160–225) remarked that enduring temporal punishment can alleviate eternal torments (Rittgers, *The Reformation of Suffering*, p. 30).

38 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a5^v.

39 Interestingly, this attribution to Gerson is incorrect. The lament is not taken from Gerson's *De artis moriendi* but from Henry Suso's chapter of dying in the *Horologium sapientiae* (cf. O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 31). The attribution to Gerson, however, confirms the prototypical status of Gerson's work.

Consequently, the author repeats what he said at the beginning of the chapter, namely that the devil cannot force an individual to succumb to the temptations unless he gives his consent.⁴⁰ Moreover, he adds — with reference to I Corinthians 10. 13 — that the devil is limited by the fact that God will not allow an individual to be tempted beyond his endurance.⁴¹ The chapter ends on a quotation from Augustine: ‘Illi non tremunt [read: crepent] in fornace qui non habent ventum superbia’ (those who do not have the wind of vainglory will not burn in the oven of hell).⁴² This again roots the *Speculum* in a monastic context, *superbia* being the most important temptation of the religious.

Throughout the *Speculum*, the author gives his text intellectual *gravitas* and spiritual depth by gathering together quotations from ecclesiastical writers. By integrating these quotations into the *ars moriendi*, they become the stepping stones along *Moriens*’ path to salvation. The reflective character of the *Speculum* also explains the author’s predilection for the literary form of the *lamentatio*. Monastic models like Anthony give *Moriens* concrete guidance, and the power of the Creed, sincere prayers, the image of the Virgin, and holy water protect him.

The ‘Picture *ars moriendi*’

The *Picture ars moriendi* confines itself to the struggle between good and bad. It is primarily aimed at laypeople ranging from literate to completely unlettered.⁴³ The work is based entirely on the *Speculum*’s second chapter, but, in the *Picture ars moriendi*, the five deathbed temptations are presented as direct verbal attacks by the devil.⁴⁴ Although approximately one third of the text is the same as the *Speculum*,⁴⁵ it has a very different structure, as each of the devil’s temptations is counteracted by a ‘good inspiration’ (*bona inspiratio*) from the guardian angel. However, the authorial voice remains

40 ‘Dyabolus in omnibus predictis tentationibus hominem nequaquam cogere poterit nec ei etiam aliquatenus prevalere ut sibi consentiat, quamdiu usum habuerit rationis, nisi sponte ei voluerit consentire’ (the devil cannot force a man to all the foresaid temptations and can in no way make him agree, so long as he has use of his reason, unless by his own accord he was willing to consent to him) (*Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a5^v–6^r).

41 ‘Unde apostolus: Fidelis Deus qui non patietur vos tentari super id quod potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione puentum vt possitis sustinere’ (hence the apostle: God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able) (*Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a6^r).

42 *Speculum*, ed. by Quentell, fol. a6^r. Cf. Augustinus Hipponensis, *Enarrationes in Psalmos: In Psalmum cxx Enarratio*, ed. by Migne, col. 1617.

43 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 3.

44 The author of the *Picture ars moriendi* most likely took the suggestion for this presentation from the one passage in the *Speculum* text in which the devil speaks directly to *Moriens*. This is the fourth temptation, where the devil assures him that his victory over the first three has rendered his salvation secure (cf. O’Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 47).

45 Palmer, ‘*Ars moriendi* und *Totentanz*’, p. 321.

strong, since the author introduces and comments on each of the devil's and angel's monologues.

The short foreword and afterword, which precede and follow the temptations, can be viewed as short summaries of the other parts of the *Speculum*.⁴⁶ In the foreword (just as in the *Speculum*), the author laments man's indifferent attitude towards death, which is instigated by the devil. However, in the *Picture ars moriendi*, there are no references to *religiosi*. The lament is followed by the *Speculum*'s (and Gerson's) warning against giving the dying false hope, and the subsequent advice to the dying is based entirely on the interrogations in the *Speculum*.⁴⁷ Again, *Moriens* is encouraged to receive the sacraments: 'Deinde studiose inducatur ad debitum usum sacramentorum ecclesie. Primo ut per veram contritionem integram faciat confessionem, alia eciam ecclesie sacramenta devote recipiendo' (then assiduously he must be led to the proper use of the sacraments of the Church. First of all, he must make a real confession through unaffected contrition, and receive the other sacraments of the Church devotedly).⁴⁸ Interestingly, in contrast to Gerson's treatise and the *Speculum*, the *Picture ars moriendi* also considers the possibility of a lonely death: 'Quisquis vero de promissis ab alio interrogatus [in] <et> informatus non fuit, seipsum interroget considerando si sit dispositus ut prefertur' (but whoever is not questioned and instructed by another about the foresaid things must interrogate himself by considering if he would be prepared as described above).⁴⁹ Irrespective of whether *Moriens* is alone or assisted, he must ultimately concentrate entirely on the suffering of Christ, through which all the devil's temptations are successfully overcome: 'Qui autem sic dispositus est, se totum passioni Christi committat continue eam retinendo atque meditando, nam per hoc omnes temptationes dyaboli, et in fide maxime superantur' (however, he who is disposed thus, must commit himself totally to the Passion of Christ by remembering continually and by meditating on it. For through this, all temptations of the devil are overcome, especially those concerning faith).⁵⁰ In his comment on the devil's first temptation (*de fide*), the author states that the devil is powerless without *Moriens*' consent and that God does not permit *Moriens* to be tempted beyond what he is able to endure (just like in the *Speculum*).⁵¹

46 Akerboom, 'Only the image of Christ in us', p. 218.

47 Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, pp. 71, 76.

48 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 251. I base my English translation on Campbell, 'The Ars Moriendi'.

49 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 251.

50 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 251.

51 'Secundum tamen quod dyabolus in nulla temptatione hominem cogere potest, nec eciam aliquo modo prevalere ut sibi consenciat quamdiu usum rationis habuerit, nisi sponte voluerit [ce] <ei> consentire, quod certe super omnia cavendum est. Unde Apostolus: "Fidelis Deus qui non patietur vos temptari super id quod potestis, sed faciet cum temptatione proventum ut possitis sustinere"' (Since however, the devil cannot force a man to yield to temptation, nor can he win his consent by any means, so long as he has use of his

The author of the *Picture ars moriendi* also remarks that *Moriens* should agree with all the teachings of the Catholic Church, which is emphasized by his claim that one should ‘firmiter credere Omnia mandata Ecclesie, quia sancta Ecclesie errare non potest cum a Spiritu Sancto regatur’ (firmly believe all precepts of the Church, because the Holy Church cannot err since it is governed by the Holy Spirit).⁵² Finally, the author repeats the *Speculum* author’s statement that reciting the Creed can keep the devil at bay.⁵³

In his comment on the second temptation (*de desperatione*), the author refers to Augustine, who said that even Judas could have been forgiven if he had not despaired: ‘Cogitet [infirmus] quod ipsa est peior et dampnabilior omnibus peccatis et quod nunquam debet admitti propter quecumque eiam peccata. Nam ut dicit Augustinus: “Plus peccavit Iudas desperando quam Iudei crucifigendo Christum” (let [the dying man] contemplate that despair is worse and more damning than all sins and never should it be yielded to on account of any kind of sin. For as Augustine said: ‘Judas sinned more by despairing than the Jews sinned by crucifying Christ’).⁵⁴ By referring to Judas, the author of the *Picture ars moriendi* makes it clear that nobody should consider his sins beyond forgiveness.

Whereas the first and second temptations follow the *Speculum* almost verbatim, the third temptation (*de impatientia*) appears to be a more creative reworking that clearly demonstrates that the *Picture ars moriendi* is primarily written for a lay audience. The devil not only claims that *Moriens*’ suffering is senseless, but also that the *amici* have no real sympathy with him. According to the devil, the *amici* want *Moriens* to pass away quickly, so that they can receive their inheritance: ‘Licet enim amici ore compaciantur tamen maxime, propter bona reliquenda tuam mortem mente desiderant: anima quidem corpore exuta, vix per unius diei spacium pro omni substantia relicta corpus tuum hospitari volunt’ (although friends may speak compassionately to you, they really want you to die for the sake of the inheritance. Indeed, with the soul having departed the body, they scarcely want to host your body for the period of one day in return for all the inheritance).⁵⁵ The angel does not question these words but retaliates

reason, unless by his own accord he was willing to consent to him, which ought to be warned against above all other things; hence the apostle: ‘God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but with the temptation he will provide support so that you may be able to bear it’). (*Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 252).

52 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 253.

53 ‘Bonum est ut simbolum fidei circa agonizantem alta voce dicatur pluriesque repetatur, ut per hoc infirmus ad fidei constanciam animet[i]ur et demones qui illud audire abhorrent abigantur’ (it is good that the Nicene Creed is recited aloud beside the one in agony and repeated many times so that through this the sick man may be endowed with strength for the steadfastness of faith and the demons, who hate to hear this, may be driven off) (*Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 253).

54 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 254.

55 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 255.

by identifying patience as the strongest shield in the battle against evil and, again, he does this by urging *Moriens* to focus on the Passion of Christ: 'Repelle ergo a te impacientiam tamquam pestem virulentam et assume pacientiam, scutum fortissimum quo omnes inimici anime facilliter superantur et respice Christum patientissimum et omnes sanctos usque ad mortem' (therefore cast off impatience as a virulent disease and embrace patience, the strongest shield with which all evils of the soul are easily overcome, and look to Christ, the one who suffered the most, and to all the saints right until death).⁵⁶

The author of the *Picture ars moriendi* uses a further battle metaphor in his comment on the third temptation: 'Melior est paciens viro forti et qui dominatur animo suo expugnatore urbium' (a patient man is better than a strong man and one who is ruled by his spirit is better than a sacker of cities (Proverbs 16. 32)).⁵⁷ These battle metaphors are not present in the *Speculum*.

The fourth temptation (*de vana gloria*) is particularly relevant for pious people. Again, a battle metaphor is used when the devil says: 'Regnum celorum tibi iure negare non potest quia legit[t]ime certasti' (the Kingdom of Heaven cannot be denied to you justly because you have fought correctly).⁵⁸ This battle metaphor is also lacking in the *Speculum*. In his subsequent comment, the author points out that the devil himself fell from angelic status because of pride. The angel uses the *Speculum*'s monastic example of Anthony, but adds the example of Mary: 'Debet cogitare quod humilitas tantum Deo placuit quod precipue ipsius occasione gloriosa virgo Maria Deum concepit et super chorus angelorum exaltata est' (let him contemplate that humility pleased God so much that it is on account of this that the glorious Virgin Mary conceived God and was raised above the chorus of angels).⁵⁹ In this way, he creates an interesting chiasma: Lucifer was humiliated because he exalted himself, and Mary was exalted beyond the angels because she humiliated herself.

The fifth temptation (*de avaritia*) concerns laypeople whom the devil tries to tempt with 'nimia occupatio temporalium atque exteriorum circa uxores et amicos carnales siue corporales divicias atque alia que magis in vita sua dilexerunt' (too great a preoccupation with temporal and external things concerning wives, carnal friends, wealth, and other things which they really enjoyed during their lifetime).⁶⁰ This passage almost literally echoes the *Speculum*'s (and ultimately Gerson's) warning about the danger of preoccupations concerning *uxor*, *amici carnales*, *liberi*, and *divitie*. The devil reminds *Moriens* of his family, friends, and wealth, 'ut sic per amorem et cupiditatem terrenorum avertat amore Dei et propria salute' (so that

56 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 256.

57 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 256.

58 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 257.

59 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 258.

60 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 258.

thus, through love and desire of earthly things, he turns him from the love of God and his own salvation).⁶¹ The angel refers to the words of Christ, who said that everyone who wants to follow him shall relinquish his family and friends and renounce all his possessions (Luke 14 and 26. 33).⁶² Christ himself was poor and had left behind his mother and friends for the salvation of humanity, and all saints have scorned the things of this world in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven: ‘Memento eciam paupertatis Christi in cruce pro te pendentis, matrem dilectissimam et discipulos carissimos propter tuam salutem spontissime relinquentis. Considera eciam quod tot viri sancti in isto contemptu rerum temporalium secuti sunt eum’ (remember the poverty of Christ hanging on the cross for you; he left behind his beloved mother and his dear disciples for your salvation. Consider also how so many holy men have followed him in this contempt of things temporal).⁶³ *Moriens* should contemplate two things: firstly, that the love of earthly things separates him from God because it shuts off the love of God, and, secondly, that voluntary poverty makes a man blessed and leads him to heaven:

Consideret primo, quod amor terrenorum a Deo separat, quia Dei amorem secludit, teste Gregorio qui ait: ‘Tanto quis a supremo amore disiungitur quanto hic inferius in creaturis delectatur’. Secundo consideret quod voluntaria paupertas hominem beatificiat et ad celum ducit, dicente Domino: ‘Beati pauperes spiritu quia ipsorum est regnum celorum’.

(let him contemplate firstly, that the love of earthly things separates him from God because it shuts off the love of God; witness Gregory who said: ‘By however much someone is separated from heavenly love, by this much he is attracted to lower things.’⁶⁴ Secondly, let him contemplate that voluntary poverty makes a man blessed and leads

61 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 258.

62 “Nisi quis renuciaverit omnibus que possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus”. Et iterum: “Si quis venit ad me et non odit patrem suum et matrem et uxorem, et filios et fratres et sorores adhuc non potest meus esse discipulus”. Item ad eos qui istis renuntiavit dicit: “Et omnis qui relinquerit domum vel fratres vel sorores aut patrem aut matrem aut uxorem aut filios aut agros propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet et vitam eternam possidebit”. (‘Unless someone has renounced all his possessions, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14. 33)’, and again: ‘If someone comes to me and he does not spurn his father and his mother and his wife and children and brothers and sisters, he cannot yet be my disciple (Luke 14. 26)’. He says to those who have renounced these things: ‘And everyone who relinquishes his household or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or land on account of my name, he will receive a hundredfold and he will possess eternal life (Matthew 19. 29)’). (*Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 259).

63 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 259.

64 Gregorius, XI. *Homiliarum in Evangelia*, libri duo, hom. 30, ed. by Migne, col. 1075.

him to heaven, as the Lord says: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs (Matthew 5. 6)'.⁶⁵

None of the angel's words can be found in the *Speculum*. Especially here, in the context of a typically lay temptation, the author of the *Picture ars moriendi* presumably felt a duty to elaborate. Interestingly, by putting the 'poor in spirit' in the context of *avaritia*, the author seems to indicate that spiritual poverty (lack of arrogance) and worldly poverty (detachment from the world) are two sides of the same coin, namely the coin that buys one's entrance to heaven.

The afterword provides a short account of the most important information about the art of dying, and it is most likely designed to be read in times of urgency. Like Gerson, the author states that *Moriens* should first pray to Christ. He should then invoke Mary, all the angels (particularly the angel assigned to watch over him), and subsequently the apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins (particularly those he respected and loved when he was healthy). Their pictures and a crucifix should be shown to him. The author then continues by offering a selection of useful prayers. According to the *Picture ars moriendi*, *Moriens* should ideally say the prayers himself. However, if he is not able to, the *amici* should recite them aloud:

Si agonisans loqui et usum rationis habere potuerit fundat orationes, Deum primo invocando ut ipsum per ineffabilem misericordiam suam et virtutem passionis sue suscipere dignetur. [...] Si autem infirmus non sciat orationes dicere, dicat aliquis de astantibus alta voce coram eo orationes vel historias devotas in quibus pridem sane delectabatur. Ipse vero oret corde et desiderio ut scit et potest.⁶⁶

(If the one in agony is able to speak and has the use of reason, he must pray, firstly by invoking God, that through his ineffable pity and the strength of his passion he may receive him. [...] If, however, the dying man is not able to say the prayers, somebody present must recite them aloud or tell a story of piety which he [*Moriens*] enjoyed when he was healthy. But let him [*Moriens*] pray from the heart and with desire as long as he knows how and is able.)

As in the *Speculum*, in the *Picture ars moriendi* the meditation on the Passion of Christ is presented as the best way to spend the last hour. It is important that the *amici* do not interfere with *Moriens*' private meditation — unless they aim to stimulate it — and do not pray for him if he is able to pray himself.

In the last paragraph, *Moriens* is instructed to search for good friends to help him at his deathbed, but the author laments that such friends are

65 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 259.

66 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, pp. 259–60.

difficult to find: ‘Sed heu pauci sunt qui in morte proximis suis fideliter assistunt interrogando, monendo et pro ipsis orando, presertim cum ipsi morientes nondum mori velint, et sic anime morientium sepe miserabiliter periclitantur’ (ah, but there are few who stand by their neighbours in death by interrogating, admonishing, and speaking on their behalf, especially when those dying do not yet wish to die and their souls are often miserably put in peril).⁶⁷

A Comparative Analysis

On the basis of Gerson’s *De arte bene moriendi*, the *Speculum*, and the *Picture ars moriendi*, the evolution of the *ars moriendi* genre in the fifteenth century can be described in terms of continuity and innovation. The emphasis on orthodoxy is strikingly constant. However, the literary structure as well as the interaction between and the agency of the stock characters changes throughout the three *ars moriendi* texts, which shows that the *ars moriendi* genre evolved throughout the fifteenth century.

Gerson was the first of the three authors to establish a structure consisting of *exhortationes*, *interrogationes*, *orationes*, and *observationes*. This structure is present in the *Speculum*. The first chapter of the *Speculum* is based on the *exhortationes*, the third on the *interrogationes*, the fifth on the *observationes*, and the sixth on the *orationes*. However, the *Speculum* also contains two chapters (the second and the fourth) that are not in Gerson’s treatise. The second chapter deals with the deathbed temptations, which attributes *Moriens* with more agency and as responsible for his own salvation. *Moriens* no longer simply confirms the questions asked to him by the priest or other bystanders. He himself is responsible for his salvation in his final hour. The fourth chapter deals with the imitation of Christ on the cross at the hour of death. It adds an element of piety which was also lacking in Gerson’s text.⁶⁸ The *Picture ars moriendi* elaborates on the second chapter of the *Speculum* and summarizes the other chapters in a short foreword and afterword. It presents a plan for achieving salvation in the final hour.

Apart from *Moriens*, Gerson presents five (types of) characters: *verax amicus*, *amicus carnalis*, *uxor*, *liberi*, and *medicus*. He also presents objects which play an important role in the death scenario: the *divitie*, the *imago crucifixi*, and the *imago sancti*. These characters and objects have a negative,

⁶⁷ *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 260.

⁶⁸ In the first chapter, *Moriens* is exhorted to follow Christ’s example in Gethsemane and, in the second chapter, to focus on the crucified Christ; but, in the fourth chapter, he is also encouraged to imitate Christ on the cross by praying, weeping, and crying.

neutral or positive value with regards to the aim of the *ars moriendi*, namely to lead *Moriens* to salvation:

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Characters	<i>amicus carnalis</i> <i>uxor</i> <i>liberi</i>	<i>medicus</i>	<i>verax amicus</i>
Objects	<i>divitie</i>		<i>imago crucifixi</i> <i>imago sancti</i>

The *medicus* is the only neutral character. In effect, this character cannot do any 'good' or 'bad', because the treatise does not characterize 'good' or 'bad' in physical but in spiritual terms. His agency is restricted by the decretals of the pope, which state that a medical doctor should not treat *Moriens* before he has confessed. The characters who attach *Moriens* to the world (*amicus carnalis, uxor, liberi*) are negatively characterized, while the character who is concerned with *Moriens*' spiritual well-being (the *verax amicus*) is positively characterized. *Moriens*' earthly possessions attach him to the world, whilst the crucifix and the image of a saint whom *Moriens* has particularly revered during his life can offer him protection and strengthen his devotion.

The *Speculum* introduces the character of the devil (*diabolus*). It only indirectly refers to the *medicus* by lamenting that one seeks medicine more readily than faith. With regards to objects, it adds the image of the Virgin (*imago Virginis*) and holy water (*aqua benedicta*):

		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Characters	Material sphere	<i>amicus carnalis</i> <i>uxor</i> <i>liberi</i>	(<i>medicus</i>)	<i>verax amicus</i>
	Spiritual sphere	<i>diabolus</i>		
Objects		<i>divitie</i>		<i>imago crucifixi</i> <i>imago sancti</i> <i>imago Virginis</i> <i>aqua benedicta</i>

The devil is not only made responsible for the fact that only very few prepare for death, but he is also presented as an extremely powerful character who endeavours to divert *Moriens* from salvation with all his might. However, the devil's agency is restricted by the notion that he cannot force *Moriens* against his will, and he cannot tempt him above what he can endure. Since *Moriens* has to resist the devil, he is given more agency. In this way, the introduction of the devil makes it possible to bestow on *Moriens* more individuality and responsibility for his actions. It is no longer enough to be Christian to be

saved; instead, *Moriens* needs to follow excellent examples, in particular monastic examples. It is therefore no surprise that, in the *Speculum* text, there are continuous references to monks, their rituals, and spiritual leaders, such as Anthony, who resisted the devil with humility. By following such examples, *Moriens* can increase his chances of salvation. Because the individual — and not the community of believers — is primarily responsible for his salvation, individual belief and personal devotion are crucial. Therefore, *Moriens* has to follow Christ's example in Gethsemane and is encouraged to imitate Christ on the cross.

The *Speculum* author is fully aware that, by introducing the character of the devil, there are more negative than positive characters in the text and, moreover, that the devil character himself is the most negative character imaginable. The author therefore attempts to compensate for this by repeatedly stressing the restriction of the devil's agency and describing additional apotropaic practices.

The *Picture ars moriendi* introduces the character of the guardian angel (*angelus*); however, there is no longer any reference to holy water or the *medicus*. The result is a more balanced 'black-and-white' role distribution:

		Negative	Neutral	Positive
Characters	Material sphere	<i>amicus carnalis</i> <i>uxor</i> <i>liberi</i>		<i>veraces amici</i>
	Spiritual sphere	<i>diabolus</i>		<i>angelus</i>
Objects		<i>divitie</i>		<i>imago crucifixi</i> <i>imago sancti</i> <i>imago Virginis</i>

Moriens is now positioned between equally strong negative and positive forces in the world as well as in the spiritual sphere. In principle, the angel is subject to the same restrictions as the devil: he cannot help *Moriens* without his consent and he cannot save *Moriens* simply because he is a Christian. In other words, the angel also has to respect *Moriens*' individuality. The same can be said of the *veraces amici*. The author of the *Picture ars moriendi* explicitly asks them to allow *Moriens* to act and pray as much as he can on his own and from his own heart. The *amici* can only help him indirectly by strengthening his personal devotion. Interestingly, the devil initiates a dynamic circle. The devil attacks the *amici* by saying that they only desire *Moriens*' inheritance. The *amici* cannot react directly, but, by strengthening *Moriens*' devotion, they can indirectly beat the devil. They can also deter the devil through apotropaic practices; however, ultimately it is *Moriens*' responsibility to choose Christ actively and sincerely. He has to fight the devil's main weapons — namely doubt and error — with strong faith and orthodoxy. He should find comfort

in the fact that deathbed repentance is a valid means to achieve salvation, and that all sincere prayers will be heard.

In essence, by introducing the struggle between the angel and the devil over *Moriens'* soul, the *Picture ars moriendi* elevates the death scenario onto a distinctively more spiritual level. Although the author admits that a true friend can be a decisive factor in *Moriens'* salvation, he not only claims that such friends are difficult to find but also considers the possibility of a lonely death. Even in this case, *Moriens* — if well prepared — can achieve salvation, because his success fully depends on how well he personally fights the devil. This is made explicit by the devil's expression 'Regnum celorum tibi iure negare non potest quia legit[t]ime certasti' (the Kingdom of Heaven cannot be denied to you justly because you have fought correctly).⁶⁹ In the *Picture ars moriendi*, *Moriens* seems to be a well-prepared spiritual knight who defeats his enemy with faith, patience, hope, humility, and detachment. He is armed with the wisdom of the Evangelists, the Fathers of the Church, and the most excellent of theologians as well as the help of the *amici* and the use of the sacraments, apotropaic practices, and prayers, which all form part of a successful strategy for salvation.⁷⁰ In order to maximize the chance of salvation, the *Picture ars moriendi* makes *Moriens* aware of the different methods to achieve salvation but also advises him to prioritize these methods.⁷¹

In the *Picture ars moriendi*, in order to achieve salvation *Moriens* himself has to be a true disciple of Christ, which involves relinquishing his family and possessions and being ready to fight the devil, while his true friends have to be 'socii vel amici devoti fideles et ydonei' (devoted, trustworthy, and suitable companions).⁷² Therefore, the best way to understand the role of the *amici* is to compare them to a knight's squires who help *Moriens* on his journey to the fatherland, the *regnum caelorum*, where the heavenly court awaits his arrival. On this journey, *Moriens* is driven by the love of God, and not the love of his family, (carnal) friends, or wealth, all of which are diversions by the devil. He can count on the support of Mary, the Queen of heaven, the angels (particularly the angel assigned to watch over him), and the apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins (particularly those he respected and loved when he was healthy). He is protected by the cross, images of saints, the sacraments

69 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 257.

70 The importance of the sacraments had already been downplayed by the *Speculum* author. Cf. O'Connor's remarks that, in the *Speculum*, the reception of the sacraments is no more emphasized than the making of the sick man's will, and that the *Speculum* author entirely omits Gerson's enumeration of the sacraments, although he takes pain to mention the crucifix, the image of the Virgin, and holy water as devotion at the moment of death (O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 6).

71 Prioritizing different methods to achieve salvation might also explain why the fourth chapter of the *Speculum* — which instructs *Moriens* to imitate Christ on the cross — is omitted in the *Picture ars moriendi*. It appears that the author of the *Picture ars moriendi* did not view such an imitation as essential to defeat the devil.

72 *Picture ars moriendi*, ed. by Akerboom, p. 260.

of the Church, and incantations (primarily the Creed), all of which keep his enemy at bay. In his spiritual battle, his most effective weapon is faith and his strongest shield is patience; at all times, he has to remain focused on his standard, the cross of his Saviour. All of this should ensure his safe return to his heavenly fatherland.

Conclusion

By the end of the fifteenth century, the three *ars moriendi* texts discussed in this chapter — Jean Gerson's *De arte bene moriendi* (c. 1403), the *Speculum artis bene moriendi* (second quarter of the fifteenth century) and the *Picture ars moriendi* (third quarter of the fifteenth century) — coexisted. Although these three successful works were used for the education of laypeople, they all had different primary target audiences and could therefore easily co-exist without one outcompeting the other. The first text was originally meant to be a practical handbook for parish priests, but, in practice, it was used for the education of both priests and laypeople. The second text had the character of meditative and devout literature and could therefore be used by religious and laypeople alike. The third text was primarily aimed at laypeople. Over time, the *ars moriendi* genre evolved to include more individualism, personal responsibility, and spirituality. In this chapter, I have described individualism in terms of agency. I have demonstrated that, over the three texts, *Moriens'* agency increases whilst the agency of some other characters remains stable or decreases. It is also the case that in the third text (the *Picture ars moriendi*), a lonely death is presented as a realistic option for salvation. Another evolution in the genre is *Moriens'* relationship with Christ, which becomes increasingly personal and intense over the three texts. Gerson claimed that praying to Christ is the main condition for salvation. The *Speculum* author asks the dying to focus on Christ's disposition on the cross, to imitate the crucified Christ, and to meditate on Christ's passion. The author of the *Picture ars moriendi* repeatedly refers to the importance of meditation on the Passion of Christ.

Both the *Speculum* and the *Picture ars moriendi* connect the concept of a good death with personal success (or failure) and offer examples of excellence. The *Speculum* seeks excellent examples in the monastic world. It describes monastic rituals and places a strong emphasis on inward piety and devotion. In contrast, the *Picture ars moriendi* seems to seek excellence in Christian knighthood: *Moriens* is granted the most agency, to the extent where, provided he can fight and pray for himself, the *amici* can best help him by not helping him at all. However, it is important to note that characters like the *amici*, *uxor*, and *liberi* are fictitious in the sense that they are characters defined by the *ars moriendi's* death scenario and are not real people. For instance, a dying man's wife and (adult) children may very well be helpful to him, but, if so, they adopt the role of the *veraces amici*.

It is not only *Moriens'* agency but also his spirituality that increases over the three *ars moriendi* texts. Gerson's text does not reflect a personal or distinctively individualistic spiritual attitude towards death, and the *Speculum* promotes a spiritual attitude that is disconnected from the life one has led. Orientated towards monastic examples, it explicitly claims that detachment from the world (particularly in the final hour) reduces pain in Purgatory, and it makes a case for the validity of deathbed repentance. It is the *Picture ars moriendi* that elevates the hour of death entirely to a spiritual level, governed by the forces of good and evil as defined by the Church. However, it does not negate the devotional element that characterizes the *Speculum*; instead, it preserves and incorporates it into the spiritual struggle between *Moriens* and the devil. At the end of the fifth temptation, the author of the *Picture ars moriendi* explicitly pleads for a personal spiritual attitude towards death, stating that *Moriens* should contemplate two things: firstly, that the love of earthly things separates him from God because it shuts off the love of God, and secondly that voluntary poverty makes a man blessed and leads him to heaven. All of this demonstrates that the evolution of the *ars moriendi* genre in the fifteenth century bears clear witness to an increasing sense of individualism, and a responsibility and spirituality that are much more distinctively personal.

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Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*

The first English printer, William Caxton, played a decisive role as a relay of religious practices among the laity by importing and producing primers. Throughout his career, he commissioned and imported editions of *Horae* or *Missals*, thus enabling his customers to add a saintly dimension, and an almost monastic rhythm, to everyday life.¹ In the last years of his life, he showed a growing concern for inscribing religious meditations into his lay readers' temporal existence.² In 1491, he printed his second edition of John Mirk's *Festial* (STC 17957), a cycle of sermons adapted for the religious feasts that structured the Christian year. This book was soon complemented by his third edition of *The Quattuor Sermones* (STC 17959), another collection of sermons in English integrating basic catechetical and penitential material. Originally intended for priests who delivered basic religious instruction to laypeople, these books sold so well among the laity from 1491 onwards that he expanded the editions to include the *Hamus Caritatis*, 'a text on the ten commandments and the two precepts of Gospel', inspired by Birgittine spirituality and addressed directly to the head of the house, who was morally in charge of his dependents' daily religious practices.³ That same year, Caxton

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- 1 On the importance of such books among the educated laity, see Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, pp. 3–65.
 - 2 Hellinga, *William Caxton and Early Printing*, pp. 99–102.
 - 3 Powell, 'The Transmission and Circulation', pp. 81–84; Powell, *Three Sermons*; Blake, *Quattuor Sermones*; Powell, 'The Secular Clergy', p. 150.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 241–272

printed another Birgittine text, the *Fifteen Oes* (STC 20195), a series of prayers to be repeated every day for an entire year in order to obtain special grace on earth or in the afterlife.

Caxton is addressing everyday life and its most dramatic outcome became particularly striking in his editions of the *Artes moriendi*. Within a few months, he translated and published two different versions of the *Artes*: *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye* (1490, STC 789) and *The Craft for to Deye for the Helthe of Mannes Sowle*, known as the *Ars moriendi* (1491, STC 786). To avoid any confusion, the singular (*Ars moriendi*) will be used to refer to Caxton's edition of 1491, while the plural (*Artes moriendi*) will be used to refer to the entire tradition.

The *Artes moriendi*, a series of guides designed for dying Christians and those assisting them at death's door, first appeared in the early fifteenth century. Although anonymous, they were often ascribed to the famous chancellor of the Sorbonne and predominant theologian of the Council of Constance (1414–1418), Jean Gerson, and relayed the orthodox faith and practices approved for this occasion. The *Artes* spread through Europe in the second half of the fifteenth century: 300 manuscripts in Latin and in several vernacular languages are preserved today. The *Artes* were also printed a hundred times before 1500.⁴ The speed of the diffusion among different linguistic and social communities may constitute what Anne Coldiron calls 'radiant translations': translations that introduce a text into several vernacular communities at once and create an immediate appeal.⁵ While its cultural importance decreased after 1520–1530, the tradition of the *Artes moriendi* survived until the eighteenth century.

Caxton did not introduce the tradition to England: an English translation called the *Crafte for to Die* had circulated in manuscript form as early as the mid-fifteenth century; rather, he simply made it available to a broader audience.⁶ As a consequence, he made a major contribution to the promotion of certain beliefs and practices surrounding the hour of death in communities of English readers.

The relationship between a text and its readers is one of continuous evolution. My purpose here is to study the initial appropriation of the *Artes moriendi* by lay readers thanks to William Caxton, or its 'Englishing', as Anne Coldiron defines the adoption of a foreign textual practice, reminding us

4 Chartier, 'Les arts de mourir', pp. 60–63.

5 Coldiron, *Printers without Borders*, pp. 20–30. The concept applied to the Renaissance by Coldiron was first developed in connection with digital humanities, see McGann, *Radiant Textuality*. Coldiron uses these concepts in her studies of lengthy profane works; I am attempting to apply them to small booklets of conventional piety, although Caxton translated his two books from the French at a time when the *Artes* were already popular in England. He did not participate in that wave of radiant translations but rather benefited from it.

6 The texts conveyed in the manuscripts and in Caxton's editions have been edited and compared by Morgan, 'A Critical Edition'. The tradition of the fifteenth-century English *Ars moriendi* has been masterfully studied by Sister O'Connor in her dissertation, 'The Art of Dying Well'. A more recent book-length study has been published by Appleford, *Learning to Die*.

that translation is never only ‘about languaging contents’ but also about the ‘reader’s approach’ to texts.⁷ I will focus on assessing whether the editorial strategies of the translator, the material form of the books, and the history of the extant copies may provide us with information on how readers used pious books in their personal quest for salvation.

The ‘*Artes moriendi*’ and the Alleviation of a Growing Fear of Death in the Long Fifteenth Century

The publication of two translations within the final two years of Caxton’s life suggests not only personal anxiety, but also a common need for spiritual guidance at the time of death as well as beforehand. In order to explain Caxton’s growing interest in spiritual guidance for such a crucial moment of human life, it is tempting to examine what we know about his private life. An ageing man himself by 1490, he was conceivably seeking consolation for the loss of his wife.⁸ The first English printer, who died in 1491–1492, may have felt a pressing need to work towards his own salvation. As he stated in the colophon of his first edition, he translated the *Artes moriendi* from French sources. The two texts, however, have little in common except for their general attitude towards the end of human life. Caxton went into the process of translating and printing the same general ideas twice in order to enable readers to come to terms with their mortality. In a broader sense, he addressed death continuously throughout his career. As an essential part of the Catholic faith, the general attitude towards death contained in the *Artes moriendi* makes itself apparent in thirteenth-century works that Caxton translated or printed: the fifth section of Friar Laurent’s *Somme le roi* (printed by Caxton about 1486, *STC* 21429), entitled ‘Virtue in General’, includes a chapter on the good death.⁹ A similar section opens the *Miroir du monde* translated by Caxton and printed in 1481 (*STC* 24766), and re-edited in about 1489 (*STC* 24763). In 1490–1491, in addition to the two *Artes*, Caxton also translated and printed Henri Suso’s *Horologium sapientiae* (*STC* 3305), which also includes a *Learn to Die* section quite similar to what is in the *Artes*.¹⁰ Renewed and repeated

7 Coldiron, ‘Taking Advice’, p. 127.

8 Caxton’s date of birth (between 1415 and 1424) can be deduced from the date of his entrance into apprenticeship in 1437–1438. According to Blake, ‘Caxton, William’: ‘The printing of the *Art to Know Well to Die* may well be associated with the death of Maud Caxton in 1490, recorded in the churchwarden’s accounts at St Margaret’s, Westminster. Caxton was, perhaps, mourning the loss of his wife!’ John Rylands Library, *Caxton in the Context of European Printing*, n°62.

9 Morgan, ‘A Critical Edition’, 1, 127. Sister O’Connor reminds us that, in spite of its title, the chapter ‘Comment on aprent a bien morir’ hardly deals with death at all and is more concerned with the art of living. O’Connor, ‘The Art of Dying Well’, p. 18.

10 Appleford, *Learning to Die*, p. 100. This fifth chapter had been detached from the *Horologium sapientiae* by Hoccleve; see Chené-Williams, ‘Vivre sa mort’, pp. 76–77.

translation of the same material may have been a pious exercise for Caxton as well as a way of ensuring that some degree of religious knowledge would reach a larger public. A decade earlier, at the end of 1479, he had also printed Anthony Woodville's translation of the *Cordiale or the Four Last Things* (STC 5768).¹¹ More modestly, in 1484, he had printed a sheet of deathbed prayers (STC 14554).¹² Caxton was definitely a pious man seeking his own salvation; moreover, he not only invested in the diffusion of religious knowledge but he was also extremely orthodox in his choice of material.

While private devotion may explain his desire to work on these translations, or to produce copies of the manuscripts, personal angst or grief cannot be taken as the only motivations for the printing of 100 to 300 copies of a text.¹³ Although the printing of the *Art and Craft to Know Well to Die* 'need not have required more than about a week',¹⁴ it was still an investment. His conventional and repetitive choice of religious texts may be explained by their extreme marketability. As an entrepreneur, Caxton needed to be sure that the book would sell. The publication of two translations within the last two years of his life conveys an intense need, shared by the translator and his readership, to face their own mortality or the death of kin.

It is common knowledge among medievalists and early modern historians that the century before the Reformation witnessed a growing and excruciating anxiety about death.¹⁵ This striking feature of late medieval religion found expression in works of art such as the *Danse macabre*, eagerness for indulgences, and the foundation of masses for souls in Purgatory. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall underline the inevitable (if unpleasant) inscription of death into

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- 11 The four last things (Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell) describe what awaits the human soul. On Woodville's translation of Miélot's text, see Hellinga, *Caxton in Focus*, pp. 39, 85–87.
- 12 Hellinga, *William Caxton and Early Printing*, p. 102.
- 13 The press used by Caxton could print up to 1,000 copies of a sheet within a day: see Febvre and Martin, *L'Apparition du livre*, pp. 166–69. 'We have no information about the number of copies that Caxton printed of any given book but it has been estimated that at the beginning of his career he printed around 30 to 40 copies, and later around 150 to 300 copies' (Mager, *The Middle English Text*, p. xi). Blake estimates that Caxton produced up to 250 copies of his first books and later decided to print fewer copies: see Blake, *Caxton: England's First Publisher*, pp. 28–29. Since devotional books sold well, his editions of the *Artes moriendi* must have reached 300 copies.
- 14 According to BMC, XI, pp. 175–76, 'Caxton's version of the Art and craft to know well to die was completed on 15 June 1490 [as stated in the colophon], just a week before his translation of the *Eneydos*, Duff 404, and was apparently sent to press almost immediately. Its printing need not have required more than about a week. Two of its paper stocks (221, 224) are shared with the *Eneydos* and earlier printing [...] and the third stock (212), though not appearing in the *Eneydos*, was used in five earlier editions of 1489–1490'.
- 15 In his comprehensive study of Pre-Reformation Catholicism and sixteenth-century religious mutations, Duffy dedicates Chapter 9, 'Last things: Now, and at the Hour of our Death' (pp. 301–37), to the rituals surrounding death and the prayers for the dead, explaining that while death appears to be a late medieval obsession, pre-Reformation Catholicism was not doom-orientated but rather sought salvation. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 301.

daily life by asserting that: 'Like the poor, the dead are always with us'.¹⁶ And just like the poor, the dead and the moribund were recipients of believers' charity. Galpern's memorable (and much commented-upon) definition of pre-Reformation Catholicism in Champagne as 'a cult of the living in the service of the dead' applies perfectly to Christianity in the long fifteenth century.¹⁷

In late medieval society, short life expectancy and religious celebrations inevitably made death part of daily experience.¹⁸ The long fifteenth century witnessed a shift in how death was perceived. In order to emphasize the important and distinctive developments in the handling of death, Nancy Lee Beaty provocatively opens her study of the English Arts of Dying by questioning the silence concerning the preparation for death in the first fourteen centuries of Christianity.¹⁹ In the fifteenth century, funerals, prayers, and masses for the dead overwhelmed religious life, and dying became a skill to be acquired. In her exhaustive study of the *Artes moriendi* in late medieval London, Amy Appleford partly dismisses catastrophic explanations for this religious change, arguing that by the end of the fifteenth century, the Black Death was a distant memory. However, the long-lasting consequences of the epidemic that killed one third of the European population cannot be totally overlooked. It would not be until the late seventeenth century that Europe would overcome plague epidemics. Such a cataclysm had spread the seeds of a long-term cultural mutation: priests had not been able or had refused to attend deathbeds, and after the Black Death the training of the younger clergy may have been inadequate.²⁰ The terror of dying unattended, without the presence of a competent helper, is an essential element in the composition and the subsequent fame of the *Artes moriendi*. Instructing the laity on how to behave at the hour of death was a way to calm this dread: the hour of death remained unknown and could always surprise the believer, but provided with a practical guide, the community itself was able to offer decisive spiritual guidance. While extremely orthodox (and written in the wake of the Council of Constance), the *Artes moriendi* offered some autonomy to the laity in the preparation for, and the managing of, death.²¹

The main strength of Appleford's approach is her emphasis on the emergence of religiously ambitious lay communities rather than on concrete reasons to think of death. More than the mortality rate, the growing religious instruction of the laity may have been a factor in the increase in religious practices connected with death. Guilt-inducing pastoral teaching on the consequences of Adam's fault (humanity's proclivity to sin and subsequent

16 Gordon and Marshall, *The Place of the Dead*, p. 1.

17 Galpern, 'The Legacy', p. 149.

18 Manchester, 'The Palaeopathology', pp. 8–14.

19 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 2.

20 O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 6.

21 See Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven' (*supra*).

damnation) had long been absorbed by conscience-stricken individuals.²² As books destined for the laity circulated and communities of readers developed, increasingly better educated individuals sought salvation and shuddered at the idea of damnation. The very texts of the guides — which may seem quite morbid in not dealing at all with living but only with dying — addressed that apprehension. Sister O'Connor reminds us that the *Artes moriendi* do not deal with popular pictures such as the horror of corporeal decay.²³ They are thus very different from the *Danse macabre* or the tradition of *memento mori*. On the contrary, they focus on the spiritual aspects of death and are much less concerned with the afterlife than with the hour of death. A good Christian death was considered a guarantee for the afterlife. As the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard states, conversion at the last hour was enough to attain salvation even if the moribund had lived a sinful life (Matthew 20. 1–16).²⁴ Conversely, dying outside the realm of the Church was in effect a sentence to eternal damnation. As a consequence, individuals and communities were horrified by *mors improvisa*, which did not enable the sinner to repent properly and commend his soul to God.²⁵ A sudden and unforeseen death was thought a malediction, a divine punishment casting doubt on the works one had accomplished in life, hindering their remembrance. This belief established the hour of death as the crucial moment of everyone's whole lifetime, both for the moribund and for the community. The *Artes moriendi*, which taught how to behave in this decisive final hour, were thus extremely comforting, even though part of their commercial success in Europe was due to dramatic woodcuts in the xylographic editions. Indeed, gruesome demons chasing *moriens* would presumably have made quite an impression on some readers.²⁶

Caxton did not follow the mainstream trend among printers of works in this genre: both of his editions were unillustrated and abridged translations deriving from the oldest and longest versions of the two *Artes moriendi*

22 See Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur*. This fundamental essay on fear and guilt covers Western civilization from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, avoiding the academic bias of separating the Middle Ages from the early modern period.

23 O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 4.

24 'Et cum venissent, qui circa undecimam horam venerant, acceperunt singuli denarium. Venientes autem primi arbitrati sunt quod plus essent accepturi; acceperunt autem et ipsi singuli denarium. Accipientes autem murmurabant adversus patrem familias dicentes: "Hi novissimi una hora fecerunt, et pares illos nobis fecisti, qui portavimus pondus diei et aestum!"' (The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These who were hired last worked only one hour', they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day'. Matthew 20. 9–12).

25 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 310.

26 Thanks to the Polonsky Foundation Digitization Project, the Bodleian Library has made a corpus of European xylographic editions available (<<http://bav.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/news/ars-moriendi-the-art-of-dying>>). Carracedo Castro, 'To lerne you to dye when ye wyll', p. 15.

traditions.²⁷ This long version, sometimes called *Tractatus artis bene moriendi*, or *Speculum artis bene moriendi*, is referred to by the incipit of the Latin text, CP, for its first words are ‘Cum de Praesentis.’ Caxton’s continental colleagues, such as Colard Mansion, preferred a shorter version (about one third of the length), identified as the QS *Ars* from its incipit ‘Quamvis secundum’, or sometimes simply as *Ars moriendi*. Since the title may be misleading, it should be restated that Caxton’s editions, including the short edition of 1491 known as the *Ars moriendi*, do not derive from the QS *Ars*. This abridgement was extremely successful in the printed form because it was accompanied by numerous striking woodcuts. Caxton’s editions, on the contrary, did not contain any images.²⁸ This may have been a conscious choice as well as a result of circumstances: Caxton’s workshop may have lacked the skill or the funds to produce such illustrations, or the translator may have been unable to find a French edition of the QS *Ars*.²⁹ He may also have wanted to keep the book cheap so that it could reach a larger audience. He may, in addition, have preferred the long version simply because it was closer to the manuscripts circulating in England in his lifetime. He may also have wanted to keep the book neutral and move away from vivid woodcuts.

While the guides focus on the few hours (or minutes) before a Christian passes away, they may also be considered a tool to be used rather earlier before death. Indubitably, reading, interiorizing, and practising the advice given by the *Artes moriendi* would have the effect of inscribing death into the believer’s daily life. One may therefore consider them as a method to be learned while one was still capable of doing so. Accordingly, ‘the English translators, who translated “ars” by “craft”, conveyed this neutral, methodical, even professional idea.’³⁰ Death is thus something not to be dreaded but to be dealt with using appropriate tools. Sister O’Connor and Nancy Lee Beaty agree that *Artes* as conduct books were comparable to etiquette lessons on table manners for children.³¹ In consequence, the texts seem over-didactic, a reproach that could be formulated against each and every simple catechism.³²

Although primers sold well and met the needs of mainstream readers, some modern critics find them too conventional: Nancy Lee Beaty, for example, acknowledges the text’s ‘significance despite its own want of literary value.’³³ Beaty compares the simplistic fifteenth-century *Artes moriendi* with their sixteenth-century successors, and claims that the handwritten *Crafte for to Die* is ‘scarcely worth consideration as a literary text.’³⁴ This disregard

27 *Contra* CIBN, I, A-603.

28 *Contra* Carracedo Castro, ‘To lerne you to dye’, p. 15.

29 Edwards, ‘Decorated Caxtons’, pp. 483–506.

30 O’Connor, ‘The Art of Dying Well’, p. 5.

31 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 6. O’Connor, ‘The Art of Dying Well’, p. 5.

32 Carracedo Castro, ‘To lerne you to dye’, p. 9.

33 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 2.

34 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 36.

for the *Artes moriendi* as having ‘nothing to offer beyond a restatement of the clichés of the Christian gospel and a rather superficial application of them to man’s deathbed experience’ fails to account for their high degree of usefulness.³⁵ Had he not known of the existence of an eager market, a sharp businessman such as Caxton would not have decided to print those clichés once, much less twice, within two years. Such a bias hinders our perception of medieval attitudes towards such texts: as scholars we struggle to appreciate the affective dimension of prayers and rituals. Primers and the catechism met a need and sold well even though their style was plain without any rhetorical effect. Common prayers lose their significance and efficaciousness when not repeated with religious fervour. The repetitive pattern of simple, easily understood rites gives reassurance in vital emergencies. With their focus on agony and deathbed prayers, the fifteenth-century *Artes moriendi* encourage readers to think about salvation in a very affective way. Consequently, they convey a paradoxical attitude towards death: a reflective and aloof approach to the fateful last hour of our lives and a grave call for fearful penitence among the living.

The sixteenth-century guides to death appeal more to reason and offer arguments grounded in theological analyses, as David Atkinson demonstrates in his study of the ‘Protestantization’ of the *Artes moriendi*.³⁶ As opposed to rational arguments against the fear of death, the fifteenth-century texts appeal to the imagination and make readers visualize the hour of death. As a result, they invite the reader to be penitent, preferably before the final hour, since a devout life of penitence is the straighter path to a Christian death. These rudimentary books designed for a broad audience, which may appear simplistic to modern scholars’ eyes, put everyday life in a perspective of eternal life. Because eternity does not wait, because it is trans-temporal, it reaches out and alters the fabric of daily life. As a result, the *Artes moriendi* subvert the logical sequence of life and afterlife and paradoxically celebrate life on earth as an echo of the glorified life in heaven. Adèle Chené-Williams goes so far as to consider the arts of dying as an art of living.³⁷ In his 1490 edition, Caxton made the inscription of death into everyday life a key principle: he rewrote rather than translated the opening and the first section, and included this warning:

35 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 35.

36 ‘While the Catholic *ars* instructed man how to die so that he could merit eternal life, Protestant works, influenced by the Catholic theology of the English Church, proceed on the assumption that man’s major concern is to gain assurance of election. Atkinson, ‘The English *Ars moriendi*’, p. 2. Sister O’Connor considers the fifteenth-century *Artes* as a medieval book because of ‘the total absence of the attitude of controversy which marks some of the books it fathered’, noting that ‘scarcely a single word foreshadows the changes that are to come’. O’Connor, ‘The Art of Dying Well’, p. 10.

37 Chené-Williams, ‘Vivre sa mort’, pp. 81–82.

Whan it ys soo that what a man maketh or doeth, it is made to come to some ende, and yf the thyng be goode and well made, it muste nedes come to goode ende. Thenne by better and gretter reason, euery man oughte to entende in suche wyse to lyue in this worlde, in keypyng the commaundementes of god that he may come to a goode ende, and that oute of this worlde full of wretchednes & trybulacyons he may goo to heven unto god and his seyntes into joye perdurable. But now in these dayes, fewe there be that aduise them of theyr ende so moche as they oughte to doo, though they be seke, auntyente or olde, and to them cometh this folie by a folish hope, that eueryche man in what estate he be hathe an hope to lyve longe. And therefore hath this presente treatyse be made composed in shorte termes, for to teche euery man wel to deye, whyls he hath understandyng, helthe and rayson, to the ende that yt is needful to hym to be better warned, enfourmed and taughte.³⁸

(When a man makes or does something in a particular way, it is made so as to come to some end, and if the thing is good and wellmade it must necessarily come to a good end. Therefore, for a better and greater reason, every man ought to take heed to live in this world in such a manner in keeping the commandments of God that he may come to a good end and that he may go out of this world, full of wretchedness and tribulations, to heaven and to God and his saints in everlasting joy. But nowadays, there are few who deliberate on their end as much as they ought to do, even though they may be sick, aged or old. And to them, by foolish hope, comes this folly — that every man, whatever condition he may be in, has a hope of living long. And therefore this present treatise has been made, composed in concise terms, in order to teach every man to die well, while he has understanding, health and reason, with the intention that it is needful for him to be better warned, informed and taught.)

The *Artes moriendi*, however, are more than a *memento mori*, their design being first and foremost practical.

The 'Artes moriendi' as a Book of Conduct for a Public Experience

Even though they can be seen as basic catechism contributing to the education of the laity, the main place for the *Artes moriendi* was on one's deathbed. Apart from the dead or the general idea of death, they dealt with the final agony and the process of dying. Such books reflect a medieval understanding of death as a public event involving an entire community, rather than a time of intimate

38 Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', II, 70. STC 789, A,r.

familial grief, as it is known in Western society today. While including the moribund in a community of Christians, they ritualized the severance of all connections with the society of the living.³⁹

The *Artes moriendi* depict (sometimes in startling woodcuts) a passive *Moriens* (dying person), surrounded by numerous — mostly lay — attendants, because death activated an impulse towards solidarity among relatives, friends, and neighbours. In her book-length study of the Arts of Dying in England, Appleford defines Caxton's intended audience as the heads of house who had charge of the family's moral well-being, and thus insists on the hierarchical relationship among believers.⁴⁰ Vertical solidarity dominated by a paterfamilias certainly had a decisive role in the access to books within a household. Death, however, is the moment of life when horizontal relationships were at stake within a community. Children, reputed for their powers of intercession, or laypeople with a reputation for sanctity, were welcome around a deathbed.⁴¹ The belief in *Communio Sanctorum*, a spiritual union in which each believer is a part of Christ's body, implied that all could pray for the soul of the *Moriens*. In return, once in heaven, the dead person would be in a position to petition for those who had helped him or her over the threshold. As with any social experience, this spiritual union was bounded by daily experienced social limits. As Galpern reminds us, in Champagne, the dying put their confidence in their family, friends, guilds, corporation, parishes, villages, or immediate urban communities.⁴² As A. I. Doyle has pointed out with regard to the *Doctrinal of Sapience*, the number of different translations, manuscripts, and printed traditions also hints at ruptures among communities of readers: a sheet of deathbed prayers is aimed at a more widespread (or even popular) audience than a folio; a xylographic edition may be more expansive (and thus more exclusive) than a leaflet printed in black and white.⁴³ The fear of damnation can be described as a transnational phenomenon involving singular consciences that was resolved through the inclusion of the individual in a small community. In the social process of dying, the community defined a social and spiritual role for the moribund: the *Moriens*. While the 'moribund' evokes a physical condition, '*moriens*' implies a spiritual and social dimension, making death more than a merely natural process.

In order to lead the *Moriens* to the humble acceptance of his or her fate, those attending had to follow a strictly codified process. Caxton provided his readers with a method designed for practical use. The CP *Ars* is divided into six parts: first comes a series of quotations relating to death, then a chapter

39 Bayard, *L'Art du bien mourir*, pp. 137–42.

40 Appleford, *Learning to Die*, p. 44.

41 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 323.

42 Galpern, 'The Legacy', p. 168.

43 'The multiplication of translations indicates a common feeling of a need and its answer, in the appropriate contexts, as well as the discontinuity of medieval literary circulation, even in continuous and sympathetic social circles.' Doyle, 'A Survey', p. 73.

on the five temptations that assault the dying soul (lack of faith, despair, impatience, vainglory, and avarice). In order to draw attention to spiritual matters, the third part contains a series of questions that are meant to probe the dying person's mind and prepare him or her for the final confession, if a priest is available. Then come instructions on how to die like Christ, with prayers and instructions for those who assist the dying, and a last part containing devotional prayers to be said by the attendants. Caxton's first translation of the *CP Ars, The Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye* (1490), cannot be connected to an extant continental edition.⁴⁴ It is an abridgement of an unidentified French manuscript that must have been close to Lille BM, MS 127.⁴⁵ All six sections are present; however, the first section, containing a general approach to death, has been stripped of all patristic quotations. Caxton intended to come to the point as quickly as possible.

The general discourse on death in this first chapter simply reaffirms the orthodoxy concerning salvation and sin, and pleads in favour of preliminary spiritual preparation.⁴⁶ This first chapter and the subsequent passage dedicated to temptation away from faith imply a submission to the faith as professed by the Catholic Church. Florence Bayard reminds us that this discourse had both a doctrinal and a practical aspect, as it was meant to fight both heretical beliefs and elements of popular practices grounded in superstition.⁴⁷ By granting agency to lay communities for the care of the moribund soul, the Church was also promoting orthodoxy and orthopraxy. The second temptation concerns a sin so terrible that it leads to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This is the only unforgivable sin, which led Judas Iscariot to an act even worse than his initial betrayal of Jesus: the refusal to admit that God's forgiveness is greater than any sin committed by man. According to Florence Bayard, the need for reassurance addressed by the authors of the *Artes moriendi* derives from the internalization by laypeople of the Church's teaching on man's sinful nature, and the need to soothe their resulting anguish.⁴⁸ Eamon Duffy agrees, noting that the very clergy who used Hell as a persuasive device in their sermons changed strategies when attending a deathbed.⁴⁹ Once the believer has overcome the temptation to despair, he must avoid indulging in the opposite sin. The over-reassured *Moriens* can suffer two other temptations: impatience, or rebelling against the idea that time belongs to God, and vainglory, that pride felt without cause, or the belief that one can be pardoned without repentance, are yet another way to refuse God's forgiveness and thus commit blasphemy

44 A Parisian printer, Antoine Caillaut, had published a French edition c. 1482, *L'art et science de bien mourir*. Bod-Inc, A-454 <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/A-454>). Caillaut's text does not fit perfectly any of Caxton's versions.

45 Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', 1, 238.

46 Beate, *The Craft of Dying*, pp. 5, 7–10.

47 Bayard, *L'Art du bien mourir*, p. 150.

48 Bayard, *L'Art du bien mourir*, p. 164.

49 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 314.

against the Holy Spirit. This particularly frightful eternal sin, although alluded to in all three synoptic Gospels, had a broad and uneasy definition, which technically embraces all the temptations listed in both traditions of the *Artes moriendi*.⁵⁰ Augustine defined it as impenitence that persisted unto death while turning it into an accusation against heretics in particular, whereas Aquinas adopted a broader definition involving mostly despair and presumption.⁵¹ The Catechism had given some knowledge of this sin to an ambitious laity. *The Doctrinal of Sapience*, a catalogue of religious knowledge explained simply to the laity, which Caxton translated and printed in 1489 (STC 21431), defined six cases of sins against the Holy Spirit that coincide more or less with the six temptations of the *Artes* (presumption, despair, obstinacy, refusal of penance, defaming the grace of the Holy Ghost, heresy).⁵²

The last temptation of the six exposed in the *Artes* may be the one modern readers most easily fail to understand, as it concerns not only the love of money, but of anything that keeps the soul anchored to earthly matters, such as taking care of the future of one's family. As a result, the presence of the family was no longer welcome, since they could potentially distract the moribund from concentrating on the afterlife and lead him to refuse penance. The fifteenth-century deathbed was definitely neither an intimate nor a familial place. Nothing in the Scripture was found to support the definition of avarice and, in that case, the *Artes* seem to contradict a practice often supported by the clergy: the deathbed was therefore a place to dictate one's will and clerks were

50 Mark 3. 28–30: 'Amen dico vobis, quoniam omnia dimittentur filiis hominum peccata, et blasphemiæ quibus blasphemaverint: qui autem blasphemaverit in Spiritum Sanctum, non habebit remissionem in æternum, sed reus erit æterni delicti. Quoniam dicebant: Spiritum immundum habet' (Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit). Matthew 12. 31–32: 'Ideo dico vobis: Omne peccatum et blasphemia remittetur hominibus, Spiritus autem blasphemia non remittetur. Et quicumque dixerit verbum contra Filium hominis, remittetur ei; qui autem dixerit contra Spiritum Sanctum, non remittetur ei neque in hoc saeculo neque in future' (And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come). Luke 12. 10: 'Et omnis qui dicit verbum in Filium hominis, remittetur illi: ei autem qui in Spiritum Sanctum blasphemaverit, non remittitur' (And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven).

51 The successive definitions of blasphemy against the spirit have been analysed by Baird Tipson who argued that this imprecision would cause growing anguish after the Reformation. Once access to the Gospel in vernacular languages had made believers more aware of this particular sin they would have acquired their own personal understanding of this distinctive threat of damnation directly from Scripture itself. Tipson, 'A Dark Side of Seventeenth-Century English Protestantism', pp. 301–30.

52 STC 21431, E₄^v–E₅^r. Gallagher, *The Doctrinal*, pp. 118–19.

put to that use.⁵³ The dying person had to put his or her affairs in order, make a will, make amends, and pay debts that could burden the soul in the afterlife.

While Sister O'Connor is surprised by the lack of psychology displayed in this seemingly inconsistent and cold list of temptations, Nancy Lee Beaty understands them as temptations inimical to the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. For instance, impatience implies a lack of charity towards one's attendants and God.⁵⁴ My analysis is based on a broad Augustinian definition of eternal sin: no sin was considered irremediable as long as one repented, confessed, and began penance before death (penance could extend into Purgatory). Augustine considered that as long as a person lived, he or she could not be condemned for their sins. Similarly, *The Doctrinal of Sapience*, while insisting on the gravity of the sin, opens the possibility for redemption:

Alle these sinnes ben ayenst the Holy Ghoost, & they be so grete that vnnethe ony cometh to amendement, and therefore ben they with grete peyne foryeuen & pardonned.⁵⁵

(All these sins are against the Holy Ghost, and they are so great but only with difficulty do any come to amendement, and therefore they are forgiven and pardoned with great difficulty.)

The Calvinist Reformation spread the belief that final judgement could be passed before death. Before the Reformation, in order to avoid a certain doom, one simply had to avoid dying impenitent, which meant that every thought that could lead one from penance was a danger to the soul of the *Moriens*: heterodox ideas, loss of hope, impetuosity, overconfidence, or family concerns.

The third chapter, consisting of a series of questions written in a language bordering on theological jargon, was considered at the time not to be an intrusive enquiry but as joyful consolation.⁵⁶ Eamon Duffy reminds us that the 'intensity of that scrutiny [was] left to the discretion of the priest' or the friend.⁵⁷ The important issue was to establish one's faith and ensure that one had no illusions about the future. When comforting an extremely sick person, it was considered a kindness to apprise them of their forlorn condition, so that they could undergo the necessary rites. The ideal *Moriens* was supinely obedient, and led by the community to accept their fate. The *Artes* thus conflate a sense of urgency with an appeal for quiet resignation. The pressure felt in the final hour was made all the more vivid by the necessity of following the rites and the impossibility of performing them early as a preventive measure. According to Eamon Duffy, while the Church promoted extreme unction as

53 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, pp. 16–17. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 322. Bayard, *L'Art du bien mourir*, p. 125.

54 O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 5. Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, p. 17.

55 STC 21431, E₅^f. Gallagher, *The Doctrinal*, p. 119.

56 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, pp. 18–21.

57 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 315.

a prerequisite for a good Christian death, it was feared by the laity, perceived both as a death sentence (for it meant that the very last hour had come) and as a kind of ordinance ‘cutting the recipient off from the normal activities of life, even should they recover’.⁵⁸ The *Artes moriendi* thus aimed to diffuse both an orthodox faith and canonical practices among the laity. While Sister O’Connor wonders at the ‘unemphatic reference to the only agenda requiring the presence of a priest, namely, the reception of the Last Sacrament’, linking this toning-down of a crucial moment to a use by a lay person, one might consider it as a tactful approach towards an uncomfortable subject.⁵⁹ Dying was a social and ritualized act over which the Church cautiously attempted to gain control.⁶⁰

The fourth chapter is devoted to a meditation on the Passion, if the *Moriens* is still conscious, appealing to him or her to imitate Jesus’s boundless love and submission to God’s will.⁶¹ Late medieval piety was inherently Christocentric and focused on the Passion — and the hour of death was no exception.⁶² In fact, rather than saints,⁶³ whom the *Artes* do not mention, Christ and the Holy Cross were thought of as the great intercessors for the moribund soul.⁶⁴ Testimonies such as that of Julian of Norwich show Christ as the great consoler of the suffering. According to *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, subsequently expanded into *A Revelation of Love*, when Julian was so ill that her life was at risk, a priest set the cross in front of her so she could gaze at it while passing into the next world. The very sight of Christ on the Cross triggered comforting visions that Julian later wrote down, thus developing her own original (and yet extremely orthodox) theology in which Christ appears as a tender mother.⁶⁵ Julian was a mystic and a well-learned woman who turned a common experience, looking at the cross when in agony and associating with Christ’s sufferings, into a reassuring and daring eschatology, stating that God had promised that ‘alle shalle be wele, and alle maner of thinge shalle be wele’ (all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well).⁶⁶ Devotion to the Passion of Christ and the certainty that a miracle would

58 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 313.

59 O’Connor, ‘The Art of Dying Well’, p. 6.

60 Bayard, *L’Art du bien mourir*, pp. 141–42.

61 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, pp. 22–23.

62 Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 324.

63 However, saints such as Katherine, Barbara, and Erasmus were used as intercessors to fend off the dreaded sudden death. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p. 311.

64 Bayard, *L’Art du bien mourir*, p. 82.

65 The anchoress Julian of Norwich had her vision in 1373, and wrote the first version of her revelations around 1393. This is the earliest recorded English book authored by a woman (<http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2016/05/god-as-mother.html>). Carruthers, ‘La Science infuse’, pp. 203–15. Watson and Jenkins, *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 3.

66 Watson and Jenkins, *A Vision Showed to a Devout Woman*, Section 13, l. 61, in *The Writings of Julian of Norwich*, p. 93.

happen at the hour of death were both common and explain the success of primers such as the *Fifteen Oes*. Several legends circulated on these orisons on the Passion: depending on the version, reciting the *Fifteen Oes* would result in the miraculous knowledge of the hour of one's death, or in the revelation of the number of blows received by Jesus on the Cross, or in a reduction of the time one was condemned to spend in Purgatory, or even in Salvation itself. *The Doctrinal of Sapience* offers another, more conventional example of Christ's sufferings used as a consolation:

Now hast thou herd recyted somewhat the paynes and trybulacions that the swete Ihesu Cryst hath suffred not for hym self but for the. For as Saynt Peter saith, he dyde neuer synne. Thenne oughst thou wel to suffre pacyently all trybulacions and aduersitees that may come to the. And thou oughtest to bileue stedfastli that thou suffrest moche lesse than thou hast deserued. And certes thi grief shal be aswaged yf thou thus thynke welle, and thou shalt be wel reconforted on the swete Jhesu Christe, whiche so moche hath loued the that he hath made the to drynke of hys chalyce, that is to say, that he hath made the suffre wyth hym peynes, gryeues and tribulacions.⁶⁷

(Now have you heard recited at some length the pains and tribulations that the sweet Jesus Christ has suffered not for himself but for you. For, as St Peter says, he never committed sin. Then well ought you to suffer patiently all tribulations and adversities that may come to you. And you ought to believe steadfastly that you suffer much less than you have deserved. For sure, your grief shall be assuaged if you think well in this fashion, and you shall be well consoled and strengthened through the sweet Jesus Christ, who has loved you so much that he has caused you to drink of his chalice, that is to say, that he has caused you to suffer, with him, pains, griefs, and tribulations.)

The fifth chapter is devoted to instruction for the attendants, who were to take charge of the entire spiritual process and of the final moments of life, especially if the *Moriens* was worn out or had lost consciousness.⁶⁸ At the end of his *Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye* (1490), Caxton states the importance of the attendants by warning that every believer should have a friend able and willing to assist him at death's door.⁶⁹ The last section is devoted to the prayers to be recited.⁷⁰ These prayers are not simply devotional but serve 'a specific spiritual need, that of the man to the point of death, rather than a general one.'⁷¹ Consistent with the Christocentric devotion of the fourth

67 STC 21431, B₅^{r-v}. Gallagher, *The Doctrinal*, p. 72.

68 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, pp. 25–32.

69 Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', II, 97.

70 Beaty, *The Craft of Dying*, pp. 32–36.

71 Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', I, 112.

section, they address first and foremost Jesus and God. One prayer calls for the intercession of the Virgin, another to St Michael, and the last one is dedicated to the dying soul, with no other intercession being mentioned. In his second edition, *The Craft for to Deye for the Helthe of Mannes Sowle* [known as the *Ars moriendi*] (1491), Caxton adds several suggestions that the Blessed Virgin Mary be appealed to as a patron of the dying.⁷² This is only one of the contrasts between the two editions meant for two distinct audiences: textual variants as well as different physical presentations suggest that they were not designed for similar use.

Caxton's Versions, Their Readership, and Use

The Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye (1490) and *The Craft for to Deye for the Helthe of Mannes Sowle*, known as the *Ars moriendi* (1491), greatly differ from the manuscript tradition. When comparing Caxton's style to the English vernacular manuscript tradition, Sister O'Connor pronounces it inferior: 'In Caxton, many of the words and phrases with the good, plain smell of English about them disappear or are Frenchified'.⁷³ While loan translation was the fifteenth-century standard technique, the adoption of a foreign vernacular style has failed to impress modern scholars. The material aspect of the book was also extremely different: Caxton imported his workers and his typographic material from the Continent. As Anne Coldiron states, looking at the bastard letters modelled on the Flemish fashion in the 1470s, or at the new Parisian black letters used in the headings of the second edition, may have been an experience akin to hearing English spoken with a foreign accent, especially if the printer practised loan translation.⁷⁴ The incomplete 'Englishing' of the *Artes* tradition may have been an advantage for marketing the text. To the fifteenth-century gentleman or urban merchant, the continental aspect of the book may have been synonymous with modernity and authenticity, especially since the *Artes* were attributed to Gerson. Since the necessary investment was too much for modest workshops on the peripheries of Europe, technically

72 O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 170.

73 O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 167. Sister O'Connor finds no redeeming traits in that translation: 'The fact that Caxton was abridging his original, perhaps with a view to making his conduct book for English gentlemen the more compendious, accounts for some of his omissions. Scriptural and patristic quotations have all but disappeared, and the ascriptions are too few to mention. Much of the comment, moreover, has gone also, leaving only simple directions. Otherwise there is about his condensing nothing systematic, no scheme like that which guided the fashioner of the QS text; consequently the transitions are often abrupt, and the tendency to incoherence is strong. Now and then he omits a repetitious element, but apparently without any artistic consciousness, for he elsewhere misses obvious opportunity for improvement'. O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 166.

74 Coldiron, *Printers without Borders*, p. 47.

ambitious books such as Hours and Missals were printed on the Continent, in the established workshops of Paris and Venice.⁷⁵ Caxton's readers may have come to associate the continental presentation of the book with religious authority.

Any study of the readers of Caxton's editions and their use of religious books requires a collation of the texts, such as Sister O'Connor and Morgan have performed, and rigorous material description of the four extant copies of *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye* and the only preserved copy of *The Craft for to Deye for the Helthe of Mannes Sowle*.⁷⁶ Small folios and isolated quarto quires have a low preservation rate, especially if their first owners wore them out through daily use. Caxton's fame is the main factor in the preservation of those copies.⁷⁷

The physical presentation of the books hints that they were meant to circulate and spread religious knowledge in emerging communities. The first edition, a folio of fourteen leaves, seems to address Caxton's established audience: 'merchants, clerics, lawyers, landed families, servants of the nobility, and state officials — rather than aristocrats', who formed a market for romance as well as for conventional religious texts.⁷⁸ These customers were fortunate enough to afford a printed book, though not rich enough to mind the simple layout. One workshop mishap illustrates both the financial means of this audience and its lower standards: an error in the composition work forced the printer to add an extra quire of two leaves, incorrectly signed B_{iii}, for the last paragraph, the colophon. The extra cost of this clumsy addition, which required 16–17 per cent more paper than originally intended, would have been an economic catastrophe had the readers been extremely sensitive to the price of books.

The second edition is a small quarto of eight leaves. The first four leaves contain an *Ars moriendi* text that is quite a bit shorter than the previous edition and includes many new points. All the divisions of the CP *Ars* can be found, although very much abridged, and in a different order.⁷⁹ The last four leaves of the 1491 *Ars moriendi* contain material unseen in the *Artes moriendi* tradition: 'prayers in preparation for the Viaticum, a list of devotional acts by which venial sin is omitted, the three "verities" which will lead the sinner to the amendment of his life, an explanation of the doctrine of perfect contrition for remission of mortal sin, a warning that confession, even to the Pope, will not remit the

75 Pettegree, 'Printing and the Reformation', p. 162.

76 See Appendix.

77 BMC, XI, 37. 'That so many of Caxton's works survive so well is not surprising. His fame as England's first printer meant that considerable value was attached to his work when early in the eighteenth century it emerged from oblivion and was sought after by collectors. Such interest has probably rescued the more insignificant-looking scraps of his work from oblivion.'

78 Wang, 'Caxton's Romances', p. 188.

79 The two editions share similarities within 'the questions to be put to the sick (*Ars Moriendi* A2^b–3^b corresponding to A5^a–6^a of *Art and Craft to Know Well to Die*), Bod-Inc, A-454.

sin of one not contrite', and even a 'synguler prayer to be sayde in the fest of the dedycacyon of ony chirche' ('singular prayer to be said during the feast of dedication of any church') — a strange inclusion! — and a list of 'the degrees of humility, obedience, patience, and charity'.⁸⁰ Since 'part V is transferred to a place immediately following the introduction', Sister O'Connor suggests that the book was intended for the faithful friend of the dying man.⁸¹ The inclusion of prayers for any occasion and the physical format (a short, small book without any decoration) seem to support this hypothesis.

The quarto format does not imply that the book was cheap or destined for a popular readership. Since the typesetting was the same as the one used for the folio edition, the same amount of paper was necessary. It may, however, have been an attempt to address the practical needs of urban merchants rather than to copy the standards of the court: Caxton was lending a first impulse to the production of small religious quartos in black letters by his successor and foreman, Wynkyn de Worde.⁸² Moreover, the choice of the quarto format might have simplified the organization of the workshop, since it is possible that they were printed on a smaller press while the main press was in use for a more challenging production.⁸³ The only extant copy, currently in the Bodleian Library, does not enable us to assess either the daily use or the practicality of the book. Until the nineteenth century, this copy was bound with pious texts for meditation and with a medical primer. In 1869, the volume was unbound and the two Caxtons were preserved separately. Although an early ownership can be found on the first text in this volume, there is no guarantee that all the components were already part of the same collection at the time. A methodical evaluation of the everyday settings in which the *Ars moriendi* was used is made difficult precisely by Caxton's fame, which saved these copies from oblivion.

The preservation history of the extant copies of the folio edition shows that the books published by Caxton have become the prized possessions of book collectors: marks of ownership have been removed, stains have been washed away, and the texts have been taken from the miscellany to which they belonged. For instance, Earl Spencer, the previous owner of the John Rylands Library copy, had his books carefully washed out. This copy used to be bound with a pious text, Digulleville's *Pilgrimage of the Soul*. Although the conjunction of two texts concerning the future of the soul seems relevant, the dismantling of the collection has prevented us from building a more elaborate analysis. Binding a short text with a longer work or with a tract-volume was

80 O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 168.

81 'To such a friend every sentence seems to have been written. Even the temptations are made part of an exhortation which he is to deliver to *Moriens*'. O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 168.

82 Dane and Gillespie, 'The Myth of the Cheap Quarto', pp. 24–45.

83 BMC, XI, 23.

necessary for its survival, until it was considered as an object to acquire. Buyers, sellers, or collectors could make such a tract-volume.⁸⁴

On the one hand, some bindings were just coincidental and short-lived measures of preventive conservation. On the other hand, some collections were assembled at an early date. The Rawlinson tract volume joined *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye* to Caxton's editions of Chaucer and Christine de Pizan. The volume was foliated in an early sixteenth-century hand and may have been sold as a single unit or assembled by the buyer. It was taken apart while still in Rawlinson's possession (the *Art and Craft* is now in the Réserve des Livres rares of the Bibliothèque nationale de France), which prevents us from interpreting the inner logic of such an encyclopaedic collection that includes classic secular works as well as religious tracts.⁸⁵ Some volumes appear more consistent: the copy now held in the Bodleian Library seems to have been joined with a *Directorium Sacerdotum* early in its history. This second text points to a pastoral use of the book, and entries in fifteenth-century hands in the second item suggest that it belonged to a Franciscan foundation. This would fit quite well with practical use by those in mendicant orders, who were often called to assist a dying person.⁸⁶

This material evidence seemingly contradicts Sister O'Connor's textual enquiry: since Caxton neglected (or deliberately opted not) to translate scriptural and patristic quotations, he may have aimed at the laity, who would have been more likely to have been more interested in general and effective guidance than in doctrinal knowledge.⁸⁷ As Morgan concludes, a book destined for the laity did not need to exclude a religious audience.⁸⁸ Even though their presence is hardly mentioned in those texts, the *Artes* may have contributed to the training of priests who handled death on a daily basis and who had to ensure the orthodoxy of the rites. This hypothesis is consistent with a collection linking the *Directorium Sacerdotum* to *The Art and Craft to Know Well to Dye*. It is not surprising, however, that a religious foundation might have been the only identified owner, since the clergy were better at preserving their books than lay families. If anything, the disappearance of the books points at their circulation among the laity, who saw them as practical items and may not have seen the need to preserve them once their immediate usefulness was at an end.⁸⁹

84 BMC, XI, 37–38.

85 Hellinga and Nickson, 'A Caxton Tract-Volume', pp. 17–26.

86 Mendicant orders were popular confessors and celebrants of funerary offices. Bayard, *L'art du bien mourir*, pp. 125–36.

87 O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', pp. 164–67.

88 Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', I, 127.

89 Paul Needham illustrates lay families' inability to preserve their books for posterity by comparing the survival of 150 copies of the only recorded fifteenth-century edition of Saint Ambrose's writings with the quasi-disappearance of the sixth edition of *Paris and Vienne*. Needham, *The Printer & the Pardoner*, p. 30.

Finally, like any medieval devotional book in Protestant England, the copies may have been discarded or destroyed, especially when used in lay circles. As Andrew Pettegree states, the only surviving Catholic books by the time of the reign of Mary I were those which had been safely hidden in churches until a more favourable time.⁹⁰ Some extant copies have been marked by the Post-Reformation rejection of medieval faith: a mention of the ‘church of Rome’ was crossed out (see the British Library copy), in response to the edict issued by Henry VIII in 1542.⁹¹ In the Bodleian copy of the *Art and Craft*, a sixteenth-century hand has written: ‘this book is full of pooperie’. The fact that someone undertook the correction of the books implies that they were still of use, even though Caxton’s versions were not used as models by the sixteenth-century editors of the English *Ars Moriendi*. Pynson reprinted *The Art and craft to know well to die* in 1495 and Wynkyn re-edited Caxton’s *Ars Moriendi* in about 1497–1498.⁹² Subsequent editions, however, used *L’art de bien vivre et bien mourir* printed by Antoine Vérard (Paris, 1493) as a source.⁹³ As a consequence of this new translation from another French original, the sixteenth-century English *Artes* turned towards the QS tradition.

Appendix

The art and craft to know well to die.

The art and craft to know well to die. [Translated from the French *L’art de bien vivre et de bien mourir* by William Caxton], Westminster: Caxton, 1490 [after 15 June], Folio.

Analysis of Content

A₁^r–(B_{ij})₁^r. ‘THE ART and craft to know well to die’: ‘¶Here begynneth a lityll treatise shorte and abridged spe-llkyng of the arte & crafte to knowe well to dye ¶ WHan it ys soo that what a man maketh or doeth / it ¶ is made to come to some ende / And yf the thyng be ¶ goode and well made / it muste nedes come to goode ¶ ède. Thenne by better & gretter reason / euery man

90 Pettegree, ‘Printing and the Reformation’, pp. 177–78.

91 Pearson, *Books as History*, p. 129. ‘Sixteenth-century English church service books, which survived the upheavals of the Reformation, will often be found to have been systematically subjected to the edict of Henry VIII, issued in 1542, that all references to the Pope, and to Saint Thomas Becket, should be expunged. The offending words will have been crossed out, or cut out, so the book could continue to be used’. This wave of mutilation also concerned private books.

92 University of Glasgow, Glasgow Incunabula Project Update.

93 O’Connor, ‘The Art of Dying Well’, p. 169.

oughte to || entende in suche wyse to lyive in this worlde / in keypyng the ||
cōmaūdementes of god that he may come to a goode ende / ... A1^b, l. 2. AS
thenne the bodyli deth is the most ferfull thing of || all other things soo /
yet is the deth of the soule of as || moche more terrible ... - ... And therfor to
eue^rly persone that wel and surely wyl deye. is of necessitye that || he lerne
well to deye / or the deth come and preuente of him.

(B_{ijj})₁^a. Colophon: 'Thus endeth the trattyte abregded of the || arte to lerne
well to deye / translated oute of the frenshe in to englysshe. By willm Caxton
|| the xv.day of Iuyn: the yere of our lord a || Miiij C lxxx x'.

1 ^a	A1 ^a	Introduction
1 ^a , l. 31–2 ^a , l. 12	A1 ^a –2 ^a	Part I: The presynge of deth
2 ^a , l. 13–5 ^a , l. 6	A2 ^a –5 ^a	Part II: Temptacyons
5 ^a l. 7–6 ^b , l. 1	A5 ^a –6 ^b	Part III: Questions
6 ^b , l. 2–8 ^a , l. 2	A6 ^b –8 ^a	Part IV: Remembrance
8 ^a , l. 3–9 ^a , l. 24	A8 ^a –B1 ^b	Part V: Instruccyions and techyng
9 ^a , l. 25–13 ^a , l. 18	B1 ^b –(B _{ijj}) ₁ ^a	Part VI: Oreysouns
13 ^a , ll. 19–23	(B _{ijj}) ₁ ^a	colophon
13 ^b	(B _{ijj}) ₁ ^b	blank
(14	(B _{ijj}) ₂	blank?)

Edition⁹⁴

Folio. A⁸B⁴(B_{ijj})². 14 leaves, the last blank (?).

Signed to the fold with capital letter and Roman numeral in the first quire, in the second, on leaves I and 2, with an additional anomalous signature on the final existing leaf (see below). Without foliation, headlines, or catchwords.

A2^a: 31 lines, 185 × 119 mm.

Type 6: 120B.

Initial spaces on A6^b and B3^b for S, elsewhere initial sets 1, 2.

Paper: stocks 212, 221, 224, see BMC, XI, 422.

The paper stocks shared with the *Eneydos* and four other 1490 editions indicate that the translation (completed on 15 June 1490) was immediately printed. The anomalous signature of the last leaf (incorrectly signed B_{ijj}) derives from a miscalculation of the copy requiring an extra sheet to be printed. 'As no copy of the conjugate blank survived, it remains uncertain whether this sheet formed a separate quire, or whether the blank was folded back around quire B, producing the collation A⁸B⁶, with leaf B₁ blank' (BMC, XI, 175–76).

94 The depiction of the 'ideal copy' derives from BMC, XI, 175–76, which also describes the copy held in the British Library.

4 extant copies

British Library: C.II.c. 8 [IB. 55134]

Imperfect, without the blanks.

Size of leaf: 283 × 193 mm.

Annotations: A line is drawn through the words ‘chyrche of Rome’ on A2^a.

Provenance:

- Owned by Edward Harley, 2nd earl of Oxford, by 1729 (se BL Add.MS 19775, fol. 57^r) and with a title written by his librarian Randal Minshull on the front flyleaf.
- Bought by the bookseller Thomas Osborne in 1742 (*Catalogus Bibliothecae Harleianae* III, 1576).
- Owned by James West by 1749 (see Ames, *Typographical Antiquities*, p. 51); his ‘Ames 31’ is written on the top right-hand corner of the flyleaf.
- Sold at his sale, March 1773 (lot 1876), to John Radcliffe who added his collation mark ‘Perfect’; then at Radcliffe’s sale, March 1776 (lot 1666), to G. Nicol for King George III.

Former library shelfmark: With the former King’s Library press mark 167.d. 18. This copy corresponds to De Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons*, 6:1 and 6:6.

Manchester, John Rylands Library, Inc. 23 C. 14 [18931]

Imperfect, wanting the last leaf probably blank (?).

Size of leaf: 283 × 203 mm.

Binding: purple double morocco, gold-tooled, stamped with the arms of George John, 2nd Earl Spencer.

Formerly bound in Russia after *The Pilgrimage of the Soul* (see Morgan, ‘A Critical Edition’, I, 225).

Provenance: (see Morgan, ‘A Critical Edition’ and De Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons*)

- James West’s sale (March 1773, cat. p. 114, no. 1874) to John Ratcliffe.
- John Ratcliffe’s sale (March 1776, cat. p. 61, no. 122O) to Gustavus Brander.
- Gustavus Brander. His Sale. Fifth Day, Friday, 12 February 1790. Lot 1011. To Leycester.
- The Marquess of Blandford’s (White Knights) sale (June 1819, cat. p. 177 no. 3787) to Dibdin for Earl Spencer.
- Bought from the Spencer library by Mrs Rylands in 1892, entered the John Rylands Library on its opening in 1899.

Annotations: ‘C&P’ written in ink in head margin of A₁^f. The copy seems to have been cleaned.

This copy corresponds to De Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons*, 6:3.

Bodleian Library: S. Seld. d. 11 (1) [A-450]

Imperfect, wanting the leaf incorrectly signed Bii and the last leaf probably blank (?). 12 leaves

Size of leaf: 255 × 190 mm.

Codicology: Bound with *Directorium sacerdotum ad usum Sarum*, Westminster, William Caxton, [c. 1489], S. Seld. d. 11 (2) [D-107].

1 blank + 12 leaves + 1 inserted leaf + 206 leaves + 1 blank.

Binding: 17th century English parchment, formerly chained; staple-marks of a hasp at head of the upper cover, '65' shelfmark on the edge, string marks. Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', I, 226–27 suggests that the both items may have been travelling together before they were rebound in the seventeenth century.

Provenance (of item 2 and probably of item 1):

- Newport, church of S. Francis, notice of dedication added in a fifteenth/sixteenth-century hand to *Kalendarium* of item 2, for 4 October: 'Dedicatio ecclesie de Nuport sancti Francisci'.
- Other manuscript additions to *Kalendarium*, in contemporary hands, containing references to feast of St Oswald of Worcester (28 Feb.) [Worcester, York], St Oswin (tr.11 Mar., here recorded as 13) [Durham, St Albans, Tynemouth], St Alphege of Winchester (12 Mar., here recorded as 14) [Winchester, St Albans], St Patrick (17 Mar.) (Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', I, 226–27.).
- Richard Wylcox (fl. c. 1500), signature on Z₁₀^v of item 2, 'Rychard Wylkoks'.
- John Sergeant (sixteenth century); inscription on Y₁^r of item 2: 'Johannes Sergeant senior and junior non ressert []'.
- John Selden (1584–1614): see Bodleian Library, MS Broxbourne 84. 10, p. 4 and Needham, *The Printer & Pardoner*, p. 77, Appendix B, no. 25.
- Presented in 1659.

Annotations: Some scribbles and pen-trials. 'This book is full of poopery' twice in the margin on A₁ (see Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', I, 226).

Former Bodleian shelfmark: B 6.14 Th. Seld.; AA 65 Th. Seld; [Auct.] QQ sup 17. This copy corresponds to De Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons*, 6:4.

BnF, Réserve des livres rares, D-338 [CIBN A-603]

Imperfect, wanting the last leaf probably blank (?).

Size of leaf: 203 × 140 mm.

Codicology: Leaves cropped and mounted within frame ruling in red and within quarto leaves.

Binding: old Russia.

Provenance:

- Thomas Rawlinson (see Hellinga and Nickson, 'A Caxton Tract-Volume'). Formerly bound (from the early sixteenth century) with:

1. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, STC 5083 (copy untraced)
 2. Chaucer, *Book of Fame*, STC 5087 (British Library, C.10. b. 13)
 3. Christine de Pizan, *Moral Proverbs*, STC 7273 (Manchester, John Rylands University Library, 12025)
 4. Alain Chartier, *Curial*, STC 5057 (British Library, C.10. b. 17)
 5. *Life of Saint Winifred*, STC 25853 (British Library, C.10. b. 19)
 6. *The art and craft to know well to die*
 7. *Eneydos*, STC 24796 (British Library, IB.55135)
 8. Christine de Pizan, *Fayttes of Armes*, STC 7269 (Beinecke Library, Yale University, * Zi+ 9677)
- Mark Cephas Tutet. His Sale. Third Day, Friday, 17 February 1786. Lot 329. To Thomas Payne, bookseller.
 - Sold to the Bibliothèque nationale by Thomas Payne.

Annotations: Ornamental decoration (not earlier than the remounting) in red, blue, and gold along the top half of the inner margin of A₁^r.

References

Editions

Morgan, 'A Critical Edition', II, 98–111, with notes pp. 175–82 and glossary pp. 244–55.
Facsimile: English experience, no. 221 (Amsterdam, 1970)

Catalogues

ISTC ia01140300; GW 2615; HC 4404; O'Connor, 'The Art of Dying Well', p. 164; Blades, *The Biography and Typography*, p. 86; Proctor, *An Index*, 9678; De Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons*, 6; STC 789; Duff, *Fifteenth Century English Books*, 35; Needham, 'Checklist of Caxton's printing', Cx 98 p. 90; Painter, *William Caxton*, p. 214; BMC, XI, 175–76; Sheppard, *Catalogue of XVth Century Books*, 7417; Bod-Inc A-450; *English Incunabula in the John Rylands Library* 18931, p. 5; Pellechet, *Catalogue général des incunables* 1356; CIBN I, A-603.

Exhibitions

British Library, *Caxton: An Exhibition*, no. 90; Bodleian Library, listed in the checklist of original Caxton editions in the Bodleian Library; John Rylands Library, *Caxton in the Context of European Printing*, no.62

Studies

Hellinga and Nickson, 'A Caxton Tract-Volume from Thomas Rawlinson's Library', pp. 17–26.

Ars moriendi (STC 786; ISTC ia01124300)

Ars moriendi [English] (Tr: William Caxton). [Westminster: William Caxton, c. 1491]. 4.

Analysis of Content

A₁^r–A₈^v. *Ars moriendi*: ‘¶ Here begynneth a lytyll treatyse schortely ¶ complied and called *Ars moriendi* / that is ¶ to saye the craft for to deye for the helthe of mannes sowle. ¶ ¶ WHan ony of the lyklyhode shal deye / thenne ¶ is most necessarye to haue a specyall frende ¶ the whiche wyll hertly helpe and praye ¶ for hym & therwyth counseyll the syke for the ¶ wele of his sowle ... - ... Ioy pⁿ not in wyckednesse but sorwe pⁿ rader. ¶ Be glad in trouthe & ryghtwysnesse & hate sy^mulacyon. ¶ For such right bere adu^rsite or oni tribulacōn ¶ To that p^e chirche techeth p^e put ful credulyte. ¶ That god ham ¶ mysed trust it well whitou ¶ dafallacyon ¶ In hope abydyng his reward and eu^rlastyng ¶ glorie. Amen Explicit.’

Edition⁹⁵

A⁸. 8 leaves.

Signed A₂^r: 24 lines, type area: 144 × 90 mm.

Type 6 for the text and Type 8 for the headings.

Paper: stocks 276–77, see BMC p. 423.

1 extant copy

Bodleian Library, Arch. Gf.9 [A-454]

Size of leaf: 160 × 117 mm.

Binding: Nineteenth-century gold-tooled green morocco, marble pastedown, by Hall of Oxford.

Until 1869, bound with Tanner 178, which until then contained:

1. Johannes de Hildesheim, *The most excellent treatise if the three kynges of Coleyne*. Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, [c. 1496] (still Tanner 178 [Bod-Inc J-165 (1)])
2. Bernadus Claravallensis, *Meditationes de interior homine* [English]. Westminster: Wynkyn de Worde, 9 Mar. 1496 (still Tanner 178 [Bod-Inc B-201])
3. Salomon et Marcolphus, *Dialogus* [English]. Antwerp: Gerard Leeu (between 27 July 1489 and 1492) (still Tanner 178 [Bod-Inc S-045])

95 The depiction of the ‘ideal copy’ derives from Bod-Inc, A-454.

4. *Ars moriendi* [English], [Westminster: William Caxton, c. 1491.] (Arch. G f. 9 [Bod-Inc A-454])
5. *Governayle of helthe* and *Medicina stomachi* [Westminster: William Caxton, 1489] (Arch. G f. 10 [Bod-Inc G-168])

Provenance: Unread inscription at the head of A₂^r of item 1 of Tanner 178. On F₆^v of item 1, inscription 'Liber iste pertinent Johanni Michell j[] teste (?) Roberto Ebeley (?) ... cum multis aliis' in a sixteenth-century hand. Thomas Tanner (1674–1735), see *Pardoner*, 78, Appendix B n°28. Bequeathed in 1735.

Annotations: Cropped note on A₈^v, which *Ars moriendi*, with introductory note by Edward W. B. Nicholson (London and Oxford, 1891) expand to read '[The fi]fteen [degree]s of charyte'

Former Bodleian shelfmarks: Auct. QQ sup 1.27; Tanner 178 (part, until 1869, when it was removed), Arch. F f. 6, Tanner 178*.

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Death Multiplied

The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead in Bohemian Art in the Context of Late Medieval Religious Practice

For people in medieval times, death was a practical matter that had to be faced as a daily reality. This fact is well reflected both in the period's daily religious practices and in its visual culture. Moreover, in the late medieval imagination and art Death is often personified and visually presented as a 'living' dead person, a walking and talking cadaver or skeleton, well reflecting the fact observed by Ashby Kinch that the dead 'played an active part in the community of the living in medieval culture'.¹ The medieval Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead is without doubt a reflection of this. For the modern individual, it is a rather disturbing cultural concept which, however, belongs among the most widespread motifs of high and late medieval *memento mori* literature and the fine arts. The popularity of Death as a visual motif is particularly evidenced in late thirteenth-century France, when macabre motifs were becoming ubiquitous within and beyond the monastic environment, gradually penetrating lay religious practice, homiletics, and the funeral liturgy of the period.

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¹ Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, p. 109.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 273–304

The Legend tells the well-known story of three young noblemen who, returning from a carefree hunting trip, encounter three dead who cross their path, reminding them of the ephemerality of life and the unavoidable reality of physical death and post-mortem bodily decay. The origin of the Legend has not been completely clarified. While a French courtly origin has long been ascribed to it, arguments for its possible Franciscan roots, associated with mendicant polemics against secular power and social elites, have also been advocated.² This hypothesis seems convincing, mainly due to the Legend's obvious didactic and pastoral potential in confronting youth, power, wealth, and pride with death, the naturalistically depicted physical decomposition of the body, and the asceticism personified by the hermit. In the fifteenth-century Italian visualizations of the Legend the hermit is portrayed as an active mediator in the encounter between the living and the dead, as a narrator of a horror story, and at the same time a moral exemplar against whom death has no power. As observed by Marc Piccat, the new, active participation of the hermit as the legend's pivot reduces the 'living' and speaking cadavers to a passive recumbent and silent 'dead-dead', depicted lying in their tombs rather than standing.³

The text of the Legend appears in French toward the end of the thirteenth century in a substantial poem by Baudouin de Condé and in other largely anonymous versions, as well as a little later in the form of visual presentations in French and English Psalters and Hours, where it provides illustration for the Office of the Dead.⁴ During the fourteenth century, the text of the Legend as well as its visualization was widely disseminated across Europe in over 200 preserved mural paintings and more than fifteen vernacular textual versions.⁵ The oldest French and English depictions of the Legend typically portray, frontally, a standing trio of living kings dressed in luxurious garments, their heads decorated with crowns and, separately, their dead counterparts, portrayed as completely or partially denuded, standing, or, infrequently, lying in various stages of decay and typically not communicating with the living.⁶

2 See, especially Chihaiia, *Immortalité*, pp. 43–70. His arguments were recently elaborated on and supported by Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, pp. 118–21.

3 Piccat, 'Mixed Encounters', p. 159.

4 Below is a selection from the vast body of literature related to the text of the legend and the legend's editions. Glixelli, *Les cinques*; Künstle, *Die Legende*; Rotzler, *Die Begegnung*; Geary, *Living with the Dead*; Binski, *Medieval Death*, pp. 134–38; Putter, 'The Language and Metre', pp. 498–526; Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, pp. 145–70. For the iconography of the legend in the context of the Office for the Dead, see Meiss, 'La Mort et l'Office', pp. 17–25; Bartz and König, 'Die Illustration des Toten-offiziums', pp. 487–528; Zöhl, 'A Phenomenon of Parallel', pp. 325–60; Büttner, 'Ce Sera Moy', pp. 243–83.

5 *Vifs nous sommes*, p. 10.

6 For this, see, for example, the Psalter of Robert de Lisle from 1310. London, British Library, MS Arundel 83 II, fol. 127^r, in the sacred compendium ordered by Mary of Brabant around 1285 (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 3142, fol. 311^v), or in front folio of *Le Roman de*

The Italian depictions of the Legend appear to be more dynamic. The living are depicted along with the dead, either standing or lying on green grass. In a composite meeting of this world and the next, they communicate in a lively dialogue often ending with the young fleeing from the dead. The oldest known examples of the encounter and the dialogue between the living and the dead can be found in Italian mural painting from as early as c. 1225 in the church of St Mary Magdalene in Melfi, c. 1260 in the cathedral in Atri, and before 1300 in the church of the Virgin Mary in Vezzolano Abbey, or in the charnel house of St Paul in Poggio Mirteto.⁷ All these thirteenth-century examples, however, are probably illustrations of the anonymous Latin poem *Vado mori*, some of them expressively describing the story of three young noblemen who, during a hunting trip, happen upon a grave from which appears a cadaver in decay, 'malodorous and with exposed bones.'⁸ The story continues, similarly to Baudouin's, with the horrified responses of the young men who eventually realize the ephemerality and futility of power, pride, and worldly joys, all of which are worthless in the hour of death.

In the fourteenth century, the visual motif of the Three Living meeting the Three Dead was disseminated through prayer books and books of hours as a visual illustration to the Office of the Dead. In both cases, the scene usually accompanies the prayers for Vespers, which begin with Psalm 116.⁹ It is also a popular motif in parish church and charnel house mural decoration all over Europe, with a number of iconographic variations. The Three Living are portrayed either as noblemen with falcons, shown walking or riding, or wearing crowns.¹⁰ Later, there is a gender correction where women also appear among the living while the dead either stand in front of open graves

La Rose from the late thirteenth-century in the French national library. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 378, fol. 1^r. Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, p. 122.

7 Piccat, 'Mixed Encounters', pp. 156–67.

8 'ossa inter et aliorum jam nudata totaliter'. Quoted after Piccat, 'Mixed Encounters', p. 161.

The original Latin *Vado mori* text probably originated in the thirteenth century, possibly in the area around Ferrara. Jean Delumeau argues that the poem is of French origin. Delumeau, *Sin and Fear*, p. 87. For *Vado mori* as the archetype of the *Danse Macabre*, see Hammond, 'Latin Texts', pp. 399–410.

9 Psalm 116. 3 'Circumdederunt me funes mortis et munitiones inferni invenerunt me angustiam et dolorem repperi'. (The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow).

10 For the iconography of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead in French mural paintings (a total of ninety-two monumental representations of this motif is preserved), see *Vifs nous sommes*. For a comparison, in contemporary England, fifty-eight wall paintings depicting the legend are preserved. There are sixteen such depictions in Italy, thirteen in Germany, four examples in Switzerland, Denmark, Netherlands, and the Czech Republic, two in Spain and one each in Poland, Sweden, and Ireland. *Vifs nous sommes*, p. 10.

or directly attack the living.¹¹ Sometimes, they are the mirrors of sinful women, usually identified by their hair, hairstyle, or hair coverings copied from a 'live model'.¹²

Although the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead is a relatively well-discussed motif in academic scholarship on late medieval culture and art, it has been to date almost completely ignored within the context of Czech medieval visual culture.¹³ With the exception of the illumination in the margin of the Kutná Hora Gradual, which at first sight resembles the Legend but is, in fact, based on the *vado mori* subject, a total of four representations of this motif are preserved in Czech medieval art. It is noteworthy that all Bohemian depictions of the Legend are presented in a monumental form, in mural painting as part of a wider narrative, generally depicting the Last Judgement or motifs relating to fear of death in general. Below, I will demonstrate two unique monumental Bohemian examples of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead and their *memento mori* 'function' within the context of late medieval pastoral care and religious practice. Its specific use is in both cases influenced by monastic, specifically Benedictine and Dominican, pastoral strategies, evidencing a practical use of the Legend in the context of contemporary homiletics, theology, and funeral liturgy.

Doubled Death and Two Judgements in the Broumov Charnel House

Originally, the fourteenth-century mural paintings covered all the interior walls (and possibly also the vault) of the quadrangle chamber of the former charnel house (now a part of the clergy house) in Broumov, a town in Eastern Bohemia founded in the mid-thirteenth century by the Broumov cell of the

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- 11 An iconographic first in incorporating women into the macabre iconography of the Legend is the aforementioned depiction in the *Le Roman de La Rose* manuscript from the end of the thirteenth century in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 378, where a scene on fol. 7 portrays a nun in between two shrouded dead and, in another scene, two ladies dressed in luxurious garb shielding a naked cadaver. Kralík, 'Dialogue and Violence', pp. 143–53. The high moment of women's 'emancipation' in the iconography of the world of the dead is represented by the *Women's Danse Macabre* (*Danse Macabre des Femmes*) from the beginning of the 1480s, preserved in a number of manuscripts (such as Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 995), where all the living are represented by women of various social roles and ranks. It was also published in print by Guyot Marchant in 1484. For more on this, see *The Danse Macabre* (for editions, see pp. 1–14).
- 12 For this in Hours of the Virgin of French origin from 1410–1430, where the first of the three decaying cadavers is depicted with a visibly female bust and remains of longer hair, see Prague, National Library of the Czech Republic, XXIII F 198, fol. 208^r.
- 13 Only two studies focus on macabre iconography in the Czech medieval painting: Stejskal, 'Obrazy smrti' (Images of Death); Rywíková, *Speculum mortis*.

Břevnov Benedictine monastery in Prague. During the construction of the building (probably in the first three decades of the fourteenth century or earlier), one anticipated possibility was that the strong walls of the charnel would make up part of the town's fortifications, which were built between 1360 and 1380, and it probably became part of the city wall tower.¹⁴

The mural paintings on the southwest front wall of the Broumov charnel are the best preserved (Figure 11.1). The central motif is the Last Judgement with *Maiestas Domini* in the upper part, surrounded by the four symbols of the Evangelists and accompanied by the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist, kneeling as intercessors, who are followed by a kneeling angel carrying the *Arma Christi*. The cycle continues in the section situated under the central scene of the Last Judgement depicting the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.

The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead is situated directly below them. The living in the Broumov Legend are depicted with crowns on their heads and with swords tucked into black scabbards (Figure 11.2). The motif is unparalleled in European presentations of the Legend and resembles thirteenth-century tombstone gisants. In contrast, the dead are standing in front of the open grave in the manner of the oldest preserved examples of the Legend and do not display any attributes of the living. They are purposefully stripped of clothing and other attributes of social status. Their rotting corpses are eaten by giant snake-like worms, lending the deceased rulers a somewhat grotesque look, which further emphasizes the humiliation and repulsiveness of the decaying human body. The swords in the hands of the living kings emphasize their social status as rulers of this world and the institution of sovereign power per se — that is, the identity of those who administer law and exercise justice over the living (*ius gladii*), though not over the dead. Whereas the human body succumbs to decay, 'the political body' — the institution of sovereign power — is, according to medieval jurists, immortal.¹⁵ From this perspective, the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead as depicted in the Broumov charnel is reminiscent of the principle of the two-level transi tombs that Erwin Panofsky described as 'double-deckers'.¹⁶ This contrast and its moral significance are perfectly captured by the biblical verses from the Book of Sirach (10. 9–10): 'How can dust and ashes be proud? Even in

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- 14 Šrámek, 'Formování klášterní' ('The Formation of the Monastic Domain'), p. 35. The ossuary chamber is situated along one of the town's main roads below surface level. Foreign analogy suggests that incorporation of the (already existing) charnel architecture into the fortifications was not at all unusual. We are aware that, in addition to the town area with the church and graveyard, the fortifications also included the buildings of the monastery and castle. See Slavík, 'Ke stavebním' ('On the Development'), p. 21.
- 15 According to the medieval jurist doctrine: 'Tenens dignitatem est corruptibilis, dignitas tamen semper est, non moritur'. Quoted according to Kantorowicz, *The King's Two*, p. 277, for the double transi tombs see pp. 276–79; Cohen, *Metamorphosis*, p. 45.
- 16 Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, pp. 65, 78.



Figure 11.1. The Last Judgement, the Parable of Wise and Foolish Virgins, the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, and Triumph of Death. Broumov, former Charnel House, front wall, c. 1340. Photo: Daniela Rywиковá.



Figure 11.2. The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead. Broumov, former Charnel House, c. 1340. Photo: Daniela Rywiková.

life the human body decays. A long illness baffles the physician; the king of today will die tomorrow!¹⁷

The Broumov Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead is glossed with an inscription in the upper bar.¹⁸ The text above the Legend had already appeared on Roman epitaphs and became the standard commentary typically accompanying this macabre scene: ‘QUOD SUM[U]S HOC ERITIS FUIM[US] QUANDO / QUE[...] ESTI[S]’ (What we are, this you will be, and we have been what you are).¹⁹ The inscription on the right reads: ‘MORS IUVENES RAPIT ATQVU[E SE]NES’ (Death carries off young and old).²⁰ The latter text

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- 17 Similar texts usually accompany transi tombs. Kathleen Cohen notes a number of examples. Cohen, *Metamorphosis*, pp. 72–76.
- 18 I quote all inscriptions in the Broumov ossuary from Royt, Dienstbier, and Faktor, ‘Středověké nástěnné’ (Medieval Mural Paintings), pp. 4–6.
- 19 ‘Quod fuimus, estis; quod sumus, vos eritis’. Quoted according to Künstle, *Die Legende*, p. 28.
- 20 ‘Mors iuvenes rapit atque senes nulli miseretur’ is, for example, recorded in a note added later in a Gothic bastard hand in the Benedictine Codex Gigas (Codex gigas, Stockholm, Kungl Biblioteket, A 148, fol. 305^v). At the time of the painting of the Broumov charnel, this was already in the possession of the Benedictines of Břevnov, thanks to Abbot Bavor of Nečtin. The head of the Monastery of Broumov was the Abbot of Břevnov. For Benedictine cells in medieval Bohemia, the Monastery of Broumov, and its medieval history, see Šrámek, ‘Formování klášterní’ (The Formation of the Monastic Domain), pp. 13–42.



Figure 11.3. The Triumph of Death. Broumov, former Charnel House, c. 1340. Photo: Daniela Rywíková.

is related to the last preserved scene on the front wall under the depiction of the foolish virgins, with a unique scene of the Triumph of Death (Figure 11.3).

The centre of the scene was not, unfortunately, preserved; nevertheless, it does show a figure riding a leaping horse, as well as the blade of a scythe mercilessly beheading the living. An outline of an indistinct figure of the Devil is located behind the rider. This represents Hell which, according to the verses of Apocalypse, follows Death ‘close behind’. In front of the horse is a clearly visible large-scale figure of a woman pouring liquid out of a jug, accompanied by other figures with vessels, sitting around a table. The banquet is interrupted by a demon-like figure pulling the innkeeper’s hair. Below the scene another fragment of an inscription is preserved: ‘vo[s] qu[i] transitis mem[o]res [nos]tr[---]o[g]o s[it] is’ (You who pass here, I ask you to remember us). This inscription can, once again, be found on Roman epitaphs but rarely (as in Tuse in Denmark, for example) accompanies the scene of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead.²¹

2.1 Tuse, St Nicholas’s Church, 1460–1480. The quoted words are spoken by the first dead in the Legend painted on the vault of the eastern church nave: ‘Vos qui transitis n[os]t[r]i me[m]ores rogo sitis’. For the paintings, see <http://danmarkskirker.natmus.dk/holbaek/tuse-kirke/> (accessed 23 January 2017), here with reference to Jørgensen, Vedso, and Johannsen, *Danmarks kirker*, pp. 587–617.



Figure 11.4. Christ the Judge. Broumov, former Charnel House, right side wall, c. 1340. Photo: Daniela Rywíková.

Another scene that is preserved, in a rather fragmentary state, is located on the southern sidewall of the charnel chamber (Figure 11.4). It is likely directly connected to the parable of the ten virgins from the front wall, since we can identify the same red background symbolizing hell as well as the chain that binds other groups of figures, the first of whom wears a crown. With so much damage to the paintings it cannot be determined whether the figures walk, ride animals, or form a compact crowd of the damned in hell. Above the scene is a visible fragment of a frontally standing (or seated) figure with raised arms — Christ the Judge displaying his wounds with the figures of saint intercessors approaching him from both sides. The scene can be interpreted as the second depiction of the Judgement. The dual depiction of Christ the Judge is unique in the context even of more extensive medieval visual narratives. In Broumov, as we shall see, such an iconographic approach has its justification and also relates to the function of the charnel house in the context of late medieval funeral practice and theology.

In the medieval period, the cemetery and its charnel house were a public, freely accessible space, where the charnel formed the most sacred part of the medieval burial site. The ossuary was repeatedly ordered by Church synods (e.g. the Münster Synod of 1297 and the Cologne Synod in the following year), mainly to prevent the destruction of the human remains by wild animals

and weather.²² The earliest European ossuaries date from as early as c. 1100. The early medieval ossuary was originally a room adjacent to the church (or located within the church) used for storing the remains of the deceased.²³ It was only during the fourteenth century that bones began to be displayed as a reminder of the ephemerality of human life and for commemoration of the deceased. In the German-speaking lands in particular, ossuaries of the high and the late medieval periods were erected as separate buildings of a size and architectural quality differing little from that of the churches themselves. They usually consist of an ossuary room located in the basement, with a chapel — the liturgical space — above it.²⁴ Typical examples of such arrangements are the large charnels in German Oppenheim, Tulln, Sedlec near Kutná Hora in Bohemia, and in Moravian Stonařov. Further examples can be found west of the Czech border, particularly in Austria and Bavaria, but also in France, Italy, and England. We also find more modest buildings, consisting of a single multipurpose room used both for the storing of human remains and for liturgical purposes.²⁵ The question remains whether the Broumov charnel served ‘only’ as a space for storing human remains, as documented here since the Baroque period, or whether it was also used as a liturgical space, as suggested by its rich and iconographically unique Gothic paintings.

The medieval funeral liturgy (*Ordo defunctorum*), established as early as the fifth century, had two forms: the funeral or Requiem Mass and the Office of the Dead.²⁶ Whereas funeral masses were said in the church and formed the main part of the funeral liturgy, the Office of the Dead assumed a more contemplative form and could be said outside the church, within the confines of the cemetery in the charnel house.²⁷ Contrary to the ceremonial and rather spectacular funeral mass, the Office of the Dead had a more intimate character corresponding with its monastic origin. Monks and, later, laypeople (family members of the deceased) first attended the vigils that began in the early evening with the Vespers prayers, followed by an overnight vigil, *matutinum*, beginning after midnight and followed by morning praise — Lauds.²⁸ The

22 Koudounaris, *The Empire*, pp. 20. However, as early as in 813, the Synod of Mainz had ordered that no corpses, with the exception of bishops, abbots, and exceptional and pious Christians, should be buried inside churches. Binski, *Medieval Death*, p. 72.

23 Koudounaris, *The Empire*, p. 19.

24 Koudounaris, *The Empire*, p. 23.

25 For example, the ossuary by the Church of St Sebastian in Swiss Leuk (after 1496), whose walls are decorated with a monumental painting of the *Danse Macabre*, or the charnel house in French Berig-Vintrage, where human remains were stored around the walls of a chamber also used for the liturgy. Koudounaris, *The Empire*, pp. 30–31, 36.

26 Binski, *Medieval Death*, pp. 32–33.

27 Binski, *Medieval Death*, pp. 32–33; for the structure of the Office, see Zöhl, ‘A Phenomenon’, pp. 328–29.

28 Vespers and morning praise typically consisted of a series of Psalms (beginning with Psalm 116) beginning and ending with the appropriate antiphon (the Office was introduced with *Placebo Domini*), followed by the prayer, pleas, short responses, and cantata of the Virgin

Office of the Dead became part of the Easter and All Saints' Day liturgies as the liturgical form of the collective *meditatio mortis*, whereas the funeral mass was understood as a uniquely individual rite celebrated on behalf of the soul of the deceased. Originating in the high medieval period, the Office of the Dead was, despite its communal character, perceived as an appropriate form of personal piety. During the fourteenth century, the text of the Office of the Dead began to appear in personal prayer books and Books of Hours, often accompanied by macabre iconography.²⁹ From the mid-fourteenth century, we can see depictions in them of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead and various images of triumphant Death.

With their unique iconography, the paintings of the Broumov charnel house perfectly express both the function of the funeral chapel and complex late medieval ideas concerning death and the afterlife. The motif of the Last Judgement, the context in which the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead is placed, is naturally an expression of eschatological expectations of the end of the world, when Christ will judge all the living and dead, who will rise from their ashes and be joined with souls awaiting the Last Judgement either immediately in Hell (the *valde mali* — those who died in mortal sin or by so-called *mors improvisa* — sudden death without receiving extreme unction), in Heaven (the *valde boni* — e.g. saints and martyrs) or, most frequently, in Purgatory (the *non valde mali*).³⁰

Mary (*Magnificat*). The overnight vigil was divided into three nocturnes, always comprised of three psalms and three readings (*lectio*), usually from the Book of Job. The individual nocturnes filled the time between midnight and the morning praise and were read on particular days (the first nocturne on Monday and Thursday, the second on Tuesday and Friday, and so on). On the night prior to the deceased's funeral all three nocturnes were recited. After that, the funeral mass was celebrated before the displayed coffin with the deceased's body surrounded by candles. Next followed the funeral. The body was then carried on the bier to the graveyard where it was removed from the coffin, covered in a shroud, and placed into the prepared grave. After the funeral ceremony, the Office was repeated on the third, seventh, and thirtieth days and, later, on the anniversary of the deceased's death.

- 29 Most frequently from the end of the thirteenth century we will encounter the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, and in the fifteenth century the Triumph of Death or *Danse Macabre*. For more on this, see Meiss, 'La Mort', pp. 17–25; Bartz and König, 'Die Illustration', pp. 487–528; Zöhl, 'A Phenomenon', pp. 325–60; Büttner, 'Ce Sera Moy', pp. 243–83.
- 30 From the time of the early church, the deceased were divided into four categories for burial. In the most prestigious category, the so-called *valde boni*, exclusively saints and martyrs, were buried in the crypt. The next category, *non valde boni* — those awaiting the Last Judgement before the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem who did not need to suffer in Purgatory (such as clergy, popes and so on) —, were buried at the most prestigious locations within the church, whereas the *non valde mali* first needed to be cleansed from venial sins. *Valde mali* — the very bad — were the sinners consigned to hell. For the 'mechanism' of dividing the deceased into these categories, see Jezler, 'Jenseitsmodelle', pp. 13–16. For funerary practice with regard to the categorization of the deceased, see Konrad-Schineller, 'Angels as Agents', pp. 63–64.

An important element of the Broumov murals is their pastoral potential and intensively contemplative perspective on *meditatio mortis*. One must remember that the right of patronage and the spiritual administration of the Broumov parish church was carried out by the Broumov Benedictines who appointed a priest there, usually a member of the local monastic community. The well-educated (Benedictine) originator of the complex Broumov iconographic programme possibly intended to emphasize the contemporary theology of sin in the context of *cura animarum*.³¹ Particularly urgent were contemporary preachers' warnings about the uncompromising nature of the Last Judgement and the Seven Deadly Sins. *Memento mori* — remembering death, preparation for a so-called 'good death' (*mors bona*), and expecting it virtually every day and every hour — became one of the most frequent motifs of late medieval homiletics and pastoral practice. The concept of the so-called 'good death' originated well before the late medieval period. Cesarius of Heisterbach mentions a number of examples of the 'good' and bad death. Nevertheless, a precise 'manual of how to die well' was not established till the beginning of the fifteenth century.³² An exact and detailed conception of the so-called *ars moriendi* and a distinctive pastoral approach to a good death was created by Jean Gerson. His *De arte moriendi* (*Tractatus artis bene moriendi*) and another (anonymous) text called simply *Ars moriendi*, became the most circulated and disseminated fifteenth-century texts dealing with the danger and prevention of sudden death.³³

The Broumov charnel paintings successfully evoke the danger of 'sudden death' in the scene of the Triumph of Death and the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead. Unlike the painting of the Legend, the central part of the Triumph of Death is not preserved intact. It depicts (an unpre-served) figure of Death riding (a grey) horse, using a scythe to behead the

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- 31 The direct influence of the religious reforms of the Fourth Lateran Council on religious practice in Western Europe, particularly in England and France is, in contrast to the Czech context, well researched and discussed. However, the cultural and historical differences between Western and Central Europe do not allow the simple transfer of research findings to the Czech context. Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran', pp. 30–43; Rice, *Lay Piety*; Harmening, 'Katechismusliteratur', pp. 91–102; O'Reilly, *Studies in the Iconography*, pp. 94–107; Kumler, *Translating Truth*, pp. 4–13.
- 32 'Quidam bene vivunt, et bene moriuntur; alii et male vivunt, et male moriuntur; alii male quidem vixerunt, sed Dei gratia bene moriuntur'. *Dialogus Miraculorum*, ed. by Strange, pp. 266.
- 33 The following works are selected from the extensive literature on the phenomenon and texts *ars moriendi*, as well as Gerson's treatise: *Ars moriendi*; Kümper, *Tod und Sterben*. For editions of the treatises, see O'Connor, *The Art of Dying*; Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, pp. 69–98; Campbell, 'The Ars Moriendi'; Olds, 'Ars moriendi'; Appleford, *Learning to Die*; Bayard, *L'art du bien*; Chinca, 'Innenraum des anderen', pp. 355–81; Duclow, 'Everyman', pp. 93–113; Siy, 'Death, Medieval'; *Trzy traktaty* (Three Tracts), ed. by Maciej Włodarski. On the reception of *ars moriendi* in the Czech context, see Marek, 'Daj pane Bože' ('Give us God').

living regardless of social rank or age. The earliest depiction of Death riding a horse in medieval art is probably that which can be seen on the arches of French cathedrals — as at Amiens or that Notre Dame in Paris. In the latter, a blindfolded woman with a long knife is depicted on a leaping horse, perfectly capturing the abruptness and brutality as well as the social justice of death. Apart from being influenced by the depiction of Death as the fourth rider of the Apocalypse, it is clear that the image of the Death-rider was influenced by Roman tradition.³⁴

The proximity of the Legend and the Triumph of Death is, in the context of the Broumov paintings, of considerable significance and it is unique within Central European medieval art. The linkage of these two macabre motifs and the consequent visual multiplication of Death first occur in the Campo Santo in Pisa and in Benedictine Subiaco in Sacro Speco, where they are placed opposite each other across the Scala Sancta. The juxtaposition of both scenes is significant for Broumov as well: the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead has a contemplative character (warning of the ephemerality of earthly possessions). It represents a mirror of worldly power and its triviality in the face of Death as well as the fear of physical death and the horror of bodily decay. The Triumph of Death warns against sudden ‘untamed’ death — *mors improvisa* — and therefore deals with the potential further fatality of a second, eschatological Death — eternal damnation — and accordingly stresses the importance of the moment of physical death.

One might ask whether the wall paintings in the Subiaco Sacro Speco could have served as an ideological, and partially iconographical, inspiration for the paintings in the Broumov charnel house. It can be assumed, with some justification, that one of the Broumov or Břevnov Benedictines was the author of this theologically sophisticated and, in the context of fourteenth-century Czech art, unique iconography — one who might have visited or have been informed about the mural decorations of Subiaco: an important place of pilgrimage connected with the foundation of the Benedictine order and with St Benedict himself. At the same time, we should not forget that the motif of the Legend was probably already familiar in Bohemia by the 1320s, thanks to the activity of the Benedictines of Niederalteich, who possessed the church

34 Johannes of Tepl, the author of the vernacular *meditatio mortis* text ‘Oráč z Čech’ (‘The Plowman of Bohemia’), states that Death was depicted on the walls of the church in Rome as a blindfolded figure sitting atop an ox. This figure held the hoe in the right hand and the shovel in the left hand. *Jan ze Žatce* (Johannes von Tepl), p. 39. Noted by Bethmont-Gallerand, ‘Death Personified’, p. 173. The closest analogy to the Broumov Triumph of Death can be found in Italian and South Tyrolean art, where, as early as the second half of 1330s, a new iconographical type of the Triumph of Death appears, depicting a female personification of Death riding a leaping horse. This type of depiction of Death ties together a number of symbols and theological meanings, culminates in the complexity of Petrarch’s *I Trionfi*, written between 1352 and 1374, in which the Triumph of Death appears in the form of an allegorical carriage drawn by a pair of oxen, carrying death with a scythe. Bethmont-Gallerand, ‘Death Personified’, pp. 179–84.

of St Moritz in Mouřenec by Annín (in south Bohemia), where this motif forms a part of the Last Judgement cycle, as it does in Broumov.³⁵

Answering the question of the direct iconographic source of the Broumov mural paintings is also important for their precise period of origin. I do not consider possible a dating to the 1320s or 1330s, as suggested in the most recent research.³⁶ Considering the poor state of the preserved fragments of the Broumov paintings, a more precise dating is possible primarily thorough contextualizing them iconographically in terms of approach towards the unique use of the ‘Italian type’ of the Triumph of Death — namely the figure riding a leaping horse. In the context of Czech, German, Hungarian, and Polish art, this unique scene needs to be seen as the determining factor for the Broumov paintings. The wall paintings in Subiaco and the Campo Santo in Pisa are dated to the period shortly after 1336;³⁷ the paintings in the South Tyrolean Aufenstein to around 1340,³⁸ like the frescos in Bolzano.

Thus, the year 1340 appears, with a certain time allowance, to be the earliest possible date for the Broumov paintings, though it is likely to have fallen between 1340 and 1350. I am convinced that this dating does not contradict the fact that their formal qualities correspond with the linear style that dominated central European art shortly before the mid-fourteenth century, albeit with certain formal archaisms noticeable in the details, such as the faces of the damned virgins and the gestures of the kings. Dating the Broumov paintings to a slightly later period is also supported by the depiction of two figures of Christ the Judge in the Last Judgement scene in the front wall, in which he shows his wounds, surrounded by saintly intercessors on the side wall. This is an expression of the new doctrine of *iudicium duplex* — the dual judgement of the human soul.³⁹ The Saviour’s dual presence in the Broumov cycle would otherwise not make sense. For this reason, I assume that the second scene on the side wall of the chamber, portraying a standing (?) Christ surrounded by saintly intercessors, is not a second representation of the Last Judgement but of the so-called particular (individual) judgement that each Christian undergoes at the moment of physical death.

The church officially adopted the doctrine of the particular judgement of the soul in 1336 through the papal bull *Benedictus Deus* issued by Pope Benedict XII. The text of the bull was based on Benedict’s earlier treatise *De*

35 For the murals in Mouřenec by Annín and its iconography, see Vřetečková, ‘Annín’, pp. 158–63; Royt, ‘Mouřenec’, pp. 203–07.

36 Royt, Dienstbier, and Faktor, ‘Středověké nástěnné’ (Medieval Mural Paintings), p. 9.

37 Boeckl, ‘The Pisan “Triumph”’.

38 For murals in the St Catherine Chapels at the Castles, see Jordan, ‘The Chapel’, p. 505.

39 For the connection between the Triumph of Death in Pisa and the new dogma, see Boeckl, ‘The Pisan “Triumph”’. Maria Boeckl dates the Pisa frescoes in Campo Santo to a time after 1336, on account of the scene of the Triumph of Death correctly recognizing the influence of the new dogma and the accompanying fight for the souls of the deceased. For the new dogma in more detail, see Bynum, *The Resurrection*, pp. 283–91.

statu animarum sanctorum ante generale iudicium, written by the future pontiff as a response to the heretical opinion that saved souls can gaze into the face of God only after the Last Judgement.⁴⁰ The papal bull stipulated that the soul of the deceased without sin can see God's face immediately following death, whereas the sinful soul experiences immediate suffering in the flames of Purgatory or Hell.

The depiction of two judgements in the Broumov charnel was intended to instil in believers a brand-new doctrine about the dual judgement of the soul, as well as to emphasize the extraordinary importance of the message of the *ars moriendi* tradition, for it was the state of the soul at the moment of physical death that determined, all too suddenly, its fate in the afterlife. This new doctrine dramatically changed the strategy of dying of late medieval people in general and pastoral practice in particular. Preachers now had to focus their full attention on the moment of bodily death, introducing a virtually hour-by-hour schedule with which to approach it. Sudden death, preventing the *ars moriendi* ritual, which included extreme unction, confession, penance, and the remission of sins, was amplified by the experience and memory of the Black Death epidemic, and understandably was seen as a monstrous threat endangering salvation. This was perfectly visualized by the Triumph of Death image — a terrifying cadaver suddenly appearing on a fast, leaping horse.

I would contend that the depiction of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, together with the Triumph of Death in the Broumov charnel — Death multiplied and given a yet stronger symbolic presence — perfectly demonstrates a complex late medieval understanding of death, as does the use of these motifs in contemporary religious practice. What they express is the concept of dual death — a physical death and an eschatological, spiritual death. Whereas the Legend is, in fact, a morality presenting a warning about the unavoidability of the physical end and the repulsive decay of the physical body, the Triumph of Death is a horrifying vision of *mors improvisa* and eternal damnation. Moreover, both macabre motifs are theologically framed by the new doctrine of dual judgement of the soul — the moment of the individual's physical death, followed by the Day of Judgement and the 'collective death' of this world.

The mural paintings in the Broumov charnel house represent a decisive moment in the development of the pastoral approach to the 'good death' that would play a crucial role in daily religious practice, devotion, and homiletics, as well as in the visual arts during the long fifteenth century, when the macabre fascination with death and the horror of eternal damnation reached its peak in Europe. Broumov's macabre iconography represents a unique example of how late medieval pastoral strategy was able to use visual rhetorics for modifying the universally unavoidable approach to death and dying by emphasizing personal moral responsibility, the struggle against sin, and the eschatology of the Four

⁴⁰ Bynum, *The Resurrection*, p. 283; Jezler, 'Jenseitsmodelle', pp. 17–21.

Last Things and, not least, reflecting current theological issues dealing with the relationship between human death, the body, and the soul. All this took place in the mid-fourteenth century when the first Czech *memento mori* texts such as *Hádání duše s tělem* (Dispute between the Soul and the Body) or *O nebezpečném času smrti* (On the Dangerous Time of Death) were penned.⁴¹ At the same time, and in parallel with these literary examples, the Broumov paintings ‘translate’ the atmosphere of contemporary *memento mori* texts, showing Death in all its theological complexity, existential urgency, anxiety, and cruelty — all in a manner eloquent of its time.

‘Cura animarum’ and the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead in the Dominican Church of České Budějovice

Another interesting presentation of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead is depicted on the south wall of the Dominican Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in České Budějovice, as a part of a more extensive cycle of paintings. It is situated between the entrance to the cloister and a niche bearing a votive painting of a seated Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus, accompanied by a kneeling donor and St Dominic.⁴² This older painting (possibly dating from the 1360s) was, however, replaced before 1400 by a high-quality image of the Pietà.⁴³

The Legend is preserved in a rather damaged state with two visible figures of walking cadavers with raised arms and two large inscription ribbons from later in the medieval period. (Figure 11.5). Only the one on the bottom ribbon, which partially covers the head of the first of the Dead, is a visible late Gothic fragment of the German text that typically accompanies the Legend, and which can be partially reconstructed: ‘[d]as wärr[en wir das wir nu] / sin das we[r]d[e]t jr auch[---]’. This corresponds with the usual German textual accompaniments to the Legend at this time: ‘Daz ir dâ sit, daz wâren wir; daz wir nû sin, daz werdet ir; Auch mag euch wol wunder han, wye wir so iemerlich seyn getan’ (What you are now, we used to be; what we are now, you will be; you may wonder, how perpetual we are).⁴⁴

41 *Spor duše s tělem* (Dispute between the Soul and the Body), ed. by Jakobson.

42 For the paintings, see Pavelec, ‘Nové poznatky o klášterním kostele’ (New Findings on the Monastic Church), pp. 296–305.

43 Pavelec, ‘Nové poznatky o klášterním kostele’ (New Findings on the Monastic Church), pp. 297–98.

44 Quoted according to Künstle, *Die Legende*, p. 45. The České Budějovice inscription is, however, younger than the painting of the Legend and was possibly added to the image during the fifteenth century, perhaps as a ‘renovation’ of the older, original, and today-unknown inscription.

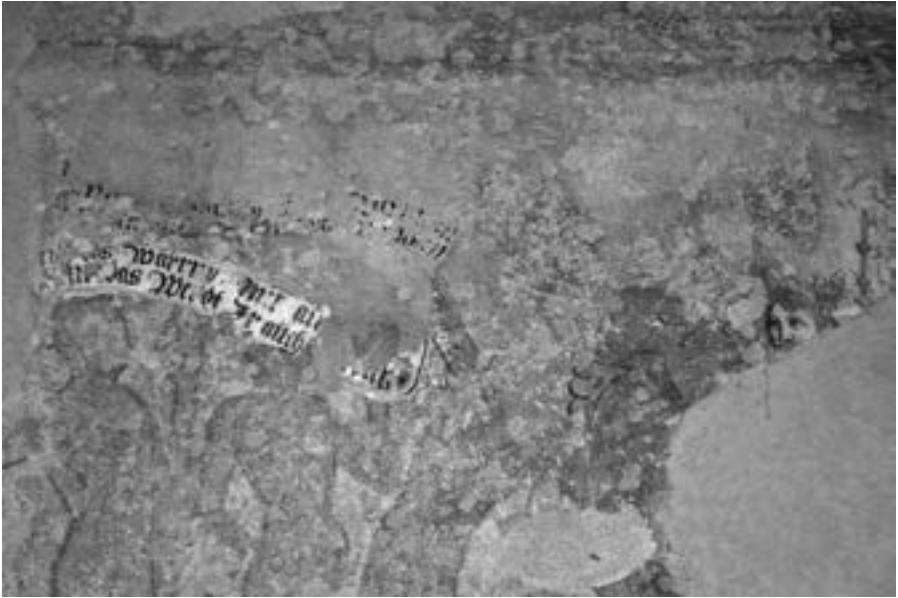


Figure 11.5. The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead. České Budějovice, Dominican Church of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary, southern wall, after 1381. Photo: Daniela Rywiková.

Opposite the Budějovice dead were three kings, even though only part of a crowned head and a sceptre (?), probably belonging to the second king, is preserved, together with a fragment of a red sleeve with a green hem covering the raised hand of the first king, who, judging from the fragment of bird's tail feathers, was portrayed with a falcon. Above the Legend is the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary with the figure of St George fighting the dragon, accompanied by St Dorothea and a kneeling donor in armour. The corner of the south and front wall of the nave was originally decorated with an extensive depiction of the Ten Thousand Martyrs. This scene was usually, in contrast to its extensive literary narration, reduced to a single scene of the dead martyrs' naked bodies either speared on sharp thorn bushes or erected on crosses. Unfortunately, the main part of the scene is not preserved, due to later adaptations of the eastern wall of the southern trave, and nearly all of the entire remaining area above is filled with a monumental figure of St Christopher.

The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead in České Budějovice is unique in Czech medieval art for a number of reasons. First of all, it depicts living kings riding horses, as is clear from the rounded contour of the neck of the white horse turning its head away in fright from the Dead. One should not forget that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Legend was almost exclusively tied to the aristocratic environment and, judging from the

preserved illuminated manuscripts, it was popular among the members of the Luxemburg dynasty. This is evidenced by its inclusion in *Les Très Riches Heures* of John of Berry,⁴⁵ the luxuriously illuminated psalter of Bonne of Luxemburg,⁴⁶ and by the wall paintings in Ennezat in the department of Puy-de-Dôme.⁴⁷

During the reign of Emperor Charles IV and his son Wenceslas IV, České Budějovice, and the Dominican convent in particular, witnessed several important political negotiations attended by both rulers. The most important meetings took place in 1378, 1394, and 1405.⁴⁸ The first tends to be connected with the origin of the monumental painting in the northern wing of the cloister, dominated by an image of the *Mater omnium*, who shields with her coat the representatives of church and secular power led by the Roman Emperor Charles IV and his son Wenceslas, both depicted wearing identical imperial crowns.⁴⁹ Thus, according to the imperial iconography, the paintings can be dated between 1376, when Wenceslas was crowned as King of the Romans, and 1378, when his father died.⁵⁰

The oldest depiction of three living kings riding horses in the Legend outside Italy is the scene in the psalter of Bonne of Luxemburg, the sister of Charles IV and the wife of the French king John II (Figure 11.6). The illustrator of this exceptionally luxurious manuscript was probably Jean de Noir, who must have been inspired by Italian examples. Given the animation of the figures that evoke resistance and horror in the Dead, the closest model seems to be the monumental narrative of the Campo Santo in Pisa (Figure 11.7).⁵¹ The scene in Bonne of Luxemburg's psalter connects Italian expressiveness and naturalism of scene with the elegant French approach that separates the standing figures of the cadavers from the Living; their worlds do not permeate and do not communicate. This approach is typical of the oldest presentations of the Legend in both French and English environments. We can find it, for example, in the spiritual compendium possibly written for the French queen

45 Duke of Berry's *Les Très Riches Heures*, 1314–1416, 1482. Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 65, fol. 86^v. Here the Legend, as usual, accompanies (as a marginal scene) the Office of the Dead with the main scene of the funeral of the Notre Dame canon Raymond Diocrèse, who, to the horror of onlookers, woke up in his coffin. In an upper left medallion in the margin of the folio Death is depicted riding a unicorn. See *Les Très Riches Heures*, image 80, p. 202. *Petites Heures*, c. 1375. Paris Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 18014, fol. 282^v.

46 Bonne of Luxemburg's Psalter and Hours, before 1349. New York, Metropolitan Museum, Cloisters Collection, MS 69.86, fols 320^v–321^r. Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, pp. 132–34; Deuchler, 'Looking at Bonne', pp. 267–78.

47 In the collegiate church of St Victor. Dated through an inscription to 1420. For the Ennezat paintings, see *Vifs nous sommes*, pp. 96–98; Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, p. 111; Gertsman, 'The Gap of Death', pp. 90–91.

48 Spěvácěk, *Václav IV (Wenceslaus IV)*, pp. 99, 240, 361.

49 Pavelec, 'Nové objevy v křížové chodbě' (New Findings in the Cloister).

50 Pavelec, 'Nové objevy v křížové chodbě' (New Findings in the Cloister).

51 Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, p. 132.



Figure 11.6. Jean de Noir, The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead. Psalter and Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxemburg, before 1349. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloister Collection, MS 69.86, fol. 320^v–321^r. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art. Image in the Public Domain.

Mary of Brabant around 1285,⁵² in the psalter of Robert de Lisle from 1310,⁵³ in the Taymouth Hours from the second quarter of the fourteenth century,⁵⁴ and in the *Roman de la Rose*, written at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁵⁵ The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, as depicted in the psalter of the Luxemburg duchess, represents a visual exemplar for dozens of other French presentations of the Legend, particularly in French wall paintings of the fifteenth century, where only rarely do we encounter noblemen or rulers walking alone without horses.⁵⁶

It is possible that the ‘hunting motif’ in the České Budějovice version of the Legend could have been an allusion to Wenceslas IV’s passion for hunting,

52 Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, MS 3142, fol. 311^v. Azzam and Collet, ‘Le manuscrit 3142’, pp. 207–45.

53 Psalter of Robert de Lisle, 1310. London, British Library, MS Arundel 83 II, fol. 127^r.

54 The Taymouth Hours, second quarter of the fourteenth century. London, British Library, Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 180^r.

55 *Roman de la Rose*, after 1300. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS 378, fol. 1^r.

56 For example, as in Kientzheim, Alsace.



Figure 11.7. The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead and Triumph of Death. Pisa, Campo Santo, after 1336. Photo: Daniela Rywiková.

since it is well known that he indulged in this and other secular diversions that, according to medieval moralists, led young nobleman — and rulers in particular — away from spiritual matters and royal obligations.⁵⁷ For this reason, hunters are sometimes portrayed among the damned in hell, as for example in the wall painting of St Nicholas church in Austrian Bludesch-Zitz from the second quarter of the fourteenth century.⁵⁸

The depiction of the Legend in the Dominican Church of České Budějovice would seem to be capable of suitably fulfilling the function of ‘making present’ the secular power and the ruling Luxemburg dynasty, albeit not without critical connotations following the moral sense of the Legend. Ashby Kinch has recently pointed out that the ‘Luxemburg’ depictions of the macabre Legend show both a strong dynastically commemorative aspect (the Dead are perceived as dead ancestors) and a kind of moral self-stylization of the high-borns and their dynasty that accentuates ‘ostentatious humility’⁵⁹ — the opposite of pride — as a certain means of transcending both physical death and social identity.

Approaching the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead in České Budějovice in the context of the paintings that surround it (Figure 11.8), it is obvious that it is a well thought-out ‘pastoral corner’ dominated, in particular by the giant St Christopher — a well-known protector from sudden death — and by a niche with the depiction of the Pietà. In my opinion this replaced the original depiction precisely because of the new semantic context of the surrounding paintings and their *memento mori* iconography, which specifically expressed a warning against sudden death. The image of the Virgin Mary holding Christ’s dead body was associated in the late medieval period with one of the most popular prayers of indulgence, *Obsecro Te*; in books of hours, it often accompanies this prayer.⁶⁰ The text of this prayer contains a number of motifs present on the south wall at České Budějovice. The extensive text of the prayer opens with a long passage praising Mary as Mother of God, mother of orphans, comforter of the miserable, daughter of the highest King, and eternal virgin:

Obsecro Te domina sancta Maria, Mater Dei, pietate plenissima, summi regis filia, Mater gloriosissima, Mater orphanorum, consolatio desolatorum,

57 The idea of the hunter as sinner and the association of hunting with sin was inspired by the figure of Esau. For example, in the *Breviarium in psalmos*, St Jerome states that ‘Esau venator erat (Gen. XXVII) quoniam peccator erat: et penitur non invenimus in Scriptis sanctis, sanctum aliquem venatorem. Piscatores invenimus sanctos’ (Esau was a hunter / Gen. XXVII/, so he was a sinner: and we do not find in the whole of sacred Scripture any holy hunter. Holy fishers we do find). Quoted after Rooney, *Hunting in Middle English*, p. 39.

58 On the paintings, see Piske, ‘Die Ikonographie des Weltgerichts’.

59 Kinch, *Imago Mortis*, p. 118.

60 On the prayer *Obsecro Te* in the medieval period, see Wieck, ‘Prayer for the People’, pp. 406–07.



Figure 11.8. Pietà, St George fighting the dragon, the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead (the side wall); and St Christopher (the front wall). České Budějovice, Dominican Church of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary, after 1381. Photo: Daniela Rywиковá.

via errantium, salus et spes in te sperantium, Virgo ante partum, Virgo in partu, et Virgo post partum.⁶¹

(I beseech thee O Holy Lady Mary, Mother of God most full of pity, the daughter of the highest king, mother most glorious, mother of orphans, the consolation of the desolate, the way of them that go astray, the safety of all that trust in thee, a virgin before childbearing, a virgin in childbearing, and a virgin after childbearing.)

The prayer further praises the moment of Christ's embodiment in Mary's womb:

In illa hora quando tibi per Gabrielem Archangelum annuntiatus et conceptus Filius Dei fuit, et per illud divinum mysterium quod tunc operatus est Spiritus Sanctus, et per illam sanctam ineffabilem gratiam, pietatem, misericordiam, amorem, et humilitatem per quas Filius Dei descendit humanam carnem accipere in venerabilissimo utero tuo.⁶²

(At that hour when the Son of God was announced to thee by the Archangel Gabriel and was conceived, and through the divine mystery worked by the Holy Spirit, and through that holy ineffable grace, piety, mercy, love, and humility by which the Son of God descended to accept human flesh in thy most venerable womb.)

The text continues through the various stages of Christ's passion to an interesting penitential passage where the sinner asks Mary for help and advice in all prayers, troubles, and requests, and for intercession with Christ and for his protection of the five senses, so that the Seven Works of Mercy may be fulfilled, the Ten Commandments obeyed, and strong faith in the twelve Articles of Faith in the Apostles' Creed sustained ('duodecim articulos fidei'). Further, Christ is to protect the penitent against the Seven Deadly Sins 'in finem vitae meae' (at the end of my life). The main text of the prayer ends with an urgent request for revelation of the day and hour of death, which is accompanied by a plea for eternal life: 'Et annunties mihi dies et hora obitus mei' (And announce to me the day and hour of my death).

With only slight exaggeration, we can state that nearly all the scenes on the southern wall provide a partial visualization of the prayer's text. The scene of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, placed above the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, depicts, in effect, the opening passage of the prayer highlighting the Virgin Mary's eternal virginity, whereas the Pietà captures its middle part concerning Christ's passion and painful death. The motif of *memento mori* and the warning against *mors improvisa* in particular is, then, in addition to the giant figure of St Christopher, being visualized

61 Quoted according to the database *Thesaurus Precum Latinarum*, available online: <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/BVM/ObsecroTe.html> (accessed 28 January 2016).

62 Quoted according to the database *Thesaurus Precum Latinarum*, available online: <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/BVM/ObsecroTe.html> (accessed 28 January 2016).

by the macabre Legend. The other pastoral motifs of the prayer's text (the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Works of Mercy, etc.) are at least partially visualized by the Legend of the Ten Thousand Martyrs. In addition to their efficacious multiple intercession, their image represents equally effective protection against evil and catastrophe. For this reason, people used to paint an image of the Ten Thousand Martyrs inside their houses for protection 'from fire and thunder: send the holy angel to this house from your Holy Kingdom so that he protects it from all evils.'⁶³

In addition to their protective potency, the Ten Thousand Martyrs were also perceived as examples of the strength of the Christian faith they professed and for which they gave up their lives, the principles of which were summarized in the text of the Apostles' Creed. An example of the visual and semantic connection of the Apostles' Creed with Holy Martyrs is well illustrated in the famous Hours of Catherine of Cleves where page 262 depicts the scene of the martyrdom of the Ten Thousand saints with St Acacius lined up with the text of the Apostles' Creed, which begins next to the bust of St Peter who, according to tradition, wrote its opening passage: 'Credo i[n] deu[m] p[at]rem o[mn]ipote[n]te[m] c[re]atore[m] celi et t[er]re.'⁶⁴ Busts of the apostles are placed in white rose blossoms illusively appearing from the vellum in the corners of the textual mirror, evoking the rosary. The Apostles' Creed was both firmly installed in the Mass rite and became part of the minimum theological knowledge of the late medieval laity. One should remember that the Dominicans, in the high and late medieval period, were among the most active providers of *cura animarum* — pastoral care dedicated both to lay believers and female members of monastic orders.⁶⁵ In the Dominican context, the depiction of the Ten Thousand Martyrs could have had yet another devotional and practical connotation, for the text of the Apostles' Creed was (and still is) the beginning of the rosary prayer, whose origin is traditionally linked to the Dominican order.

Taking into account all the existing knowledge about the paintings on the eastern and southern walls of the monastery church in České Budějovice, we come to several interesting features prompting speculation about how the court environment may have related to the commissioner of the paintings. The unique iconography of the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead relate to the Luxemburg and French environment, as do the luxurious execution and exceptional quality of the paintings, particularly of the images

63 ('od ohně i hromu: pošli anděla svatého ihned v ten dům z království svého by ho ostříhal ode všeho zlého'). Quoted according to Royt, 'Horšovský Týn', p. 443.

64 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M.917/945, p. 262. Plummer, *The Hours of Catherine*, image no. 126.

65 For the pastoral activities of Dominicans and their place in art, see Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, pp. 197–278.

of the Pietà and the figure of St George, whose nimbus and armour were originally gilded.⁶⁶

It is impossible to document whether the scene of the Legend was executed in a similarly elaborate manner. Nevertheless, its composition and artistic quality, together with the identification of Kings Charles IV and Wenceslas IV with Roman crowns on their heads in the *Mater omnium* image of the cloister, suggest that the commissioner was someone in the king's close circle or possibly Wenceslas himself. The paintings could have been intended as a commemoration of the deceased emperor and a plea for the protection of the members of the Luxemburg dynasty, whose lack of homogeneity and diverse political interests introduced, after Charles's unexpected death, a period of instability in the Czech Lands and a struggle for power that ended only in 1405 with a peace treaty negotiated in České Budějovice. The paintings on the southern and eastern walls are iconographically and semantically related to *memento mori* and were intended to remind the viewer of the ephemerality of worldly concerns and secular power.

Conclusion

The Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead is almost always a 'multifunctional' image; its meaning cannot be reduced to mere *memento mori*. It is a polysemantic visualization of Death, which was not reduced (as all too often would be the case nowadays) to the sole physical perishing of an individual. The encounter of living and dead reflects the permeability of the worlds of both: their mutual communication documenting the fact that death was an inevitable part of the daily life and experience of medieval people. In posing the immanent and permanent presence of Death, the Legend in some way 'humanized' it — albeit in the form of a decaying (*ergo mortal*), and vanishing, human body. The fear of death — whether of its physical form or, predominantly, of eternal damnation (eschatological death) — is, moreover, reflected in late medieval daily religious practices and rituals. Macabre themes were an inevitable part of pastoral care, homiletics, and culture in general, whether such themes, as urged by preachers, involved gazing at the image of St Christopher in order to prevent sudden death or the discipline of remembering death on a daily basis. The Four Last Things were a firm part of the minimal theological knowledge of medieval believers, and the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, together with the Dance of Death, was *the* pastoral topic par excellence.

For this reason, the medieval iconography of personified Death or images of cadavers rarely appear in isolation. In most cases, they form part of a larger narrative cycle absorbing pastoral themes. For the late medieval believer, the

66 Pavelec, 'Nové poznatky o klášterním kostele' (New Findings on the Monastic Church), p. 297.

cadaver and the human skeleton represented an obvious, understandable, and shocking symbol of the end not only of his personal existence but also of the end of the world, represented, as they were, in visual media often drawing on the rhetoric of biblical parables and on dramatic descriptions of the Day of Doom. The coincidence of the Legend and macabre motifs with Last Judgement iconography emphasizes the dramatic ascent of 'collective death' — the end of this world whose part is, paradoxically, the death of Death itself: Death belongs in the world of the living, for Death will no longer be part of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Medieval preachers permanently emphasized the general belief that, like the end of human life, the end of the world will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Pastorally, the Legend is therefore predominantly a warning against eternal damnation — eschatological death as a fatal result of deadly sin. In some visual presentations of the Legend, the Dead are the dead alter egos of the living: their 'mortal transformation' is a spiritual matter calling for moral transformation. Without proper self-reflection and struggle against sin salvation is not possible. *Memento mori* was an imperative, and it was not by chance that its fulfilment was understood as a part of daily Christian life — as intrinsic to the permanent struggle with sin and the way to spiritual salvation. Medieval preachers often warned against postponing confession and imperfect or deceitful penitence, which imperilled salvation. For this reason, firmly-structured confession and penance became an important part of late medieval *ars moriendi* manuals and religious practice. The Four Last Things became a matter of overwhelming importance, posing, as they did, urgent and vital questions about the uncertainty of salvation. Medieval theologians accordingly held that the post-mortem fate of the soul should unceasingly occupy the minds of believers. This mortal preoccupation is aptly expressed by the Latin verses of the Bohemian jurist and humanist Štěpán of Krumlov in his 1495 poem *Morte nichil melius*: 'Itaque te exhortor elegas qui legeris istos ut mors sit cordi consociata tuo' (And so I exhort you, reader, to accept that Death is the partner of your heart).⁶⁷

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*De praeparatione ad mortem**The Dying and Death of Charles V (1500–1558)*

From the end of the fifteenth century onwards, the political emancipation of dynastic monarchies enabled an individualization of power and dominance. State authority was increasingly performed by absolutist sovereigns. In order to gradually centralize their personal and dynastic power, to strengthen their rule at home, or to manage foreign policy, western European rulers struggled to extract benefits from the crisis of the feudal order, provoked by Black Death and depopulation, and to dominate the Church and religious orders, nobles, and cities. Large territories were necessary as economic and military resources. Monarchs in Britain, France, and Spain relied on taxation and bureaucracies, and increased the size and scope of central institutions and government activities, creating 'nation states', while dynastic power and continuity were further secured by marital strategies involving other ruling houses. Whenever necessary, they concluded the alliances with some in order to weaken others. As international relations were disturbed, sometimes even corrected, by constant struggle, by disorder caused to the feudal system by the Black Death, by depopulation, by the western schism, and by the absence of centralized state power and steady governance, absolutist rulers were becoming real masters of war and peace. Since the beginnings of the sixteenth century, the emergence of numerous rulers' portraits in a new ideological context

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confirmed a political reality in which the civil, military, and religious order was reduced to one single personality.¹

The decadence of autonomous feudal institutions highlighted the role of the prince and his office, diplomacy, and public finances. However, dynastic struggles, the Ottoman conquest, and the spread of Protestantism prevented absolutist rulers from efficiently governing the international order and the balance of power among states. The evolution of organized Protestant communities generated a challenge to the entire existing political and religious framework. Protestants took advantage of contemporary political tendencies while at the same time being bound to absolutist rulers or local lords within the German confederal structure. In this way, dynastic monarchies and their rulers were becoming able to manage the religious affiliations of their subjects.

Both Protestantism and the most powerful forces within the Counter-Reformation arose in the context of the Holy Roman Empire. Although devoid of internal coherence, the Empire under Charles V (1516/1519–1556) stretched from Austria to the Netherlands and was simultaneously linked with the Spanish crown. In this sense the changes in the relations of rulers to perceptions of power swiftly changed. Yet regardless of the growth of their personal power over state, Church, cities, and overseas colonies, absolutist rulers also were subject to a physical reality. They were born, they died, they worshipped and suffered, and lived in pain and anxiety as did their subjects.

Political or intellectual debates on war and peace, on the rule of ethics — and the ethics of warfare in particular — were given new meaning and importance in the context of general uncertainties caused by the Reformation. Protestantism was discretely introduced in Spain by the teachings of Erasmus of Rotterdam. Spanish resistance to Protestantism was partly conditioned by a crisis of identity after a long history of Muslim pre-eminence and Judaic influence.² While Erasmus was a key mediator between the two conflicting religious and ethical philosophies, his appearance was specifically important for the personal and political evolution of Charles V, and also for the formation of his spiritual attitudes towards life and death.

Spanish 'Erasmianism' was a rich and complex movement. Its initial intentions could be read in terms of its aspirations to limit existing abuses in the Church and to reform Christian life. Spanish Erasmian spiritualism was characterized by the devaluation of ceremonies, routine practices, soulless devotions, and the ritualism of monastic observances. In its return to Sacred

1 See such general studies as Bonney, *The European Dynastic States*, Ertman, *The Birth of Leviathan*; Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe*; Clark, *State and Status*. On rulers' portraits, see Hackenbroch, 'Some Portraits of Charles V' and Matthews, 'Jakob Seisenegger's Portraits of Charles V'.

2 *Limpieza de sangre*, literally "cleanliness of blood" and meaning "blood purity", referred to those who were considered pure "Old Christians", without Muslim or Jewish ancestors, as the majority of Spanish Christians in the sixteenth century were of Muslim origin.

Scripture, especially to the Gospels, Erasmianism implied a devaluation of scholasticism.³

In its beginnings, Spanish Erasmianism revealed more of the political than of the spiritual. *Institutio principis christiani* (1516) was composed by Erasmus for Archduke Charles, the future King of Spain and Emperor Charles V. Erasmus had been appointed counsellor to Charles with a pension of 200 florins a year. *In praise of folly* (*Encomium Moriae*, 1509) had been published in 1524 in Barcelona. The centre of Spanish Erasmianism moved from Seville to Alcalá de Henares, and Erasmus still enjoyed support in court. The reception of Erasmus's ideas, and the spread of his popularity, provoked clerical resistance. This resistance was in fact twofold. It was an issue of both ideology and identity, for Erasmus did not personally subscribe to the spirit of Hispanic Catholicism. In 1527, the Spanish Inquisition summoned the most prominent theologians to Valladolid in order to judge a variety of suspicious passages culled from Erasmus' works. 'The theologians met, argued, and disbanded without ever reaching a decision on the orthodoxy of the excerpts or even debating the whole inventory under review'.⁴ Nevertheless, denounced as a dangerous heretic, Erasmus was from now on to lose his initial influence. His supporters dispersed during the following years.⁵ Charles V, however, still remained cautious with Protestants, avoiding violent interventions, 'and he may have learned it from Erasmian counselors'.⁶

Charles V politically matured in the atmosphere of Spanish Erasmianism. Although he never became intimate with Erasmus, and his religious ideology remained faithful to traditional Catholicism, his political behaviour nevertheless revealed the belief (otherwise legitimized within Protestantism) that personal liberty is required for each soul to work out its salvation. The concept of personal freedom implied an ethics of personal responsibility that could be simultaneously transformed into the sphere of dynastic power and propel the maintenance of (preferably) growing political influence on the following generations. 'The humanism of Erasmus was diametrically opposed to the doctrine enunciated by his contemporary, Machiavelli, in *The Prince*'.⁷ While dedicating his paraphrases of the gospels to four reigning princes (Charles V, Francis I, Henry VIII, and Ferdinand I of Austria), Erasmus thought that it was possible to dissuade kings and their subjects from the idolatry of power. 'More that you cannot turn to good, you may at least make less bad' became important political guidance for the ruler, who was also a Christian knight, primarily because such an attitude acknowledged political reality. Erasmus's failure to extricate politics from religion did not necessarily mean that he was

3 Battailon, *Erasmus y España*, pp. 72–102.

4 Homza, 'Erasmus as Hero, or Heretic?', p. 78; also Bietenholz, *Encounters with a Radical Erasmus*, p. 35.

5 On the persecution of the followers of Erasmus, see Battailon, *Erasmus y España*, pp. 432–93.

6 Watson, 'Introduction', p. 7.

7 Caspari, 'Erasmus on the Social Functions of Christian Humanism', p. 83.

a false or failed political thinker: 'the true and only monarch of the world is Christ'; 'if our princes would agree together to obey His commands, we would truly have only one Prince, and everything would flourish under Him'.⁸

The *Education of a Christian Prince* (*Institutio Principis Christiani*) emphasizes the idea of the interdependence of peace and responsible personal rule. If the king does not have any ideas of his own, it is infinitely preferable to get them from the wisdom of the past rather than expose him to the intrigues and manipulations of his court and counsellors. The aphorisms of the *Education* were to be absorbed by the young prince, his tutors, and even by the wider public of cultivated citizens. Like the wisdom books of the Bible that Erasmus admired, and like his own *Adagia* (proverbs), these instructions distil the ideas of reading, reflection, and even the experience of a mature and cosmopolitan scholar. However, every Renaissance prince took a 'barbarian' pride in real or fictional ancestors, and Erasmus alluded that European princes were as a rule not chosen by election. Even the 'election' of Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 was a simulation and even a corruption of electivity, revealing a new complicity between rulers and transnational capital, invested in extracting economic gain from political influence.⁹

In the absence of real control over central institutions within the territorial framework of a generally unitary state, the Holy Roman Empire was still an elusive phantasm. Throughout the sixteenth century, territorial monarchies lacked centralized, regulated, and efficient institutions. Italian city states, institutionally well established, were almost helpless against foreign invasions. Only Venice built a specific system of functions based on overseas businesses and its diplomatic service, while the role of the ruler, from the very beginnings of Republic, was transferred to oligarchic bodies.¹⁰ Renaissance political writers generally agreed that a state owes everything to a good prince. The wise prince is really the creation of the teacher who instructs him in the wisdom of humanity. Renaissance and Reformation alike legitimized a rational belief in improvement through learning.¹¹

The relatively tolerant and entrepreneurial character of his urban social background probably influenced Erasmus in his dispassionate deflection from Plato's vision of an overregulated community under an authoritarian state. Faced with the authoritarian tendencies of contemporary princes, Erasmus addressed his thoughts to common citizens as well as to kings. Erasmus also gave an entirely new meaning to the classic formula *Princeps imago Dei*. For him, the symbol of the Christian king's rule was not the globe or crown but the cross, a symbol of earthly pain and eternal life. His call to personal modesty

8 Hardin, 'The Literary Conventions of Erasmus' Education of a Christian Prince', p. 153.

9 Carrasco, *La Empresa Imperial de Carlos V*, pp. 63–66.

10 Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant*, pp. 184–210, etc. On state power translated to the maritime affairs: Tenenti, 'I sistema marittimo veneziano tra Adriatico e Levante', pp. 95–104.

11 Vivanti, 'La crisi del Cinquecento', pp. 5–23; Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 403–12; Coleman, *A History of Political Thought*, pp. 254–56.

and commitment to the political task was a Protestant request (even if also similar to the medieval *specula principum* writings on rule and behaviour), assuming that individual responsibility in this world is related to one's destiny in the eternal world.¹²

Early in 1515, proposals were made to Erasmus to join the court of Prince Charles (the future Charles V). His appointment and assumption of office probably took place at the end of that year or on the first day of the following January. The political handbook *Education of a Christian Prince* was prepared during this period and was intended from the first for the young prince, then only fifteen years old. The treatise is contemporaneous with the more famous *Utopia* (1516) of Thomas More and Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (1513, printed in 1532). The number of editions over the following years was impressive.¹³

The prince should be born and raised in his own country, 'for the ties of birth and country, with a sort of common spirit of understanding, have a great deal to do with establishing a feeling of good will'.¹⁴ However, the future Charles V was born in Ghent, came to Spain as a foreigner, and as a foreigner acquired the German imperial throne. A prince was meant to stay within the borders of his kingdom, not to wander all over the world as did Ulysses, and also, rather frequently, Charles V himself. Erasmus advocated a conservative policy: low taxation and the rule of law, claiming that the most felicitous conditions exist when 'the prince is obeyed by everyone, and the prince himself obeys the laws, and the laws go back to the fundamental principle of equity and honesty, and have no other aim than the advancement of the commonwealth'.¹⁵ Laws should be just, fair, and directed to the common good with a corrective and preventive as well as a punitive purpose. The prince should turn his efforts to the one aim of ruling in such a manner that, when Christ makes the final reckoning, he will be approved, and will leave an honourable memory of himself. His main object should not be the extension of his domain, but rather its improvement. War should be used only as a last resort, and concluded as swiftly as possible, with the least bloodshed and suffering.¹⁶

Both the life and death of Charles V reveal complex historical features. His primary identities were determined by his rich family background, imperial duties, and biological challenges. The marginalia of his imperial career disclose suffering, painful progressive diseases, and sometimes even the threat of immediate death. All his illnesses are difficult to diagnose from the

12 Caspari, 'Erasmus on the Social Functions of Christian Humanism', pp. 79–83; Melo dos Santos, Suhett de Oliveira, 'State, Consensus and Legitimacy in the Political Philosophy of Erasmus of Rotterdam', pp. 1905–1926.

13 Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, pp. 213–36.

14 Born, 'Erasmus on Political Ethics', p. 531.

15 Born, 'Erasmus on Political Ethics', p. 532.

16 Born, 'Erasmus on Political Ethics', p. 532.

available facts. He likely suffered from pain on an everyday basis. Life in pain sharpens the senses, especially for those who face death. Death was not only a regular public phenomenon; it was a complex obsession of Charles V and his contemporaries. Short life expectancy, steady pain, and imminent death are not, however, only subjects for metaphysical reflection. Life was just a short and painful, mostly unfortunate, antechamber of death. Accountability for life and death, both past and future, especially the past and the future taking place in the other world, unquestionably demanded the preparation of the individual for that final departure.¹⁷

Deviation from Catholic dogma on dying and death was also present in Spanish popular culture of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Death is a topic that follows the Black Death from 1348 in all literary genres.¹⁸ The pattern of actively coping with dying and death, in poetic form, appeared in the satirical literature of the Spanish fifteenth century and spread in the theatres throughout the sixteenth century. These patterns combined the motives of religious asceticism with social and anticlerical criticism. Death played a very active role in sixteenth-century writings. The farce called *Danza de la Muerte* (by Juan de Pedraza) represents four figures, the pope, the king, queen and shepherds: all of them end up unreconciled to their condition, surprised by implacable Death. Diego Sánchez Badajoz, a cleric of Extremadura, wrote allegories, *moralidades*, on biblical topics with satirical intentions, which were popular in the era of Charles V. His thirty-eight pieces were collected after his death in Seville in 1554 with the title *Recopilación en metro*, and are characterized by fiery anticlerical satire. His *Farsa de la Muerte* points to an attachment to corporeal, physical life even in those who are the strongest in their Christian faith, though they know that only death is the gate to the eternal glory.¹⁹

Religious practices influencing the attitudes of Charles V towards life and death are impossible to distinguish from those arising from his political education, which may have varied somewhat from the immediate environment and attitudes of his counsellors, but they did declare themselves through their call to duty of the Christian knight facing the complex requirements of a sprawling and incoherent empire. The trajectory from religious practice to rational policy is most evident in the spiritual interaction of Charles V with Erasmus of Rotterdam.

Rumours went on for centuries about how Charles V, the son of Joanna the Mad, decided to attend his own funeral — that he went to the other world only after a rehearsal of his funeral ceremony. There are also opinions that this was just a spiteful legend. A mass in honour of his death was reportedly

17 Samardžić, *Karlo V*, pp. 382–89.

18 Usher, 'Boccaccio's "Ars Moriendi" in the *Decameron*', pp. 621–22.

19 García-Matos, 'La Danza de la Muerte', pp. 257–71.

held on 30 August 1558, complete with the tears and sighs of those present. And only then did he die.

It seems that Charles V, as claimed by some of his contemporaries, adopted recommendations from the treatise of Erasmus of Rotterdam *De praeparatione ad mortem* (1534). Erasmus practised meditation on death throughout his life. He devoted several works to the preparation for death and the ceremony of dying. He felt that whoever lived well could not have a bad death. When he was about fifty, in 1519, he claimed that he had lived enough already, compared to the average life expectancy of that time. He was burdened with the death of his parents of the plague in the early years of his childhood. His Christian education bound him to a sense of death as a difficult transition to happiness. His relationship with Christ in the domain of dying and life was very personal, almost private: Erasmus held that the final act of our lives could be compared with a dramatic play. The dying shall look upon the Christ, and upon the salvation offered through his suffering. Even in the deepest despair, he should maintain hope. The crucified Christ is the sign of victory and endless glory. All hope of victory depends on one's eyes and ears. We keep our eyes focused on the only sign of grace, and our ears attentive, in order to hear the voice of a lone Saviour: Christ, crucified on the cross, giving us proof of his mercy. And this voice will not stop calling us. Come to me, all who suffer, and endure your burden, and I will give you rest. Those who suffer should hide in the depth of the rock which is Christ; let them hide in his wounds, and he will shelter them from the onslaught of Satan.²⁰

Erasmus's most important treatises on dying and death are *Declamatio de morte*, *Epistola de morte*, *Colloquia*, and *De praeparatione ad mortem*. He also left letters of condolence, prayers, epitaphs, and adagia. The *Enchiridion militis christiani* (1504) confirms that he has overcome youthful trauma, claiming that the death of the soul is more terrible than the death of the body. *Convivium religiosum* (1522) condemns the ceremonies that burden the dying: everyone is somehow preparing for death. In his writings *Funus* (1526) and *Exequiae seraphicae* (1531), he confirms that the road to death is harder than death itself and condemns the terrifying disarray of ante mortem and after-death sermons. There is a necessity to prepare for death in peace and dignity, in prayer and reading of the Scriptures, and in receiving the last sacrament and the viaticum from the priest.²¹ 'At the hour of death Erasmus prescribes the last sacraments: penance, extreme unction, and the Eucharist.'²²

20 Tentler, 'Forgiveness and Consolation in the Religious Thought of Erasmus', pp. 114–15; Halkin, 'Érasme et la mort', p. 287.

21 Halkin, 'Érasme et la mort', p. 276.

22 Tentler, 'Forgiveness and Consolation in the Religious Thought of Erasmus', p. 112.

Erasmus's *De praeparatione ad mortem* remains his most important and most complete treatise on death. It is a kind of spiritual testament, designed and composed in the tradition of *Artes moriendi*. He wrote it under the pressure of a disease, believing that he was approaching the end. The treatise confirms his spiritual and intellectual maturation. *De praeparatione ad mortem* is a treatise of great profundity, one of his most influential writings, and the last one dedicated to the topic of death that he ever wrote. His highest ambition was to preserve the dignity of life and of dying. Death has to be accepted boldly. Death releases the soul from the body. The good death is the 'crowning of Christ's philosophy'. Death is the gate of heaven, especially if it is preceded by a life of virtue. Instead of praying to the Lord to deliver a sudden death, he suggests the Lord's help for those leading a bad life. His recommendations for preparations of dying require prayer and reading the Scriptures, then forgiving enemies and accepting the test of suffering, and finally, to rely firmly on the help of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, to restore one's soul to God in hope. The 'spirit of Erasmism' is found precisely in his demand in which he moves away from the general confession suggested for the dying.²³

In his short treatise Agustín García Simón considered that Charles V accepted advice given by Erasmus:

As the night was already escaping, about four o'clock, in the presence of everybody, he asked that the psalm of the Lord's prayers on the crucifixion should be read out loud and in full. When the reading ended, he sought a wax candle and a crucifix. He took a candle and spoke, Lord, you are my light and my health, what should I fear? Shortly after that, he hid his hands on the chest, as those who pray, and raised his eyes to heaven and spoke, Lord Jesus, accept my soul. And here he closed his eyes.²⁴

He left this world on 21 September 1558.

Charles V had abdicated in 1555 and 1556 as an old man who could barely walk. The last three years of his life he dedicated to his personal salvation: he confessed and took communion frequently. Thirty-eight monks of the monastery of Yuste, where he had retired, were charged with serving his religious devotions. He suffered from gout from his twenty-eighth year. His hands were ineffective because gout attacked all his extremities. But he did not die from any of his many chronic illnesses — he died in a local epidemic of malaria.²⁵

After his abdication, Charles V officially (and allegedly) turned away from his secular duties, but it was becoming obvious that he missed political power. He explained his attempts to preserve his political authority after abdication by the need to help his son Philip II.²⁶ News from Spain and the

23 Halkin, 'Érasme et la mort', p. 279.

24 Chaunu and Escamilla, *Charles Quint*, pp. 720–27.

25 Fernández Álvarez, *Charles V*, pp. 180–86.

26 Merriman, 'Charles V's Last Paper of Advice to his Son', p. 491.

Empire reached the monastery of Yuste, but he was helpless, unable to react. A malarial attack ambushed him on 30 August 1558. In constant delirium, he occasionally regained consciousness, understanding that he needed to make his last will and testament. During his final years he was burdened by the Lutherans, and he demanded their complete destruction from his son. His second obsession was his funeral. He insisted on being buried in Yuste Monastery. At first, he expected the body of his wife Isabel, who had died in 1539, also to be transferred to Yuste. Quijada, however, discouraged him, reminding him that historically his true final resting place was Granada, determined by the Catholic kings as the ultimate residence of the Spanish rulers. But Charles remained persistent.²⁷

Charles V was gossiped about for centuries: as mentioned above, it was rumoured that he attended a rehearsal of his own burial. With his funeral ceremony drama, he attempted to 'control the future of his soul'. One of the Yuste brethren emotionally described Charles's active participation in this mock funerary rite as 'seeing a man bury himself alive'.²⁸ He demanded to be buried beneath the main altar of the monastery church, but so that half of his body would lie outside the altar line, so that, when celebrating mass, the officiant would stand above his head and shoulders. An improvement in his medical condition on 18 September turned out to be just a break in the agony. The next day, 19 September, they gave him extreme unction. On 20 September, he asked for psalms to be read. He was weak and aware that for him there was no cure. As he approached his last hour, he asked for the cross with which the Empress Isabel died, and ordered the moribund candles to be lit. Present were his confessor Juan Regla, García Alvarez de Toledo, Count Oropesa, and fray Bartolomé de Carranza, Archbishop of Toledo. At two o'clock in the morning, Charles V cried: 'Ayúdenme, que me muero' (Help me, for I'm dying). He took a candle in his right hand, and a crucifix in his left hand, and pronounced, 'ya es tiempo' (It's time).²⁹ With the name of Jesus on his lips in his final struggle, he died at half past two in the morning, on St Matthew's Day:

On the morning following his death, the monks embalmed his body and placed it in a lead coffin, which in turn they placed inside a case of chestnut wood. They then lowered the coffin from the window of his bedroom into the church below and prepared to bury him as he had instructed. Charles V's glorious reign as secular leader of the Christian world ended with a solemn, quiet funeral attended only by the members of the monastic order.³⁰

27 Chaunu and Escamilla, *Charles Quint*, pp. 627–30.

28 Gachard, *Retraite et mort de Charles-Quint au Monastère de Yuste*, p. 69.

29 Gachard, *Retraite et mort de Charles-Quint au Monastère de Yuste*, p. 70.

30 Gachard, *Retraite et mort de Charles-Quint au Monastère de Yuste*, p. 70.

In the process that instituted later the Inquisition against the Archbishop, Juan Regla asserted that the ‘heretic flavour’ of his dying darkened the last moments of Charles V. José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras claimed that in the words and actions of the archbishop there was nothing controversial, and he testified to the last message spoken by Bartolomé de Carranza to Charles V: ‘Near you and in you, Master, is already the price paid and the reparation of our sins, which is Jesus Christ, as John said in his epistle, *Quia Christus est propitarius pro peccatis nostris*.’³¹

Charles V lived fifty-eight years, seven months, and twenty-one days. His personal history and his attitude toward life and death are not a chronicle of a lone individual, although he often felt alone, and in particular moments of temptation and danger even abandoned. History is not primarily interested in solitary individuals, or their opinion, if considered outside the social context. Charles V lived a full life, and his thinking overlapped with the orbits of his contemporaries. The history of Charles V was not even over with his death. When he visited, during his final days, the requiem mass that he organized and dedicated to himself, he probably faced the prospect of his likely subsequent history meeting him after his demise. He apparently abandoned his earthly life patiently and gradually. However, during the process of rejecting the burden of political jurisdiction, including solemn ceremonies, he began to feel a renewed need for sovereign power, faced with the emptiness with which he was surrounded after his voluntary withdrawal from thrones and government.

Juan Antonio de Vera y Figueroa Ávila y Zúñiga (better known as El Conde de la Roca, 1583–1658), in his *Epítome de la vida y hechos del invicto emperador Carlos V* (1621), noted that, after the news of his death in 1558 (‘el día de la verdad es la muerte’, the day of truth is death), Charles V was mourned in all the provinces of Europe, Africa, America, and even Asia (Figure 12.1).³²

Charles V was buried in Yuste Monastery. Philip II, his son, transferred his remains on 14 January 1574 to El Escorial. The body was temporarily located beneath the main altar of the original chapel. Charles V was finally placed in the Pantheon of the Kings on 11 May 1654. But even then his post-mortem displacements were not ended. The sarcophagus containing his mummified body was opened in 1870. This was when his last portrait was drawn by Vicente Palmaroli (Figure 12.2).³³

31 Chaunu and Escamilla, *Charles Quint*, p. 717.

32 Fernández Álvarez, *La España del Emperador Carlos V*, pp. 950–52.

33 Fernández Álvarez, *La España del Emperador Carlos V*, p. 942.



Figure 12.1. Nicolaas Hogenberg, *Funeral Procession in Brussels on the Occasion of the Death of Emperor Charles V*. Sheet 24-25, 1559. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Reproduced with permission.



Figure 12.2. The mummified body of the Emperor Charles V in the Escorial. Photograph of a painting by V. Palmaroli y González. Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

Without the need to consider the already familiar details of the dying and death of Charles V, the state of his consciousness has been analysed in a broad context of religious and ideological attitudes and practices, taking also into account of the complex relations of Hispanic Catholicism and its variations, Erasmianism

and Protestantism. Charles V envisaged and conceptualized his dying, death, and afterlife in an individualizing process of change and reconsideration, influenced both by Erasmianism and Protestantism, as well as by the logic of contemporary tendencies, and in connection with struggles to do with the personalization of increasingly centralized absolutist political power and state authority. His attitude toward life and death emerged from various elements: traditional Christianity, Erasmian humanism, a Hispanic pride and sense of honour, civic responsibility, and tidiness — and even an almost Protestant modesty.

Fernand Braudel never joined the biography of Charles V with that of Philip II. Braudel pointed out that the intimate personality of Charles V was mysterious and inaccessible.³⁴ Pierre Chaunu and Michèle Escamilla reminded us that the attitudes of Charles V towards life, dying, and death were expressions of spiritual reconsiderations otherwise summarized in the writings of Erasmus as an intellectual forerunner of the later crisis of European 'mind'.³⁵

Although he came to power by chance, after a series of deaths delivered sovereignty and a basis for future rule to him, Charles V remained obsessed by death just like any contemporary. Though a defender of Roman Catholicism, he understood life and death more in accordance with the Erasmian attitudes of his immediate intellectual environment, which was otherwise predominantly Protestant in character. Such were the preparations for his final departure, that the last act of his final moments allegedly took place in a carefully thought-out devotional ritual.

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35 In the sense of consciousness as argued by Paul Hazard: Chaunu and Escamilla, *Charles Quint*, p. 732; Samardžić, *Karlo V*, pp. 378–81.

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Continuity and Change in Religious Practices

Christianity and Islam

The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity in the Balkans during the Sixteenth Century*

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Before we delve into the phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity in the Balkans, we ought to put forward a definition of it. In essence, Crypto-Christianity implies religious practice in which a certain population or individuals practise their Christian faith in secrecy, while publicly professing Islam. Consequently, in a wider sense, we could also try to define a phenomenon of crypto-religiousness, in which a certain populace or persons secretly adhere to one set of religious beliefs while openly professing another one. Further explanations and examples will be provided in the following passages.

If we observe the phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity geographically, we will notice that it occurs on the boundaries, or rather, points of contact between the Islamic and Christian worlds. As this frontier shifted over time, so did the location(s) of occurrences of this phenomenon. It is possible to observe a geographical shift westwards with the passage of time. For example, there were Crypto-Christian villages in Northern Iraq in the tenth century; then, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Crypto-Christianity appeared in Asia Minor. It was the epoch of Byzantine – Turkish (Seljuk) conflict over the region, and it represents an interesting case of the existence of syncretism between Islam and Christianity, bi-confessionalism, or even religious confusion among the population.¹ After that, starting in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the next area of Crypto-Christianity was the Balkan peninsula. For the purpose of this paper, we will employ an ‘elastic’ definition of the Balkans, so the islands of Crete and Cyprus will also be taken into consideration.

Of course, there are also examples of crypto-religionism of faiths other than Christianity, such as the case of Zoroastrianism in Persia in the first centuries after the Muslim conquest, or the preservation of ancient animistic beliefs amongst the population of Western Sudan after formally embracing Islam in the fifteenth century.² The Iberian peninsula also offers an abundance of instances of such practices, for example the cases of the Marranos (Jews who converted — willingly or by force — to Christianity, but who continued to practise Judaism in secrecy) and Crypto-Muslim Moors (Moriscos). There was also a peculiar case in central Asia, in Bukhara and Turkestan, where a community of pseudo-Muslim Jews existed.³

An interesting case of Crypto-Christianity preceding the phenomenon in the Balkans occurred in Anatolia, where it started to flourish after the decisive Seljuk victory over the Byzantines in 1071. The process of the subsequent Islamization of Anatolia was very long and serves as the perfect example of

1 Zirojević, *Islamizacija na južnoslovenskom prostoru* (Islamization in the Realm of South Slavs), p. 6.

2 Zirojević, *Islamizacija na južnoslovenskom prostoru* (Islamization in the Realm of South Slavs), p. 6.

3 Skendi, ‘Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans’, p. 228.

the development of religious syncretism, in as much as the Turks, who were still nomads, clung strongly to their nomadic shamanic superstitions. The existence of different Dervish orders and their expansion would not have been possible without religious syncretism. The best sources for this are the poems of Yunus Emre, the thirteenth-century Turkish poet and Sufi mystic. He was a contemporary of Rumi, and his poems are proof of parallel worship in both mosques and churches in Anatolia.⁴

What makes the Balkans distinctive in this regard is the long duration of the practice of Crypto-Christianity, which lasted until the middle of the twentieth century (or perhaps, in some instances, even until today). This practice is also well documented, as it attracted the attention of European travellers through the Balkans in the sixteenth and later centuries. Also, due to the efforts of Serbian and Yugoslavian ethnologists and anthropologists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we have an abundance of studies that provide valuable insights into this phenomenon.

The phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity was noticed in what is today Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Greece. There were also communities on the islands of Crete, Cyprus, Dodecanese, and Mytilene. Almost all the communities had special, domestic names for Crypto-Christian practices: for example, *laramana* ('multicoloured') in Albanian; *linovamvakoi* ('linen and cotton', as someone who is between Christian and Muslim, likening the phenomenon to fabric), *lardokophtedes* ('lard cutters', or 'lard eaters'), or *mesokertedes* (from Italian 'mezzo quarto' — 'half and half') in Greek; *dvoverstvo* or *dvovere* ('double faith') in Slavonic languages, and so on.⁵

There is a predominant attitude among Serbian and Yugoslavian historians, ethnologists, and sociologists that Islam was first accepted by the privileged social classes (in other words, the nobility), who saw an opportunity to enjoy the continuation of their privileges, as well as a new opportunity for advancement within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.⁶ Subsequently, individuals among the lower strata of the society embraced the new faith in the centuries after the Ottoman conquest. There was no religious pressure to convert to Islam; the reasons were mostly economic⁷ or practical.⁸ However, there is a tendency among early modern European authors and travellers, in writing about the Ottoman state, to overemphasize the economic incentives

4 Zirojević, *Islamizacija na južnoslovenskom prostoru* (Islamization in the Realm of South Slavs), p. 15.

5 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', pp. 227, 230, 239.

6 Mušović, *Muslimani Crne Gore od pada Zete (1499)* (Muslims of Montenegro since the Fall of Zeta 1499), p. 30; cf. Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', p. 233.

7 Non-Muslims were subjected to an annual poll tax called *jizya*, while Muslims were exempt.

8 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', p. 228.

for conversion, because it was very difficult for them to imagine that someone would convert for religious reasons.⁹

It is clear, however, that the Islamization of the Balkans was neither rapid nor complete. It could be argued that it never took a deep foothold, and that it would be more accurate to speak about various degrees of Crypto-Christianity rather than of incomplete conversion or of mixed religion / syncretism. One of the reasons for incomplete Islamization was a peculiar situation, in which the Christian Balkan population retained a significant amount of pagan and pre-Christian beliefs in their religious life. This population met Islamic Ottoman Turks who still kept their shamanistic traditions. So perhaps the interplay of their religious backgrounds allowed for the widespread phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity, or for surviving forms of Christianity among converts to Islam in the Balkans.¹⁰

Some of the expressions of Crypto-Christianity in Cyprus were the baptism of children before circumcision, the observance of fasts and Holy Communion, and marrying according to both Christian and Islamic customs, with Muslim grooms being baptized beforehand. Crypto-Christians prayed in both mosques and churches; they received 'Christian consolation' on their deathbeds, but they were buried in a Muslim cemetery.¹¹ Crypto-Christianity was practised by both Orthodox and Catholic Christians.¹²

Contemporary sources concerning this phenomenon are numerous; they have both western and eastern provenances. The first western accounts of Crypto-Christianity in the Balkans come from French travellers, who criss-crossed the peninsula in the sixteenth century as traders or diplomats. Several of them wrote memoirs that contain interesting passages and observations of this practice among the local population. There are also Ottoman sources — for example, a fatwa from 1568, issued for the territory of today's Western Macedonia, envisages the harshest punishment for those who formally embraced Islam but kept practising the old religion: Christianity. Such people claimed when they were brought before the state authorities that they were Muslims while they kept going to church; they baptized their children and also married in church. They had two names — one Christian, which was used in private, and another, Muslim, used publicly or before the authorities. For example, combinations were Ferhat – Djon, Mustafa – Nikola,

9 Arnold, *Povijest islama* (The Preaching of Islam), p. 226; similar attitudes can be found among modern historians as well, cf. Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', p. 240.

10 Ru, *Religija Turaka i Mongola* (Religion of Turks and Mongols), pp. 42–43; Zirojević, *Islamizacija na južnoslovenskom prostoru* (Islamization in the Realm of South Slavs), pp. 16–17; Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', p. 246.

11 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', p. 230.

12 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', p. 235.

Hasan – Bogdan.¹³ There is an interesting superstition tied to the practice of taking two given names. It was customary among families in Montenegro who experienced high child mortality to give a public, ‘Turkish’, name to a newborn, while a private name *Stanko* (literally ‘Stopper’, the one who stops) was also given, in order to prevent premature death.¹⁴ Some of the records are rather obscure and cursory, such as an inscription in a commemorative book from the Orthodox monastery in Peć dated to 1535, where Ali aga doganci başa made a dedication to his father.¹⁵

Crypto-Christianity was not only a phenomenon affecting the individual. There is a record of the whole Christian community of Moglena (today Almopia in Greece), with its bishop at the helm, outwardly embracing Islam. During the daytime they prayed publicly in the mosque, while they venerated hidden icons in the privacy of their homes at night.¹⁶

There exists a source that mentions the practice, which could be considered both eastern and western in provenance: the memoirs of Konstantin Mihailović, who was a former Janissary.¹⁷ Little is known about his early life, origins, and occupation. The only certain things are that he was a citizen of Novo Brdo (a town in Kosovo) and that he was captured during an Ottoman campaign sometime around 1455. Later, he was taken to Asia Minor where he converted to Islam. Some time after that, Mihailović joined the ranks of the army. He became a Janissary and he rose through the ranks until he had become a captain. Mihailović fought in almost all the major campaigns of the Ottoman army in Europe and Asia at that time. Finally, he was appointed commander of the fort of Zvečaj in Bosnia. He was captured by Hungarians during the siege of the fort and subsequently taken into captivity. Mihailović then converted back to Christianity and later settled in Poland, where he wrote his memoirs, entitled *Memoirs of a Janissary or Turkish Chronicle*, in which he gave an overview of his life and service in the Ottoman Empire. The book was dedicated to Jan Olbracht (1492–1501), king of Poland, and was intended not only to serve as a guide for diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire,

13 Zirojević, *Islamizacija na južnoslovenskom prostoru* (Islamization in the Realm of South Slavs), p. 5.

14 Đorđević, ‘Preislamski ostatci među jugoslovenskim muslimanima’ (Pre-Islamic Remnants among Yugoslavian Muslims), p. 55.

15 Đorđević, ‘Preislamski ostatci među jugoslovenskim muslimanima’ (Pre-Islamic Remnants among Yugoslavian Muslims), p. 41.

16 Skendi, ‘Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans’, p. 234.

17 Janissaries were the Sultan’s household infantry. They formed a core of the army and were famous for their discipline and loyalty towards the Sultan. They were recruited through *devshirme* system — the taking of boys aged six to fourteen from Christian families from the Balkans and Asia Minor; they were then subjected to harsh discipline, and also had to study martial arts, and the Turkish language and customs. They additionally had to become Muslims. However, conversions were not always total, as we shall see.

but also as a field manual, that is, a treatise on how to defeat the Ottomans on the battlefield.¹⁸

The significance of this manuscript for the topic of Crypto-Christianity lies in Chapter 34, where he writes about the Bosnian king's envoys' visit to the Ottoman capital in 1463. They were on a diplomatic mission to negotiate a truce with the Sultan. However, the Ottoman ruler had managed to deceive them. He had promised to honour the truce, but at the same time, he was secretly raising an army to invade Bosnia. Konstantin had overheard a conversation between two Ottoman dignitaries who discussed the Sultan's plan and decided to warn the envoys. He approached them and revealed the Ottoman plan. However, his words were met with disbelief. He tried to bolster his words by claiming that he was also a Christian like them, but he was ridiculed and sent away. The rest of the chapter is devoted to the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia.¹⁹

As mentioned earlier, some French travellers left accounts describing the practice of Crypto-Christianity in more or less detail: the first such report, from 1551, was written by Nicolas de Nicolay. He describes an encounter with a type of Turkish soldier called *Deli* — he says that their name means 'crazy' or 'brave' in Turkish; he further explains that they call themselves *Zatočnik*, which in Slavonic means 'brawler' or 'the one who challenges people'. He then describes a soldier's flamboyant dress, a leopard-skin hat with an eagle wing fixed to it. He had two more eagle wings nailed to his shield. His horse was covered in lion skin, with the front paws tied up in front, while the hind ones dangled freely. Nicolas asked that man through an interpreter who he was and to what religion he belonged. He replied that he was a Serb, but that his grandfather was descended from ancient Parthians.²⁰ However, he also claimed that he only pretended to be a Muslim, and that he was Christian by birth, heart, and will. In order to demonstrate this, he recited the Pater Noster, Hail Mary, and Creed in both Greek and Slavonic. Questioned about his attire, he replied that he dressed that way in order to look more intimidating to his enemies.²¹

The second account was written by Philippe du Fresne-Canaye in 1573, during his visit to Constantinople. He described a syncretic movement among the Janissaries, which had been started by an Ottoman priest or doctor, who was renowned as a great scholar of Muhammad's law, but who also had spent a significant amount of time travelling through Bosnia and Serbia and preaching about Christ. Grand Vizier Mehmed-pasha was concerned about this, so he sent a letter and numerous gifts to the doctor in order to summon

18 Mihailović, *Janičarove uspomene* (Memoirs of a Janissary), pp. 9–70.

19 Mihailović, *Janičarove uspomene* (Memoirs of a Janissary), pp. 139–42.

20 A rather obscure reference. During ancient times, the ancient Parthians were considered to be exceptionally brave and able warriors; so, claiming descent from them would reinforce one's own claims to bravery and prowess in combat.

21 Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika XVI–XVII vek* (Belgrade and Serbia in Writings of French Contemporaries 16th–17th century), pp. 118–20.

him to Constantinople. The doctor obliged and arrived, as du Fresne-Canaye reports, with a multitude of followers. The Grand Vizier knew that the majority of the priest's supporters were among the Janissaries, so he postponed the actual meeting until the soldiers were out of the city. After that, the doctor was summoned and questioned about his teachings. He persisted in his convictions, passionately arguing about Muhammad's mistakes and claiming that Christ was truly the son of God; he was subsequently accused as a heretic and as a criminal against the public order. He was sentenced to be executed publicly, but the government was afraid of the reaction of his supporters, so he was executed in secrecy. One of his supporters among the Janissaries, who had remained in Constantinople, and who witnessed the execution, stepped forth, claiming that he wanted to die as well, and to become an eternal witness of the innocence of his teacher. As he said this, he took a knife and plunged it in his own throat, falling dead instantaneously.²²

The third account was authored by Pierre Leskalopier in 1574, where he describes his and his companion's travel from the Adriatic coast to the Balkan hinterlands. In a brief passage, he mentions their arrival at the monastery of St Sava (Mileševa). They were greeted by the monks residing there, who led them to kiss the relics (a bone of the hand of St Sava), which they did. Leskalopier further claims that he saw Jews and Muslims kissing the relic with a respect equal to that of Christians, noting that they gave greater alms than the Christians did.²³

It is noteworthy that the French travellers reported these events as mere curiosities, without actually reflecting on them or trying to provide some explanation for their readers. Doubtless they were perplexed by the things they saw; however, they did not seek further explanation from their guides or even from locals. One exception may have been Nicolas de Nicolay, as he tried to communicate with a Turkish soldier and even to obtain some answers about his attire and confession.

Valuable information about Crypto-Christian practices may be gauged from reports about the book trade between Protestants from Croatia and Slovenia and Islamized Slavic soldiers who served on the border of Ottoman Empire with Hungary and Croatia. One of the much sought-after items was the New Testament printed in the Slavonic language in Cyrillic type. One interesting account from Belgrade (1596) tells of an argument between a Bosnian Muslim soldier, who had returned from the front in Hungary, and who wanted to buy a Cyrillic Bible from a trader of Dubrovnik who had a shop in Belgrade. The trader offered a Bible in a good binding, but at too

22 Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika XVI–XVII vek* (Belgrade and Serbia in Writings of French Contemporaries 16th–17th century), pp. 131–32.

23 Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika XVI–XVII vek* (Belgrade and Serbia in Writings of French Contemporaries 16th–17th century), p. 135.

steep a price, while the soldier complained that just a few years ago such a book could be bought for half the money, or even less.²⁴

Modern ethnographic and anthropological studies also provide detailed accounts of the practice of Crypto-Christianity. For example, a study from 1950 documents the existence of bi-confessional Albanian *zadrugas* in Western Kosovo (Metohija). A *zadruga* was a rural community formed by an extended family or group of several families living together; property, cattle, and money were held in common and the oldest male member served as patriarch. One particular Albanian *zadruga* had sixty members living under the same roof. About one third of the occupants were Catholic, the rest were Muslims. It is important to note that the way of life in the *zadruga* actually constitutes a code of conduct rather than a religion. Furniture and its placement are the same, and so are clothes, language, cuisine, women dying their hair with henna regardless of their faith, and wedding customs; the only notable differences are in funerals and certain religious customs. Muslims circumcised their children, while deceased persons were buried according to Islamic rules (a body was wrapped in a cloth); they could also be buried on their estate. On the other hand, Catholics were buried in a coffin in a particular local cemetery. It is significant that both Christian and Muslim holidays were celebrated jointly and with mutual respect. For example, Catholics avoided eating pork and drinking wine, while Muslims drank *rakia* (schnapps, arak) on Christian holidays in order to celebrate together with their relatives. The celebration of the Feast of St John was especially interesting, as it was difficult to discern that members of two faiths were present at the feast.²⁵ In sixteenth-century Bosnia, freshly converted Muslims would not stop consuming pork; similarly, in mixed households in Albania (where spouses were of different confessions), pork and lamb was prepared in the same dishes.²⁶

The emergence of a national state presented the biggest challenge to Crypto-Christians. The case of the compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s was the textbook example of the uncertainty posed by the question: what makes a person a member of the tribe? Was it religion, language, or something else? The Valaades in Greece spoke Greek but were Muslims, whereas the Pontics and Karamanlides of Asia Minor were Orthodox Christians but mostly spoke Turkish.²⁷ Because of this forced migration, Turkish-speaking Orthodox would be able to preserve themselves mostly by keeping their profile low as Crypto-Christians.

24 Hadžijahić, 'O vezama islamiziranih bogumila sa hrvatskim i slovenskim protestantima' (On Relations between Islamized Bogomils and Croatian and Slovenian Protestants), p. 129.

25 Barjaktarović, 'Dvovjerske šiptarske zadruge u Metohiji' (Albanian Bi-Confessional Zadrugas in Metohija), pp. 198–209.

26 Zirojević, *Islamizacija na južnoslovenskom prostoru* (Islamization in the Realm of South Slavs), pp. 74–75.

27 Fabbe, 'Historical Legacies, Modern Conflicts', pp. 436–37.

On the other side of the Bosphorus, in the case of Albania, the late national state-building was among the most important reasons why religious pluralism stayed widespread in that region. Albanian Crypto-Christianity remained intact even later, in the period of Enver Hoxha, as it had to adapt to the declaration of Albania as an atheist state in 1967.²⁸

It is also worth noting that the Catholic and Orthodox Church hierarchies had diametrically opposed views on Crypto-Christianity. The Catholic Church hierarchy in the Balkans had a much more rigid approach, which was encouraged from Rome. There are numerous examples recorded in the reports of bishops from the Balkan peninsula or from Apostolic Visitors on missions in the region. One such report was penned by the Catholic Archbishop of Antivari in 1610, who noted a conversation with a Muslim man during his travels through the archdiocese. This man told him that, although he professed Islam, he was a Christian at heart and wanted to live and die in that faith. The archbishop replied that being Christian in his heart was not enough, and that martyr saints would rather lose their lives than profess a religion other than Christianity. He further instructed the man to leave the region if he could not renounce Islam out of fear of the possible consequences.²⁹

Another good example belongs to a later period (1703), but it illustrates a similar attitude nonetheless. At that time, the issue was raised whether priests should, out of necessity, be allowed to administer the sacraments to Crypto-Christians. The provincial Church council met in Lesh (northern Albania) in order to address the problem. The council decided that those who professed Islam in public, while privately being Christian, should abjure Islam and publicly profess Christianity. The clergy were also ordered to stop administering the sacraments to Crypto-Christians.³⁰ However, the feasibility of this order could be seriously doubted, as a report by the Apostolic Visitor Nikolić from 1743 stated that bishops and missionaries still administered sacraments to 'secret Catholics'.³¹

On the other hand, the Orthodox Church hierarchy was much more lenient on this issue. This approach stemmed from the times of Byzantine Empire and the Christianization of the Slavs, when the Church authorities were quite accommodating to pagan remnants in the Slavs' spiritual lives, and they even adapted, to a certain extent, to Slavic paganism. Almost a thousand years later, a similar approach was adopted with regard to Crypto-Christianity.³²

The examples involving the Catholic Church show a significant disharmony between the higher and lower Church hierarchy. The approach adopted at high level was more rigid and dogmatic, while local priests and missionaries had

28 Broun, 'Religious Freedom in Eastern Europe', p. 27.

29 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', pp. 235–36.

30 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', pp. 237–38.

31 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', p. 238.

32 Skendi, 'Crypto-Christianity in the Balkan Area under the Ottomans', pp. 238–39.

a more flexible attitude, and in fact followed the practices of their Orthodox colleagues. Priests of both religions were more interested in the spiritual well-being of their flock than in the formal demands of their respective faiths.

One of the peculiarities of the Islamized Southern Slavs (Crypto-Christians included) is the relative absence of polygamy, along with a general similarity of marriage rites with their Christian compatriots. Although the Islamic law permits polygamy, converts in the Balkans only took second wives on rare occasions. It was considered socially permissible to marry a second woman only if the first one was not able to bear children. This permission was also extended in cases when the first wife only bore daughters. If a man took a second wife for reasons other than those mentioned above, he would be considered sordid by his community, and his behaviour would be met with scorn.³³

Some ethnographical surveys conducted after the Second World War discovered remnants among Yugoslavian Muslims pointing to customs and rites originating not only in their previous Christian faith, but in the distant, pre-Christian pagan past. For example, in the region of Bihor (northeast Montenegro) some Muslim families celebrated Christmas in the following way: early in the morning specially baked bread would be brought into the house. It was circular in shape, with a hole in the middle and grooves imitating the sign of cross. After that, an ox was brought inside; the bread was placed over one of its horns and then the animal was showered with wheat. The animal would break the bread in four parts through the movement of its head, and those parts would then be collected from the floor and given to family members. This local custom echoed a very distant past with a 'deep meaning and clear sacrificial character.'³⁴

As mentioned earlier, thanks to studies and researches conducted by Serbian and Yugoslavian historians, ethnologists, and anthropologists, we are left plenty of examples that document Crypto-Christian practices in more or less detail. Some of them are admittedly anecdotal, but they nonetheless provide an insight into the deep-rootedness of the phenomenon and its continuity well into the twentieth century. By observing these examples and practices, some of which are mentioned in this paper, we can conclude that the early modern Balkans provided a fertile ground for interplay between a Christian Balkan populace, that retained a significant amount of pagan and pre-Christian beliefs in their religious life, and Islamic Ottoman Turks who, on the other hand, still observed their shamanistic traditions. Their non-dogmatic approach to religion and spirituality created a suitable framework for the occurrence of a phenomenon such as Crypto-Christianity and, in a broader scope, provided for a higher degree of religious tolerance than was the case

33 Đorđević, 'Preislamski ostatci među jugoslovenskim muslimanima' (Pre-Islamic Remnants among Yugoslavian Muslims), pp. 38–39.

34 Mušović, 'O nekim zajedničkim običajima muslimanskog i pravoslavnog stanovništva Pešteri i Bihora' (About Some Common Customs of Muslim and Orthodox Population of Pešter and Bihor), p. 237; Čajkanović, *Mit i religija u Srbia* (Myth and Religion among Serbs), pp. 223–24.

in the rest of contemporary Europe. This relative tolerance was present not only in relations between the Ottoman government and its subjects, but in the mutual relations between Ottoman subjects as well. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that population of the Balkan peninsula, regardless of confession or ethnicity, shared similar mentalities, everyday habits, and world views. In this milieu, tribal and local identities were considered to be the most important, and this consequently prevented outbursts of religious passion at levels characteristic of Christian Europe during the sixteenth century.

In conclusion, we can say that research into Crypto-Christianity in the Balkans offers a compelling opportunity to study popular religious behaviour in a region that found itself at the contact points between Christianity (Orthodox, Catholic as well as Lutheran) and Islam. At the same time, the distinctiveness of popular approaches to faith lies in its embeddedness in pre-Abrahamic religious customs, such as paganism, which permeate religious life in the Balkans up to the present day. The traces of Crypto-Christianity remain more visible in parts of the Balkans that experienced their ethnic and national revolutions later, such as Albania and Macedonia.

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Traditions and Transitions

Examples of Parallel Practices in a Sixteenth-Century Central European Region

Parallel practices occur naturally in any era of paradigm shifts: the developments commonly referred to as the Reformation could be considered a series of paradigm shifts, because the new framework, encompassing sectors of life ranging from education to spiritual life, became compelling as a result of long earlier processes leading to the aesthetic and practical philosophy of late humanism. 'Process', as such, has to be stressed, as 'bringing the old to a close' rarely took place in a radical fashion. In fact, the 'old' was often not even eradicated; older practices carried on — sometimes in a slightly modified form, sometimes newly defined. In the sixteenth-century county of Szepes in Hungary (present-day Spiš in Slovakia) parallel practices coincided to a great extent, with old and newly emerging traditions existing side by side. Here, the century of Reformation can, in the forms of various processes and practices, be observed in a unique historical region. Parallel religious praxis, it should be emphasized, are not the only ones worthy of highlighting: examples are also to be found in the world of education and confession, and in common everyday practices. The Reformation's commonly denominated 'confessional' and 'cultural' programme, paradigm-shifting movements, and developments served as natural binding agents. These terms might seem unexpected, so some explanation dealing with their contexts is required.

One of the important consequences of the scholarly debates of recent decades is the notion that terminology and traditional historical chronology eroded and eventually transformed traditions of the past. Accordingly, it is worth looking at composite cultural developments and programmes

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instead of discrete earlier historical periods, and viewing the Renaissance and Reformation as the ‘dawning’ of the Modern Age.¹ We are dealing here not only with the reception of bodies of knowledge (and artisan expertise) that dissipated from centres, but also with interactions and, often, synchronicity. The existing collective European phenomena, with local and/or national characteristic variants, clearly interacted with both the sixteenth-century changes that took place and the medieval phenomena that had preceded it.²

While the Renaissance and Reformation became established as ‘period’ categories in the middle of the nineteenth century, they did not merely signify a sequence of events, but were considered historical turning points.³ Up until the second half of the twentieth century both terms were subjected to revisions by professional communities.⁴ The terms ‘Renaissance’ and ‘Reformation’, or more precisely, ‘Renaissances’ and ‘Reformations’, existed nevertheless, though they did not signify the great transformations that took place from the Middle Ages to modernity.⁵ The Renaissances and Reformations as broadly understood progressed in stages from the late medieval to the early modern period. Their cultural movement was characterized by an itinerary through humanism, the arts, and the ancient classics, which were newly defined with regard to the practices and activities of primarily urban and literate strata. It also included a re-examination of Christian values upon which the extensive internal changes in the Church were based. They did not refer to a complete historical period.⁶

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- 1 Challenging the accepted view on periodization is discussed by William J. Bouwsma (among others) in Bouwsma, *The Waning of the Renaissance*, pp. 1–19.
 - 2 See the European overview of this historiographical shift, see *The Renaissance in National Context*, ed. by Porter and Teich and *The Reformation in National Context*, ed. by Scribner, Porter, and Teich. For a detailed discussion of the issue see Sebők, *Humanista a határon* (Humanist on the Edge), pp. 16–26.
 - 3 For recent discussion of the historiography, see *Palgrave Advances in Renaissance Historiography*, ed. by Woolfson and *Palgrave Advances in the European Reformations*, ed. by Ryrie.
 - 4 The revision was started by the presidential keynote lecture of William Bouwsma at the annual congress of the *American Historical Association* in 1978: see Bouwsma, ‘The Renaissance and the Drama of Western History’, pp. 348–65. For the twentieth anniversary of Bouwsma’s talk and the changes within Renaissance studies, a special forum was dedicated by the *American Historical Review* in the first issue of 1998: see the articles by Kenneth Gouwens, Paula Findlen, William Bouwsma, Anthony Grafton and Randolph Starn.
 - 5 For a taxonomy of expressions, see *Handbook of European History*, ed. by Brady Jr., Oberman, and Tracy, pp. xvi–xvii.
 - 6 Peter Burke also called the attention to this process: Burke, *The European Renaissance*, pp. 1–18. Later Burke stressed, in accordance with the new Renaissance studies, that external (Byzantine and Muslim) influences on the European Renaissance should also be examined together with the so-called export of the Renaissance into different cultural contexts. He also argued for the comparative analyses of Renaissances in a global context. Burke, ‘Renaissance Europe and the World’, pp. 52–70.

In fact, one outcome of the Reformation was that, although the Christian Church's traditional body of rituals split in two, the language of Protestant and Catholic rites persisted in sharing many of the same features.⁷ Thus, despite the fact that their focus was on the interpretation of Scripture, Protestants still experienced the sacrament through ritual. Accordingly, the reformation process (and understanding) constituted a ritual process.⁸ While those who authored, prepared, and actively participated in religious reform believed first and foremost in a broader, enhanced understanding of doctrine, actual reformation was still realized as a ritual process: for example, in changes in the liturgical calendar, in everyday practices, such as catechism and festivals, and in the rejection of Catholic rites through parody and iconoclasm.⁹

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the ritual process was also able to establish itself in the new structure when another juncture was reached: late humanists (within *Späthumanismus*) wrote it off as the period of confessionalism, which German Church leaders, Protestant rulers, and theologians defined as a functional alliance among the participants of Evangelical reform. As a consequence of this alliance and the process of confessionalization, the new ecclesiastical control served the ends of social control at the same time. A combination of reforms imposed from above came into existence, which meant the strengthening of ecclesiastical reform, the establishment of the early modern state, and a new type of social discipline and control.¹⁰ In general, however, the era of confessionalization in a region such as Szepes county did not affect the practices of the Protestant German provinces. As a rule, the Catholic Church and its leaders were subordinate, although the ecclesiastical administration was mixed, containing landowners of the Evangelical-Lutheran faith and patrons from their regions. In one important respect, however, the German situation was similar: in Szepes county, and also in other counties of Upper Hungary, there were conflicting Protestant groups, who persistently debated key questions and issues of interpretation arising from them, and who often fought ruthless battles in what, from an educational and artistic point of view, was a culturally rich era.¹¹ As Katalin

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- 7 The 'language of rites' was used by Natalie Zemon Davis: Davis, 'The Sacred and the Body Social', p. 59.
- 8 The ritual process is discussed in length by Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 185–228.
- 9 Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*, Chapter 5, 'Ritual and Reformation', pp. 103–22.
- 10 The concept of confessionalization as paradigm change was first described by Heinz Schilling by looking at the German and Dutch histories: Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung* and his later work, 'Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives', pp. 21–36. On questions of East-Central European confessionalism, see *Konfessionalisierung in Ostmitteleuropa*, ed. by Bahlcke – Strohmeyer. For a later discussion of the issue, see Schilling, 'Confessionalisation and the Rise of Religious and Cultural Frontiers', pp. 21–37.
- 11 International scholarship explains this period, by referring primarily to the German examples, as 'the second Reformation'. This time was characterized by an intense building of the Lutheran Church and the flourishing of Calvinism, both of which divorced themselves

Péter wrote in her summary of the Hungarian and European Reformations: behind all the intellectual enthusiasm ‘individual and group patrons were more often than not simple people.’¹²

This essay looks at three areas of practices within the century of Reformations that can offer instances to help the understanding of continuities and changes at the micro and macro level. By taking examples from the region of Szepes county in the Kingdom of Hungary, which was a multicultural and multi-ethnic constituency (a land of people of Saxon, Hungarian, Slovak, Polish, and Jewish origins), a Lutheran region that was still under Catholic control in many ways, I discuss the state of education, the parallel practices within ecclesiastical administration and confession, and parallel practices in everyday religious practices.

Education: Parallelism and Continuity

In 1612, the deacon of the twenty-four cities alliance of Szepes county, Stephan Xylander, recalled the beginning of the period thus:

After Luther’s deeds a number of evangelists suddenly emerged in Szepes county who were not really familiar with his teachings and awkward refuting the papacy as well. Of course, they represented themselves very poorly, saying foolish things, as there was no restraint. Until finally the schools and churches called in gentlemen scholars to deal with the affair, and among them was Stöckel.¹³

Today we might assess this situation as follows: Leonhard Stöckel, the humanist teacher of Bártfa (Bardejov, Slovakia), played a particularly important role in designing, drafting, and making public the regional educational and ecclesiastical reforms.¹⁴ The Reformation, particularly its Lutheran and Melancthonian

from the first generation of evangelical reforms. See Schilling, *Religion, Political Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society*, pp. 247–301, and Po-chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation*. As for the phases of the Hungarian Reformation, see Péter, ‘A reformáció’. From the recent scholarship on the special regional features and continuities, or changing traditions, the following volumes should be mentioned: *The Reformation in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. by Maag, *Confessional Identity in East-Central Europe*, ed. by Craiun, Ghitta, and Murdock; *Confession and Nation in the Era of Reformations*, ed. by Doležalová and Pánek, and *Living with Religious Diversity*, ed. by Dixon, Freist, and Greengrass.

12 Péter, *A reformáció: kényszer vagy választás?* (‘The Reformation: Pressure or Choice?’), p. 121.

13 Budapest, Széchenyi National Library, Archive–Manuscript Section, Fejérváry, *Sylloge Miscellaneorum*, p. 236. Deacon Xylander acted as a historian of Szepes county. The twenty-four towns mean here and elsewhere all the towns of the county.

14 We refer here to the Lutheran/Evangelical confession — *Confessio Pentapolitana* — prepared by Stöckel in 1549 for the five royal free towns of Upper Hungary. *Pentapolita* refers to the alliance of five royal free towns of the region, some beyond the borders of Szepes county (Eperjes, Lőcse, Bártfa, Kiszszeben, Kassa). These towns were the exclusively subject to the

programmes, soon spread through Szepes county. This was partly due to the county's ethnic composition, since the majority of its society was composed of people of German origin — besides the significant Hungarian and Slovak population, and Poles and Jews — and partly to its relatively high educational standards, urban development, social composition, and economic assets. This region responded rather swiftly to the reforms in religious and secular life.¹⁵ The ideals and the programme of the Reformation were well received not only among the Saxon Zipsers, who lived according to Saxon traditions and law, but also among other minority communities.¹⁶ Although the ideas of reform were institutionalized, decades were needed for conversion in the countryside of Upper Hungary. Features observed in the neighbouring so-called 'mining towns' can also be seen in Szepes county history. 'Reform was negotiated slowly, paying heed to internal and external factors. Accepting the inevitability of other faiths within their city walls, councils and clergy for the most part adopted a non-antagonistic approach.'¹⁷ For instance, the spread of Reformation educational patterns did not result in a new type of school here either. The school of Selmecbánya (Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia), founded in 1528, and that of Késmárk (Kežmarok, Slovakia), founded in 1533, carried on according to the regional city-parish school model. The renowned Bártfa (Bardejov, Slovakia) school continued likewise, and the rectorate and pastor became Lutheran under the supervision of the town magistrate.

In earlier literature, historians of education perceived a sharp dividing line between the development of Hungarian schools before and after the mid-sixteenth century. Fundamental differences were found between the Catholic and Protestant schools, though all of them based their teaching on

ruler, belonged to him as his own property, though having a number of privileges, such as staple right, the right of organizing fairs, of issuing full citizenship to new settlers, of building town walls, of selecting and contracting their own preachers, of allowing their citizens to prepare freely their last will and testament. As for the place names of Szepes county, in the text of this essay I use the Hungarian form, and include its present-day Slovakian version in brackets.

- 15 Recent scholarship reveals these aspects of social and cultural history in more detail, see especially the volumes of *Terra Scepusiensis, Historia Scepusii*. A detailed overview of the Evangelical reform in English is written by Daniel, 'Lutheranism in the Kingdom of Hungary', pp. 455–509. Another recent monograph is Fata, *Ungarn, das reich, der Stephanskronen*.
- 16 *Zips* refers to the region's German name, *Zips*. For the first decades of the Reformation, see some reliable but older scholarship, such as Bruckner, *A reformáció és ellenreformáció története* (History of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation) and Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus* (Hungarian Protestantism). One of the more recent studies deals with the spread of the Reformation by using previous primary sources: Trajdos, 'Reformacja i kontrreformacja na Spiszu' (Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Szepes County), pp. 467–86.
- 17 Cobern, 'Negotiating the Reformation in Habsburg Hungary', pp. 247–48.

a humanistic curriculum for the young.¹⁸ More recent monographs on the history of schools, however, clearly state that

the development of schools in the sixteenth century is one of the most uniform phases of development in the history of Hungarian school systems. And the uniformity in this development was due to the gradual incorporation of humanistic material in education; it represented the presence of this material.¹⁹

Melanchthon was not the only figure whose work left a mark on the reorganization of schools in Szepes county. The school policies of Valentin Trozendorf in Goldberg and Johann Sturm in Strasbourg were also considered.²⁰ Through the established structure of the educational system, without major changes in the curricula, the hierarchy of the social order was already introduced in childhood. A rigorous curriculum and practices were considered essential for habituating students to the unconditional acceptance of ‘truth.’ The elements of the formal curriculum — such as rhetoric, logic, or grammar — together with authority, the sanctity of tradition, and the acceptance of the existing order — all helped to reinforce the reformed educational system.²¹ This trusting kind of acceptance of educational patterns meant that students were subjected to indoctrination, especially during the first half of the century.

The calm adaptation of mostly German models was only one of the factors that spurred the Evangelical reform of education in Szepes county. Attacks by the Catholic Church and resolutions by the Diet of the period calling for change with compelling force, also hastened the transformations. Besides the well-known political and ecclesiastical history, according to which Article XI of the 1548 Diet had a major impact on the local development of beliefs (that is, for the five royal free towns of Upper Hungary), it appears that Article VI on education also served to reinforce the Evangelical education agenda in Szepes county. It stated that:

In every town and village are priests and other persons who profess to teach true doctrine and disclose the sacraments according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. The same church dignitaries are capable of setting up schools where the right material and the true religion are taught. In

18 Fraknói, *A hazai és külföldi iskolázás a XVI. században* (Education in Hungary and Abroad in the Sixteenth Century); Fináczy, *A reneszánszkori nevelés története* (History of the Education in the Renaissance); Békefi, *A népoktatás története Magyarországon* (History of the Education of People in Hungary).

19 Mészáros, *XVI. századi iskoláink* (Our Sixteenth-Century Schools), p. 51.

20 Regional catalogues of books in inventories could also include the educational tracts by Vives and Erasmus, but the German formulas were the primary standards.

21 This question was thoroughly discussed in Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, chapters 2–4. See especially Strauss, ‘The Social Function of Schools’, pp. 191–206.

this way, the undesirable faith (that is, Protestant beliefs) is blotted out and the old religion is fostered.²²

In these circumstances, there was an anxious necessity to introduce an Evangelical alternative, and this reached a critical level of significance in the second half of the century.

Ecclesiastical Administration and Confession: Parallel Practices

As important simultaneous changes were taking place in education, however, reforms in the ecclesiastical institutional order and in everyday practices did not occur: the liturgy, observation of the sacraments, funerals, and shrift carried on without change. Only in the mid-sixteenth century did the long decades of organizational and structural change begin.²³

A survey of the official landscape would have revealed something conspicuous: just as he was being emulated in various localities generally, Melancthon exerted considerable influence also on Szepes county's ecclesiastical communities and on other cities of Upper Hungary as well.²⁴ Among the Hungarian and Zipser students of the Wittenberg professor were a good number whose lives and work were pervasively influenced by educational reforms. They cherished and referenced his writings, holding them in great esteem. Synods were occasions at which the Evangelical Church was able to reveal its ideals and its actual workings. There were also subsequent colloquia, such as Church bodies which met regularly, and deliberative bodies which reviewed doctrinal issues, the state of the religion, and the religious life of the deacon. Every kind of doctrinal issue was also discussed, of course, including those concerning more ordinary areas of life, such as methods of preaching, or when the catechism was taught.

If the majority believers of Szepes county seemed to be Philippists (that is, followers of Melancthon), in practice there were various shades of grey between the views of the Evangelical camps. Not only were there factions of orthodox Lutherans or Philippists, but there were also pastors and teachers who were ambivalent in their confessional stance, and those who wished to identify with ad hoc associations in the process of attempting to strengthen

22 Zsilinszky, *A magyar országgyűlések vallásügyi tárgyalásai I* (Discussions of Hungarian Diets), p. 39.

23 For the Central European examples, and especially for Silesia, see Fleischer, 'The Institutionalization of Humanism', pp. 256–74. For the process of institutionalizing humanism see Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to Humanists*, which concentrates on Western European instances.

24 Recently István Szabadi has summarized Melancthon's Hungarian relations: Szabadi, 'Melancthon und seine Freunde in Ungarn', pp. 201–08.

their embedded positions in the short or long term. For a certain period of time, solidarity was sought on the basis of utilitarian associations or beliefs, but conflicts could illustrate the difference between degrees of compulsion subscribed to and free choice, which could extend the range of territory of possible actions to be taken. The public Church synods regularly examined everyday practices of pastors who apparently failed to correspond to the prescribed norms, and considered them as 'deviance'. If we view these seemingly overt pretences and stigmatization as process, adjusting for mixed periods, then every decade in the last third of the sixteenth century can be characterized by the seeking of identity and solidarity in an environment of rapidly alternating alliances. In other words, it was an era of simultaneous doubt and debate.

In 1580, after several years of debate (the so-called *Formula Concordiae* debates, for example, originating in German-speaking lands), it appears that for situations requiring important decisions, such as the case of a generally acknowledged regional confession informed by the *Formula* debates, the Philippists held the upper hand and the voting majority. The fraternity of the twenty-four Szepes towns and the communities of the five royal free towns in many instances agreed on important theoretical and practical decisions. Lőcse (Levoča, Slovakia), which belonged to both fraternities, played a leading role in this.²⁵ The inclusion of opposing views was supported by the highest representative of the ecclesiastical administration, the Roman Catholic provost Gergely Bornemissza, but it was clear that even the Church's highest authority could not interfere in the religious life of the region. The secular authorities of the region, the Habsburg Captain General Hans Rueber, who was part of the leading aristocracy, with the regional landlord Gergely Horváth by his side, attempted to intervene, but in the end the religious authorities prevented them from taking any action.

The senior minister of the twenty-four towns turned correctly to Bornemissza, even after the Reformation, and despite organizational changes, the provost still possessed ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the alliance. Besides this, and even after the articulation of the Lutheran Confession, the usual *cathedraticum* (a fixed-amount annual tax) was paid for the provost. They also adopted Bornemissza's marriage decrees and turned to him with everyday cases of legal redress (without even mentioning the gifts that piled up when the seat was being handed over). The *canonica visitatio* would also be part of the institutionalized practice of dependence, but did not translate into comprehensive control. It was the consequence of a thirteenth-century agreement, in which the fraternity of twenty-four towns consolidated its separation from the provost of Szepes county in writing. This document also specified the

25 The fraternity of twenty-four (originally marked as XXIV) towns of Szepes county was an alliance for ecclesiastical and self-organizational matters.

time and regularity of church visits with relative autonomy granted to the alliance.²⁶ On the other hand, we see that in the case of Provost Bornemissza that the possibility of visitation was not used: it was simply neglected. When the tour (*visitatio*) of Szepes was on the agenda, questions of the legal estate, inheritance, and religious affairs in particular were to be dealt with.²⁷ Only his successor exercised the right to church visits after King Rudolf II ordered them to be regularly observed (effective from 18 September 1592).

Earlier on, when the Catholic bishop of Várad and the Szepes county provost administered the Lutheran parishes in Szepes county, the issue of whether one could speak at all about separation from the Catholic Church was raised, as was foreseen in the *Formula* debate. It appears that the situation was not necessarily so sharply formulated, as is shown by the fact that relative to the rest of the Kingdom of Hungary, Szepes county enjoyed much greater scope for self-governance, since it had its own confessions, which were led by representatives of its own choosing (this resembled Transylvania in some respects).²⁸ Only the Church synod was in a position to decide whether or not the provost could exclude some pastors or ministers from the Church community or suspend them from office; in principle he could not prevent them from participating in the annual synods. Consequently, a balanced state could be created between the provost and the Szepes community, which, of course, necessitated a largely diplomatic approach on the part of Szepes Church leaders during the period of preparation for confessions. Quite often, Bornemissza positioned himself into an influential stance, for instance during the period before the creation of the *Confessio Scepusiana*. At other times — such as in 1570 — he also assigned pastors himself, warning them against the regulations issued by the Arians and Sacramentarians (as heretics). Their relative autonomy was guaranteed so long as they did not deviate from confessional beliefs. Bornemissza was aware that his long absence ‘opened up the path to having the clergy take license’, but the pastors of Szepes county had to adhere to the traditional measures under such circumstances. Instead of the obligatory church visit, he drew attention to the recognition of the first four Catholic Church synods, assuring the pastors, moreover, that their children ‘will be taken care of like their father’.²⁹ As the region’s guardian, in

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- 26 The first point of the agreement from 1278 says: ‘The Provost exercises his official examination once a year in the twenty-four cities of Szepes county; this time his entourage consists of 26 people and 30 horses. It is the duty of all pastors to welcome the Provost with decorum, and to host him for a day and night. The deadline of visitatio lasts from the day of Saint Michael till September 29 that is Ash Wednesday’. Published by Hradszky, *A XXIV. Királyi plébános testvérelete* (A XXIV Royal Fraternity of Parish Priests), p. 41.
- 27 The Diet of 1572 named Bornemissza to become Justice of the Peace in Upper Hungary and Priest of Várad at the same time.
- 28 For the Transylvanian confessional landscape and practices, see the chapter in István Keul’s recent book, *Early Modern Religious Communities in East-Central Europe*, ‘Denominational Toleration and Confessionalization’, pp. 239–71.
- 29 Wagner, *Analecta Scepusii*, II, 261.

a letter of 1572, he promised to protect the people of Szepes county from the Polish *starosta* Thurzo and his tithe owners, and the tribute demands of the captain of Lubló.³⁰ Even Hans Rueber, the captain general, was obliged to reinforce the provost's aspirations with armed force if necessary.³¹ Rueber, in fact, fought the *starosta*, asserting in vain that the pastors of the thirteen bonded towns did not fall under Polish authority, but under that of the provost of Szepes. Captain Maczejowski of Lubló still accused the pastors of treason and rebellion.³² The aim of the *Comissio Rueberiana*, which began in May of 1580, was partly to repair the bad relations, but since Bornemissza was unable to attend, the attempted reconciliation with Polish neighbours at the frontier was unsuccessful.³³

It is important to note that while the representatives of the Church and the secular world, with their growing networks, wanted to control and administer affairs, after the death of the archbishop of Esztergom, the archbishop's county remained without a head of clergy up until 1596.³⁴ Thus, Bornemissza had no superior as a matter of course either, and his room for manoeuvre grew, which was clearly perceived by the Szepes fraternity representatives, particularly when it came to negotiations with the provost.

Everyday Religious Practices

If we look at the world of the pastors in the cities, we can get a fairly detailed picture of their activities. Their rights and everyday responsibilities are clearly designed in regional confessions and by the so-called *vocators*.³⁵ The complexity of their duties is striking: the selected pastor is given extensive management responsibilities. Not only must he care for the household, but also for the parish and school employees, while offering spiritual and intellectual leadership in the village or town. In addition to all of this, services must be held regularly and he must preach in the language of the community. The concentration of

30 The Polish *starosta* was expected to administer a territory. In this case the so-called thirteen bonded towns of Szepes county were subject to control by him as a consequence of an earlier impawn. The captain of Lubló (Stará Lubovňa, Slovakia, earlier under Polish protection) had to assist the *starosta* in such situations. The Polish *starosta* made recurring attempts to subjugate the region.

31 Wagner, *Analecta*, II, 262–63. The Polish pretensions over *starosta* and the captain of Lubló concerned the thirteen bonded towns.

32 Wagner, *Analecta*, II, 264–65. Maczejowski threatened the region many times, but his interventions had no result.

33 The original aim of this *Comissio* was to promote reconciliation between the thirteen towns and the noblemen of Szepes county. Reference can be found in Pirhalla, *A szepesi prépostság vázlatos története* (A Short History of the Provostship), p. 288.

34 The archbishop was Antal Verancsics, who died on 21 July 1573 in Eperjes.

35 *Vocator* refers to the vocation of the pastors: this document describes the duties and rights of their job.

duties and functions demanded responsibility and perseverance, but we also know that from the middle of the century the vocation of the pastor became quite diverse. By the 1580s the urban division of labour revolved around the central place of the pastor. In comparison to officials in other urban areas they had a much greater range of responsibilities.

This is reflected also in their remuneration, which was principally through a tithe, an income which was not abolished with the Reformation.³⁶ The tithe did not cover all crops everywhere, but in the case of Sebastian Ambrosius of Késmárk, we see that his income was granted with respect to grain, and the responsibility for delivery of flax and cheese was entrusted to the discretion of the town council. The tithes of the Lutheran clergy were generally received as agricultural produce, but in some places towns collected and purchased it. In the latter case, the incomes of the clergy were mainly assured by the towns with banknotes. The tithe — provided that the nearby Polish magistrates or lords of the manor did not tap into it — naturally assured a greater income for the clergy. If, however, much of the crop had to be given over to the lords of the manor, then the pastors with fixed salaries were better off. Ambrosius earned three forints per week plus a decent salary coming from tithe (in 1578, for example, his yearly salary as school-rector amounted to seventy-five forints), though Georg Moller, a pastor from Lőcse, received the same salary as early as in 1558. The lists of magistrate salaries in Késmárk clearly indicate that Ambrosius was paid two instalments by the town annually: the town first paid out 66½ forints and then 87½ forints, which was more than twice the remuneration of his rector's salary.³⁷ Since Ambrosius received the tithes as produce, he was obliged to take from this what was needed to pay the fees of the Church administration and school employees as well. The pastors' help in the Church, schoolmasters, cantors, organists, and sextons were provided with food and accommodation, and the maintenance of farm buildings and the parish also fell on his shoulders.

The salary of the pastors' servants fluctuated between forty to fifty forints annually, and they usually received a part of the tithe crop. Apart from this, they received either full or partial board and were offered a number of fixed days off. The schoolmaster either received free board from Ambrosius or a supply of food on certain days. On the days when the cantor and organist had church duties, they received full board from the pastor of Késmárk: Sunday morning and evening, Thursday and Saturday night, and usually over the course of two holidays. In exchange, the organist had a duty to serve everyone at the table for the common meal. The sexton usually only had the right to have lunch, but on occasion may have received compensation in kind: grain and beer, of

³⁶ Wagner, *Analecta*, 1, 273. The ruler reconfirmed the right to the tithe.

³⁷ Magistrat Mesta Kežmarok, 1570–1600, Payroll in the City Archive of Poprad. In the period 1583–1600 Ambrosius belonged to this payment category, and his colleague here was Mathias Bobrowicz, a royal tax-gatherer.

which Ambrosius certainly had his own reserves. Every Epiphany Ambrosius had to account for all of these responsibilities, according to his *vocator*.

Besides such details of everyday jobs, the question should be addressed concerning everyday life within the walls of Késmárk church. Under which ecclesiastical order did the ceremony take place? We know that in mining towns the Körmöcbánya (Kremnica) synod in 1580 approved Matthias Eberhard's *Kirchenordnung*, which is considered a benchmark.³⁸ Earlier, in 1556, Bertalan Bogner prepared the church order for Igló (Spišská Nová Ves, Slovakia) parish, and a later fragment from Lőcse is also known from a certain Zabler, who summed up the orders relating to the church service in an *Agendenbuch*, but there is no information about the orders in Késmárk.³⁹ From the Lőcse register and Bogner fragment we can also see that certain Catholic customs survived and were still alive. For instance, during the high holidays, the prefaces (*praefationes*) were sung in German at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and during the Feast of the Holy Trinity. Their texts were identical with those of the Catholic preludes.

If we look at the 1588 songbook of Ambrosius we see that, in addition to his own compositions, it also contains other hymns by Melancthon and other revered theologians for almost every occasion.⁴⁰ The collection of hymns published in Wittenberg contains twenty-eight songs. We find in it songs written for the morning and evening, for before and after meals, and for Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Holy Trinity. Ambrosius also indicates the musical notes of the sacred chants at the beginning. We also find contemplative Christian hymns, songs about God's goodness, about glorifying the good shepherd, about comfort, God-fearing, and about psalms dealing with redemption. Finally, songs of thanksgiving for the harvest and for nature's abundance, songs for times of famine and on the transitory nature of human life, including protection and preparation for death, were all recorded in Ambrosius's volume. Another song book appeared in 1588, the *Vierzehn Geistlich Lieder*, which contained, along with songs with common themes and other hymns, old Catholic songs and Catholic prayers translated into German.⁴¹ It is remarkable not only because, despite the lack of a formal order being decreed by the Church, the publication of songs formed a kind of order, nevertheless, from which we

38 For the full text, see Breznyik, *A selmecebányai ágostai hitvallású evangélikus egyház és lyceum története* (History of the Lutheran Church), pp. 248–58.

39 Hradszky, *A XXIV. Királyi plébános testvérilete* (A XXIV Royal Fraternity of Parish Priests), p. 180 refers to this, and provides the sequence, the songs, and petitions.

40 Ambrosius, *Acht und Zwanzig Geistliche Lieder*.

41 For instance songs beginning with '*Da pacem Domine in diebus nostris*', '*Ne reminiscaris Domine delicta nostra*', '*Contere Domine fortitudinem inimicorum Esslesiae tuae*', '*Cur mundus militat sub vana gloria*'.

can indirectly infer practices of worship.⁴² This piece of information is also important as it indicates that continuity existed within everyday practices which, again, could be regarded as evidence of the coexistence of Catholic and Lutheran/Evangelical customs. The old order did not disappear in the ceremonies: Ambrosius was also able to include songs in his volume because such songs and hymns were part of common practice. They were kept alive due to the wishes of his congregation, which must also have played a part in the survival of religious services in Latin, which remained the official language of instruction.

The Latin liturgy persisted for a very long time, but Mass was no longer customary in Szepes county at that time. The sermon, nevertheless, was already being delivered in the German language by Ambrosius. Other pastors preached in Slovak and Hungarian to the congregation. These small fragments show how the process of the Reformation gained ground in the everyday lives of engaged Lutheran pastors: it was completely natural to use old formulas and prayers, because ministers knew that it accorded with the community. We see the overlapping of old and new customs and occasionally of methods — instinctive and conscious motifs — which in turn created a new assemblage of traditions. This was similarly the case in other contemporary towns, such as Lőcse and Igló, where even in 1593 one could witness ministers holding Mass in the parish. And this is how it continued — with increasingly dwindling numbers — during the last third of the following century.

In relation to the slowly changing liturgical examples, another field of regional discussion should be mentioned: idolatry. By the middle of the 1570s, all regional synods issued resolutions against worshipping idols. They prescribed that in the churches ‘the altars should be closed and idols should be removed’. Pastors were expected to condemn the cult of images, and ‘it had to be eradicated from the believers’ heart with the word of God’.⁴³ The believers, however, did not strictly accept the synodal decrees, but rather they either followed their landlords’ choices — as it happened on the estates of Gergely Horváth, where all the golden statues, graven images, or saints or animals in clothes remained in the same place and position — or supported their minister’s stance. Ambrosius, a persistent adversary of Horváth, deliberately cleansed the church of Késmárk of statues and idols, and he closed the main altar for most of the year. The altar was nevertheless open

42 Béla Pukánszky wrote about these song-collections in his *History of German Literature*: ‘There is almost no trace of crypto-Calvinism in Ambrosius’ songbook’. See Pukánszky, *A magyarországi német irodalom története* (History of German Literature in Hungary), p. 111. Besides this, a more recent monograph deals with several aspects of the composition and music: Wagner Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation*.

43 Budapest, Széchenyi National Library, Archive–Manuscript Section, *Matricula Molleriana*, p. 593.

for the main feasts, while he preached from his pulpit as usual.⁴⁴ Ambrosius intended to provide a more puritan space for his community of believers. Horváth believed in the power of images, and considered the adorned idols as the best means for contemplation. Both options had their own validity, and these issues could either be publicly discussed or be presented in a process of persuasion.⁴⁵

If we wish to consider another important ‘surviving phenomenon’, the institution of confession, there is indeed evidence to confirm it. Ambrosius, as well as his colleagues in Igló and other mining towns, practised the *examinatio* on Sundays and public holidays, hearing the confessions of Christians who requested it. In earlier decades, the regional synods ratified provisions to have confession retained, and a decision had even been taken about baptism and female issues relating to brides and birth. They declared that, for the ‘female persons’ in question, services and sacred ceremonies must always be held in the church (again, a true survival of old traditions and customs). Indeed, those who were custodians of the official creeds tried to assure religious compliance in formulas and confession, but could not escape the will of their communities.

We can see that in 1593 it was also still the custom in Lőcse to raise the host during the elevation as if transubstantiation were happening, and holy oil was used regularly by Lutheran pastors.⁴⁶ The assistant minister in Szepesvárálja (Spišské Podhradie, Slovakia) used it when anointing the sick, which resulted in an official complaint during a meeting of the fraternity in 1586. The archdeacon opposed the gesture and the renewed use of holy oil, and he officially banned it, but it was still practised for many years. Circumstances were similar with the adiaphorists and religious cults that permitted the use of (Catholic) symbols and rituals.⁴⁷ Luther entrusted the same freedom of choice to individual churches with regard to the retention or rejection of adiaphoristic practices, but in Szepes county these were only slowly transformed into consistent everyday practice. The customary exorcism of Christians (*exorcium*) during baptism, the use of the white vestment (*alba*), and the burning of candles were all kept as regular practices, as was devotion before images and statues in the church: respect for such things was long maintained. In 1603, certain

44 In most cases, the altars were closed, or as it happened in Lőcse, they neither touched the altar nor the statues of the Church.

45 As for the public debates, Ambrosius and Horváth engaged in a long-lasting controversy which resulted a number of publications against each other, and public appearances too. The main topics of discussion were idolatry, the Lord’s Supper, confessional issues, and so on — similar to sixteenth-century religious controversies. Sometimes their debate could be perceived as a personal duel in front of the regional public: see Sebők, *Humanista a határon* (Humanist on the Edge), pp. 120–31.

46 Levoča, Archiv Mestá Levoče, *Protocollum Comitatus Sepusiensis*, vol. 6, 1593.

47 *Adiaphora* originally means indifferent things. According to the *Formula Concordiae*, adiaphoras are those church rites which are neither forbidden nor prescribed by the Holy Script.

adiaphoristic practices were considered when János Sylvester was chosen to become a pastor. He was committed to wearing an *alba* at funerals, with candles burning at the altar, and carrying out exorcism during baptisms. However, he was only admitted to the fraternity of the twenty-four towns — which denied these practices — when he was able to demonstrate that it was the ‘will of the people that forced him to carry on with the old Catholic practices’, and that he had not insisted on them.⁴⁸

Ambrosius probably did not wear the *alba* for funerals, though we are familiar with his obituaries, memorial speeches, and an epitaph written by him.⁴⁹ It was his common practice for sure to take part in funerals and wedding ceremonies. In one of the letters by Anton Platner, the Lőcse pastor offers testimony that after the new bishop of Várad and provost of Szepes county, Márton Hetessi-Pethő, took office, four people, Platner, Christoph Fabrizious, Sebastian Ambrosius, and Valentinus Hortensius, visited a couple planning to marry, Jonas Brichenzweig and Sophia Ussray of Késmárk.⁵⁰ Previously, under canon law marriage and the dissolution of marriage cases had been under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Church. With the Reformation, however, fraternities took over the legal judgement of these matters. For this reason, Platner’s intention was to approach the couple before the Catholic provost was able to take action. Sixteenth-century archdeacons were aware of the Szepes and Magdeburg law books which discussed marriage laws in detail. The Szepes Laws (*Zipser Willkühr*) held dominion in Szepes county towns until the fifteenth century, but after the pledge of the thirteen towns to the Polish crown some changes in the administration of justice were instated as the Polish towns followed Magdeburg law.⁵¹ On the basis of their perceived common interests, Szepes towns adopted the Saxon mirror laws (*Sachsenspiegel*), based upon Magdeburg law, although the laws of Szepes were thereby not completely swept aside.⁵² In 1628 the two legal systems merged, and Balthasar Apellus codified the statutes.⁵³ According to the spirit of these laws, for example, in 1585 the deaconry of the twenty-four cities could annul an engagement, since it turned out that in spite of her father’s will a bride had been espoused. Another example comes from the statute of a noble family: the fifth paragraph of the Máriássy statute of Márkusfalva,

48 Budapest, Széchenyi National Library, Archive–Manuscript Section, *Matricula Molleriana*, pp. 646–47.

49 These works were written later, to the memory of Petrus Codicillus: *Epitaphia Clarissimi Ac Doctissimi Viri, Domini M. Petri Codicilli*; to the death of Johann Kraus’ wife *Memoriae Nobilis, Pudicissimae Et Lectissime Matronae Annae Wolkensteiniae*; to the death of Zsuzsanna Dóczy: *Oratio Funebris: Memoriae Generosae ac Magnificae Dominae Svsannae Doczi*.

50 For Platner’s letter, see Levoča, Archiv Mestá Levoče, Trieda V. 52., 26 December 1588.

51 Demkó, *A szepesi jog keletkezése* (The Formation of Zipser Law). As for the new results concerning the political history of Szepes county, see *Terra Scepusiensis*, ed. by Gładkiewicz and Homza.

52 Its new, critical edition is *The Saxon Mirror*, trans. by Dobozy.

53 Wagner, *Analecta*, 1, 240–61.

dated 1581, stated that marriages could not take place between close members of a family.⁵⁴ According to the Szepes regulations, the minimum age for women to marry was the fourteenth year, different from the law concerning men, which had been established as the twentieth year. The provisions also strictly required that both parties to the marriage were obliged to learn the Ten Commandments beforehand, 'the branch of faith and the beseeching of prayer', since only then would they 'teach it to their children in future'. It further decreed that the betrothed couple experience the Lord's Supper a few weeks before the marriage, and that the joining of hands take place in a church. These urban regulations and mandatory duties were likely to be mentioned at the meeting between the four ministers and fiancées, because it was considered advice.⁵⁵

Beyond the parallel practices sketched here, another peculiar contemporary case is the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1582, which guaranteed a special coexistence of the old and the new for a long time. The dispute over the new calendar was about much more than adopting calendars and the perception of time: discipline and control was one of its central questions, and the direction of the region by either the Evangelicals or the Catholics. In addition to shedding light on these aspects, the series of clashes could also illustrate those attitudes and behavioural patterns that were characteristic of the process of slow transition and coexisting traditions.⁵⁶

It is unsurprising that during the sixteenth century the pastors who had been raised on *studia humanitatis* preached according to the practices of their Church. However, sermons were also based on the needs and demands of the village. As new teachings were accepted and established after debates, and religion became more secularized, we might say that the church became more the congregation's, not the pastor's. And the faithful were treated in the same way as if they were citizens of a town that was uniformly Lutheran in being able to request one of two types of communion. Or they sang hymns that could have been written by Ambrosius, songs not just by a great humanist pastor, but specifically for them and about them. It is in such songs that Catholic piety, the poems of Melancthon, and Lutheran practice met.

54 Iványi, *A Máriássy család levéltára* (The Archive of the Máriássy Family).

55 On weddings and bridals, see Demkó, *Polgári családélet és háztartás* (Civic Family Life and Households), pp. 73–76; Radvánszky, *Magyar családélet és háztartás* (Hungarian Family Life and Household). For a series of German cases on weddings and shaping the emotions, see Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Feeling*.

56 For a more detailed discussion of the case, see Sebők, *Humanista a határon* (Humanist on the Edge), pp. 135–60. Another regional example is discussed by Johnston Gordon, 'Controlling Time in the Habsburg Lands', pp. 28–36.

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Continuity and Discontinuity in Everyday Religious Life in Southern Hungary before 1526 in the Light of Supplications to the Holy See

The remission of sin, also known as release from sin, and its different types of supplication, represent activities of everyday religious life. This does not immediately come to mind when one thinks of religious activities that are in some way connected with the religious life of an individual or a group of people, and which serve as an everyday occurrence in their lives. Supplications made to the papacy were clearly not an everyday occurrence in an individual's religious life. However, a broad examination of the religious life reveals that it was a regular occurrence that can be noted down as such. Looking at the book of supplications, one can find such requests arriving at the papal seat on a daily basis on consecutive days: there were even instances of multiple cases arriving on the same day, and originating from the same, rather small part of Catholic world: the south of Hungary.

For deeply religious medieval individuals, religious life was one of the main forms of existence. Convinced by the religious teachings of the Church of the existence of the 'afterlife', within this framework they had to maximize opportunities for gaining access to the 'other world'. The keys to 'paradise' lay in the hands of the priesthood, with the ultimate arbiter on earth being the Holy See, or the papacy. In the later Middle Ages, believers

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, NCI 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 355–374

in the western parts of Christendom, if they wanted to be saved, were forced to use these resources to obtain salvation. For this purpose, a believer was supposed to address a request (supplication) to the representatives at the very top of the Church hierarchy. Such actions elicited thousands of solicitations to the highest ecclesiastical level. Some examples of such supplications are stored in a series of collections of supplications, the *Libri supplicationum*, kept in the Vatican Archives. The structure of *Libri supplicationum* allows an insight, in a clear and straight forward manner, into the daily life of inhabitants of southern Hungary up until the middle of the fifteenth century.

The present essay will analyse a selection of these supplications, chosen by Pál Lukcsics when he collected and edited supplications originally located in the Vatican Archives and concerning the entire territory of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary.¹ Based on these supplications, this essay focuses upon spiritual mercies concerning the south of Hungary. It will also offer a picture of continuity and discontinuity in the ways in which these supplications were formed, delivered, and received. They mostly addressed the topics of absolution from sin, absolution from excommunication, absolution from oaths given, the possibility of choosing a confessor, the annulment of marriage, the construction of portable altars, hearing Mass *ante diem*, pilgrimages, miracles and the adoration of relics, complete forgiveness, indulgences (the most notorious supplications), and, finally, the granting of forgiveness to church visitors.

Lukcsics was not the only scholar who collected and published supplications that originated from the territory of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary. Whilst his volume concerns the supplications from the time of Popes Martin V (1417–1431), Eugene IV (1431–1447), and Nicholas V (1447–1455), volumes collected and edited by Menyhért Érdújhelyi and Pál Tóth Szabó cover the later popes: supplications made during the reign of Popes Callixtus III (1455–1459) and Pius II (1459–1464), and during the times of Popes Paul II (1464–1471) and Sixtus IV (1471–1486), respectively.² A volume of collected and edited supplications for an earlier period was produced by Árpád Bossányi and concerns 1342 to 1394, the period from the reign of Pope Clement VI to that of Pope Boniface IX.³

A number of scholars viewed the organization of the Vatican Archives, as well as the history of research of some of the archival sources, among which

1 *XV. Századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia I, 1931, II, 1938).

2 Érdújhelyi, 'Kutatásaim a római levéltárakban' (My Researches in Roman Archives), pp. 605–46; Tóth Szabó, 'Magyarország a XV.század végén a pápai supplicatiók világánál' (Hungary in the End of the XV Century in the Light of the Papal Supplications), pp. 1–15, 151–59, 219–39, 327–44.

3 *Regesta supplicationum*, ed. by Bossányi.

was the source of supplications in the period under consideration, from the perspective of German and Hungarian historiography.⁴

Studies of the overall history of general and papal diplomatic can be of use for the study of supplications to the papal Curia.⁵ Although studies of medieval Hungary based on these edited volumes of supplications are not very numerous, those which do utilize them concern themselves with a variety of subjects. Thus, for example, Enikő Csukovits used the editions by Lukcsics and the other aforementioned editors in her study of medieval Hungarian pilgrims.⁶ Gabriella Erdélyi's study concerns supplications for the absolution of sin made from Hungary during the fifteenth and sixteenth century.⁷ György Bónis had aimed to write on the topic of church trials in Hungary during the Middle Ages, but having understood that he had not collected sufficient materials after fifty years of research, he published regesta based on the work of Lukcsics and the other scholars named above.⁸ The aforementioned volumes of edited papal supplications made by clerics and lay persons from the territory of the medieval Hungarian kingdom also served for a study of the religious life of the Hungarians in the Jagellonian era.⁹

The Vatican Archives contain an assortment of different kinds of supplications in its Register of Supplications, not all of which are of a penitent character. In the context of wider European studies on this kind of supplication, edited volumes of supplications originating from the University of Paris over several centuries and representing requests for benefices, are of interest. The supplications in these volumes constitute prosopographic sources for the French universities which are valuable for historians researching the history of universities in the rest of Catholic Europe, since they offer information on the contemporary student body and data on its geographical spread.¹⁰ Regarding the Catholic part of Europe during the long fifteenth century, supplications recorded in the papal registers were employed in a number of studies covering western parts of Europe, and for such topics as the Catholic

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- 4 Schmutge, *Kirche, Kinder, Karrieren*, pp. 135–36 mention supplications that concern the legal status of children born outside of wedlock; Frenz, *Die Kanzlei der Päpste der Hochrenaissance*, pp. 80–83; Érszegi, 'A Curia Romana középkori levéltárai' (The Medieval Archives of Curia Romana), pp. 325–26; Pásztor, 'A Vatikáni levéltár' (The Vatican Archives), pp. 117–29.
 - 5 Lasala and Rabikauskas, *Il documento medievale e moderno*, pp. 250–52.
 - 6 Csukovits, *Középkori magyar zarándokok* (Medieval Hungarian Pilgrims).
 - 7 Erdélyi, *A Sacra Poenitentiaria Apostolica hivatala és magyar kérvényei a 15–16. században* (The Office of Sacra Poenitentiaria Apostolica and Hungarian Supplications to it in the 15–16th Centuries), pp. 35–36.
 - 8 Szentszéki *regeszták, Iratok az egyházi bírászkodás történetéhez a középkori Magyarországon* (Regesta of the Holy See, Proceedings towards the History of the Ecclesiastical Juridiciary in Medieval Hungary), ed. by Bónis and Balogh.
 - 9 Pásztor, *A magyarság vallásos élete a Jagellók korában* (The Religious Life of Hungarians in the Jagellonian Era).
 - 10 *Rotuli Parisienses. Volume I: 1316–49*, ed. by Courtenay, pp. 1, 2, 10. The co-edited second volume covers the years 1352–1378.

Church in England and Scotland. Thus, for example, a history of the diocese of Argyll from the twelfth until the sixteenth century mentions the importance of the material from the papal chancery, which is seen in cases of successful applications being recorded in the Register of Supplications.¹¹

The studies of the registers of papal supplication are, in their source materials, closely connected to the studies of the Apostolic Penitentiary, for certain types of supplications were handled by and held in this office of the papal Curia. The essays in *The Apostolic Penitentiary in Local Context*, while concerning the interconnectedness between clerics and laity and the papal Curia as the highest in the Church hierarchy (mostly concerning the European peripheries), deal with pardons that could have been granted only by a pope. They focus on a variety of issues connected to a variety of problems facing late medieval clerics and laity: from matrimonial dispensation due to impotency to supplications by vagrant monks.¹² The use of requests addressed to the Apostolic Penitentiary is relevant to the present essay, which also aims to investigate different types of spiritual mercies which could have been granted only by a pope.

Csukovits noticed correctly the difficulty of researching a theme based on the papal supplications, due to the sheer scale of the source material. This is true in the case of the southern parts of Hungary, just as it is probably the case for any European periphery. For the most part, detecting the material validity of a supplication would be almost impossible, given that, since a supplication was registered in the papal Register of Supplications, it had fulfilled formal requirements and had been considered valid by contemporaries. Studies basing their analysis on a large variety of supplications, but most importantly on those concerning the so-called spiritual mercies, tended to treat the source at face value. This is not unusual given the characteristics of the source itself. It can be considered highly unusual, if not very strange, that a person, whether a cleric or a layman, would lie about his needs for the granting, for example, of a portable altar or of a complete forgiveness of sins. One can have doubts about the degree of consanguinity in cases where dispensation of marriage is sought, since the Catholic Church did not grant divorce. However, trying to find obscure motives for such requests is an impossible venture, particularly as the identities of the petitioners are largely unknown and the lives of the minor nobility of this European periphery are poorly documented.

Absolution of Sin

The absolution of sin was amongst the most important means of salvation. The Vatican has preserved thousands of supplications which testify to the continuation of the practice whereby sinners of various social ranks sought

11 MacDonal, *Clerics and Clansmen*, pp. 16–17.

12 Jaritz, 'Introduction', pp. 1–3.

pardon for already committed violations of Church norms, primarily consisting of sexual offences and violence. This practice had been instigated by the confirmation of the existence of Purgatory, in 1215, at the Fourth Lateran Council. This allowed for the possibility of the behaviour of the living to affect the spiritual salvation of those already dead.

Thus, there is the example of the Hungarian King Bela IV, who founded the abbey of Petrovaradin in southern Hungary so that its Cistercian monks could pray for the salvation of his mother's soul, since his sister, St Elizabeth, had seen a vision of her burning in Purgatory. However, Gertrude of Merania had been a German princess married to the Hungarian King Andrew II. She was very much hated in her new country because the king not only married her but accepted her numerous relatives, who received high-ranking positions and large estates. Naturally, this caused great hatred among the Hungarian nobility, who felt that the 'Meranians' were gaining power. Finally, Gertrude was killed. Her daughter, who dreamt of her burning in Purgatory, was only seven years old.¹³

That the practice of petitioning for the absolution of sin continued into the sixteenth century can be seen from a supplication dated 1507. Toma Kenty from Subotica (Hungarian: Szabadka) asked for permission to rebury his son in accordance with Christian practices, for he could prove that, prior to his murder, his son had made a confession. Thus, the father of the victim had an opportunity to interfere on behalf of the fate of his son's soul. Such a possibility also meant an exception or deviation from standard religious practice, which, according to Church regulations, stipulated that murdered persons could not be buried in a normal Christian fashion.

The importance of the absolution of sin in the daily lives of believers can be viewed in a supplication made to the papal see, where the parson or vicar of the parish church had the authority to absolve sins under the authority of a bishop. This right was founded in areas where heretics or pagans lived four days and more away from a cathedral, in this case, the cathedral of Pécs. The church in question was the church of the Blessed Peter the Apostle, and the supplication was approved by Pope Nicholas V.¹⁴

Absolution from Excommunication

Excommunicated believers constituted the hardest category of sinners. To be readmitted into the Church, they were obliged to make a request to the highest of ecclesiastical orders for absolution. The excommunicated asking for readmission from the south of Hungary, at least according to the book of supplications, typically belonged to the two highest social strata.

13 Rokai, Đere, Pal and Kasaš, *Istorija Mađara* (History of Hungarians), pp. 60–61.

14 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1250, pp. 302–03.

Nicholas of Ilok (Hungarian: Újlaki Miklós) carried different titles throughout his life. They included the title of Ban of Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, and Macsó, Voivode of Transylvania, and titular King of Bosnia from 1471 until his death. He was also a member of the Újlaki family, who were amongst the richest landowners in the Kingdom of Hungary and Croatia, and were also some of the most influential magnates there. Nicholas sought readmission into the church following his excommunication for an unspecified money malfeasance. That the grace given through readmission into the Church solved more than merely the issue of one's soul can be seen by a petition by the widow and sons of a deceased Ban of Croatia, who petitioned for the cancellation of an excommunication so that they could inherit. These appeals occurred at a frequency of approximately one per month.

Absolution from excommunication was granted to Nicholas of Ilok on account of his donation of 154 florins, collected from the believers of his *oppidum*, for the rebuilding of the parish church in Ilok. However, the money collected was in fact misused, since it was originally meant for the cause of unity of the Greek and Roman churches. Nicholas of Ilok was one of the most influential and powerful men of his era in Hungary. But he was not allowed to collect money in the churches without the permission of the pope. However, since Nicholas of Ilok used the money for conservation of another church (the one in Ilok, where he would be buried) and since he did not spend the money on a more trivial matter, the pope granted him absolution from sin, which in this case would otherwise have had excommunication as its consequence.¹⁵

Another case from the same year concerns the archbishop of Bácska, Blasius of Kamenica, and a provost Damian from Hungary, who was also the canon of the church of Bácska. Pope Nicholas V entrusted these two individuals to act as judges in the case of the nobleman András, son of János Bessenyei, a resident in the diocese of Cenad, who had been excommunicated by the archbishop of Esztergom, without a subpoena. This act by Pope Nicholas V was brought about by a complaint issued by Bessenyei, since court procedures had not been honoured. For this reason, the pope requested that the court procedures of the time be honoured.¹⁶

A level of continuity can be noticed in the frequency of petitions for absolution from excommunication which were granted. There is a further example from the following year, dated 18 May 1452, where the petitioner is a woman of high rank. Jelena, the mother of Nikola, Vladislav, Matko, and Franko, who were also the sons of the late Franko, Ban of Croatia, with residence in Varalija in the diocese of Pécs, asked for the annulment of her excommunication. Jelena had been excommunicated without any basis during

15 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukacsics, II, no. 1232, p. 298.

16 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukacsics, II, no. 1236, p. 299.

an inheritance dispute led by her sons and their uncle Peter, on the one side, and Ladislaus Petr the Czech on the other. The inheritance suit was started by an official from Pécs but was not completed. In this dispute, Jelena was unfairly excommunicated, since she was found not to be a successor and, according to the customs of the Kingdom of Hungary, the father's estate and his inheritance were supposed to be given to his successors and not to his wife and lateral relatives. Pope Nicolas V granted Jelena absolution from excommunication.¹⁷

Complete Forgiveness

There was also an opportunity to obtain forgiveness for future sins in advance, named 'complete forgiveness'. Variants of this spiritual grace could be forgiveness for life, as well as in the case of death (*in articulo mortis*). The request for complete forgiveness could be submitted by an individual either personally or through a representative. Supplication referred not only to the applicant, but also to the closest members of his or her immediate and extended family, or even to those in a vassalic relationship. Obtaining forgiveness of sins in advance was possible also in the case of future visitors to the churches. If one offended the pope, it was only the pope who could grant forgiveness. If, however, one offended God, forgiveness could be granted by any priest.

The majority of supplications from the territory of southern Hungary addressing the forgiveness of sins in advance come from the period between the 1430s and 1450s. It is noticeable that the majority of cases concern forgiveness for those visiting certain churches in the future. There were two such requests in July 1433. On 7 July 1433, the nobleman Paul, son of Stephen, Comes of Live in the diocese of Veszprém, asked for the forgiveness of the sins of future visitors to three parish churches. These three churches were the church of the Blessed Mary in Zomenj, the church of St George on the estate of St George, and the church of St Nicholas on the estate of St Nicholas.¹⁸ Less than one week later, on 13 July 1433, the noblemen Acacius, Dimitrije, and Djurdj Čupor of Moslavina in the diocese of Zagreb supplicated for several matters in one request. Most importantly, they asked for complete forgiveness in the case of his death. Apart from this, the supplication requested permission for a portable altar, for the service to be able to go ahead duly in places under interdict, and for hearing a Mass *ante diem*.¹⁹

17 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1265, pp. 306–07.

18 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 169, p. 77.

19 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 211, p. 90.

The other instances of supplication seeking complete forgiveness come from the middle of the fifteenth century. It was in the first years of the 1450s that a number of such supplications appeared. In December 1451 two such supplications were granted. On 9 December 1451, a complete forgiveness for life was granted to Friedrich of Oltenburg, the Count (*Comes: knez and župan, respectively*) of Zagorje, and Ban of Slavonia.²⁰ Interestingly enough, only a couple of days later, on 13 December 1451, permission for complete forgiveness of the very same nobleman, Friedrich of Oltenburg, was registered again.²¹ We know that this re-permission actually occurred owing to the fact that supplications were noted down, and thus it is possible to track filed supplications.

Petitioners for complete forgiveness were not only men, but also women. In May 1451, complete forgiveness was given to Jelena, the daughter of nobleman Gaspar Kasztellánfi of Szentlélek in the diocese of Zagreb.²² The following year witnessed the same type of supplication. On 8 January 1452, complete forgiveness was granted to the priest Bartholomew Buzlai, governor of the abbey of Petrovaradin in the diocese of Bácska.²³ On 3 March 1452 Nicholas of Ilok, the Transylvanian voivode, petitioned for complete forgiveness for himself, for his wife Margarita, and for their children Nicholas and Catherine, if they visited the church of the City (Rome) during the jubilee and once in the event of death. The authorities redeemed them of all reserves and dismissals once for life and also in the case of death.²⁴ This example demonstrates that such religious practices varied in frequency over these two decades of the fifteenth century.

Absolution from Oath and Covenant

Medieval people (mainly men) made oaths on a frequent basis. These were promises of very different types, given to various persons, from God to political opponents. These promises were given under oath. The petition to be released from a promise given under oath was also under the jurisdiction of the highest ecclesiastical order. Absolution from an oath was noticeably prevalent during the middle years of the fifteenth century. In February 1448

20 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1244, p. 301.

21 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1247, p. 302.

22 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1228, p. 297.

23 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1248, p. 302.

24 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1250, pp. 302–03.

Pope Nicholas V ordered the archbishop of Krbava to change the oath that the nobleman Martin Frankopan had sworn into another act of mercy. Interestingly, the oath made by this Martin, otherwise Prince of Krka, Senja, and Modruš, had been to take down the tower named Trsat in the diocese of Krbava.²⁵

The nature of the oaths from which absolution was asked from the pope did not concern only the internal issues of the medieval Hungarian kingdom. Sometimes, the most important people in medieval Hungary were afraid of the excommunication that might have followed a case of breaking an oath. One cannot dismiss the profound fear of God's wrath that permeated the consciousness of medieval people. On 12 April 1450, Pope Nicholas V liberated John Hunyadi, the Governor of the Hungarian kingdom, from promises given and an oath sworn to Đurađ Branković, Despot of the kingdom of Rascia (the kingdom of Rascia in this context means the Serbian Despotate). Pope Nicholas V also absolved those barons of the Hungarian kingdom who had once made promises alongside the governor to the Despot of Serbia from these promises and oaths, and also absolved them of the guilt of breaking the oath.²⁶

John Hunyadi was, together with members of the Újlaki and Garai families, one of the most prominent men in the Hungarian kingdom during the first half of the fifteenth century. Until his death in 1456, he held the office of Palatine of Hungary, the title of Voivode of Transylvania (Erdély), and his estates stretched into what are now at least five European states. This supplication, petitioned from the highest ecclesiastical body in the Church hierarchy, had a very dynamic political and military background and origin in the dynastic struggles of Hungary. A decisive moment for Hunyadi's career, power, and further legacy occurred when the Hungarian estates failed to reach an agreement with the Habsburg Emperor Friedrich III regarding the future of the minor King Ladislaus V, and decided to entrust the power to a governor until the king reached his majority. John Hunyadi was elected governor in 1446. He used his position to organize renewed warfare against the invading Ottoman armies. This was in part the result of Hunyadi's desire to improve his shaken authority and to get revenge for a disastrous defeat at Varna. Therefore, in the autumn of 1448, Hunyadi assembled a great army against the Turks. The route to engage the Turkish army included the territory of the Serbian Despotate. The Serbian Despot at the time, Djuradj Branković, refused to allow him to pass through his lands. However, Hunyadi did not pay attention to this prohibition and crossed the Danube, leading his armies through Serbian territory, and moved south until he reached the Kosovo plain, where he planned to engage the armies of Skenderberg. The

25 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1010, p. 258.

26 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1103, p. 276.

battle occurred on 18 October 1448, and this time the Christian armies, led by Hunyadi, were terribly defeated. Hunyadi was captured but succeeded in escaping. He searched for refuge in Smederevo, at the court of the very man whose orders he had defied. Djuradj Branković did not forgive him for his trespass and captured him. Branković released him only under the condition that Hunyadi gave him back his estates within the territory of Hungary, which he had to renounce together with the promise that he would pay for the damage caused by the passage of his troops.²⁷ Hunyadi gave the oath to be released, which he did not intend to keep, and from which he supplicated the pope to absolve him. In fact, his elder son Ladislaus remained in Serbia as a hostage, and the prominent Hungarian aristocrats Ladislaus Garai and Nicholas Újlaki acted as guarantors of the fulfilment of the oath.²⁸

On a smaller scale, on 14 April 1450, Mihailo, son of Ivan, the parish priest of the church of the Blessed Mary in Szonta in the diocese of Bácska, supplicated to change the oath he had once given for another merciful deed from on high. In contrast with the previous case, this was a very personal matter. The priest had given an oath that he would enter the Order of Friars Minor if he were to be cured of an illness. He made the oath as a minor, but had repeated it as an adult. He supplicated to the pope because he could not keep the oath since the illness concerned his legs. The pope granted him absolution from the oath, with a caveat, and allowed the petitioner to switch to another order.²⁹

Litterae Indulgentiarum

Salvation from sin was also given through indulgences. As is well known, it was their misuse by the papal legate Johann Eck in Germany in 1517 that directly triggered Martin Luther's actions. Inhabitants of southern Hungary were just as keen to petition for letters of indulgence as people from other parts of the Catholic world. Continuity in the issuing of letters of indulgence by the pope on the supplication of a petitioner is noticeable in southern Hungary. These examples relate to the 1430s and the 1450s, as there were no registered cases for 1440s. In 1437 a letter of indulgence was granted to a noble knight, Nikola Kis, the Lord of Macedonia in the diocese of Cened, and to his wife, of whom the letter said nothing more.³⁰

27 Rokai, Đere, Pal, and Kasaš, *Istorija Mađara* (History of Hungarians), pp. 156–57.

28 Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković i njegovo doba* (Despot Djuradj Branković and his Time), pp. 341–46, 349.

29 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1107, p. 278.

30 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 459, p. 145.

In May of 1450 another married couple petitioned for a letter of indulgence. This concerned Ivan of Bele Crkva (Hungarian: Fehértemplom, Romanian: Biserica Albă) in the diocese of Cened, who, with his wife Anca, supplicated for the letters.³¹ The 1450s saw an increase in petitions for this type of supplication in the region under consideration. In January 1451, a letter of indulgence was granted to Tvрто, Comes of Usor and Knight of the Kingdom of Bosnia.³² Several years later, in January 1455, another high-ranking official of the Hungarian kingdom, Nicholas of Ilok, the Duke of Transylvania (Erdély), Lord of the town of Ilok in the diocese of Pécs, supplicated for the letters of indulgence. His supplication was approved by the pope.³³

The Choice of Confessor

Release from sin was in the first instance given by one's own confessor. This was usually a person held in the highest confidence. The choice of one's confessor was allowed by the pope. One can see the relationship of the Church to the penitent in permits allowing the choice of one's confessor. Interestingly, the petitioners who most frequently sought this from the papacy were higher ecclesiastical figures. There is an evident continuity of this religious practice in the south of Hungary, which can be traced from the mid-1420s in this collection. The first example comes from October 1423, when the choice of confessor was permitted to Stefan of Korod, a knight in the diocese of Pécs. The granting of this petition also included Stefan's wife Katarina, who too was allowed to choose a confessor.³⁴

It was not only members of the lower nobility who were obliged to ask for permission to choose a confessor, a fact made clear by the example of Nicholas of Garai. The Garai were one of the most powerful aristocratic families in fifteenth-century Hungary, together with the aforementioned Újlaki and Hunyadi families. Nicholas Garai, mentioned in the granting of the supplication as Nicholas II Garai, had served as Palatine of Hungary from 1402 to 1432, and also held the titles of Ban of Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, Macsó, Usora, and Só. Through marriage to King Sigismund of Luxembourg's sister-in-law, Anna of Cilli, Nicholas II Garai became brother-in-law to one of the most significant European rulers of the era. However, Nicholas II did not suddenly come into high-ranking office, despite his aristocratic background. His father,

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- 31 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1113, p. 279.
- 32 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1215, p. 294.
- 33 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1349, p. 331.
- 34 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 656, p. 147.

Nicholas I Garai, had already been an influential office-holder under King Louis I the Great and his daughter, Queen Mary of Hungary, and succeeded in obtaining the title of Palatine, which he held from 1375 until his death in 1386.³⁵ In December 1424 the possibility of a choice of confessor was given to Nicholas II Garai: the permission included his wife as well.³⁶ Some ten years later, in July 1433, Pope Eugene IV allowed a choice of confessor to an even more high-ranking person in the state. This time it was Stefan Tvrtko, king of Bosnia. The confessor the king chose was able, by papal consent given in the permission, to absolve the king of the mandatory fast according to the advice of the king's doctor.³⁷

A further example comes from 1436, when Miklós Čazmanski, doctor of Canon Law, Provost of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary and canon of the Church in Eger, asked for permission to choose a priest who could absolve him of sins even in cases requiring a bishop.³⁸ This was a specific supplication, since more serious sins were only absolvable under a bishop's jurisdiction, whilst absolution of sins such as the physical attack of clerics and acts of sacrilege were under the sole jurisdiction of the pope himself. The supplication was dated 28 February 1436, whilst the document of absolution was dated 27 March of the same year, with the statement that 'everything was allowed according to the form and only [that] regarding the conscience [was] reserved [for] the presence of the Pope'.³⁹ From this answer it can be noticed that the petitioner also supplicated the choice of a confessor who could absolve him of all sins and irregularities, and to be granted absolution in complete form in the case of death.

The 1430s saw only one further documented case relevant for our consideration here. In 1438 a certain bishop and nuncio John was permitted to allow twenty persons to choose a confessor.⁴⁰ This instance of supplication is interesting, since it regards continuity in a way that is not concerned only with certain, usually high-ranking, individuals, but with a wider public. The pope allowed those clerics beneath him in the hierarchy to give permission to a certain number of petitioners who presumably were not expecting a direct answer from the pope himself.

35 Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, pp. 209–44.

36 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 765, p. 164.

37 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 277, p. 112.

38 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 406, pp. 136–37.

39 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 417, p. 138.

40 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 529, p. 158.

It is from the following decade that the next case comes. In 1447 the right to choose a confessor was allowed to the count of Cilli, Friedrich. Lukcsics noted that he had found this detail in another work.⁴¹ The permission to choose a confessor was given also to those who followed the court of the count of Cilli on the same date, 10 November 1447.⁴²

In 1451, another count of Cilli, Udalrik, was allowed his choice of confessor. The form of his name varies, so that sometimes Udalrik and sometimes Ulrik was used by his contemporaries.⁴³ The nobleman Friedrich of Ortenburg, Count of Zagorje and Ban of Slavonia, was yet another dignitary to whom permission was granted that same year to choose a confessor.⁴⁴

The Annulment of Marriage

The Roman Catholic Church does not recognize complete divorce, but does allow for the annulment of marriage. After the forgiveness of sins, the second most important reason for a believer to address the Holy See was the annulment of marriage. For these cases, supplications are also preserved in the Vatican Archives. One reason for the annulment of marriage has always been the obstacle of close kinship, either through blood or through spiritual kinship. Since medieval families made alliances on the basis of economic interest, it often happened that in closed environments a marriage occurred between close relatives. Another reason for the annulment of a marriage was if they were already married or one of them had already been married to a third party. The third reason was if the marriage was contracted under duress. The fourth reason was if one party was impersonating another individual. The fifth and final reason was impotence or male homosexuality. Cases of supplications for this are rather rare in the area and period under study.

There is one such occasion, dated December 1437, when Pope Eugene IV ordered the bishop of Pécs, on the supplication of Sigismund of Luxembourg the Holy Roman Emperor, who was also German, Hungarian and Czech king, to annul the marriage contracted between the nobleman Ivan, son of Filip of Korodj in the diocese of Pécs, and a noble girl Ana, the daughter of John Marotti, a housewife from the same diocese.⁴⁵

41 Lukcsics mentioned that he found the used information in *Vetera monumenta historica Hungarum*, vol. II, ed. by Theiner, p. 242.

42 *Vetera monumenta historica Hungarum*, vol. II, ed. by Theiner, p. 242; *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 988, p. 251.

43 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1212, p. 293.

44 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 1245, p. 302.

45 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 518, p. 156.

The most frequent such obstacles stemmed from a certain degree of blood or spiritual kinship. Lukcsics found and collected in his volume supplications pertaining to the annulment of marriage, noting cases from 1435–1436. In October 1435 Pope Eugene IV entrusted the Greek bishop of Pécs to annul an obstacle to marriage that existed between a layman Nikola Nikolica and Katarina, daughter of Grgur Senjski, whose sister Jelena had once been Nikola's wife.⁴⁶ The second case dates from April 1436, when Pope Eugene IV entrusted the bishop of Pécs to absolve from the third degree of consanguinity the nobleman Antun Blagajski, a householder, and Margareta daughter of one Stefan, a housewife, a married couple from the diocese of Zagreb.⁴⁷

Portable Altars and Hearing Mass *ante diem*

Church dogma required believers to visit churches at certain times, usually on Sundays and on religious holidays, when they were required to attend Mass. To make it easier for them to fulfil this obligation, Church authorities enabled them to hear Mass *ante diem*. This possibility included the week in advance or a holiday in advance. It meant that not only could a Mass supposed to be held on the next day be heard in advance, but also a Mass of the next week or of a future feast day. For those not able to go to church, for instance travellers and warriors, the papacy granted the right to use portable altars. A portable altar was, in fact, a table that the believer, to whom such a supplication was granted, would have constructed with a built-in relic.

Requests for the use of portable altars present the most frequent and durable type of petition throughout the period and the geographic area under observation. The first mentioned dates from December 1417 and concerns a supplication for the granting of a portable altar to Ivan of Alben, Ban of Dalmatia and Croatia, and brother of the bishop of Zagreb, Eberhard. Ivan's petition was preceded in the same document by the two brothers' supplication for permission to choose a confessor, and for complete forgiveness for life in the case of death.⁴⁸ There is a clear continuity and frequency, since the petitions appear regularly several times a month, amounting to once per week. Such supplications were the most frequent up to 1433, and in the years 1441–1442. The reason for this high frequency can be found not only in the recurrent travel of the members of the aristocracy, but also due to the frequent wars occurring in this period in the southern lands of medieval Hungary. A supplication made in 1433 by Paul, son of Stefan, gives the reason for this.

46 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 392, p. 135.

47 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 420, p. 139.

48 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 19, p. 49.

In this instance, the petitioner makes yet another supplication: for complete forgiveness during life and if he dies 'during the war with the unbelievers'. Here the need for portable altars in this period is quite obviously stated and can be easily understood in the context of the general history of the time.

There were three instances noted in 1418. All three documented cases were recorded in supplications by petitioners, and not in documents confirming the grant. The nobleman Stefan, son of Fabian of Bichkele and his noble wife Margarita, from the diocese of Zagreb, supplicated for several mercies. This included supplications for the granting of a portable altar, for hearing Mass in advance, and for complete forgiveness on four occasions in a lifetime and once in the case of death.⁴⁹ The nobleman Fabian of Bichkele and his wife Klara, daughter of Emerich, also from the diocese of Zagreb, asked for similar mercies just like the previous couple.⁵⁰ All of these cases were submitted in January. This was one of the few that petitioned for several mercies, though, as has been demonstrated, this was not a rare occurrence. In fact, petitioning for several mercies with one supplication was an permitted practice. In this instance, the petitioners asked for the permission to be granted a portable altar even in places under the interdict, and also for hearing Mass in advance, as well as for other mercies connected to these: these latter mercies were clustered together in one supplication. They also included a supplication for the granting of complete forgiveness once in a lifetime and once in the case of death, as well as for letters of indulgence for noblemen in the company of the King of the Romans (that is, the Holy Roman Emperor): for Ivan, Stefan, Nikola, Fabian, and their wives, as well as for Balint, son of Toma of Monoslo, and his wife Margaret in the diocese of Zagreb.⁵¹

For three years no supplications of this type made from the south of Hungary were noted. In February 1421, the use of a portable altar was granted to János Garai and his wife Jadwiga,⁵² as well as to another petitioner, Ivan, son of Francis of Sgvar, the provost of the church of the Holy Wisdom in Titel in the diocese of Kalocsa.⁵³

The petitioners who had asked for the granting of a portable altar in the years 1423 and 1424 did not ask for any other mercy, and another such simple supplication was granted to the nobleman Benedict Nelipiću of Dobrakuće,

49 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 29, p. 52.

50 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 30, p. 52.

51 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 41, p. 54.

52 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 331, p. 103.

53 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 333, p. 104.

knight of the diocese of Zagreb, and his wife,⁵⁴ as well as to the nobleman János, son of Ladislaus, son of the Baron of Ilok in the diocese of Pécs, and to his noble wife,⁵⁵ and to the nobleman István, son of Ladislaus, son of the Baron of Ilok of the same diocese.⁵⁶

The petition submitted by Peter, son of Paul, count of Zriny, from the diocese of Zagreb, is worth mentioning because of the sheer number of mercies requested in this single supplication. It can be viewed as a testament to the continuity of daily religious practices in southern Hungary. The count asked first for complete forgiveness for himself, his wife, and his children, as well as for persons with the status of vassal, and once more in case of death. Then, he petitioned for the permission to choose his confessor, since, as he had stated, he had not been in a position to visit Rome due to the unceasing warfare against the infidel Turks and Saracens. Then, the count asked for a similar mercy for every Christian who fought under his banner. Next, he asked for permission to hear Mass in advance, then for a portable altar, which was followed by a request for permission to hear Mass in places under the interdict. These mercies were followed by a plea for the granting of absolution to visitors to the church of the Virgin Mary, which the count had founded in the fortress of Zrin on the feast day of the birth of the Virgin. The appeal was for the power of absolution to be granted to the rector of this church, but only once a year on the feast day. Finally, the count pleaded for permission that the rector would be able to punish thieves of church goods, as well as those borrowing such goods but not returning them, by anathema and excommunication.⁵⁷

The previous case was not the sole instance of a person supplicating for hearing Mass in advance and for the portable altar also mentioning warfare against the Ottomans in his supplication. There are two supplications from Paul, son of Stefan, Count of Lindva in the diocese of Pécs. He pleaded for a portable altar, then for complete forgiveness during his lifetime and at his death, as well as during the warfare against the infidels. After these, the count asks for permission to take relics away.⁵⁸ The second such case was made by the nobleman Petar Tocka de Capoczocz, the son of Blasius, who was a knight from the diocese of Zagreb who supplicated for complete forgiveness for himself and his wife, then for a portable altar, and subsequently for hearing

54 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 604, p. 142.

55 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 618, p. 143.

56 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 667, p. 148.

57 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, I, no. 893, p. 185.

58 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 169, p. 77.

Mass in advance. Finally, he asked for complete forgiveness in the war against the infidels for himself and his vassals.⁵⁹ Another rather long supplication comes from the same year. The nobleman Stefan Belošević from the diocese of Zagreb supplicated for permission to hear Mass in advance, as well as for having a portable altar, and finally for the divine service to be held in places under interdict. These he prayed for, for himself as well as for his wife, together with pleading for complete forgiveness to be granted to him and to his wife Helena in the event of death. What followed the pleadings for these rather personal mercies was the supplication for complete forgiveness to be granted to visitors to the church of St Michael in Hooros, and to visitors to the parish church of Sts martyrs Cosmas and Damian in Baknuch, as well as to the visitors to the chapel of the Blessed Mary the Virgin, situated in the cemetery of the aforementioned church of Sts Cosmas and Damian. This plea for granting complete forgiveness was finally extended to visitors to the parish church of All Saints in Steznet in the dioceses of Kalocsa and Zagreb.⁶⁰

The list of supplications made to the papacy requesting the hearing of Mass *ante diem*, and the permission for the construction of portable altars, is by far the most wide-ranging, covering the longest period and involving the largest number of petitioners. It is a testament to the undisturbed continuity of daily religious practices in southern Hungary until the middle of the fifteenth century. This state of affairs would be altered very soon, both by a clear-cut discontinuity with previous practices, and then by a slower process of change affecting daily religious practices in subsequent years.

Visits to Churches and the Adoration of Relics

The supreme clergy granted spiritual grace, such as the forgiveness of sin, to individuals who visited churches. These had initially been specific places in the Holy Land (Palestine) and in Rome, but later the papacy bestowed such grace on churches in other countries as well. At first, these 'indulgences' were granted in the area under consideration to the churches founded by monarchs, such as the abbey of Petrovaradin in 1361. This practice was later widened to encompass the churches established by individual feudal lords.

From this practice of visiting churches, the phenomenon of pilgrimage (*hajji*) evolved, in which private or group visits to 'holy places' took place. Here, people pledged themselves to pilgrimage for private motives, primarily for health reasons, expecting not only the salvation of their souls but also physical healing. Places of pilgrimage were particularly attractive if miraculous

59 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 213, p. 91.

60 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukcsics, II, no. 228, pp. 94–95.

events had occurred there. These primarily involved wondrous healings and miracles emanating from holy relics. Grace given to those who attended certain churches was closely connected to the grace given to believers visiting sacred places and sacred relics. This is not surprising if one keeps in mind that these sacred places, and particularly the relics, were connected with the churches, for the relics were kept there.

From 1456 onwards, in the region of southern Hungary the most famous centre of pilgrimage was Ilok, where the Hungarian nobleman Nicholas of Ilok put to rest the remains of the Franciscan monk John of Capistrano. There was 'evidence' from the pilgrims that the remains had created miracles in the form of marvellous healing. As might be guessed, conducting miraculous healings was a profitable practice which produced funds from visiting pilgrims for the clergy's existence. Whilst continuity in the exploitation of this and similar relics was evident, a gradual lack of belief in their actual usefulness emerged across the span of the fifteenth century. This was mostly due to the greed of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the region. The belief in the efficacy of the working of miracles was also connected to current military and political events. Most evident are the cases of the so-called 'miraculous' blood. The castellan of Vajdahunyad, George Scholz, cursed the relics and at the remains of John of Capistrano for not being able to save the medieval Hungarian state from the Ottoman conquests.

This kind of religious practice, for which believers supplicated the papacy, is evident from a number of previously cited examples. As can be seen, petitioners sought this grace along with other mercies, and it was for such reasons that they were collected, mentioned, and analysed in the instances discussed above. Many times, the petitioner was a member of the high aristocracy, who wanted to emulate monarchs in founding churches. However, there is also the example of a less well-known nobleman of the medieval Hungarian kingdom. In 1422 Toma, son of Djurdj of Ladihović, supplicated for granting forgiveness to visitors to the parish church of Ladihović in the diocese of Zagreb, which had been founded by the petitioner himself and his ancestors before him.⁶¹

The Abrupt End to the Continuity of Practice of Supplications

More often than not discontinuity in religious practice happened in a more definite manner rather than in a prolonged decrescendo. With the entrance onto the historical stage of the Lutheran Reform and the Ottoman conquest, great changes occurred in the everyday life of the inhabitants of the region. The relics of John of Capistrano disappeared without trace. The aforementioned Petrovaradin abbey was destroyed by the Turks during a siege, Catholic

61 *XV. századi pápák oklevelei* (Charters of the XV Century Popes), ed. by Lukacsics, 1, no. 446, p. 121.

churches became Protestant, and relics suddenly seemed useless. St Elizabeth's remains were thrown out of the church in Marburg, where they had been kept by her own descendants. A similar fate befell the relics of 'the Sacred Blood' in Batasek in Baranja, which had been a gift from the citizens of Dubrovnik. It was transferred by the castellan of this place, Péter Perényi — a man who accepted the reformed Church — to the chapel in his castle in Siklós.

Another event that caused a rather distinct and abrupt end to this practice, as well as to the other practices of asking for and obtaining supplication, was the conversion of the Catholic churches in the territory of South Hungary, governed by the Ottomans, into mosques. Simultaneously, the transformation of Catholic churches into Orthodox ones had also been occurring, due to changes in the demographic structure of the region. Therefore, with the cessation of the performance of the Mass according to the Catholic rite, and with it, the need for, and the possibility of, visiting specific churches with relics, a sharp and straightforward discontinuity took place in the area. This can be seen in the light of the political history, when the approach of the Ottomans at the southern borders of medieval Hungary caused migrations of the population. Catholic inhabitants of southern Hungary moved north-west due to the so-called 'fear of the Turks.' This demographic gap was filled by migrants from the Balkans, mainly orthodox Serbs. Furthermore, a discontinuity in daily religious life can be noted from the facts of the dissolution of the medieval Hungarian state and the exclusion from papal jurisdiction of the area under Ottoman control. The remaining Catholics were relieved from the religious discipline imposed earlier by their Church.

The Reformation made all aforementioned spiritual graces superfluous for the 'saving of the soul.' Changes in the religious affiliations of the population of southern Hungary arising from the Ottoman conquest made addressing the papal seat impossible. Thus, the population of the region suddenly ceased to address the highest ecclesiastical authority with their petitions. This serves to inform us of the discontinuity that had occurred.

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Conclusion

Books and Objects Supporting Quotidian Devotion

*Conclusions and Prospects for Investigating Daily Religious Practices during the 'Long Fifteenth Century'**

Studying Christianity in late medieval Europe is a multifaceted task: here, during this period, the Christian faith was so deep-rooted that it underlay every single aspect of human activity — politics, society, education, culture, and even the humblest routines of daily life. The present collective volume has its focus on the latter, namely on the concrete impact that Christianity — Catholic and Reformed — had on the daily occupations of diverse late medieval Europeans. Although this topic has already received scholarly attention, the present collection of essays refreshes our consideration of its central theme by adopting wide boundaries, not only in terms of chronology, but also in terms of space. It is not the first study endeavouring to bridge the traditional academic gap between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries: previous

* I am happy to thank the editors of this volume for having entrusted to me the delightful mission of reading it in advance and of writing conclusions for it. I am especially grateful to Ian Johnson for having inserted into the first draft of my prose a generous provision of idiomatic English expressions, and for having worked at the clarification and contextualization of certain points that have been extended, glossed, and elaborated through his agency.

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Religious Practices and Everyday Life in the Long Fifteenth Century (1350–1570): Interpreting Changes and Changes of Interpretation, ed. by Ian Johnson and Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, New Communities of Interpretation, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), pp. 377–402

publications have brought together both periods.¹ Recently, a few studies and essays have forged an expression, namely the ‘long fifteenth century’, which conveniently covers various endeavours to bridge the late Middle Ages and early modern times.² Following on from these, this collective volume contributes to the current academic endeavour — no longer scanty — that does its best to compensate for centuries of cleavage between medievalists and specialists of the early modern period. Its wide geographical focus, however, is more of a novelty, especially in being combined with a large timeframe, as it chooses to encompass the whole of western Christendom, from Mediterranean countries (Italy, Spain, and Portugal) to northern Europe, and from England to Slavic, Baltic, and Balkan territories (Bohemia, Poland, Lithuania, and Serbia).

The lofty ambitions of this collective study can also be identified in its concern with religious movements. One of its utmost assets is the attention it pays to the shifting borders of western Christendom through studies of regions where, owing to conquest or cohabitation, different religions interacted, be they Christianity and Islam;³ or Christianity, Islam and Judaism (as in the

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- 1 See, for instance, Collinson, ‘The Late Medieval Church and Its Reformation’; Goudriaan, ‘Geert Grote’ or Goudriaan, ‘The Church and the Market’. For any thorough idea of the recent bibliography dealing with the history of Christianity and Christian culture and bringing together the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, this list would have to be expanded exponentially.
 - 2 e.g. Cooper and Mapstone, eds, *The Long Fifteenth Century*. Ghosh, in ‘Wyclif, Arundel’, seems to consider the ‘long fifteenth century’ as a given and natural framework, inasmuch as the formulation appears only in the title of the paper, and he does not dwell thereafter either on its boundaries or on the period it actually covers. Sabrina Corbellini’s research often bridges the late Middle Ages and early modern times (see, for instance, Corbellini, ‘Mapping Spiritual Life’; or Corbellini and Hoogvliet, ‘Artisans and Religious Reading’, each of which deals with both the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries). Corbellini, ‘Reading, Writing, and Collecting’, considers the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and Corbellini and others, ‘Challenging the Paradigms’, embracing a time-span from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, has ended up making the ‘long fifteenth century’, as she defines it, a period covering the years 1350–1570 — the main target of the COST Action that she initiated and directed. The Action’s collective goal has been ‘to develop and communicate a better calibrated and nuanced understanding of religious and cultural change in the “long fifteenth century”’ (see the official ‘Memorandum of Understanding’, which served as a source of inspiration and of collective tuning for the COST Action ‘New Communities of Interpretation: Contexts, Strategies and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe’, n° IS1301, 2014–2017). Delineating such a large period and naming it ‘the long fifteenth century’ not only makes sense for historians of religion in Western Christendom, it also applies to the history of science (see French, ‘Introduction: The “Long Fifteenth Century” of Medical History’), and, in some significant ways, to the history of illustrations (Veyseyre, ‘Le livre illustré du “long XVe siècle”’), to English literature. For this, see Woodcock, ‘England in the Long Fifteenth Century’, who comments on the expression, quoting Cooper and Mapstone, eds, *The Long Fifteenth Century*, p. 510.
 - 3 Abramović and Dajč, ‘The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity’, deals not only with the Balkan peninsula, but also with the islands of Crete and Cyprus, thereby defining the Balkans in the sixteenth century as a ‘the boundaries, or rather, [point] of contact between the Islamic and Christian world’ (p. 324).

Iberian peninsula);⁴ or Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy; or even, in different combinations in different times and places, Catholicism, Utraquism, Wycliffism, Lutheranism, Erasmianism, not forgetting other kinds of reform movement sooner or later considered unorthodox by the Roman Church.

This book's spectrum is also wide in terms of the social layers examined: the implication of one's faith in one's daily schedule is studied among clerics (monks, friars, nuns, priests, or canons) and laypeople, and among a wide range of believers whose culture varied from the most sophisticated theologians to the illiterate, with a special emphasis on all of the Christians who, somewhere between these two extremes, could read the vernacular proficiently and gain access to a glimpse or more of what the specialists in late medieval English religious literary culture name 'vernacular theology';⁵ or at least of prayer books translated and designed for their specific use.⁶

Addressing such an ample topic entails a twofold risk: being sketchy and being inconsistent — two shortcomings which this collection of essays avoids, thanks to the multifaceted links, more or less patent, interconnecting the individual outputs of this collective research. Some of these bridges between different linguistic areas, between the Middle Ages and early modern times, or between divergent beliefs, stem spontaneously from the facts under consideration. This is particularly obvious where geography is concerned. From the early Middle Ages onwards, the Christian faith, in concert with a directive, going back to the Carolingian period, to restore scholarly Latin, fostered the cultural unity of western Christendom, at least as far as learned elites were concerned. Later on, international relationships among Christian territories were consolidated by monastic orders establishing international networks whose interconnections prompted national and linguistic borders to be crossed frequently, whether through various modes of institutional transfer or the movement of individuals. Such dynamics were amply developed in the thirteenth century through the emergence of the mendicant orders and the gradual establishment of a European network of universities allowing students to take a *peregrinatio academica*,⁷ to say nothing of the transnational links constantly maintained by popular pilgrimages or the regular movement of people, documents, and other objects to and from the papal residence in

4 Abramović and Dajč, 'The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity', p. 324; Samardžić, '*De praeparatione ad mortem*', p. 306.

5 The term, though not invented by Watson, gained particular prominence in the wake of his 1995 article, 'Censorship and Cultural Change'. Watson's views have been challenged ever since, for example, by Minnis and Brewer, eds, *Crux and Controversy*; Gillespie, 'Vernacular Books'; Johnson, 'Vernacular Valorizing'; Gillespie, 'Vernacular Theology'; and Johnson, 'Vernacular Theology / Theological Vernacular'.

6 See, for example, Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', pp. 162–63.

7 An example of this is provided in the present volume by the *peregrinationes academice* of the Lithuanian Abraham Culvensis, who 'studied at the Universities of Crakow, Louvain, Wittenberg, and Siena, emerging from the last of these as a Doctor of Jurisprudence' (Stančienė, 'The Reformation and the First Book', p. 208).

Rome (or, for a shorter period, Avignon), which functioned as the centre of a transnational domain held together by papal jurisdiction and authority.⁸ In such a context, prayer beads, whose origin is probably Islamic, did not spread across western Christendom by accident: the rosary, for instance, was promoted by three successive international orders: first by the Carthusians in Trier, then by the Dominicans with Alain de la Roche, and eventually by other religious orders.⁹

As far as Church history is concerned, the coherence of western Christendom is a given fact, and the space delineated in the present book naturally appears as relevant. It allows the different chapters not only to bring together people or communities actually in touch with each other, thanks to their spatial vicinity or their belonging to the same networks (for instance the same religious order,¹⁰ or the same intellectual milieu), but also to compare groups of people or establishments whose tantalizing resemblances to each other were never fostered by any kind of contact, even indirect, between them. Such is the case in the essay fittingly bringing together not only the Poor Clares of Barcelona and the Brigittine nuns of Syon Abbey (England), but also, more pertinently, their use of devotional books and the role that these books were made to play in efforts to build collective memories for either monastery.¹¹ Both communities of sisters celebrated their offices and said their prayers far away from each other, in female monasteries with different origins: the first goes as far back as 1236, whereas the latter was founded by Henry V in 1415;¹² the first, moreover, was Franciscan until the Observant reform and then Benedictine, whereas the second was Birgittine. Nevertheless, there were striking similarities in their use of liturgical manuscripts, which in both cases interwove 'liturgical and devotional content with self-referencing texts',¹³ namely memorial texts helping to cultivate the memory of deceased people for their importance to the community. In both monasteries, at least some of the nuns were encouraged to develop skills allowing them to use and produce books, and

8 The important role of the papacy at the periphery of Western Christendom in southern Hungary before it was disrupted by the Lutheran Reform and the Ottoman conquest, is clearly shown in Rokai, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Everyday Religious Life in Southern Hungary', pp. 355–56. The importance of the papacy is also proved by the disarray caused by the schism (see for, instance, the introduction of Samardžić, *De praeparatione ad mortem*, p. 305).

9 Saczyńska-Vercamer, 'Change and Continuity in Lay Devotion', pp. 110–11.

10 For example, the Canonries of Marbach (Alsace) and Roudnice (Bohemia), whose statutes share too much substance for their overlap to be merely coincidental (Ebersonová, 'Religious Practices of the Canons Regular', pp. 30–31).

11 Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', pp. 54 and 62.

12 Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', pp. 51–53.

13 Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', p. 64.

even texts.¹⁴ The proficiency they demonstrate in doing so makes them comparable with the Dominican nuns of Aveiro (Portugal) whose house, founded in 1461 — even later than Syon Abbey —, was a major centre of the Reform movement. In consequence, a proportion of their residents not only studied Latin in order to celebrate the liturgy in the best conditions, but also had plenty of opportunities to read and write, enjoying quotidian contacts with books and diverse documents (accounts, reports).¹⁵ Again, though this community was not in direct contact with either the Birgittines of Syon or the Franciscan nuns of Barcelona, they were comparable with them in many ways: the overlaps of their daily life span three different orders whose residents lived in three distinct linguistic areas.

Beyond this case study, the present collection of essays allows its readers to gain access to plenty of fresh and enlightening examples serving to nourish their appreciation of the cohesion of western Christendom. First of all, it provides fresh illustrations of the natural tendency of orders to foster uniformity, at least to a certain extent. The Obedient movement and the general reform it promoted gave new impetus to this trend in the regions this book considers. These include not only the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, but also Spain.¹⁶ Adéla Eberssonová's case study on the Canons Regular of St Augustine exemplifies this phenomenon from another point of view. This order positioned its members somewhere between the secular and the regular clergy, and its initial rule was elusive and abstract enough to allow each congregation, down to each canonry, to cultivate certain specificities in daily life.¹⁷ The statutes extant for Bohemia attest to this, at least until the middle of the fourteenth century. After that, the authority bestowed by the Observant movement on the Latin statutes of Roudnice and the members of its canonry made them so influential that they became mandatory in all the houses of the order, not only in Bohemia but also in Moravia. They were subsequently adopted in a wider region including Poland, Slovakia, Germany, and Austria. These statutes, which became even more important than the original rule of the order, were far more prescriptive and restrictive than the original rule, not least because they dealt with more concrete realities. Under their stipulations, the daily life of all the canons living in this large area without doubt became more standardized and less flexible. In that the *Consuetudines Rudnicenses* were

14 Such intellectual skills were deeply rooted in the Birgittine nuns of Syon Abbey (individually and collectively), as shown by the continuous and multi-handed updating of their Martyrology (London, BL, MS Additional 22285), which went on even after they were exiled from England by the Reformation (Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', p. 13). Even this brutal change of scenery does not seem to have undermined the nuns' intellectual aspirations and baggage.

15 See Moiteiro, 'Literacy, Books, and the Community', pp. 87–88.

16 See Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', p. 52.

17 Eberssonová, 'Religious Practices of the Canons Regular', pp. 28–29.

widely disseminated and enjoyed unopposed authority, they make the particulars of everyday life easier and more reliable to imagine for modern historians than would otherwise be the case.

The noticeable unity of western Christendom was also an outcome of the long-lasting effects of the Fourth Lateran Council. Although this important milestone predates the beginning of the 'long fifteenth century' as defined here by more than two centuries, some of its effects still influenced Christian daily life in the later Middle Ages and early modern times. For instance, the fear of the Purgatory still inspired supplications sent to the Holy See in fifteenth-century Hungary.¹⁸ It also seems that the importance given to confession and contrition in 1215 had both fast and slow effects. The emphasis put by Lateran IV on personal responsibility for one's salvation kept on developing for the whole of the long fifteenth century, and maybe even after that, as shown by the shifts observed by Joost Robbe in the *Artes moriendi* between 1403 and 1475.¹⁹

Another well-known feature brought together a wide-reaching majority of late medieval Europeans: their common and acute awareness of human mortality. It prompted their regular use of clerical guidance already available from the earlier Middle Ages to those about to cross the mortal divide. It steadily and spectacularly increased their demand for rituals, texts, books, and objects enabling not only dying individuals but also members of the family and close friends assisting them, to perform actions, ask questions, and pronounce prayers that would prove as efficacious as possible, especially in the event of an unexpected death occurring before the sacraments could be administered to the dying by the clergy. Consequently, *Artes moriendi* books became bestsellers over the 'long fifteenth century', enjoying spectacular Europe-wide success. To the *Artes moriendi* should be added the wide dissemination of works including chapters or sections dealing with death — catechisms like Brother Laurent's *Somme le roi*,²⁰ spiritual treatises like the *Horologium Sapientiae* by Heinrich Seuse,²¹ and prayer books.²² Considering the importance of mortality in the literature and material life of the late Middle Ages, devoting a whole section of this collective monograph to the concrete ways in which late medieval Christians prepared for their

18 Rokai, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Everyday Religious Life in Southern Hungary', pp. 358–59.

19 See the conclusions to 'The Kingdom of Heaven', pp. 236–37.

20 Quoted in Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 243.

21 Heinrich Seuse's *Horologium Sapientiae* and its European translations are listed in José Van Aelst, Steven Rozenski and Réjane Gay-Canton, 'Henry Suso (c. 1295–1366): a brief introduction to his life and works', published in 2012 on the website of the research project *Old Pious Vernacular Successes* (ERC Starting Grant n° 263274). See <http://www.opvs.fr>, accessed 30 August 2021.

22 With the exception of Bohemian prayer books in the vernacular, in which 'the Office of the Dead appears only rarely' (Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', p. 168).

'Death and [...] Afterlife' is not disproportionate. The theme of how to handle death, moreover, coursing as it does through so many essays in this book, contributes to the interconnectedness of the collection as a whole. In late medieval literature, the way death is apprehended by Christians in *Artes moriendi* (e.g. preparing for one's death, funeral rituals, and so on) is so ubiquitous that even this one dedicated section is insufficient to gather all of its occurrences. Accordingly, contributions in more than one other section of this book cover different aspects of death.²³

One notorious fact is illustrated afresh in the 'Preparing for Death and the Afterlife' section of the present volume, namely the constant (almost obsessive) awareness of one's own death during the 'long fifteenth century':²⁴ *Moriens*, the protagonist of the *Artes moriendi*, seems to have come to terms with the allegorical character Everyman in terms of readers' potential identification. At that time, the collective and individual anxiety of Christians contemplating their own passing was sharpened by some of their spiritual guides, which fostered the vivid imagining of the corporeal and spiritual consequences of death. Their way of dealing with the subject is not a pure novelty, but their resort to concrete and even sometimes crude images contrasts with the abstract discourse employed by earlier catechisms and elementary treatises approaching this matter. Their customary abstraction is illustrated, for instance, by one of the European bestsellers of the time, the *Somme le roi*, which circulated widely not only in manuscript form, but also in early prints, especially in England.²⁵ This religious and moral manual was composed in 1279 by a certain Brother Laurent, Dominican confessor of Philip III the Bold, King of France at the time. It spread not only in France, among the clergy as well as the laity, but also in England, where, in addition to the French manuscripts that had crossed the Channel, it was translated into English. In the Netherlands

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- 23 The ritual of funerals stands out as one of those for which Balkan communities recently converted to Islam shunned Crypto-Christianity (see Abramović and Dajč, 'The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity', p. 326). By contrast, on the subject of Christian monastic funerals, see Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', pp. 65–66, for instance, referring to the books used by the Franciscan Poor Clares of Barcelona when one of the nuns was about to die [pp. 59–60]: a mention that proves that the habit of using *Artes moriendi* or substitutes for them was not exclusively a lay custom, but also one prevailing among religious communities. The rituals surrounding the deathbed or sickbed of the nuns of Aveiro (Portugal) are also hinted at in Moiteiro, who mentions Passion narratives being read aloud to the bedridden (Moiteiro, 'Literacy, Books, and the Community', p. 90).
- 24 As far as England is concerned, Delphine Mercuzot describes it as an 'excruciating anxiety about death' ('Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 244; quoting Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*). This finds its counterpart in sixteenth-century Spain with Charles V and his contemporaries, for whom death, and especially the emperor's own trespass, is described as 'a complex obsession' (Samardžić, '*De praeparatione ad mortem*', p. 310).
- 25 See Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 243, especially footnote 9.

the work was translated into Dutch, and at least one Italian translation of this manual survives.

In order to promote virtue, its author starts with the following reminder:

Tu dois savoir que ceste vie n'est fors que mort. Que morz est un trespas, ce set chascuns. [...]

Ceste vie tant seulement

N'est fors un trespasement,

Voire voir un trespas mout briés.²⁶

(You should be aware that earthly life is nothing but death. Everybody is aware that dying consists in crossing a threshold. [...])

Our mundane life consists in nothing

But crossing the earth,

Nay truly crossing it very quickly.)

The content of this statement is a *memento mori* prioritizing moral teaching. Just as in Caxton's print of one of the English translations of the *Somme*, 'it hardly deals with death at all and is more concerned with the art of living,'²⁷ Indeed, mortality makes only the mildest of impressions on the reader of this work: no effort is made to embody either death or its corrupting consequences on the mortal human body. Earthly life and the continuity of the human lifetime with death are approached in terms of the speed with which time passes and with a tame play on the words *trespas* and *trespasser*, both of which mean either 'to cross a threshold' or, in a narrower and metaphorical sense, 'to die.' Other authors and illustrators choosing to deal with death in the later Middle Ages were more likely to seek out their readers' imaginations, and, as a consequence, to portray death far more impressively.²⁸ Did these compelling *memento mori* help more spectacularly than intellectual admonitions did to promote morality and good behaviour? Authors and painters of the time seem to have thought so, considering the frequent use of *Artes moriendi* — books or texts — and other narratives or legendary models staging death, for instance the Legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, in sermons, paintings (murals or manuscript illuminations),²⁹ and other didactic tools. The use of this theme, together with the images and texts connected with it, was so pervasive that it gradually became part of everybody's daily life. All around Europe at this time, whether they took the form of objects, images, performances, texts, or something else, *memento mori* reminders addressing Christians' reason or emotions were

²⁶ Laurent d'Orléans, *La Somme le roi*, ed. by Brayer and Leurquin-Labie.

²⁷ O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, p. 18; quoted in Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 243, footnote 9.

²⁸ See, for instance, Rywиковá, 'Death Multiplied', p. 287.

²⁹ See Rywиковá, 'Death Multiplied', pp. 273–76.

commonplace and on everybody's mind.³⁰ This is attested, for example, by the growing dimensions of charnel houses built adjacent to churches not only as ossuaries but as places for celebrating the liturgy.³¹

The collective fixation on death, combined with an increasing emphasis on personal responsibility for one's own salvation,³² resulted in the emergence and development of devotional activities and spiritual practices. Their origins may be traceable as far back as the thirteenth century and Lateran IV, but they flourished much later, from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, pervading laypeople's domestic space just as friars occupied the public space of city streets, squares, and yards. The daily schedule of more and more laypeople seems to have included, on an individual level, a variety of spiritual activities: founding and attending masses for souls in Purgatory;³³ uttering personal prayers (perhaps while manipulating prayer beads, a rosary, or using a prayer book); worshipping saints (assisted perhaps by hagiographical texts or portraits of personally favoured saints); invoking the Virgin Mary; and, even more importantly and significantly, adoring Christ, ruminating and sharing his humility and the suffering he endured throughout his Passion. Such active spiritual engagement paved the way for contemplation. By doing so, women's timetables could meet, or at least could come closer to, the standards appointed for housewives by the French, Spanish, and Italian clerics who, in the treatises that they wrote for them, advised women to spare as much time as possible for contemplation, ignoring almost completely the material duties and social obligations that made their life different from that of nuns.³⁴

In her study of such treatises, whose contents she compares with that of sermons, Geneviève Hasenohr reports a striking disparity, in terms of flexibility, between the way clerics deal with men and women.³⁵ Only three categories of women are distinguished, namely virgins, spouses, and widows — categories not updated since the Church Fathers and not taking into consideration any of the differences existing between the daily schedule

30 In Spain, poetry also treated issues of 'actively coping with dying and death', as did satirical literature in the fifteenth century, and drama in the sixteenth (Samaržić, '*De praeparatione ad mortem*', p. 310).

31 Rywiková, 'Death Multiplied', p. 282.

32 As proved, among other arguments, by the analysis provided by Joost Robbe of the way Gerson's *Ars moriendi* (1403) is rewritten in the *Speculum artis bene moriendi* (second quarter of the fifteenth century), and even more clearly in the adaptation of the latter in the slightly later *Picture ars moriendi* (third quarter of the fifteenth century). See Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven', respectively pp. 223–26 and 226–32.

33 Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 244.

34 Hasenohr, 'La vie quotidienne de la femme vue par l'Église'; reprinted and updated recently in Hasenohr, *Textes de dévotion*, ed. by Hubert and others, especially pp. 634 and 640–41. On the help provided by prayer books (especially Hours and Missals) for laypeople aiming at giving their daily existence a contemplative or quasi-monastic flavour, see Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', pp. 245–46.

35 Hasenohr, 'La vie quotidienne de la femme vue par l'Église', pp. 632–34.

of peasants, bourgeois women, and members of the high aristocracy. By contrast, as far as men were concerned, clerical authors of prescriptive treatises observed the social distinctions fostered since Lateran IV by collections of *sermones ad status*: hence their efforts to adapt their teaching and their requirements to the social and worldly obligations that men were not permitted to skip.

The present volume does not allow us to ascertain the stability and consistency of the disparities between the ways in which women and men were considered, but it confirms that the authors of religious texts and books took into account the fact that their recipients may have had to share their time between devotion and other activities, due to professional or social obligations — sometimes even taking into account the professional skills their recipients had acquired and the technical vocabulary that they employed while exerting them.³⁶ The present collection of essays offers novel and enlightening examples of this pliability, which seems to increase during the long fifteenth century. The most striking example is probably the contents of the prayer book offered to George of Poděbrady at Christmas 1466 by his wife, Queen Joanna of Rožmitál. Ever since it was copied, it contained a set of short prayers attributed to St Jerome (Jerome's Psalter) and designed specifically, according to its prologue, for the 'sick, the pilgrims, and the soldiers', namely those who could not afford to pray the whole sequence of psalms or Marian Hours. These prayers were complemented, not long after this lavish book was offered to its recipient, by the short prayer *Before the Battle* (fol. 1^r), which directly echoes the urgent needs of a king judged heretical by the pope, deposed from his throne, and as a consequence defending himself against a crusade raised against him and his subjects by the Church.³⁷ The short prayer *Before the Battle* could have been replaced by the part of *Artes moriendi* in which their reader is provided with the instructions to follow in case of a sudden seizure;³⁸ nevertheless, it seems that the military threat prompts its victims to resort to expedients different from those turned to by people hit by disease or old age. Anyway, in both cases, prayers provided by memory or books are the best insurance against any menace. Over time, ready-made sets of prayers were prepared for all kinds of circumstances, just as collections of *sermones ad status* were prepared for any social class. In consequence, two converse trends coexisted during the long fifteenth century: on the one hand, specialized books whose contents were designed or customized according to place, religion, social status, and even gender, mushroomed, fostering the emergence of multiple 'sub-communities of interpretation'. On the other

36 See the introduction to Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', pp. 176–77 and 188–89. In a different way, the *Picture ars moriendi* takes into account the ideal of the late medieval nobility in transforming *Dying* into a 'spiritual knight' (Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven', pp. 236–36).

37 Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', p. 154.

38 Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven', p. 231.

hand, thanks to ever-rising literacy, the community of readers grew bigger and bigger, especially in proportion to the total population. This increasing Christian readership gained, more and more easily, access to a common religious culture acquired from texts impossible to avoid. Indeed, they often obtained from books even more than they did from sermons, performances, or images.

In a period when the use of vernacular languages significantly challenged the exclusivity of Latin in the religious field, this collection makes it obvious that the infrastructure of a Europe-wide common culture was strong enough to allow texts to circulate from one linguistic area to the next almost as swiftly and consistently as theological treatises in Latin circulated in the vast networks of European universities, religious orders, and the Church hierarchy.

In addition to this, the present volume helps us realize that the new faiths parting from Catholicism also created their own international networks and *peregrinationes*, sometimes reusing well-established links. Indeed, supporters of the Reform in Siena had a positive influence on the Lithuanian pioneering Reformist Abraham Culvensis, who planned to translate the Bible into Lithuanian, collaborating with Stanislaus Rapagelanus. Both of these wished to emulate Luther's German translation published in 1534. As a consequence, Lutheranism influenced the early production of printers in Lithuania. The first printers who were active there worked at disseminating Lutheran doctrine through the medium of the vernacular book. The contents of the first book published in Lithuania and in the Lithuanian language, whose ambitions were pitched particularly high, were no accident.³⁹ Its print dissemination not only reflected, at a larger level, the influence on Lithuania of countries where Protestantism first appeared, but also enlarged and shaped a community ideologically akin to those of the Lutherans of western Europe.

In consequence, it seems that theological debates and the emergence of reformist movements judged heretical by the Catholic Church, far from undoing the interconnectedness of western Christendom, created new networks within its space, which challenged anterior connections (such as the links between Lithuania and the papacy), but also replaced them by new, well-organized, and even institutionalized networks, some of which were connected to temporal powers. For instance, in Lithuania, the Reform was promoted by Albrecht, the Duke of Prussia, an official supporter of Martin Luther. Even where Catholicism maintained its pre-eminence as the sole officially recognized faith (as in England or, most of the time, in Bohemia, with the exception of the reign of George of Poděbrady [1458–1471]), overlaps and mutual influence could emerge between reformist theologians of different countries, not even necessarily neighbours, as was the case with the English

39 Stančiene, 'The Reformation and the First Book', pp. 210–11.

John Wyclif and the Bohemian John Hus,⁴⁰ both of whom were convicted in 1415 by the Council of Constance as two sides of the same coin.⁴¹

In terms of chronology, examining the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a whole has never been unusual,⁴² and it has also become less exceptional to bridge together the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, especially since the dawning of debates not only on the traditional periodization separating the Middle Ages and Renaissance but also on the very concepts and terminology of 'Renaissance', 'Middle Ages', and 'Reform'.⁴³ Nevertheless, to encompass a time-span as large as the present collection does — from 1350 to 1570 — is distinctive, especially in the context of dealing with such a large geographic area.⁴⁴ Broadening the chronological focus of the study to such a degree that its core, the fifteenth century, is not only 'long' but in effect multiplied by more than two, allows the reader of the present volume to appreciate the evolution, transformations, and maturation of a wealth of interesting and significant materials and themes over an extensive period. Such is the case with prayer beads and the rosary: two studies in this book enable us to follow them from their origins until, promoted by the Dominicans (particularly in Italy and in Germany),⁴⁵ they were completely implanted not just in daily Catholic routine but even in the textual culture of Catholic Italy. The two chapters on this topic also enhance a more general understanding of the progressive extension and standardization of the use of prayer beads and the rosary across the Catholic countries of early modern Europe.

A further topic fitting for study over a long run, in this instance bridging the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, is provided by the case of books that preserved (usually by recording deaths) the memory not just of individuals

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- 40 On the influence of Wyclif's writings in Bohemia, and especially on the Hussites, see for instance Hudson, 'From Oxford to Prague', Hudson, 'The Survival of Wyclif's Works'; Herold, 'Zum Prager Philosophischen Wyclifismus'; Kras, 'Recepcja Pism Johna Wiclifa' (Reception of the Writings of John Wyclif); and Herold, 'The Spiritual Background'. For comparisons between the opinions and agencies of both theologians, see for instance Wilks, 'Reformatio Regni'. The other way round, the — more anecdotal — visit of a Hussite to Scotland is documented in the years 1430 (Vyšný, 'A Hussite in Scotland').
- 41 About Wyclif's conviction, see Tatnall, 'The Condemnation of John Wycliff', and Ghosh, 'Wyclif, Arundel'. About Jan Hus's trial, see Miethke, 'Die Prozesse in Konstanz'; Fudge, 'O Cursed Judas'; Providente, 'Hus's Trial in Constance'.
- 42 e.g. Verger, 'Different Values and Authorities', a study that focuses on the shifts discernible in mentalities between 1300 and 1500.
- 43 Literature on the topic is quoted in the introduction to Sebök, 'Traditions and Transitions', pp. 335–36.
- 44 Some of the facts under consideration do not recede until the middle of the twentieth century — for instance, the practices of 'Crypto-Christianity' analysed by Abramović and Dajč ('The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity', p. 325), some of which had roots in a very ancient paganism (p. 333).
- 45 On Italy, see Ardisino, 'A Daily Devotion', pp. 129 and 132; on Germany, see Martin, 'Behind the Scene'.

important to a monastery but also of the less noteworthy individual religious.⁴⁶ Another subject benefiting from examination over an extensive time-span is the literary tradition providing guidance to Christians on how to die well. The wide dissemination of *Artes moriendi* literature is discernible from the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. 1403 saw the appearance of Gerson's bilingual *Opus tripartitum* in Latin and in Middle French:⁴⁷ one could not measure their impact without being able to observe their distribution in both manuscript and print. An insight into both is possible, however, thanks to the complementary studies by Joost Robbe and Delphine Mercuzot. Caxton's prints are among the best illustrations of the continuity between manuscript and print culture, not only for the *Artes moriendi*, but also for other religious — and even profane — prints. With implications beyond the *Artes moriendi*, the choices that William Caxton made disclose another thought-provoking leitmotif of this collection of essays: that most changes followed a path that was anything but straightforward and linear, especially when it came to religious texts and practices. So, although vivid and impressive images flourished in the tradition of the *Artes moriendi*,⁴⁸ Caxton, ever the 'sharp businessman',⁴⁹ chose, for his own good reasons, to publish two successive *Artes moriendi* devoid of any images.⁵⁰

Case studies examining people (individuals or communities), books, objects, or texts that stand out against mainstream developments are conspicuous. By taking into account quite a few of these documented exceptions, this book avoids oversimplification of the big picture. On the contrary, it offers a nuanced overview (especially in terms of chronology and periodization) of the 'slow transition and coexisting traditions' characterizing the late Middle Ages and early modern times.⁵¹

Indubitably, such a formula of 'slow transition and coexisting traditions' could serve well as a sub-title for several chapters in this book. Nevertheless, it is used with particular relevance in Marcell Sebók's study of the county of Szepes in Hungary (nowadays Spiš in Slovakia) during the sixteenth century. In addition to this, his essay conjoins two further issues that keep emerging and re-emerging throughout this book: firstly, stability and change, and secondly, centre and periphery. Accordingly, Sebók demonstrates that in peripheral

46 On the 'construction of collective memory in the monastic communities of Europe' during the late Middle Ages and early modern times (a Europe-wide phenomenon deserving scholarly attention), see Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', p. 71.

47 Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven'.

48 The block books mentioned and defined by Joost Robbe ('The Kingdom of Heaven') provide ample illustration of the phenomenon.

49 Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 248.

50 Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 247, where reasons for this choice are examined.

51 Sebók, 'Traditions and Transitions', p. 339 (concerning diverse regional factors fostering a *vis inertiae*) and p. 350.

areas of Christianity like the county of Szepes, knowledge and practices did not only travel from the centre to the margins, but they also negotiated other dynamics and circumstances, namely ‘interactions and, often, synchronicity.’⁵²

The interconnectedness of the studies in this book is not only the result of observing and elucidating converging and interrelated phenomena, its coherent thematic remit offers opportunities for different authors to deal with common objects: rosaries are the central object of Erminia Ardissino’s paper; they also belong to Monica Saczyńska-Vercamer’s study, and they are touched upon in the study by Blanca Garí and her colleagues of the monastery of Sant Antoni i Santa Clara in Barcelona.⁵³ Other specific or more general topics are echoed from chapter to chapter: for instance, the practice (or disapproval) of indulgences;⁵⁴ the emergence and agency of confraternities;⁵⁵ the issue of how to cater for any given Christian’s reason or affective disposition, and whether to do so by excluding one of the pair or by choosing to combine them in whatever proportions were deemed suitable;⁵⁶ the complex joins between individuals and communities;⁵⁷ or the interface between religious teaching

52 Sebök, ‘Traditions and Transitions’, p. 336.

53 Ardissino, ‘A Daily Devotion’; Saczyńska-Vercamer, ‘Change and Continuity in Lay Devotion’; Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, ‘The Devotional Book in Context’.

54 See, as prime examples in this collection, Rokai, ‘Continuity and Discontinuity in Everyday Religious Life in Southern Hungary’; Dienstbier, ‘The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady’, p. 169, and Mercuzot, ‘Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*’, p. 244.

55 Important in Italy according to Ardissino, ‘A Daily Devotion’, and evidenced in Poland (Saczyńska-Vercamer, ‘Change and Continuity in Lay Devotion’, p. 105).

56 This issue has already been addressed in the existing bibliography. For instance, with regard to English religious literature of the late Middle Ages, see Gillespie, ‘Vernacular Theology’: ‘pathways that mimic the more affective, devotional, and intuitive features of the meditative and psychologically catalytic “monastic” spirituality reflected in the religious prose that appeared in the vernacular in such rich abundance in the years after 1380, and continued to enrich it throughout the fifteenth century’. In the present collection of essays this issue is examined anew, for instance, by Mercuzot, ‘Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*’, p. 248, who observes a shift in *Artes moriendi* rhetorics between fifteenth-century treatises ‘encouraging readers to think about salvation in a very affective way’ and sixteenth-century *Artes*, who prioritize their intellects. In late medieval England, the pressures to avoid the reproval of the official Church by finding the right balance between trusting reason too much and trusting too much one’s own spiritual powers made for an interestingly fraught landscape. On one side, Reginald Pecock conflated the law of reason with the ‘law of nature’, prioritizing it above Scripture itself (see Johnson, ‘The “Goostly Chaffare” of Reginald Pecock’, pp. 179–sqq and p. 193). On the other side, some Lollards gained notoriety for allegedly claiming that their humility and charity gave them, in effect, the full understanding of Holy Writ. Later, the choice made by Erasmus to cultivate reason under the double influence of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which ‘alike legitimized a rational belief in improvement through learning’ (Samaržić, ‘*De praeparatione ad mortem*’, p. 308), was dangerous enough for him to be summoned by the Spanish Inquisition (1527) (p. 307).

57 Mutations of Crypto-Christianity at individual and group levels are observed in the Balkans (Abramović and Dajč, ‘The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity’).

and morals⁵⁸ (for several works are on the border between religious treatises and *miroirs des princes*).⁵⁹ In addition to this, the more crucial issues of the *Devotio moderna*, of the Observant movement, of the use of the vernacular in the religious field, of the devotion to Christ's passion, and several other leitmotifs of late medieval Christianity either underlie or come up to the surface, in different combinations and in diverse proportions, throughout the whole of the volume.

Such thematic overlaps would remain superficial, perhaps even artificial, if the bonds between and amongst individual essays were not founded as a matter of priority on a harmonized methodology aiming to tackle collectively a knot of entangled issues. This does not mean that disciplinary tools have been merged or that the most specific of them have been given up. On the contrary, the field of expertise of each author is apparent and well defined: philosophy and sociology underlie Dalia Stančienė's study of early modern Lithuania;⁶⁰ art history provides Jan Dienstbier and Daniela Riwyková with the suitable implements for examining illuminations and mural paintings;⁶¹ philology provides Ebersonová and Robbe with their major premises,⁶² as it does for Delphine Mercuzot, who combines literary scholarship with expertise in the history of early prints.⁶³ Each author, then, employs specific skills in dealing with well-defined issues, which are highlighted in the introduction to the present volume. One crucial focus is the emergence of 'new communities of interpretation' among the European societies of the time, in which literate, illiterate, and moderately literate people acted and interacted more than before, especially in the religious field.⁶⁴ The example of the London parishes, to which freshly graduated Oxford theologians were sent, from the fifteenth century onwards,⁶⁵ in order to answer as adequately as possible the growing spiritual demands of merchants and other members of the urban bourgeoisie, is characteristic of this evolution.⁶⁶ Whatever the initial or enduring gaps of knowledge that may have existed between average Christians and clerks appointed to their parish or to their monastery (especially where nuns were concerned), both parties had enough to share in terms of common practices

58 For instance, in the sermons delivered by qualified priests in the parishes of London (Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', p. 185).

59 e.g. Brother Laurent's *Somme le roi*, and the *Institutio Principis Christiani* by Erasmus (Samardžić, 'De praeparatione ad mortem', p. 307).

60 'The Reformation and the First Books', pp. 201–14.

61 Respectively in 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', pp. 151–73, and 'Multiplication of Death', pp. 273–304.

62 Respectively in 'Religious Practices of Regular Canons', pp. 23–48, and 'The Kingdom of Heaven', pp. 217–39.

63 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 241–72.

64 See, for instance, Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', p. 189.

65 Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', p. 185.

66 Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', p. 185.

and daily life — uttering the same prayers, reading the same books,⁶⁷ some of which, written for helping modest priests in their pastoral activities, ended up in laypeople's hands⁶⁸ — or the other way round.⁶⁹ Through such processes they became specific communities, delineated by idiosyncrasies which could go as far as estranging them from some of the official orders issued by the Church authorities.⁷⁰

Such a degree of tolerance seems to have been possible as long as daily practices and rituals were concerned, without any dogmatic debate being engaged.⁷¹ It became more problematic when it came to dissenting over concepts, as shown by the condemnation of Jan Hus and the difficulties faced by his followers, among whom was one of their defenders, King George of Bohemia. For all the tensions between them, Utraquists had a lot in common with Catholics, as they worshipped saints and the Virgin, believed in the power of the sacraments, and refused to allow the clergy to marry.⁷² Such substantial overlaps provided King George with the opportunity to appoint a Catholic chaplain and to live peacefully with a Catholic wife.⁷³ Despite all this, the Hussites' ideas concerning indulgences or Purgatory exposed George to papal retribution. Even 'rejecting, deconstructing, and repackaging [...] common doctrinal formats' — as Reginald Pecock did — seems to have entailed tangible risks, as is proved by the latter's final disgrace.⁷⁴

During the period under consideration, the engagement of laypeople in religious activities and the improvement of their cultural proficiency allowed some flexibility when it came to the boundaries between clerical and non-clerical attendance to the devotions of individuals or groups. As we have

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- 67 Some devotional volumes obviously went, on a regular basis, through the doorways separating nunneries from the chaplains, friars, or monks with whom they were associated: such is the case of the Diurnal used for celebrating the liturgy of the hours by the Franciscan nuns of Sant Antoni i Santa Clara (Barcelona) as well as by the monks and chaplains administrating sacraments to them (Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', p. 55).
- 68 e.g. Gerson's bilingual *Ars moriendi*, issued in 1403 (Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven', p. 219); or Caxton's *Quattuor Sermones*, re-edited more than once (Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 241).
- 69 This happened for the French *Somme le roi* (Leurquin-Labie, 'La Somme Le Roi': de la commande royale').
- 70 The example of local priests and missionaries living and serving in the Balkans among Crypto-Christians is typical. Aware of the local specificities and giving priority to their flock's welfare, they proved flexible in tolerating Chrypto-Christian practices hiding behind an Islamic facade, whereas the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and its envoys reprehended what they considered unacceptable cowardice (Abramović and Dajč, 'The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity', p. 331).
- 71 Abramović and Dajč, 'The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity', pp. 331–32.
- 72 Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', p. 153.
- 73 On the details of their *modus vivendi* with regard to the daily practice of religion and their children's education, see Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', p. 152.
- 74 Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', p. 177.

seen, it became possible to pass away with the assistance of qualified and pious friends, should no priest be available at the crucial moment.⁷⁵ And before that, during one's lifetime, praying individually or collectively may have happened with or without a cleric present. In some of these cases, what was once part of a liturgical celebration became somewhat disconnected and took on a life of its own. Such was the case with the success of the rosary, exemplifying the evolving flexibility of practices in Catholic countries.⁷⁶

In a collection of studies dedicated to 'daily life', the reader may be surprised to discover the overwhelming importance given to books in preference to other objects — and not only books in their 'materiality' or 'spatiality',⁷⁷ but with regard to their contents (texts and paratexts plus decoration and images) — although, of course, other items such as prayer beads,⁷⁸ 'paintings and sculptures, vestments, liturgical implements',⁷⁹ portable altars,⁸⁰ crucifixes, vessels containing holy water,⁸¹ moribund candles,⁸² or 'baked bread [...] circular in shape, with a hole in the middle and grooves imitating the sign of cross',⁸³ etc. are not omitted.

Are books crucial and ubiquitous enough, at that time, to account for the importance conferred on them by the present study? An answer in the affirmative seems to be the case, at a moment when a theologian trained in Oxford could portray the human soul as the receptacle of a 'book of the judgement (*doom*) of reason', and as 'inward scripture' introduced therein by God himself.⁸⁴ The study by Jan Dienstbier of the prayer book of the Utraquist King George of Poděbrady (who reigned in Bohemia from 1458 to 1471) offers additional grounds for us to think so. Indeed, it shows that in the high aristocracy of his time, a prayer book was something very personal: in the case of the prayer book offered to George by his wife, a portrait of him was included in it, representing his 'real likeness', along with other more expected depictions such as that of the

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- 75 Even in Gerson's *Ars moriendi*, which advocates more than others the importance of the sacraments, most of the steps intended to ensure *Dying's* spiritual welfare and salvation are facultative, the minimum being the utterance of a prayer to Jesus Christ and the meditation on his Passion (Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven', p. 221). With the exception of extreme unction, such devotions can be performed without the assistance of the clergy.
- 76 See Saczyńska-Vercamer, 'Change and Continuity in Lay Devotion', and Ardisino, 'A Daily Devotion'.
- 77 Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', p. 50.
- 78 On the different types of prayer beads that are known of (with strings or bands; with even or uneven beads; etc.), see Saczyńska-Vercamer, 'Change and Continuity in Lay Devotion', and Ardisino, 'A Daily Devotion' respectively pp. 101–28 and 129–50.
- 79 Moiteiro, 'Literacy, Books, and the Community', p. 92.
- 80 As defined in Rokai, 'Continuity and Discontinuity in Everyday Religious Life in Southern Hungary', pp. 368: 'a table that the believer [...] would have constructed with a built-in relic'.
- 81 Which are distinguished from other negatively connoted 'earthly possessions'. See Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven', respectively pp. 220 and 221.
- 82 Samardžić, 'De praeparatione ad mortem', p. 313.
- 83 Abramović and Dajč, 'The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity', p. 332.
- 84 Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', p. 393.

Virgin Mary.⁸⁵ Moreover, the textual content of the book was carefully designed to accommodate the king's moderate Utraquism and busy working life.⁸⁶ In addition to this, like a fetish or at least as a vitally important possession, this prayer book accompanied its owner almost everywhere, even to the edge of the battlefield.⁸⁷ Similarly, the handling and deathbed use of an *Ars moriendi* book/text is evidenced in the case of Charles V of Spain († 1558), whose last years and final moments were deeply influenced by Erasmus's *De praeparatione ad mortem*.⁸⁸ During the same period, the case of the rosary, studied by Erminia Ardissino, underlines the fact that in sixteenth-century Italy religious books were unavoidable. Even the concrete materiality of the rosary was tightly connected, at each stage of its development, with a whole field of handwritten texts and early prints, especially in Renaissance Italy, where books/texts offered guidance on how to use the rosary's different beads, and then reflect on, or play piously with, their content and usage.⁸⁹ Books also had primacy in the *Artes moriendi* tradition examined by Joost Robbe: the texts under consideration were made available in Latin and in the vernacular, reproduced in manuscripts (in the various forms of large miscellanies or pamphlets in which the text circulated autonomously, as deluxe codices or humble copies) or in prints (such as typographical or block books,⁹⁰ using Flemish bastard letters or 'new Parisian black letters').⁹¹ This means that they appealed in an extraordinary way to a late medieval and early modern readership, becoming, with prayer books, a cultural overlap shared by an extra-wide range of Christians, transformed through its agency and mediation into a 'community of interpretation' of *Artes moriendi* literature. The spate of *Artes moriendi* manuscripts and prints produced and distributed during the 'long fifteenth century' also confirms that some books were ubiquitous, in diverse formats, in a vast number of homes, monastic cells, or even pockets — perhaps in similar or even larger numbers than crucifixes, bare crosses, images, or prayer beads. Such is the case of Hours and Missals, produced and sold on a large scale by Caxton and others: these were numerous enough to 'add a saintly dimension, and an almost monastic rhythm, to everyday life.'⁹² Translations of Sacred Scripture into the vernacular would play their own role in this trend.⁹³

85 Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', p. 162.

86 Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', respectively pp. 170 and 167.

87 See supra.

88 Samardžić, '*De praeparatione ad mortem*', p. 311.

89 Ardissino, 'A Daily Devotion'.

90 Robbe, 'The Kingdom of Heaven', p. 218.

91 Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 256.

92 Mercuzot, 'Caxton and the Reception of the *Artes moriendi*', p. 241.

93 The most striking case of the volume is probably the New Testament printed in the Slavonic language in Cyrillic type that was an object of trade between Protestants from Croatia and Slovenia, and Islamized Slavic soldiers stationed on the border between the Ottoman Empire, on the one side, and Hungary and Croatia on the other (Abramović and Dajč, 'The Phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity', pp. 329–30).

This collective volume helps us measure how deeply the dynamic production of religious books, not only vernacular, but also far cheaper, changed the way average Christians (as far as such a reality as an 'average Christian' ever existed) could gain access to all kinds of religious knowledge: theology, doctrine, prayers, Sacred Scripture, spiritual or mystical treatises, and so on. Of course, precious prayer books, and especially liturgical manuscripts, went on being chained in the sacred spaces of monasteries,⁹⁴ and theological authorities, especially Sacred Scripture and its important commentaries, remained tied to university desks; but unpretentious codices also circulated more and more freely outside religious enclosures and clerical houses, from the shops of merchants to the homes of laypeople, or from parents to children, either during their lifetime or via legacies. Legacies also brought many manuscripts, bequeathed by laypeople, into religious communities. Being handled by several members of a household, being read aloud during family meals, they provided the daily life of laypeople with at least part of the spiritual and contemplative devotion which seems to have been expected especially of women, and among them mothers, according to several manuals and written advice prepared by clerics for their guidance.

The multiple effects of this general shift in religious culture, as well as the particularities of its most quotidian and most concrete impacts, may be observed at various levels and locations in the present volume. One of the things this book does, then, is to explore how social interactions, especially between the clergy and the laity, evolve, with the Church and its agents having to take positions, either encouraging the use of books or restricting such use; or using the emerging texts and books as didactic tools enabling clerics, as learned leaders, to provide the laity with more substantial knowledge; or, at the other end of the spectrum, banning to a greater or lesser degree, such texts and/or the actual processes of textual production.

Reginald Pecock's writings, both in Latin and in the vernacular, as analysed by Ian Johnson, exemplify both sides of this alternative.⁹⁵ On the one hand, this scholarly bishop's option was to trust merchants', lawyers', and other urban workers' wits and to take advantage of the appeal religious books had for them in order to provide them with the best education possible.⁹⁶ On the other hand, some of his scholarly counterparts, who then ruled the English Church, proved very hostile to his initiative: in 1457–1458 Pecock was demoted, his works were burnt, and the effects of this disgrace lasted as long as his life did (he died c. 1461). Such a sentence is typical of the refractoriness of part of the clergy in England at a time when heresy was still a threat. Nevertheless, Pecock and his censors both belonged to the same 'community of interpretation': as scholars trained in Oxford, they shared a

94 See Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', pp. 56–57.

95 Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock'.

96 Reginald Pecock even trusts their awareness of their own intellectual limits (Johnson, 'The "Goostly Chaffare" of Reginald Pecock', p. 185).

common background and the same religious culture, as well as the same goal of fighting and fixing heresy.

This volume feeds generously its reader's curiosity with an impressive wealth of data that one single researcher would never have been able to gather or interpret. Such an achievement gives sense and legitimacy to our being urged — sometimes artificially, if insistently — to perform 'interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary research' and to collaborate with scholars coming from other horizons and different fields of expertise. This official requirement has obviously been met with no little success across the teams of the COST Action 'New Communities of Interpretation: Contexts, Strategies and Processes of Religious Transformation in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe' (IS1301).

For all this, one does not feel like having crossed any finishing line on reaching the last page of the present volume: in itself, this book is not — nor does it pretend to be — exhaustive on any of the issues it addresses. Rather than providing an ultimate and satisfying synthesis about 'Religious Practices and Everyday Life' (whatever the meaning one chooses for the conjunction *and*), it arouses one's curiosity, and hence paves the way for future research. Specialists of the religious history and texts of a defined region or linguistic area will hardly frown reprovingly if their field happens not to have been studied in this collection of essays. Should it happen, however, their initial frown will give way to a studious frown, for this book is a treasure chest pointing to unreclaimed topics and issues.⁹⁷ Its principal achievement is that it provides a wide range of cleverly deciphered case studies that, from now on, other specialists will be able to compare with their own material. By shedding light on linguistic and geographic areas in which few foreign specialists are able to navigate per se, especially while dealing with periods when the vernacular had become dominant enough even to take centre stage in religious literature, this book provides us with groundwork to be completed and extended in diverse and converging directions by diverse and converging scholars.

For instance, considering the scarcity of studies about the rosary in late medieval France, specialists in this period and subject area will want to know more about its use as an object, about the rosary handbooks that might have been available there, and about its eventual influence over poetry, music, and even drama,⁹⁸ in order to compare this area with Italy, Germany, Spain, or

97 Even its minute zones of shade pave the way for further investigations. For instance, the question remains open as to why the canonry of Roudnice would have been in touch with that of Marbach (Alsace) and its congregation, St Ruf, during the period immediately predating the writing of the *Consuetudines Rudnicenses* (see supra p. 380, footnote 10). This remains to be explored, and might be of special interest to scholars specializing in the French and German Augustinian Canons.

98 In Italy, some motets were inspired by the rosary (Hatter, 'Reflecting on the Rosary'). In the Low Countries, the rosary is numbered among the sources of at least one drama: Everaert's *Tspel van Maria Hoedeken* ('Play of Mary's Chaplet'). See Hüsken, 'Van Incommen En Begheert Men Scat Noch Goet'.

the Low Countries, about which more research has been published.⁹⁹ Those specializing in other countries, for instance England, will conceivably feel the same comparativist curiosity.¹⁰⁰

Other subjects merit further attention and wider investigation: firstly, the comparative study of different (and the same) religious orders in different countries,¹⁰¹ and also the comparison of family record books which emerged in parallel during the same period at different moments and in different places.¹⁰² No general study of this topic is available, even though, for an earlier period (namely from the eighth to the thirteenth century), the collective volume *Medieval Memory*, edited by Elisabeth Van Houts (and especially her introduction), provides a useful background.¹⁰³ Apart from these two issues and themes, a host of topics, whether studied in depth or merely hinted at in the present collection of essays, will inspire specialists in the Christian cultures of the long fifteenth century.¹⁰⁴

Indeed, as a portable library available to current scholarship, this collection of essays will, one hopes, create among its readers a 'new community of interpretation', more inclusive than the COST Action it stems from, by gathering and mobilizing academic interlocutors whom it will conceivably help to develop and challenge both long-standing and more recent published research in their own field of expertise.

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- 99 See supra; on Germany, see also Jäger, 'Das Rosenkranzgebete'; Winston, 'Tracing the Origins of the Rosary'; and Winston-Allen, 'Exempla in German Rosary Handbooks'; see too Saffrey, 'La fondation de la Confrérie du Rosaire à Cologne'. With regard to Spain, see Miralpeix Mestres, 'L'hipotètic Llibre Del Rosari de La Reina Joana'. With regard to the Netherlands, see van Asperen, 'Praying, Threading, and Adorning'.
- 100 A very uncommon set of prayer beads discovered in Chevington chapel (Northumberland) has been recently examined (Stallibrass, 'Taphonomy or Transfiguration'). For the rosary of Henry II, discovered by archaeologists during late twentieth-century excavations, see Bluer, 'Excavations at Abbots Lane, Southwark'. English rosaries were otherwise scarce and remain little studied.
- 101 As suggested by Carrillo-Rangel, Gari, and Jornet-Benito, 'The Devotional Book in Context', p. 69–71. See supra.
- 102 A rich bibliography dealing with the dawning of family record books already exists. The case of Italy, with its *ricordanze*, is probably the best known (Ciapelli, 'Family Memory'; Cazalé Bérard and Klapisch-Zuber, 'Mémoire de moi et des autres'; Mordenti, 'Les Livres de famille en Italie', etc.). On other areas, see, for instance, Bergeron-Foote, 'Personnaliser un Livre d'Heures', which discusses Montreal, Bibliothèque de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, MS 3, in which a record of the births of Pierre's children is written; Tricard, 'Bourgeois casaniers et noble voyageur'. Numerous references could be added here. Nevertheless, these studies do not compare the documents in question, nor the memory that they may have fostered, with similar attempts made in monasteries during the same period.
- 103 Van Houts, 'Introduction: Medieval Memories'.
- 104 At least one more issue has tickled my own curiosity: the tantalizing difference between Bohemia and Northern-Western Europe in terms of standardization of prayer books in the vernacular. Central Europe seems to present us with a centrifugal tradition (Dienstbier, 'The Prayer Book of George of Poděbrady', pp. 167–68).

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