UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Englishing the Virgin:
Enclosure, Dissemination, and the Early English Book

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Stacie N. Vos

Committee in charge:

Professor Seth Lerer, Chair
Professor Nancy Caciola
Professor Page duBois
Professor Lisa Lampert Weissig
Professor Sal (Sarah) Nicolazzo

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The dissertation of Stacie N. Vos is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

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I wrote this dissertation during a time of collective enclosed living. Once the global pandemic hit in 2020, most found themselves working from home. The topic of medieval enclosure suddenly became too resonant as I sought remote library access and gave up hope of taking up the research grants I had received from the UCLA Center for Early Global Studies and from the Huntington Library. As I researched the early English book, I touched not a one.

I have many to thank for helping me through this period of solitary work. First and foremost, I wish to thank my committee chair, Seth Lerer, whose expertise, enthusiasm, and encouragement has guided me throughout my doctoral program. My committee members—Nancy Caciola, Page duBois, Lisa Lampert-Weissig, and Sal Nicolazzo—have all guided my work in significant ways, from the seminars I took with each of them and throughout the drafting process. Beginning with my qualifying paper on William Caxton, Sal Nicolazzo has offered consistently thorough and challenging feedback throughout the process of drafting each chapter, and I am grateful for her ongoing mentorship.

During my year and more of writing from home, I developed a research group that met virtually each month. The Enclosure Group, which is made up of visual artists and medievalists, quickly became a great source of inspiration and support, whether we were reading about the culture of the anchoritic cell together, hosting a guest speaker, or discussing my chapter drafts.

My husband, Jeffrey Stuker, has read and listened to this dissertation several times, and has encouraged my writing in all of its forms. Most of all, he has kept me laughing when that is what I needed most. One final note of gratitude goes to Debbie Collins, of Ms. Dragon Print & Copy in Altadena, California. During the final stages of writing this thesis, Deb became a fast friend and provided new insight on the long history of the print shop, the documentation of which remains incomplete.

VITA

2005	Bachelor of Arts, Kalamazoo College
2011	Master of Arts in Teaching, Smith College
2016	Master of Divinity, Yale University
2021	Doctor of Philosophy, University of California San Diego

PUBLICATIONS

"Divided by Flesh and Pen: Teaching Medieval Manuscripts Through Virginia Woolf." *New Chaucer Studies: Pedagogy and Profession*, 2(2), 2021.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Englishing the Virgin:
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by

Stacie N. Vos

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Professor Seth Lerer, Chair

Englishing the Virgin argues that the vocabulary and iconography of vernacular Marian devotion became, for early English writers and printers, the currency of literary expression in the mother tongue. Reading texts on female virtue, from Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue* and *Tale of Melibee* to the encomia of the 1557 *Songes and Sonnettes* printed by Richard Tottel, this dissertation provides an account of how the Virgin Mary and her followers, especially women living the enclosed life within religious houses or in the isolation of the desert, occupied a central role in the development of the early English book. More than the chief subjects of the majority of the early books printed in England, the imitation of both Christ and his mother were two of the

key strategies of the press. The early English book, as conceptualized by Geoffrey Chaucer and his first printers, was a Marian book: it was a record of the suffering of mother and child, of the singular promise offered by the fecund virgin womb, and the bound, wounded text. Connecting the *Book of Margery Kempe* to the printed books of William Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde, this dissertation concludes that the development of the early printed book in England did not mark a swift break with the Catholic past of England. Rather, the first printers of the English book drew from the devotional cultures of the enclosed women to whom the first prose texts were addressed. The symbolism of enclosure, especially de Worde's presentation of a womb-like book, helped to make possible the widespread dissemination of the vernacular text in England.

Introduction

Figure 0.1: Marston MS 287, circa 1470, Beinecke Library, New Haven CT

Marston MS 287 encases a fifteenth-century collection of texts related to St. Barbara. Introducing a key aspect of Barbara's story (her request for an additional window for the tower to which she is bound), the book presents a title through a *fenestra* cut into the cover of the book.[1] According to Derolez's version of her life, "She was locked by her father in a tower ... where she was miraculously converted to Christianity; in honor of the Holy Trinity she then

[1] Albert Derolez writes that the subject of Marston MS 287 is "...Saint Barbara, a martyr and virgin highly venerated in the Late Middle Ages, but one whose historicity is highly questionable. Together with Margaret and Catherine...Barbara is–after the Virgin Mary–the most venerated female saint of the Middle Ages" (200). On the manuscript itself, he writes that it "offers a rare look into the thoughts and culture of a member of the lower clergy on the eve of the Renaissance – a man endowed with a modest position in the kind of institution where literary culture was scarcely practiced and Latin literary culture almost unknown, and living in a city far from the centers of secular and monastic learning in the Low Countries" (197).

ordered that a third window be added to the two existing ones in the wall of the tower" (200). According to Derolez's synopsis, Saint Barbara's father, Dioscorus, ordered that she be sentenced on account of her reverence for the Holy Trinity. In an English translation of the Old Norse-Icelandic Legend of Saint Barbara (edited by Kristen Wolf), we read:

> But when her father Dioscorus came home again from the long journey, he looked at his finished hall and saw three windows and said to the craftsmen: Why did you put in three windows? And they answered: Your daughter requested us to do so. Then he summoned his daughter and said to her: Did you, daughter, request to have three windows made? She answered: That I did, and it is well that I did, because three windows give light to each person who is born, but two windows may be dark. (147)

In Marston MS 287, the discussion of the three windows appears on folio 20r, and is marked by a marginal notation from an unidentified reader.

The remains of two clasps can be found along the right side of Marston MS 287; so too can a small portion of the leather strap that would have connected the two boards in order to keep the book closed tightly. The spine reveals a strong stitching job of the pages, and the thread can still be seen, in tact. The spine also features the number "54," which indicates the previous shelf number of the book at the library of the ducs d'Arenberg. The chain hasp connected to the back board helps to confirm that the wishes of the compiler were met while the book remained at the Herenthals beguinage. The compiler of the text, Nicasius de Pomerio, specified the following:

> Nicasius de Pomerio, a priest, chaplain of the Holy Spirit in the Beguinage of Herentals, on account of his special and singular devotion to Barbara, the most blessed and glorious virgin and martyr of Christ, ordered the copying of the outstanding *Passion* and *Translation* of this virgin along with the various stories gathered together with great labor and difficulty which are contained in the present book. This book he generously conferred upon the church of the Beguinage in Herentals under the following agreement and condition: that no one of the church, whether prelate, pastor, or administrator, shall presume to sell, to alienate, or under any pretext remove this book, unless per chance some devotee of this glorious virgin should wish for a reasonable period of time to copy it out or

> perhaps to study it privately and then to return it to its original place. (translation in Derolez, 205)

These directions set forth how the text, an enclosure for the saint herself, can be used within a particular community of religious women. It is clear here that one way to show devotion to the virgin and martyr Barbara is to sit with this book, copying it out or studying it. The beguines of the low countries, unlike their English counterparts, received instruction in Latin that would allow them to read such a text. In England, the religious vernacular text was often directed to holy women precisely because they could not read Latin. To what extent this was true remains a topic of scholarly debate that is beyond the scope of this current dissertation. My aim, rather, is to explore the ways in which female *illiteracy* (whether actual or notional) gives rise to the English prose work as well as the physical object—the book—used to record it.

How does the early medieval religious rule, often addressed to the enclosed woman, create the late medieval vernacular prose book, addressed to all lay readers in England?

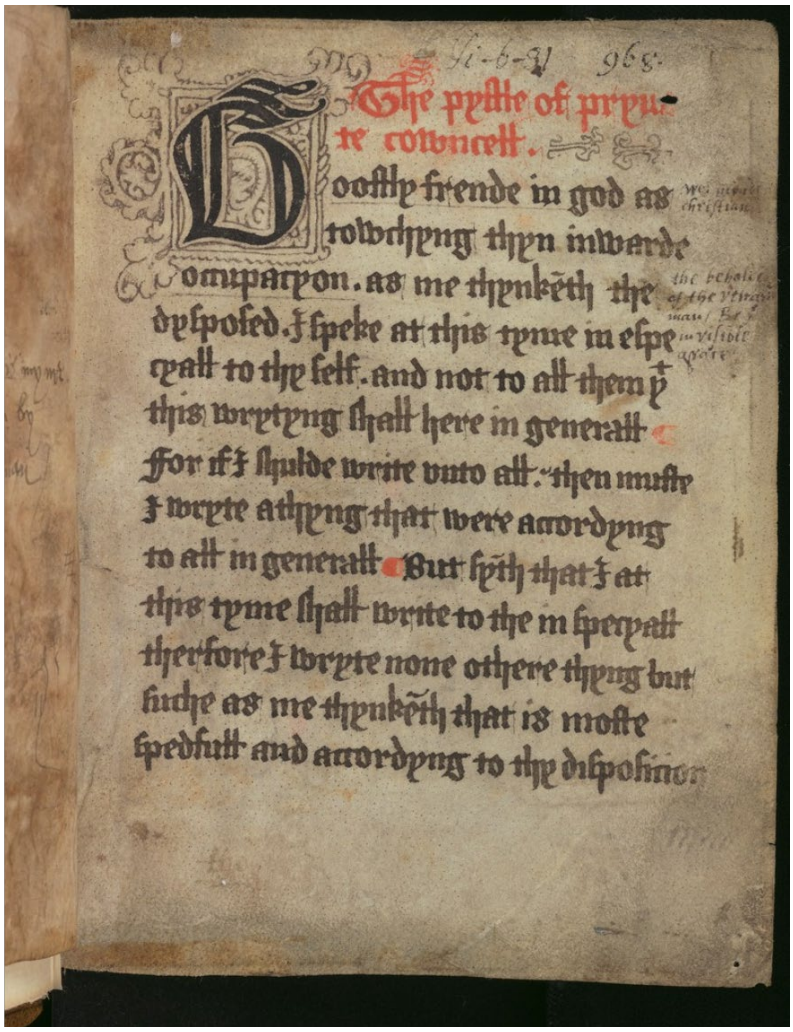

Figure 0.2: *The Book of Privy Council,* MS Ii.6.31

The prologue to the above-pictured "pystle of pryvate cowncell" states,

> Goostly frende in god as towchyng thyn inwarde occupacyon. as me thynketh the dysposed. I speke at this tyme in especyall to thy self. and not to all them this wrytyng shall here in generall For if I shulde write unto all. then muste I wryte a thyng þt [that] were accordyng to all in generall. But syth that I at this tyme shall wrtie to the in specyall therfore I wryte non othere thyng but suche as me thynketh that is moste spedfull and accordyng to thy disposition.

This prologue exemplifies the ways in which devotional prose texts accomplished the feat of presenting themselves as private "pystles" to known readers while simultaneously suggesting

that English could come to be read by everyone. It is the premise of this dissertation that one could not could not exist without the other; that is, the rise of late medieval lay literacy depended upon a fiction of enclosed female readership. It is for this reason, I will argue, that late medieval authors and printers so frequently relied upon various images of enclosure, both symbolic and concrete. Frequently imagining the female body *as* text, late medieval authors explore the vexed questions of the author's publication and the readers' reception through the enclosed object. Book, womb, garden, and cup encase the disseminated text.[2]

One of the implications of this claim is that the study of devotional literature, especially the literature that was read and preserved by the female religious, is deserving of greater attention within the study of medieval English literature. Within the canon, prose works continue to lag behind their poetic counterparts, with the *Book of Margery Kempe* only recently gaining momentum along with Julian of Norwich's *Shewings*. This study aims to revise dominant understandings of the rise of literacy for both women and lay men, both of which are associated with the Reformation and the rise of the printing press. While Books of Hours have rightly been the focus for much scholarship on vernacular piety, I argue that the intimate relationship with the devotional book begins even earlier than when the Book of Hours reaches its height in England. This tradition begins earlier, with the devotional prose treatise, sometimes called the religious rule. In these books we find evidence of a textual tradition in which people learned how to live. In many manuscripts, documentation of the practical use of the book can also be found. Between

[2] Feminist critics Karma Lochrie and Carolyn Dinshaw have offered the reading of the female protagonist as text in the *Book of Margery Kempe* and in Chaucer's Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale. See Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the* Flesh (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) for a discussion of this poem in the context of the *Book of Margery Kempe* and Dinshaw, Carolyn. *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics.* Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

texts instructing the religious how to worship are letters requesting money from parents.[3] The rule is library, lexicon, and altar, compiling theological works, inventing English words, and crafting both the space of reading and the reader herself. The book is an enclosed garden, or *hortus conclusus*, in which words are grown and the text is experienced through sound, smell, and touch.

Many scholars of the female spirituality of late medieval England have focused on the history of religious women, placing little emphasis on the figurative development of the female figure. Existing scholarship focuses, importantly, on the untold histories of women's religious communities, which were impressive with regard to the books held and read within and with regard to the work the women did for the community both within and without the nunnery or anchorhold. This study looks at the ways in which this community was shaped by the book, and how it later came to shape the English book itself. The pure, virginal body is one enclosure that becomes the focus of both the rule and many English works from Chaucer's "Second Nun's Tale" to Spenser's *Faerie Queene.* This gendered body is not mere essence; rather, it is made and constructed. What I explore in the following chapters is how the body is constructed both through the form of early English prose and through the object of the book, which is to be read in a particular way in the female religious communities of the late Middle Ages. Several poets of fifteenth-century England relied upon the practices and texts developed within these communities, adapting the narrative of the holy woman for the benefit of the sometimes holy, sometimes secular, poet.

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[3] Huntington Manuscript 502 includes a letter between Richard Rolle's *Form of Living* and the anonymous *þe Lyfe of Soule*, which reads, "Ryght welbelouede father and mother I haue me recommendede unto yow dessyereng youe to Sende me yower dayly blessyng, ye wyshe Is batter to me than all ye wordly godes. I praye youe to send me a grote for to paye my quarterege & I pray youe to send me a payer of shoues & soues & I praye yow to send me a cape & a gerdelle & I paray yow to send me a purese" (f. 34v., transcribed in catalog entry).

Devotional prose, more broadly, is integral to our understanding of the development of early English poetry. Eamon Duffy's work—from *Stripping of the Altars* to the *Voices of Morebath*—tells a story that departs from many common views of the church as an oppressive force from which people are able to break free by the time the Reformation strikes England. Duffy's close archival reading of the medieval parish reveals not the shepherd leading a foolish flock, but rather a church body that divides up the responsibility of caring for sheep. I begin by noting this moving account of church governance because the "broad-based accountability" Duffy finds in the Morebath parish is both the result of and the foundation for the thriving devotional culture that I hope to trace back to the medieval English prose work of the late Middle Ages. Just as preacher and worshipper work in reciprocal, interactive ways, the author and reader of the religious prose work embark upon a shared project of shaping the devotional, reading self.

The first reference to an "English book" occurs in the English guide for anchoresses, the *Ancrene Wisse*. In a line referring to another text, the author suggests the profound connection between English books and female sainthood. The phrase occurs in Book Four, on "Temptations," when the author poses a question to the reader: "Nabbe ye alswa of Ruffin the deovel, Beliales brother, in *ower Englische boc of Seinte Margarete*?"[4] The shared text, both within the *Ancrene Wisse* and in the reference to other books that both author and reader have read, is one of the most crucial presuppositions of this first prose treatise written in English. Scholars from Christopher Cannon to Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Nicolas Watson have noted how a dynamic of dependence underlies such texts.[5] However, it could also be said that these

[4] Robert Hasenfratz translates this line (795-796) this way: "Do not you also have [the story] of Ruffin the devil, Belial's brother, in your English book of St. Margaret?": Hasenfratz, Robert, editor. *Ancrene Wisse*. 1st ed., Medieval Institute Publications, 2000, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv138438d: 261.

[5] Cannon notes that this dependence is broken with the *Shewings* of Julian ("Monastic Productions," 39).

texts introduce an *interdependence* between author and reader. The author writes to the Mary-like reader, who, through reading the text, takes on the intercessory role of the Virgin. The *Ancrene Wisse*, and several of the other English religious rules to follow it, refer frequently to a reader who does "ondswerest" the author, spurring him on to explain further or differently. Through the theme of loving friendship with God, the author creates the same dynamic with his reader, a dynamic that is both intimate but also flexible enough that the text can later be read by anyone who wants to befriend Christ. In teaching the anchoress how to make her own "ancre-hus," the author of the *Ancrene Wisse* first must enter the anchorhold. Enclosed together, the author and reader join in developing the enclosure of the English book.

In the religious rule directed toward the solitary woman we find a highly interactive development of the self and of the English text that will inform the vernacular prose work in the centuries to follow. These texts do more than guide the readers; they also offer a pedagogical model, showing other writers and religious guides how they can best teach their disciples. It is precisely through the figure of the separate, silent, female figure that the English author is able to develop a text in which the offerings of the Christian tradition are consolidated. While it would be wrong to suggest that this woman is different from these poets because of her lack of literacy, it is true that her literacy, like her ability to buy her own bread, required the mediation of others. Whether this mediation was deemed a necessary feature of texts for laypeople or whether it was necessary given the education level of the holy women of medieval England, it is a definitive feature of early English prose, which is staged, with few exceptions such as Julian of Norwich's *Shewings* and *The Cloud of Unknowing*, in terms of male religious authorities addressing women. The author writes as one who has read the Bible carefully, the church fathers, and other English works with which the reader may already be familiar.

Cannon has most clearly articulated what is at stake when it comes to the corpus of English anchorite texts:

> … they point and confront a paradox constituted by all forms of medieval Christian devotion: the injunction to separate oneself from worldly things the better to devote oneself to God was itself a means to denying those connections with other people (that 'community') which a better spirituality was itself meant to perfect.[6]

The enclosed woman is sacrificed by and for the community. In order to be the exemplar of virtue for the community, she must live apart. And still others are sacrificed for the religious community, like the woman who must go to the market for the food needed by the anchoress. The go-between exposes herself to the risk of the men at the food stalls, the hands of the baker or the eyes of the wool-seller, in order to sustain the purity of her better. Aelred's rule mentions a total of three women, two assisting the recluse. The servant of the pious woman, like the woman fitted for the dress of the bride-to-be in Chaucer's "Clerk's Tale", must have lived a particularly lonely existence, between that of the exalted virgin and the boisterous brewer. She, too, was sacrificed for the purpose of the community. Margery Kempe, disrupter of church services, also disrupts this narrative of the segregated female exemplar, as she shows herself in the town center, the "best example to the people."

Cannon's essay "Enclosure" reflects upon thirteen existing rules in English, dating from 1080 to the fourteenth century, relating the texts to the history of English language and literature and to major works of modern Western philosophy. He concludes by writing that

[6] Cannon, Christopher. "Enclosure." *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Women's Writing*, edited by Carolyn Dinshaw and David Wallace, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 109–123. Cambridge Companions to Literature: 110.

> … enclosed life and its literature are the crucial arenas in which the modern self was first defined and mapped. The work of Nietzsche, Freud, Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, Butler and other philosophers of the subject bears directly upon anchoritic texts because the subject under discussion in all this writing is precisely the same (119).

Cannon also posits at the beginning of the essay that these texts "…are a very early attempt – perhaps the earliest in English – to extend human possibility by cultivating and exploring, even as they set limits to, an individual mind" (111). Focusing on the topics of ascesis, community, and subjection, Cannon distills for scholars of the rule the many essential questions to which it attends, which, it seems, are limitless. Is the womb an enclosure? How can the body make an anchorhouse without making the anchorhouse as broken as the body?

This project explores the relationship between enclosure and the making of the English text in both manuscript and print. Less an exercise in exploring the uncontestable force of the Virgin Mary in late medieval England than in how authors and printers drew upon Marian iconography, my argument agrees with that of William Quinn and others, who identify in the Virgin a crucial source for the language of intercession and mediation.[7] Mary, as "mediatrix," is much more than a moral exemplar. She is also a figure for human communication itself. See, for instance, this remarkable woodcut from a 1488 French Book of Hours:

[7] Quinn, William A. "Chaucer's Problematic *Priere*: *An ABC* as Artifact and Critical issue." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, vol. 23, 2001, p. 109-141. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/sac.2001.0040.

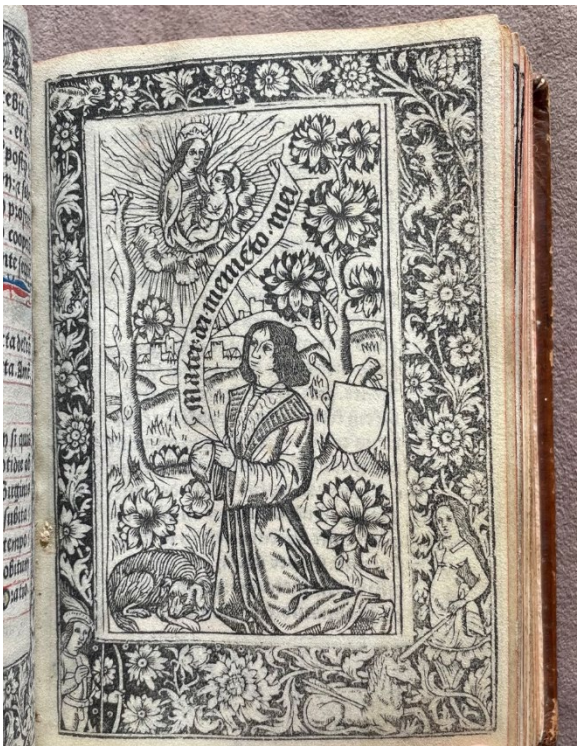

Figure 0.3: PML 126012: Leaf [A]5r with metalcut of donor praying to Virgin and Child, "Mater dei meme[n]to mei" in scroll.

Described by incunabulist Arthur Hind as "the Printer adoring the Virgin," this is an early continental version of the images I will explore in the work of the first English printers, William Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde.[8] The union of Marian imagery and of representations of textual dissemination is the core subject of *Englishing the Virgin*.

I begin with a reading of Chaucer's Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, and the *Tale of Melibee*, arguing that the poet explores questions of literacy and textual interpretation through the unlikely figures of two "good wives," Dame Prudence and

[8] Hind, Arthur M. (Arthur Mayger), 1880-1957. *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut: with a Detailed Survey of Work Done in the Fifteenth Century*. London: Constable and Company, ltd., 1935. I wish to thank Morgan Library curator John T. McQuillen for this image.

Alisoun, the Wife of Bath. Through these two women, Chaucer ventriloquizes church fathers and preachers by restaging innumerable proverbs. The text that is reproduced through the body of the woman takes on new meaning in both of these texts, allowing Chaucer to argue implicitly for a collaborative approach to the authoritative book. The book can no longer be read alone, in isolation, in an enclosed way. Rather, it is opened up to the interpretation of other readers in the community. In both the *WBP* and the *Melibee*, husband and wife negotiate the meaning of the text.

While Chapter One, "Beaten for a Book: Disseminating Texts with Chaucer's Good Wives," explores what Marion Turner notes is a critique of enclosure in Chaucer's writings, the following four chapters of this dissertation explore the uses of the rhetoric of enclosure and dissemination in relationship to new readers that were emerging, as Susan Schibanoff, Heather Blatt, and others have noted, in late medieval England.[9] One of these new readers was Margery Kempe, whose book describes, in several chapters, the process by which she came to read what is now considered a small canon of late medieval devotional prose.

Chapter Two, "Enclosed Within the *Book of Margery Kempe*," argues that the *Book* presents itself as an object made by more than one human, once the "creature" had heard from God that he would like her to write the *Book*. Likely composed only forty years prior to the advent of print in England, the *Book* anticipates the ways in which printers will negotiate similar questions related to publication. This chapter reads the *Book* as a key textual example of the transition from manuscript to print publication in England, with particular attention to how

[9] Schibanoff, Susan. "The New Reader and Female Textuality in Two Early Commentaries on Chaucer." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, vol. 10, 1988, p. 71-108. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/sac.1988.0003; Blatt, Heather. *Participatory Reading in Late-Medieval England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018.

publishers approached debates around lay and female reading. The *Book*, I argue, defines enclosure as an effort to build Christian "felawship" through the figure of the work's protagonist, Margery. A highly crafted work that enacts the self-effacement of the female author, the book ties textual dissemination—represented in the traveling body of Margery the pilgrim—to its opposite: the enclosures of private conversations with God and of spaces of exclusively female devotional community.

The Virgin Mary, usually associated with traditional religious practices based in the ideal of female chastity, is equally a force for imagining cultural and technological innovation. Chapters Three and Four argue that private use of the book, especially the popular Book of Hours, is altered by early English printers, who offer a simultaneous expression of enclosure and dissemination by using the iconography of Mary on one hand and the blood of Christ on the other. Through illustrations, printers' marks, and paratexts that frequently include Christ's wounded body on the cross, William Caxton and his successors creatively merge biblical history, late medieval medicine, and mechanical reproduction to make books in the English vernacular that appeal to both men and women. Inventing the English printed book on the foundations of the medieval Marian devotional text, Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde rely upon notions of motherhood that are remarkably capacious, allowing for the male printer's Trinitarian identification with the mother of God.

Chapter Three, "Maternal Impressions: William Caxton and the Marian Book," presents readings of Caxton's paratexts, especially his interpolations to the *Golden Legend*, arguing that Caxton presents narratives of shifting identities and unknown parentage, narratives that lend themselves to a notion of the book as a foster parent, a mechanism by which one can nourish and be nourished. It is often through the figure of the non-writing (and, often, the non-reading)

woman that Caxton explores the possibility of lay authorship, including his own. Chapter Four, "The Womb and de Worde," reads the devotional works printed by de Worde, including the *Chastising of God's Children* and the *Speculum Vitae Christi*, arguing that, through his illustrations and paratexts, de Worde recasts the symbolism of medieval enclosed devotion as the symbolism of the printed book. The miraculous reproduction of the Virgin Mary encapsulates the printer's reflections on the book and on his role as a reproducer of text and woodcut.

In many of his printed works, de Worde included title page illustrations and printers' devices that featured the Virgin suckling the Christ Child. The book, opened, reflects the pair of miraculous wombs of Mary and Elizabeth. The womb and the wound become central metaphors in the early English book, which offers itself as a mother to the reader at the same time that it spreads itself throughout the world like the overflowing blood of Christ. Marian devotion, practiced especially by female communities in late medieval England, provided de Worde with both the sure audience he needed commercially and, more surprisingly, with the symbolism of enclosure that helped him produce new kinds of books within a context of traditional devotional reading. Alongside books of manners and Latin instructional texts, in other words, books of devotional literature keyed to idealized female readers played a crucial role.

Tottel's Miscellany is printed at a time when England is Marian in two senses. The printer's license was issued from Mary Tudor, who was working to reestablish Catholicism throughout the realm. The laments for lost virgins and mothers, most notably present in Nicholas Grimald's poems from the first edition of the miscellany, can be read as laments for the Virgin Mary herself, and for her role as exemplar to all "maydens" in early modern England. Chapter Five, "'Within these noombers closde': Disseminating Enclosure with Richard Tottel," argues

that Richard Tottel helped to establish a theory of the English book as a closed system that could bring together the miscellaneous while elevating the status of the English vernacular.

Chapter One

Beaten for a Book: Disseminating Texts with Chaucer's Good Wives

Farewel my bok and my devocioun!

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Legend of Good Women*

I was beten for a book, pardee!

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*

To be a reader of Geoffrey Chaucer is to surrender to second-hand experiences with the text, to read, as Seth Lerer writes in *Chaucer and His Readers*, in the "shadows of the secondary" (3).[10] Although modern readers may have physical books to hold and read, they are in some ways in no greater position than the medieval women who could only hear books being read. One of the many Chaucerian paradoxes, especially for today's readers, is the fact that his poems are, as Alexandra Gillespie puts it, "full of books." And yet no book of Chaucer's exists

[10] Lerer, Seth. *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1996.

today.[11] It is perhaps because of these material circumstances that Chaucer presents women and children as his most significant, if sometimes challenging, readers. So long as we continue to lack any books from Chaucer's lifetime, we are much like those who have historically lacked access to both the physical book and the means for reading its content. Chaucer the poet, moreover, risks being misinterpreted in the same way that the Wife of Bath laments women are portrayed in the misogynist anthology her husband reads.[12] Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue* gets to the heart of this connection between the survival of the physical book and the reception of the texts it preserves. The subject of this chapter is the convergence of Chaucer's writings on female virtue and the book. In his tales related to "good women," Chaucer develops an authorial persona consistent with Marian devotional practices, especially devotion toward the wounds of Christ. This authorial persona is inextricably linked to a theory of the book, which, in late medieval English texts, also bore the inscriptions of Christ's wounds.[13] The early English book,

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[11] In the chapter "Books and Booklessness in Chaucer's England," Gillespie writes, "It is one of Chaucer's characteristically 'humble' poses to appear more willing to represent himself as a user and maker of books than as an author of poetry" (81). She continues, "But 'booklessness' must remain a factor in the discussion, because no copy of Chaucer's works made during his lifetime survives, nor any volume that was part of his library, nor even a book that we can be sure he consulted" (84): *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer*. Edited by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and James Simpson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Sebastian Sobecki conjectures that it is "not impossible that the Ellesmere Canterbury Tales... might have been started before 1400, the year in which Chaucer probably died": Sobecki, S. (2017). 'And gret wel Chaucer whan ye mete', Critical Survey, 29(3), 7-14, https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/critical-survey/29/3/cs290302.xml: 8.

Leaving aside the theoretical problems that Lerer and Gillespie later pick up, Beverly Boyd wrote *Chaucer and the Medieval Book* in 1973 as a pedagogical tool for those wanting to trace Chaucer's works in their medieval editions: San Marino, California: The Huntington Library. A brief note by Marshall Stearns suggested that Chaucer's use of the book to initiate the plot of the love vision was a creative addition that helped to set Chaucer apart from the poets whose source material he adapted in his own poetry: Stearns, Marshall W. "Chaucer Mentions a Book." *Modern Language Notes*, vol. 57, no. 1, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1942, pp. 28–31, https://doi.org/10.2307/2910678. See also Neuss, Paula. "Images of Writing and the Book in Chaucer's Poetry." *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 32, no. 128, Oxford University Press, 1981, pp. 385–97, http://www.jstor.org/stable/514523.

[12] On this fear of misinterpretation, see Schibanoff, 1988, pp. 98.

[13] William Quinn's argument that Chaucer's An ABC ought to be read as both prayer and lyric poem rests upon a more specific understanding of the role of the Virgin Mary in this stand-alone poem: "Chaucer's fundamental conception of Our Lady in the *Priere*, of the sacramental text itself, and of his own function as its translator all focus on one common theme: the rhetoric of mediation" (114). See, despite its age, Kelly, John T. "Chaucer and the

as conceptualized by Chaucer and his early readers, was a Marian book: it was a record of the suffering of mother and child, of the singular promise offered by the fecund virgin womb, and the bound, wounded text.

While some of the existing scholarship on Chaucer's religious writings has considered his overt praise of Mary, I seek in this chapter to locate the subtle inflections of Marian imagery in the tale that most strikingly rejects the value of virginity: the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*.[14] The critical readers Chaucer imagines most vividly are female ones. In the *Legend of Good Women* (*LGW*), *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* (*WBP*), and the *Tale of Melibee*, Chaucer stages his career as a product of the tension between written records of good women and the good women who read these records with skepticism. In these works, he develops a theory of the book that is based in these fundamental positions: First, there is no such thing as a virgin text. Secondly, no book can be forged without violence (toward the past, the predecessor, or the female body). To use a metaphor from the *LGW*, there is no corn without plowing and reaping the land.[15] But Geoffrey

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Blessed Virgin." *The Irish Monthly*, vol. 55, no. 654, Irish Jesuit Province, 1927, pp. 633–39, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20518235.

[14] See Heffernan, Carol F. "Praying before the Image of Mary: Chaucer's 'Prioress's Tale,' VII 502-12." *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 39, no. 1, Penn State University Press, 2004, pp. 103–16, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25094274; Boyd, "Our Lady According to Geoffrey Chaucer: Translation and Collage". *Florilegium*, vol. 9, June 1987, pp. 147-54, https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/flor/article/view/19174; Rambuss, Richard. Devotion and Defilement: The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Corporeal Hagiographics of Chaucer's Prioress Tale in *Textual Bodies: changing boundaries of literary representation* (Albany : State University of New York Press, 1997). 75-100. A recent article by Roberta Magnani and Liz Herbert McAvoy similarly reads one of Chaucer's tales (the *Knight's Tale*) with attention to the imagery of enclosure and the contributions of female religiosity to Medieval literary history: "Resituating female-coded modes of spirituality, and intellectual agency more broadly, at the center of medieval cultural practices has allowed us to reflect on and refute a long line of scholarship that has overlooked women's centrality in mystical thinking and their influence on canonical authors such as Chaucer...": Magnani, Roberta and Liz Herbert McAvoy. "What Is a Woman? Enclosure and Female Piety in Chaucer's The Knight's Tale." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, vol. 42, 2020, p. 311-324. Project MUSE.

[15] It is worth noting that in this description of the garden bed, Chaucer resists the well-worn path of equating the earth to the female body, which Page duBois explores in *Sowing the Body : Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

insists that he merely gathers what has been left by the reapers. Not quite a poet, he is instead a gatherer of corn:

> For wel I wot that ye han her-biforn
> Of makyng ropen, and lad awey the corn,
> And I come after, glenyng here and there,
> And am ful glad yf I may fynde an ere
> Of any goodly word that ye han left" (73-77).

This humble self-positioning allows Chaucer to insist, through Alceste, that he knew not "what matere he take" when he merely translates what "olde clerkes writen" (365, 370).

Through female speakers in the *LGW*, the *WBP*, and the *Melibee* Chaucer explores his own relationship to texts, books, and readers. Books are developed, these texts reveal, through processes of transgression, negotiation, and penance. The topics of marriage and virginity provide for Chaucer occasions for exploring the larger question of female literacy, which represents the even broader problems of lay literacy and the relationship between author, text, and reader. [16] The *LGW*, *WBP*, and the *Melibee* dwell upon questions of virginity, violence, and the relationship between the book and its reader. Through the female speakers of Alisoun and Dame Prudence, Chaucer offers a non-standard view of virtuous women, a view that allows for marriage rather than virginity, textual exegesis rather than devotional consumption of the text. The critique of virginity in these texts activates a broader critique of an old kind of reading that accepts the received texts unquestioningly.[17] Chaucer, on the other hand, presents a view of the

[16] As Ruth Waterhouse and Gwen Griffiths note in their two-part essay on Melibee, part of the effect of the tale is to "throw into relief the complexities and ambiguities of the author/text/reader relationship…" (340).

[17] Schibanoff reads late medieval annotations of Chaucer manuscripts in order to trace what she calls a "shift in audience conception" in Chaucer's writing. She writes, "… we, the fictional audience, are transformed from old to new readers over the course of Chaucer's works and thus distanced from the narrator, there is a corresponding increase in both the narrator's originality and his anxiety over our misinterpretation of his text" (98). On Alisoun's dramatically destructive reading of Jankyn's book, she writes, "Her literal act of taking the book into her own hands demonstrates the power of new reading and dramatizes her female textuality, her rewriting of both Paul's teaching

book that prioritizes use as preservation. Like the gowns of Alisoun that never gather dust because she uses them with so many lovers, Chaucer's books—none of which survive today—were meant to be used more than they were to be enjoyed.

Like the *Book of Margery Kempe*, which I explore in the next chapter of this dissertation, Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue* dramatizes the scene in which a man uses the physical book in order to claim authority over his wife and other women. Despite Chaucer's implicit arguments for use over chastity, his insistence upon the feminized, wounded book lays the foundation for the creation of the Marian book. The book, like the enclosed womb of the Virgin Mary, gives forth the body of Christ, which becomes a figure for dissemination.[18]

on marriage and the conventional antifeminist *dissuasio* of marriage that Alison refashions into a *dissuasio* of male celibacy" (104).

[18] Martha Rust's article on Christ's blood as ink is particularly insightful with regard to Christ's body as a source of textual dissemination: "Blood and Tears as Ink: Writing the Pictorial Sense of the Text." *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 47, no. 4, Penn State University Press, 2013, pp. 390–415, https://doi.org/10.5325/chaucerrev.47.4.0390. See also the collection edited by Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown: *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: with a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle'*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014.

1. Chaucer's Leaves: Chaucer's Good Women, Enclosure, and the Reader

Chaucer scholars have noted that it is in his works about women that he most openly reflects upon his own status as a shaper of texts and books.[19] In the prologue to the *LGW*, the poet Geffrey stands before the God of Love, hearing criticism for his writing on "love," which is also, it stands to reason, his writing on women. Lee Patterson's analyses of the *LGW*, the *Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, and the *Melibee*, all suggest that these provocative works on female virtue and authority are just as much about Chaucer's development of his own poetic persona.[20] In keeping with Chaucer's disavowal of his own poesis, Patterson notes, "… the Wife provides the poet with a means of restaging the chronic ambivalence towards authorship that dogged him throughout his career and which, to judge from the Retractions, was finally resolved only in silence" (659). In both his self-representation and in his later reception, Chaucer is perceived as a man who stood with women and children. "'All womanis frend,'" as Gavin Douglas called him, Chaucer created an autobiographical character within his texts who could genuinely say to the female reader, as he does at the end of "The Legend of Phillis," "And trusteth, as in love, no man

[19] As Julia Boffey and A.S.G Edwards write on the *LGW*, "We are reminded of the relationship between old and new books, between the materials Chaucer is going to be drawing on to create his 'new' book, as well as those he has himself already written" (124): "The Legend of Good Women." *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer*, edited by Piero Boitani and Jill Mann, 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, pp. 112–126. Cambridge Companions to Literature.

[20] Patterson writes, "In the *Legend of Good Women*, then, a familiar Chaucerian ambivalence towards 'auctoritee' – as both received authority and achieved authorship—is staged in terms of the dilemma of feminine virtue" (691): Patterson, Lee. "'For the Wyves Love of Bathe': Feminine Rhetoric and Poetic Resolution in the Roman de La Rose and the Canterbury Tales." *Speculum*, vol. 58, no. 3, [Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge University Press, University of Chicago Press], 1983, pp. 656–95, https://doi.org/10.2307/2848963. In his article on *Melibee*, Patterson argues that *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee* represent a further attempt on Chaucer's part to define both the kind of writing that constitutes *The Canterbury Tales* and, more tellingly, the kind of person who wrote it" (120). Patterson emphasizes Chaucer's creation of the daughter named Sophie, arguing that Chaucer prioritizes the child throughout the *CT* in order to prioritize that which has yet to become: ""What Man Artow?": Authorial Self-Definition in *The Tale of Sir Thopas* and *The Tale of Melibee*." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, vol. 11, 1989, p. 117-175. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/sac.1989.0006.

but me" (2561).[21] This statement—*trust no man but me*—articulates the essence of all future claims on the part of authors, printers, and publishers who seek the trust of the reader.

Through the speech of the Wife of Bath and the lively conflict she initiates with her clerical husband Jankyn, Chaucer introduces the notion that misogyny leads to bad writing. One of Alisoun's critiques—"Been ther none othere maner resemblances/That ye may likne youre parables to, But if a sely wyf be oon of tho?"—suggests that the making of "resemblances," the very work of any poet, is made richer with nuanced thinking, especially when the writing is about women (368-370). As Alisoun continues her critiques of male writers who refuse to ever write of women like her, she implicitly praises her own creator, Chaucer. Chaucer's ability to give voice to the outrageously female-centered lines of the *WBP*, even in the context of a prologue and tale that reproduce stereotypes of women, is remarkable to modern readers.[22]

Before Geffrey the poet-narrator can dream of meeting the God of Love in the prologue to the *LGW*, he must first mimic the flower he desires, enclosing himself in the ground for the night. Sleeping on flowers he has sacrificed for the garden bed he commissions, he dreams of meeting a queen who wears flowers in her crown:

> Whan that the sonne out of the south gan weste,
> And that this flour gan close and goon to reste
> For derknesse of the nyght, the which she dredde,
> Hom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde
> To goon to reste, and erly for to ryse,
> To seen this flour to sprede, as I devyse.

[21] James Simpson is one of several critics to cite this remarkably ambivalent characterization of Chaucer as an exceptional male feminist of his time: "Chaucer's Presence and Absence, 1400-1550," *A Chaucer Companion*, edited by Jill Mann and Piero Boitani, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 251-69: 262. See also Jennifer Summit's discussion of the Douglas prologue: *Lost Property: the Woman Writer and English Literary History, 1380-1589*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000: 23.

[22] A new podcast miniseries on medieval women, by Irina Dumitrescu and Mary Wellesley, explores the popularity of the Wife of Bath: "Encounters with Medieval Women: Storyteller," *Close Readings*, from the *London Review of Books*, October 26, 2021, https://www.lrb.co.uk/podcasts-and-videos/podcasts/close-readings/encounters-with-medieval-women-storyteller.

And in *a litel herber that I have*,
That benched was on turves fressh ygrave,
I bad men sholde me my couche make;
For deyntee of the newe someres sake,
I bad hem strawen floures on my bed.
Whan I was leyd and had myn eyen hed,
I fel on slepe within an houre or twoo. (F.197-209, emphasis mine)

The flower that closes is connected, in these lines, to the "flowers" that Geoffrey's "men" strew across his "litel herber." This connection between the flower that closes at night and the flowers that get spread across Geffrey's garden plot indicates that Chaucer saw enclosure as always temporary, cyclical, and contingent, bound to certain hours of the day.[23] His own "herber" and the "couche" within it, is overseen by not one but several unnamed "men," so that even the private hours of sleep, for Geffrey the narrator, are encountered out in the open. His bed is prepared by others; he sleeps amongst the herbs, which, for Chaucer, are texts in the making. Chaucer's use of the word "ygrave" in these lines ties the communal digging into the earth to the individual act of writing. By the time he comes to write the *WBP*, the work of making the text

[23] As Gillian Rudd writes, "Chaucer gives his readers a picture of a poet responding to the sun and season in ways very similar indeed to that of the flower he so eagerly seeks": "'Farewel my bok': Paying attention to flowers in Chaucer's prologues to *The Legend of Good Women*," : *Postmedieval* 9**,** 410–419 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41280-018-0099-x: 412.

Marion Turner closes her article for Oxford Handbooks Online with a discussion of Chaucer's ambivalence toward enclosure, especially in the dream visions. While Chaucer frequently presents enclosed spaces, Turner notes, he was more interested in "selfhood as a process of change and interaction and in the relationship between how space is configured and our sense of our selves": "Chaucer," 2015: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.58. Chaucer's approach toward virginity in the *Physician's Tale*, Howard Bloch has argued, is similarly complex: "In praising Virginia, Chaucer, enmeshed in the paradoxical logic that would sing the virtues of perfect modesty, that would adorn excessively that which exists 'with mesure eek of beryng and array,' violates the virgin": "Chaucer's Maiden's Head: 'The Physician's Tale' and the Poetics of Virginity." *Representations*, no. 28, University of California Press, 1989, pp. 113–34, https://doi.org/10.2307/2928588: 124. Catherine S. Cox reads the Wife of Bath's Prologue as a paradoxical reflection on virginity and textuality, writing that the Wife "... inscribes ambivalently the paradox of 're-virginized' language, implicating her author: the more the poet strives for the 'virgin' word, the more he confirms the promiscuity of discourse": Catherine S. Cox (1993) Holy Erotica and the Virgin Word: Promiscuous Glossing in the Wife of Bath's Prologue, *Exemplaria*, 5:1, 207-237, *DOI:* 10.1179/exm.1993.5.1.207*: 234.*

has fulfilled this collaborative promise, as the Wife simultaneously re-presents the words used against her by her husband and the response developed for her by Chaucer.

The Wife's prologue describes both the text and the book as plant matter: she repeats twice that she tore out of her husband's book a "leef," and she describes his ability to reproduce proverbs against wives at such a rapid rate that they appear even faster than "gras or herbes" can sprout from the earth (667, 774). In keeping with the theme of the fertile, ever-reproducing text, the wife's description of the single "leef" she tears from the book increases to three leaves by the end of the prologue: "Al sodeynly thre leves have I plyght/Out of his book, right as he radde" (790-791). The Wife's physical attack on both Jankyn and his book "right as he radde" violates the enclosure that the book of wicked wives provides for her husband, which he reads "with ful good devocioun" (739). How many kinds of devotional reading does Chaucer satirize in this single prologue? Here, the husband's reading is interrupted by his wife, who herself cannot read. Chaucer's representation of the scene suggests to his readers that Jankyn's book, which fails to record any of the good wives of history, and thus the goodness of his own wife, should not inspire his devotion. Devoted to misogyny alone, the clerk is forcibly drawn away from his perverse attachment to the book, which keeps him from fulfilling his sexual duty as husband to Alisoun. Through the salacious details of a wife's unfulfilled sexual desire, Chaucer dramatizes the act of reading itself, laying bare to his own readers the possibility of their own destruction of texts.

It is, indeed, the question of the good wife that prompts Geoffrey the pilgrim, following the lines of the Miller in the *Miller's Prologue*, to guide the dissatisfied reader.[24] When the Reve

[24] In "Taking the Gold out of Egypt: The Art of Reading as a Woman," Susan Schibanoff discusses how William Caxton will pick up this same language of readerly agency. Once again, the discussion of the reader's response occurs in a text about female vice (in the *Dictes and Sayengs of the Philosophres*) "He advised anyone who was

requests that the Miller leave out the topic of wives, saving both the man and woman of his proposed tale from "fame" or embarrassment, the Miller replies that any listener should know he speaks not of all wives, and that there are plenty of good ones out there:

> Ther been ful goode wyves many oon,
> And evere a thousand goode ayeyns oon badde.
> That knowestow wel thyself, but if thou madde.
> Why artow angry with my tale now?
> I have a wyf, pardee, as wel as thow; (3154-3158)

Geoffrey the pilgrim concludes this prologue with a defense of the free speech of the pilgrims, saying that he includes the tales of all, "be they bettre or werse." Even the "dronken" Miller must be allowed to speak. But the reader, Geoffrey insists, has the right to stop "listening." In a remarkable set of lines that fuses the orality of the *Canterbury Tales* with the materiality of the bound book, Chaucer writes,

> And therefore, whoso list it nat yheere,
> Turne over the leef and chese another tale;
> For he shal fynde ynowe, grete and smale,
> Of storial thyng that toucheth gentilesse,
> And eek moralitee and hoolynesse.
> Blameth nat me if that ye chese amys. (3176-3181)

The *Miller's Prologue* humorously links the choice of a wife to the choice of a tale to read. Just as there are good and bad wives from which to select one's spouse, there are many tales to "yheere" or to choose to "nat yheere." The reader's act of selection is a physical one of turning over the leaf. The compiler of Jankyn's *Book of Wicked Wives*, unlike Chaucer, selected only those texts that represented women in a negative light. Alisoun's criticism of Jankyn and his

offended by the reinstated anti-feminist material to delete it physically: 'wyth a penne race [scratch it out or ellys rente [tear] the leef oute of the booke'…": in Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart, eds. Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 83-106. Reprinted in Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson, eds. Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature (Routledge, 1994), pp. 221-45.

book becomes an indirect form of praise for Chaucer himself, who is able to include both "sondry tales" and sundry views within the diverse work of the *Canterbury Tales*.

2. "She knew myn herte, and eek my privetee": Female Community in *WBP* 515-584

In lines 515-584 of the prologue, Alisoun develops a sense of female community, first by using the phrase "We wommen" in the line "We wommen han... a queynte fantasye...", then by describing her intimate friendship with a woman who shares her name, and finally, by describing her "dame," or her mother's teachings. In this digression, Alisoun reminds the reader of the ways in which the entire prologue seeks to create female community, even if, outwardly, it appears to to be preoccupied with debates over marriage and "sovereignty." Throughout the prologue Alisoun directly addresses "wise wives" (225). She demonstrates how one can speak to her husband in private. But she also speaks on behalf of the large societal group of secular women who marry:

> "we wives" (282)
>
> "we shal yow teche…." (438)

This use of the first-person plural pronoun grammatically constructs a solidarity seen elsewhere in the social collective of the medieval guild or pilgrimage, as the *Book of Margery Kempe* depicts it. The remarkable proto-feminism of the *WBP* tale lies in these subtle details more than it does in the outlandish lines the wife speaks about her ability to keep her husbands working (having sex) all night. In the medieval English corpus, such references to wives who help one

another remains understudied.[25] Even in her description of Jankyn as "oure sire," Alisoun suggests that when Jankyn reads about the "wikkednesse" of woman, he does so in order to claim authority over not only his wife, but all other women, too.

Just as Alisoun begins to introduce her fifth husband, she spends several lines instead describing the female friend:

> Hir name was Alisoun.
> She knew myn herte, and eek my privetee,
> Bet than oure parisshe preest, so moot I thee! (530-532)

Alisoun goes on to reveal how some of the intimacy created with the friend consists of the violation of her husband's privacy. With Alisoun, and with other women she knows and trusts, Alisoun shares his shameful acts until he is red with embarrassment:

> To hire biwreyed I my conseil al.
> For hadde myn housbonde pissed on a wal,
> Or doon a thyng that sholde han cost his lyf,
> To hire, and to another worthy wyf,
> And to my nece, which that I loved weel,
> I wolde han toold his conseil every deel.
> And so I dide ful often, God it woot,
> That made his face often reed and hoot
> For verray shame, and blamed hymself for he
> Had toold to me so greet a pryvetee. (533-542)

Alisoun's ability to trade her husband's "pryvetee" for the company of other women—Alisoun, her nece, and the unnamed "worthy wyf"—is yet another instance of the ways in which the Wife of Bath moves between the social arrangement of heterosexual marriage and its alternative: the female community, as anticipated by Alisoun's use of "we." Oral female culture becomes an enclosure here. The [stereotypically feminine] oral culture Alisoun describes is one in which she

[25] Carissa Harris begins her chapter "Pedagogies of Pleasure" by describing Alisoun's use of wordplay as both obscene and pedagogical: "But Alisoun does not stand alone; her use of obscene wordplay to teach a pleasure-focused, assertive brand of female sexuality is part of a larger late medieval discourse of women's peer pedagogy": Harris, Carissa M. *Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain*. Cornell University Press, 2018, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt21h4x3k.: 151. This discourse, as the positive reception of Harris's book attests, is one that many medieval scholars are only beginning to consider.

is free from the constraints of her husband's books on female conduct. More than this, the space she shares with her friend, her niece, and fellow "worthy wyf" is one in which she can undermine her husband's authority by talking about what he does at home. She violates Jankyn's enclosed reading and the intimacy of their shared home, taking his "privitee" out in the open, in the space she shares with her female friends. Just as Geoffrey is enclosed in the garden bed in the *Prologue to the Legend of Good Women*, Alisoun is also enclosed in the open, in the open field with her companions. While elsewhere in the prologue Alisoun cites and criticizes specific texts, this set of lines offers an enclosure within Chaucer's text. Here, female experience, speech, and clothing take the place of the preacher's manual.

The season of lent, Alisoun explains, is a time to "be gay" with her "gossyb dame Alys." Curiously given the same name as the Wife of Bath, this travel-mate helps to introduce a sense of the wife's interiority, accessible only through travel, time in the fields away from her husband:

> And so bifel that ones in a Lente—
> So often tymes I to my gossyb wente,
> For evere yet I loved to be gay,
> And for to walke in March, Averill, and May,
> Fro hous to hous, to heere sondry talys—
> That Jankyn clerk, and my gossyb dame Alys,
> And I myself, into the feeldes wente.
> Myn housbonde was at Londoun al that Lente;
> I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,
> And for to se, and eek for to be seye
> Of lusty folk. What wiste I wher my grace
> Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
> Therfore I made my visitaciouns
> To vigiles and to processiouns,
> To prechyng eek, and to thise pilgrimages,
> To pleyes of myracles, and to mariages,
> And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes.
> Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes,
> Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel;
> And wostow why? For they were used weel. (543-562)

If Alisoun is the text, and her body an injured book, this line about the use of her dresses is consistent with Chaucer's representation of textual struggle over passive acceptance of received authorities.[26] Alisoun's boast about her well-worn dresses, *preserved through use*, is doubly interesting for its placement within a passage about how she has been engaging in all of the traditional activities of a medieval Christian: visitations, vigils, processions, sermons, miracle plays, pilgrimages, and marriages. The last example, "mariages," appears out of place here apart from its role as a rhyming word with "pilgrimages." The word, however, allows Chaucer to transition from the traditional activities of religious women to the good woman he attempts to portray through the figure of this "good wyf." For Alisoun, marriage becomes like a pilgrimage with many stations. She moves from husband to husband. As the General Prologue introduces her, she is especially skilled in "wandrynge by the weye" (467). Chaucer's WBP fits the definition of enclosure I discuss above, prioritizing the oral and the dreamlike over the physically confined home and book. Jankyn, sitting home in his armchair, is presented as an ignorant clerk who preaches to a world he refuses to properly investigate.

Just as the Wife of Bath's female community is forged through discussions with others, this description of Alisoun's devout activities is interspersed with the profane sexuality of which she boasts. Chaucer represents female enclosed life, in other words, as an impossibility. The all-female discussion is about men; the pilgrimage away from the husband quickly becomes an opportunity to meet other men. Finally, Chaucer offers a subtle juxtaposition between the Wife of Bath, who cares nothing for a "mouses herte" (572), and the Prioress, who "wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous/Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde" (GP 144-145). These

[26] Carolyn Dinshaw's foundational work on the Wife who "speaks as the literal text" relies upon the "Glose/bele chose" rhyme from the tale. As Dinshaw puts it, "… Chaucer suggests a revision of the paradigm of reading as a masculine activity that would acknowledge, even solicit, feminine desire" (120): *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics.* Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

paragraphs within the Wife's prologue together suggest that bonds between married women are stronger than bonds between men and women or bonds between chaste women who live within religious houses. The Wife's self-proclaimed inclusion in the group of "We wommen" is the result of her own understanding that women who engage in sex with men become closer to one another through the very "daunger" this sex represents. As she attempts to introduce the most attractive of all of her husbands, the abusive and misogynist Jankyn, the Wife first presents an intricate economy of female desire, one that ties physical preservation to repeated use, female intimacy to heterosexual risk, and contemplation to the open field.

This digression ends with a rare reference to the mother of Alisoun, who taught her "subtilty":

> I bar hym on honde he hadde enchanted me—
> My dame taughte me that soutiltee—
> And eek I seyde I mette of hym al nyght,
> He wolde han slayn me as I lay upright,
> And al my bed was ful of verray blood;
> 'But yet I hope that ye shal do me good,
> For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.'
> And al was fals; I dremed of it right naught,
> But as I folwed ay my dames loore,
> As wel of this as of othere thynges moore. (575-585)

This final reference to intimacy shared between women, which in this instance is shared between mother and daughter, is yet another occurrence of the pattern that runs throughout this digression: same-sex intimacy between women that is made through the manifest content of heterosexual relationships. Through this web of sexual intimacies, Chaucer continues to develop a theory of enclosure that is paradoxically nurtured out of doors.

Alisoun's preference for the field, for movement, and for the company of women—all of which she describes in this associative interruption to her "tale"—corresponds with uncontainable oral culture rather than with the bound text that is read at home or in the church.

Recall the line above in which she says she loved to walk "Fro hous to hous, to heere sondry talys" (547). The "sondry" tales to which she refers draw her attention away from the main "tale" to which she must return herself at line 586. Dramatically pausing to gather her thoughts she says "But now, sire, lat me se what I shal seyn./A ha! By God, I have my tale ageyn" (586). The implication here, especially with the direct address to the "sire" who is her current listener, is that Alisoun has to force her thoughts into a linear retelling of her five marriages, despite the fact that her "experience," with which she opens the prologue, is tied to a wandering mind that remembers times like this, when she was visiting her female friends and sharing secrets, free from the restrictions to which her current "tale"—Chaucer's prologue—must conform.

3. Textual Enclosure in the *WBP*

Schibanoff and others have explored what she calls Alisoun's "bookishness," or her role as a dramatic interpreter of texts (Schibanoff 77). Alison may be "bookish" in the sense that she is astute and aware of arguments in books written and shared between men, but she is the opposite of a bibliophile. Her dismissal of the bound book runs parallel to her argument against virginity, which suggests that Chaucer may be attempting to demonstrate, through Alison, the very impossibility of the virginal book. The Wife of Bath's critique of virginity relies upon arguments for procreation, but rather than children, she only reproduces texts. As soon as she utters that experience has greater authority than texts, in her view, she cites a female Samaritan from the Bible, revealing to Chaucer's reader and her listeners that her "experience" is already textual. Authority and experience are not opposable, but are rather mutually constitutive. The virgin text, moreover, would have to come from the experience of a woman like Alisoun, who

does not read. But since she is read to, the virgin text becomes impossible to create. It always requires the intercourse of reader and listener. The Wife of Bath weaves a new text out of speech that is made up of old texts.

The textual underpinnings of the relationship between Alisoun and Jankyn are first introduced when she describes her complex desire for him:

> And therwithal so wel koude he me glose,
> What that he wolde han my bele chose;
> That thogh he hadde me bete on every bon,
> He koude wynne agayn my love anon.
> I trowe I loved hym best, for that he
> Was of his love daungerous to me. (510-514)

The connection between "glose" and "bele chose" has its parallel in another rhyming pair of lines referring to the torn "leef" and the ear made "deef." Jankyn's appeal is complex because he seduces Alisoun with his "glossing," but he is also dangerous to her because he reads books against wives and retaliates, physically injuring her for life, when she destroys his favorite anthology.[27]

The Wife's prologue persists in its effort to recall the link between Alisoun's handling of the physical book and the violence that has left its indelible mark upon her upper body (namely, her ribs and her ear).

> He nolde suffre nothyng of my list.
> By God, he smoot me ones on the lyst,
> For that I rente out of his book a leef.
> That of the strook myn ere wax al deef. (633-636)

> Now wol I seye yow sooth, by Seint Thomas,
> Why that I rente out of his book a leef,
> For which he smoot me so that I was deef. (666-667)

[27] As Dinshaw writes of this reference to glossing, "Glossing here is unmistakably carnal, a masculine act performed on the feminine body, and it leads to pleasure for both husband and wife, both clerk and text" (125).

But now to purpos, why I tolde thee
That I was beten for a book, pardee! (711-712)

These lines connecting the book to violence against wives are some of the only examples of repetition in the *WBP*. While critics have noted the Wife's tendency toward digression, repetition is not typically included in the structural features of the tale. The leef/deef rhyme repeated at lines 632 and 667 reminds the reader of the connection between the book and the violence Alisoun endures. While Alisoun's deafness is mentioned in the *General Prologue*, it is not until we read her prologue that we learn how she came to be deaf. The permanence of the two injuries she mentions—to her ear and to her rib—accords with Chaucer's use of repetition in the Wife's prologue.

As Alisoun recounts what happened between her and Jankyn, the injuries are repeated yet again:

And yet was he to me the mooste shrewe;
That feele I on my ribbes al by rewe,
And evere shal unto myn endyng day. (505-507)

The Wife describes Jankyn as the only husband she ever desired. The fact that he was also the one who physically abused her and actively denied her his love only made him more attractive:

But in oure bed he was so fressh and gay,
And therwithal so wel coude he me glose
Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose* (508-510)

The Wife's refrain "men can glosen up and down" becomes here a physical description of what her abusive husband can do, first with words, and then with a parallel movement on her body.

4. “I made hym of the same wode a croce”: The Violence of Writing and the Marian Book

Chaucer’s Marian poem “An ABC” belongs to a medieval tradition of writing that associates the body of Christ with the Word of God. As Gillespie notes in her chapter on books and “booklessness” in Chaucer’s England, other “ABC” lyrics from the time specifically link the “book” to the boards on which Christ was nailed in order to pay for the sins of humankind. In particular, Gillespie cites a lyric from the Preaching Notebook of John of Grimestone, which reads

IN place as man may se,
Quan a chyld to scole xal set be,
A bok hym is browt,
Naylyd on a brede of tre,
Tat men cattyt an abece,
Pratylych I-wrout.
Wrout is on Te bok *with-oute*,
.V. paraffys grete & stoute
Bolyd in rose red ;
Tat is set with-outyn doute,
In tokenyng of cristis ded.
Red letter in parchemyn
Makyth a chyld good & fyn
Lettrys to loke & se.
Be Tis bok men may dyuyne
Tat cristis body was ful of pyne
Tat deyid on rode tre.
On tre he was don ful Blythe
With grete paraffys, Tat be wondis .v.
As ȝe mou vnder-stonde.
Loke in hys body, mayde & wyfe,
Qwon hee gun naylys dryue
In fot & in honde.[28]

[28] See *A Descriptive Index of the English Lyrics in John of Grimestone's Preaching Book.* Oxford: Blackwell for the Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature, 1973. See Karma Lochrie, *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh* for a discussion of this poem in the context of the *Book of Margery Kempe*: “The crucified body of Christ becomes Margery Kempe’s mystical primer, teacher her how to read his love, mercy, and grace in his humiliation and disfigurement” (171).

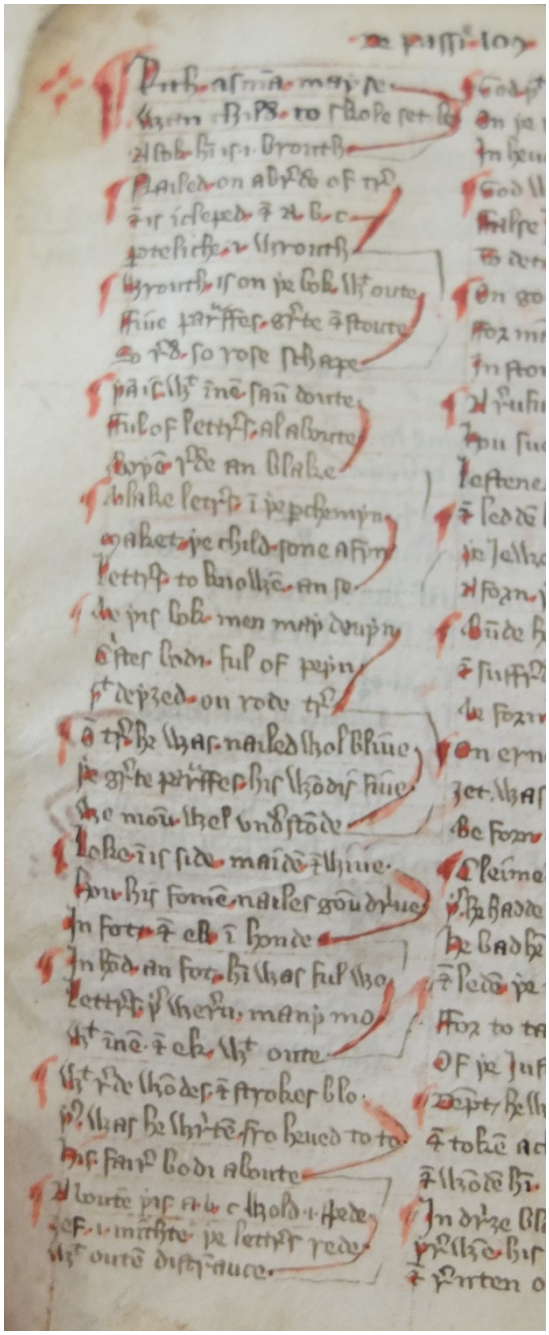

Figure 1.1: John of Grimestone's Preaching Notebook,
National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 18.7.21, fol. 122v

The book, according to this lyric, is a devotional object that begins to teach the child his "lettrys" at the same time that it teaches him "Tat cristis body was ful of pyne." The tree upon which Jesus

dies and the tree upon which the child learns to write are symbolically the same. The written mark, or the "parraf," is a repetition of the wounds of Christ. In the ABC lyric, then, the book is not an object used by one group to subdue another, as is Jankyn's anthology in Alisoun's case. Rather, it is an object to which the youngest of children gain access to the primary symbols of both English writing and Christian worship. As Georgiana Donavin writes in the chapter "Chaucer and the Dame School," Chaucer suggests that Mary might act as 'dame' for adult learners of English in *An ABC*, where basic English phrases are taught through Marian devotion" (163).

Such images of Christ-like suffering populate the *WBP*, so that it is possible to reconsider Alisoun's own book*less*ness. Throughout the prologue, images of bodies hanging from trees reinforce the core of the narrative: Alisoun was "beten for a book." Describing what she does when her fourth husband goes for a younger woman, Alisoun turns to the imagery of the cross as she recounts how she avenged her husband's infidelity:

> I made hym of the same wode a croce;
> Nat of my body, in no foul manere,
> But certeinly, I made folk swich cheere...
>
> ...By God, in erthe I was his purgatorie...
>
> ...He deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem,
> And lith ygrave under the roode beem (484-496)

Just as Alisoun will go on to meet her next husband while on a "pilgrimage," here she uses the iconography of Christ's death in order to describe her husband's suffering. If, following Gillespie's argument about the book in Chaucer's time, the cross *is* a type of book, this scene is one in which Alisoun initiates a new version of the text, which is always underwritten with the

violent death of Christ.[29] It is with a similar vision of "verray blood" that Alisoun ends her digression about her friend by the same name. Embedded in this set of lines within the prologue, which I discuss above, is a dream within a tale about a tale. This is a multilayered text with multiple addressees and temporalities, a depiction of a manufactured trauma within a text that recounts a true experience of trauma, Jankyn's physical abuse: "And all my bed was ful of verray blood... For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught" (579-581). These three imagined scenes of eroticized bloody bodies—on the cross, the tree, and the bed—reinforce the violence to which the prologue so frequently refers.

Elsewhere in the prologue, trees can either produce "mo proverbes" or more dead wives. Alisoun recounts one of Jankyn's legends of "blissed" trees:

> Thanne tolde he me how oon Latumyus
> Compleyned unto his felawe Arrius
> That in his gardyn growed swich a tree
> On which he seyde how that his wyves thre
> Hanged hemself for herte despitus.
> 'O leeve brother,' quot this Arrius,
> 'Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
> And in my gardyn planted shal it bee.' (757-764)

Alisoun's retelling of this scene in which men bond over the possibility of growing trees that will lead to their wives' suicides is followed by her memorable description of Jankyn's preference for textual regeneration over sexual reproduction. The dream, the femicidal proverb, and the Wife's description of her ability to become a "purgatorie" to her husband make up a library of texts written from the wound.

[29] Gillespie writes, "It is very likely that the first manuscript that Chaucer ever used was not something we would call a book at all, but a tablet of wood. It might have taken the form of a diptych... or it might have been a single board covered in a thin piece of translucent, polished horn. It would have carried an alphabet, either written onto the wood, or onto a leaf of paper or parchment nailed to the tablet" (87).

The phrase "the same wode" reminds the reader of Alisoun's ability to refashion, like Chaucer himself, old material into something new. By making a "croce" for her husband, she appropriates not only the Christian iconography that male preachers claim to understand best but also the wood with which husbands beat and even murder their wives, as Alisoun says just 20 lines above: "Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn,/That with a staf birafte his wyf hir lyf..." (460-461). It is with the vocabulary of the use of material objects that the Wife makes her recycled tale. Likening herself and other women to animals and things, the Wife restages the misogynist text in such a way that undermines the source text (or sermon) and instead creates a sense of her own imitation of Christ.

Identifying with the object and the animal is one way to take one's suffering and shape it into a form of agency. Chaucer's verse translation of a humorous passage from Jerome's "Against Jovinian," spoken by the Wife, stands out as a highly crafted poetic fragment amongst the never-ending proverbial statements Alisoun surveys throughout the prologue:

> Thou seist that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
> They been assayed at diverse stoundes;
> Bacyns, lavours, er that men hem bye,
> Spoones and stooles, and al swich housbondrye,
> And so been pottes, clothes, and array;
> But folk of wyves maken noon assay,
> Til they be wedded – old dotard shrewe! – (285-290)

The paratactic verse repetition of Jerome's *exemplum* encouraging clerical celibacy becomes, through Alisoun, another critique of the male expectation of female chastity. To make "assay" of a wife, of course, would require sex before marriage. The use of "housbondrye" described in these lines thus helps to introduce Alisoun's self-congratulatory description of her gowns, which never gather dust or worms, since they are used so well. Alisoun presents herself as part of the

"housbondrye." Herself crafted, she is the best at crafting a vengeful text.[30] As she will go on to explain in the next hundred lines, she could behave just like a horse when she made up stories of her husbands' poor behavior: "For as an hors I koude byte and whyne./I koude pleyne, and yit was in the gilt" (386-387). To "byte," "whyne," or "pleyne"—each action has equal status within the Wife's prologue. The physical attack, animal cry, and poetic complaint come together as an image of the vernacular devotion that underlies the Wife's critique of male clerical authority. Alisoun's language aligns her injured body with the materiality of the damaged book.

5. "no womman of no clerk is preysed": Chaucer Makes the Good Wife

Alisoun's definition of "womman" is developed through the description of her husband's reading. For her, a "womman" is anyone who is *not* praised in the writings of "men," that group she associates with the church fathers whose treatises are bound together in Jankyn's beloved volume.

> He hadde a book that gladly, nyght and day,
> For his desport he wolde rede alway; (669-670)

The wife explains that Jankyn names the book "Valerie and Theofraste," though it contains the writings of many others, whom the next several lines catalog. "And all thise were bounded in o volume," she tells us at the end of the list of contents. Scholars have sided with Alisoun on the name of the book, usually referring to it as the "book of wikked wyves" (685). In the lines

[30] As Jill Mann notes in her chapter "Antifeminism," with regard to this set of lines, "Male attacks on women become the very substance of a female attack on men": *Feminizing Chaucer.* Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK ; Rochester, NY :D.S. Brewer, 2002: 63.

leading up to Alisoun's now oft cited question, "Who peyntede the leon, tel me who?," the Wife explains how this book compiles only one type of text on women, and thus presents women in a flawed light:

> He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves
> Than been of goode wyves in the Bible.
> For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
> That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,
> But if it be of hooly seintes lyves,
> Ne of noon oother womman never the mo. (686-691)

The Wife's knowledge of the Bible, which becomes clear at the very beginning of the prologue, is an important aspect of her criticism of Jankyn's book, which fails to acknowledge the "goode wyves in the Bible."

Although Alisoun will initiate the physical fight with Jankyn by tearing the pages from his book and hitting him on the cheek, her narration suggests that Jankyn's reading is what first introduces violence to the relationship. Before the description of what reads like a mutual assault followed by a resolution between husband and wife, Alisoun recounts Jankyn's reading as an endless attack against her, a reading and a telling that simply will not cease. Beginning with Eve or "Eva," Jankyn recounts to Alisoun the number of women who continue the initial "los of al mankynde" that begins with the Fall. After hearing Alisoun's description of her previous husbands, through which she represents plenty of proverbs of her own, the reader is surprised to see the wife's silence as she allows Jankyn to hold forth.

Compared to the bombastic first-person prologue of the Wife, whose prologue is the longest of all of the pilgrims', the following set of lines reveal a disturbingly subdued version of Alisoun. At the level of syntax, this unidirectional reading scene amplifies Jankyn's relentless attack on Alisoun and all other wives dating back to antiquity:

Tho redde he me how Sampson loste his heres (721-722)

Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,
Of Hercules and of his Dianyre,
That caused hym to sette hymself afyre. (724-726)

He tolde me eek for what occasioun
Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf. (740-741)

Of Lyvia tolde he me, and of Lucye (747)

Thanne tolde he me how oon Latumyus
Compleyned unto his felawe Arrius… (757-758)

Alisoun concludes with a description of procreation—*engendrure*—that is linked to texts rather than the marital bed she famously prioritizes:

He spak moore harm than herte may bithynke,
And therwithal he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes. (771-774)

She, like Dame Prudence in the *Melibee*, actually has more proverbs than he does (within Chaucer's text). Although the Wife argues at the beginning of the prologue that sex and marriage are necessary for procreation, she is curiously silent about any of the offspring she may have produced throughout the course of her several marriages and sexual adventures before, after, and in between each of these.

The wife speaks from her embodied experience as a listener and a destroyer of books. Deaf in one ear, and permanently injured at the rib, Alisoun offers a portrait of a husband who is made up of texts just as she is. By the end of the prologue, the two are bound together by the pages of the burned book. Husband and wife take the place of the book they destroy, leaving the reader with an image of marriage that is far more complex, and possibly more violent, than the "book of wikked wyves" (685). Chaucer's description of female desire, spoken through Alisoun, also maps onto the now-burned book.

Now that the book has been ripped and burned, it becomes the object of the reader's desire. The book is now an eroticized object that takes the place of the sexually free Wife of Bath. Recuperated to a marriage in which she has less power over her husband precisely because she desires him more than all of her previous husbands, the Wife begins her tale of a rapist knight who is rewarded by a young, pretty wife. Chaucer has replaced the old texts with the new, making his own verses productive of a marriage of two minds. While marriage appeared in the old texts to produce only discord between men and women, Chaucer's Wife of Bath presents it as a site of negotiation and potential harmony, with a great deal of sex and violence in between. References to the physical book—to torn pages, texts bound in "o volume" and, finally, to the burned book—mirror Alisoun's reflections on her own body as a source of knowledge, knowledge that comes from communion with other bodies (such as those of the five husbands who have "schooled" her) (681).

6. Gathering Honey: Dame Prudence's Lessons in Enclosure

The text with which I close this chapter is typically called the *Tale of Melibee* despite the fact that Melibee's wife, Dame Prudence, speaks most of the lines of the long prose tale. The Ellesmere manuscript lists her as the second speaker at the end of the tale, and Royal MS 17 DXV lists her alongside Melibee at both the beginning and the end of the tale. The Ellesmere marginalia calls attention to the points in the tale when Prudence "answers" her husband, and these notes, however unwittingly, place both Melibee and Prudence in a place of material equality with the authorities Prudence cites throughout.

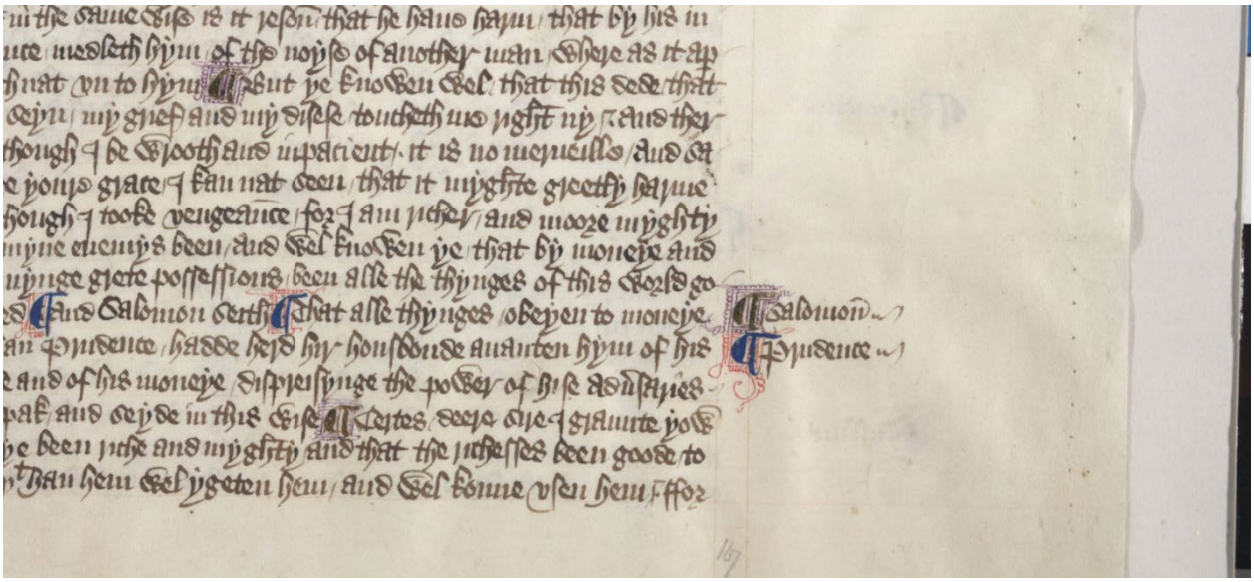

Figure 1.2: "Salomon, Prudence," annotations in the Ellesmere Chaucer, f. 163r.

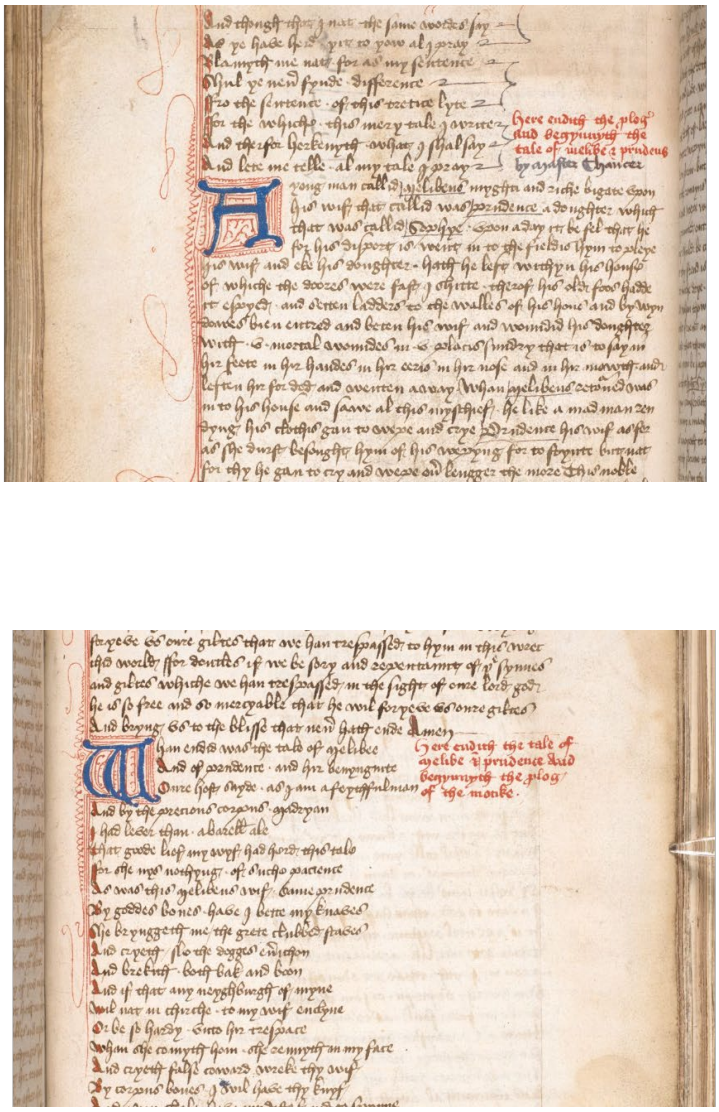

Figure 1.3: Notes marking the beginning and end of the "tale of Melibe & Prudence," Royal MS 17 D XV, fols. 242 v. and 261r.

Prudence is more than the co-narrator of this dialogical tale; she is also the designer and host of an event that complements the pilgrimage that forms the basis for the *Canterbury Tales*. While Harry Bailey calls together all manner of folk for the pilgrimage, Prudence (if indirectly) calls together a diverse group of "freendes" who will meet not on the open road but in a "pryvee place":

> Thanne, by the conseil of his wyf Prudence, this Melibeus leet callen a greet congregacion of folk,/ as surgiens, phisiciens, old folk and yonge, and somme of his olde enemys reconsiled as by hir semblaunt to his love and into his grace;/ and therwithal ther coomen somme of his neighebores that did hym reverence moore for drede than for love, as it happeth ofte. / Ther coomen also ful many subtille flatereres and wise advocatz lerned in the lawe. (1004-1009)

This description of Melibeus's "greet congregacion of folk" is a world in miniature, a collection of people of various classes, occupations, and temperaments, not unlike the pilgrims gathered on the road to Canterbury. Melibeus's failure to discern between the neighbors who act out of dread and those who act out of love is what leaves his family in danger, and thus becomes the key lesson he must learn from his wife. The *Tale of Melibee* is thus a lesson in enclosure, as Prudence teaches Melibee how to be more discerning in his choice of friends. Although the lesson comes too late to save the wounded daughter, Prudence teaches Melibee how to come home from the field.

The narrator (Geoffrey) describes a simple scene at the beginning of the tale, in which "Melibeus," a husband and a father, goes "into the feeldes hym to pleye" (970). As Melibee is out on this adventure, which resembles the wanderings of the Wife of Bath, he leaves his home and family unguarded. While the doors are securely fastened, the windows are not:

> His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren faste yshette./Thre of his olde foes han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by wyndowes been entred,/ and betten his wyf, and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal woundes in fyve sondry places—/ this is to seyn, in hir

> feet, in hire handes, in hir erye, in hir nose, and in hire mouth – and leften hire for deed, and wenten awey. (970-973)

The narrator's description of the home that is both "yshette" and penetrable suggests that the danger Melibee faces is less physical than it is moral. His "olde foes" know how to find the home when Melibee is away, and have both the time and the motivation to secure ladders for their domestic siege.

While Geoffrey, the narrator of the *LGW*, will frequently direct his readers to go to Ovid, it is Dame Prudence who, at the beginning of the tale, thinks immediately of Ovid as she, who has just been beaten by an intruder, is now in the position to comfort her weeping husband. Prudence is the source of emotional resolve, textual citation, and political counsel in this understudied tale: "This noble wyf Prudence remembred hire upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is the Remedie of Love…" (976-978). If the Wife of Bath stages her own illiteracy, claiming from the start of her prologue that "experience" is greater than "authority," Prudence is a hyper-literate wife who will provide both text and gloss throughout the tale. Prudence and Alisoun are both injured speakers in these two tales that are haunted by the violence that helped to produce them: Alisoun's broken bones and Sophie's five wounds. The wounds of Sophie, which are the evidence of the violence that produces the *Tale of Melibee*, are offered as a mere introduction to the greater wounds suffered upon Melibeus's home, and by extension, his soul. Curiously detached from her own bodily suffering and from the death of her daughter at the beginning of the tale, Prudence later explains, through proverbial phrases and enumeration, the danger Melibee faces as a result of his failure to keep his home locked up.[31]

[31] Chad G. Crosson situates this portion of Prudence's speech within the tradition of the Aristotelian prologue: "Chaucer's Corrective Form: The *Tale of Melibee* and the Poetics of Emendation." *Studies in Philology*, vol. 115 no. 2, 2018, p. 242-266. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/sip.2018.0009: 256.

The *Tale of Melibee* has been read as an important anti-war treatise on one hand; on the other, some have read it as a humorous tale through which Geoffrey the pilgrim gets revenge on the host for calling his rhymes "drasty." Geoffrey says he will instead offer a "litel thyng in prose" that the host will like, but what he offers is a very long "tretys" in which a husband is made to take the counsel of his wife. A third reading of the tale is that this is where many of the problems raised by the Wife of Bath are effectively resolved.[32] The proverb has now been issued from the wife's mouth; by the end of the tale, Melibee has been brought home. This time, without any violence to the body or the book, the husband and wife find peaceful agreement, which consoles the male listeners who, like most married men represented in medieval texts, struggle a great deal with their wives.

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In his works that thematize female virtue, Chaucer is most present as an author. I have suggested here that Chaucer's presence in these works points to a method of exploring complementarity over simple conflict. Aware that individual readers will treat texts differently Chaucer initiates a tradition of theorizing the early English book through questions of female reading..[33] Finally, he wants a text that will grow like the "proverbs" that are more numerous than "herbs," but he argues, implicitly, that this growth should come through a struggle with difference rather than as the mere recitation of the past that readers encounter through Jankyn's volume. Chaucer offers a model for the reconciliation of binary oppositions, including male and

[32] Daileader, Celia R. "The 'Thopas-Melibee' Sequence and the Defeat of Antifeminism." *The Chaucer Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, Penn State University Press, 1994, pp. 26–39, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25095869.

[33] As Waterhouse and Griffiths conclude, "Melibee's and Prudence's 'sentences' are always different, and their inability to establish a shared meaning becomes an *exemplum* for the idiosyncratic way in which any audience may respond to a particular text" (Part Two, 61).

female, oral and written, lustful and chaste, new versus old. While Chaucer reflected deeply upon his role as an author of new texts forged from old ones, he was even more concerned, I argue, with the author's relationship to new readers. Chaucer explores the complexity of this relationship through the metaphors of the virgin birth of Christ and the subsequent suffering of Christ on the cross, which was a central image linked to writing in the Middle Ages.

The following four chapters will explore the uses of the rhetoric of enclosure and dissemination in relationship to this group of "new readers." Chaucer's emphasis on the dissemination of enclosure arises out of a reading culture that could count on a certain level of closed-off reading. Once texts become available to increasing numbers of social groups, writers and printers will change the focus I have traced here, moving from the dissemination of enclosure to the enclosure of dissemination.

Chapter Two

Enclosed Within the *Book of Margery Kempe*

> Thus thu thynkist, dowtyr, in thi sowle, that I am worthy to syttyn on a red cuschyn, in rememorawns of the red blood that I schad for the.[34]

If Chaucer explores his own authorship through his texts on virtuous women, the *Book of Margery Kempe* seeks to establish the saintly virtue of the woman who cannot call herself an author. In a pair of radically unclear prefaces and throughout the work, the *Book* suggests that the role of author is both unattainable and undesirable for women in late medieval England. The *Book* presents itself as an object made by more than one human, once the "creature" had heard from God that he would like her to write the *Book*.[35] Likely composed only forty years prior to

[34] *The Book of Margery Kempe*, I.86.7102-7104. All quotations are from the edition made by Barry Windeatt: *The Book of Margery Kempe* (Annotated Edition), Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004.

[35] The genesis of the *Book* is both difficult and one of its key themes. As Nicholas Watson puts it, "For Kempe and the priest did not see eye to eye all the time" (410): "The Making of The Book of Margery Kempe," in *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). Critics remain somewhat divided on what to call the protagonist of the *Book*, and how to differentiate between the author and the character. Sarah Salih provides a compelling approach in her chapter "Like a Virgin? The *Book of Margery Kempe*, "If there is a distinction between 'Kempe' and 'Margery' it is not that between author and character, but between the writing and the written selves of autobiography. Their difference is not total. Whether Margery knew it or not, she was using a model of self-writing developed by Augustine" (171): *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England*. D.S. Brewer, 2001. The Introduction to Rebecca Krug's *Margery Kempe and the Lonely Reader* (Cornell University Press, 2017) offers a comprehensive overview of critical debates around the authorship of the *Book*, in which Lynn Staley, Felicity Riddy, and Karma Lochrie play key roles: Lochrie, Karma. *Margery Kempe and Translations of the Flesh*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991; Staley, Lynn. *Margery Kempe's Dissenting Fictions*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994. See also Sarah Beckwith, cited by Diane R. Uhlman, 51, "The Comfort of Voice, the Solace of Script: Orality and Literacy in *The Book of*

the advent of print in England, the *Book* anticipates the ways in which printers will negotiate similar questions related to publication. This chapter reads the *Book* as a key textual example of the transition from manuscript to print publication in England, with particular attention to how publishers approached debates around lay and female reading.[36]

As I demonstrated in Chapter One, many of Chaucer's works present enclosure critically, favoring representations of interiority that is developed in concert with nature and other human beings. The *Book*, I argue here, offers a similar picture of open enclosure, of streetside meditation.[37] It also, however, takes the reader into other enclosures that are both immaterial and material. The following readings of Chapters 18, 30, and 39 trace five distinct forms of enclosure throughout the *Book*: the syntactical enclosure of the sentence, the vision, and the concrete, if symbolically rich, enclosures of the chest, the cloak, and the house of the earthly mother.

And yet Margery Kempe is one religious exemplar who cannot be contained, a fact that upsets many of the clerics she encounters.[38] As Nancy Warren notes,

> Margery Kempe's refusal to channel her religious devotion into a cloistered life added to the disturbances she often provoked… For instance, when Margery recounts a story from Scripture, declaring to a monk at Canterbury that she will

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Margery Kempe," *Studies in Philology* 91 (1994). As Julie Orlemanski puts it, "The forensic work of recovering who is responsible for the words and ideas of the *Book* remains an important ongoing project, though one that cannot rely too heavily on the evidence of the *Book*'s narrating voice" (275). See *Symptomatic Subjects: Bodies, Medicine, and Causation in the Literature of Late Medieval England.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019.

[36] In addition to the theme of involuntary weeping, the structure of the heresy trial is central to the *Book.* As Genelle Gertz writes, "… the discourse of inquisition, both in auricular confession and public trial, generates a self-narrating voice in *The Book of Margery Kempe*" ("Confessing Margery Kempe, 1413–1438." *Heresy Trials and English Women Writers, 1400–1670*, by Genelle Gertz, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2012, pp. 48–76: 49).

[37] Liz Herbert McAvoy notes in the introduction to the collection *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place and Body within the Discourses of Enclosure*, "…Margery, whose anchorhold was of the mind, becomes a paradigm for the permeability of the anchorhold walls and the extension of anchoritic influence far into the community" (10).

[38] As Kathleen Ashley notes, Margery refuses both enclosure within a sacred space and enclosure within a domestic one (cited in Hostetler, 73).

> both speak of and hear of God, he responds, 'I wold þow wer closyd in an hows of ston þat þer schuld no man speke wyth þe' (93). [39]

This passage is remarkable in its ability to reveal how religious women could pose threats just as they could model devotional practices for others. The monk's desire that Margery be "closyd in an hows of ston" reveals both the threat of the enclosed woman (lessened once she is enclosed, but apparently still a part of what defines her) and of the woman who, like Margery Kempe, travels and "spekes" with men.[40] The *Book* takes this monk's desire for Margery's dissapearance by way of religious enclosure, and instead forges a book that will trace the real "wanderings" of a woman, the likes of which no other book in English has by the time this one is written.[41]

Her status as one cast "owte" drives Margery into the imaginative structures available to her, through the metaphors of late medieval Marian piety.[42] In Chapter 63, the interrelatedness of inside and outside is particularly vivid: "…sche was in the Priowrys Cloystyr and durst not abydyn in the Cherch, for inqwietyng of the pepil wyth hir crying…" (5219-5220). Driven from

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[39] Warren, like Rebecca Krug (to be discussed shortly), sees textual creation in the *Book* as salvific work. She cites a passage in which in which Christ tells her that he will be most pleased when she is done with her writing because by her book, "many a man" will turn to him. See Warren's study *Spiritual Economies: Female Monasticism in Later Medieval England. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.*

[40] Hostetler argues that "the strictly cloistered anchoritic culture – as a model of religious enclosure – provides a foundation for understanding the processes of subject formation in the *Book*" (72). Other scholars have begun to address the relationship between enclosure and textual production, with reference to Julian of Norwich: Maud Burnett McInerney writes that "Gestation and labor are essential images for the female anchorite's relationship to Christ, for complex connections between Christ, Mary, and the Christian soul, and for Julian's relationship to her own text. See "In the Meydens Womb: Julian of Norwich and the Poetics of Enclosure," in *Medieval Mothering*, edited by John Cardi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, 1996.

[41] However shocking the character of the Wife of Bath may be to Chaucer's readers over time, the *Book*, if read in light of the historical existence of Margery Kempe, becomes all the more remarkable. As Deanne Williams puts it this condensed observation: "If she had not been rediscovered, she would have had to be invented": "Hope Emily Allen Speaks with the Dead." *Leeds Studies in English 35*: 137-160, 2004: 137.

[42] Laura Saetvit Miles notes that scholars have long emphasized Margery's imitatio Christi, but are only now beginning to appreciate the significance of imitatio Mariae in the Book. Tara Williams has also been at the forefront of such analysis. Williams's thorough account of how Margery uses her sexuality to rival Mary in her devotion to Christ also explores the importance of both biological and spiritual motherhood in the development of Margery's authority throughout the *Book*: "Manipulating Mary: Maternal, Sexual, and Textual Authority in *The Book of Margery Kempe*." *Modern Philology*, vol. 107, no. 4, 2010, pp. 528–555. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/652270: 541-542.

church to cloister on account of her loud cries, Margery enters into a new space that is at once physically and spiritually separate. This separation allows for a strengthening of her conversations with the Lord, in which he tells her that the friar who has chastized her will only strengthen her holiness: "'Dowtyr, thu schalt be *in* cherch whan he schal be *wythowtyn*'" (5250-5251).[43] In this long speech, God reminds Margery of his Passion, likening his suffering to hers: "I have chastized the as I wole myselfe, bothe *wythinneforth* in thi sowle, and *wythowteforth* thorw slawndyr of the pepil" (5266-5267). He refers to himself as the steward of Margery's "howsholde." This "howsholde," I will show, is the multiple layers of enclosures in the *Book*.

Despite the *Book*'s remarkable attempts to provide an internal account of its own making, recent scholarship has looked to the manuscript history for critical accounts of the text's making. While such scholarly work follows developments in the field of medieval studies, especially paleography, it runs against the theological claims of the text. The *Book*, that is, offers Margery as a spiritual authority whose conversations with God can never be fully opened to the reader. Nonetheless, enthusiastic reports of news about the *Book*'s scribes have dominated Kempe scholarship over the past five years. In 2015, Sebastian Sobecki published an article on a 1437 letter he discovered, which provides paleographical evidence for the case that the son of Margery Kempe was one of the scribes of the *Book*. Joel Fredell has been diligently pursuing the "scribal mediation" of the voice of the *Book*, an approach that imagines an authentic female authorial voice that is inauthentically shaped by outside male figures: "her *Book* as we have it may be substantially a male construction, using many of the conventions of devotional narrative that her amanuenses, scribes, and early readers would know intimately" (19). This analysis, in my view,

[43] For an eloquent inquiry into the literary value of Christ's speech in the *Book*, see Barbara Zimbalist, "Christ, Creature, and Reader: Verbal Devotion in *The Book of Margery Kempe*." *The Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, vol. 41 no. 1, 2015, p. 1-23. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/article/564860.

over-values the source of the ink on the parchment, leaving behind the rich material described in the language of the narrative itself, which, far from a "male construction," illustrates a deep understanding of late medieval female devotional cultures from England to the various countries Margery visits throughout the course of her journey.[44]

A third significant contribution to the paleographical approach toward the *Book* is Anthony Bale's research on the scribal inscription of the name "Salthows" in the manuscript, which he identifies as the mark of a monk at Norwich's Benedictine cathedral priory in the middle of the fifteenth century. While Bale's findings offer a compelling account of the manuscript as an object preserved by what he calls an "august and orthodox institution," it also, he admits, "little helps us to comprehend the historical or literary character of Kempe herself" (187). I would take this point a step further and suggest that such approaches take us further and further from the *Book* itself, which offers an internal account of how it was made. Names not included within the narrative, it is safe to infer, are are *purposely* left out. Those left unnamed demand our full attention.

I am less interested in who wrote the *Book* than I am in the *Book*'s insistence that "the sayd creatur was mor at hom in hir chambre wyth hir writer" (7273-7274), and that Jesus joined her in the same place, later recalling to her: "'Also, dowtyr, I thanke the for as many tymys as thu hast bathyd me, in thi sowle, at hom in thi chambre…'" (7203-7204). The narrative begins in the home of Margery, the creature, and proceeds by illustrating how Margery remains spiritually "at home" with Jesus as she travels on pilgrimage. The text insists at once upon movement and stillness, pilgrimage and enclosure. I propose that we read the *Book* as a collaboratively written,

[44] Fredell, Joel. "Design and Authorship in the Book of Margery Kempe," 12 (2009), 1-28.

fictionalized life, based in the imitation of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. It is a work forged out of intimate encounters: acts of telling and listening, shared experiences of prayer and worship, and gestures of care-giving for both objects of devotion and fellow human beings.[45]

The *Book* fuses the art forms of prose style and Marian devotion–from the carving of the crib to the dressing of the doll—in order to envision the text *as* a source of spiritual vision, a site around which devout bodies gather. Donavin's chapter "The Virgin Birth of Margery Kempe's *Book*" traces the many ways in which the book presents itself as a "maternal act."[46] As Donavin writes, the *Book* "… belongs in a study of the Virgin Mary's influence over medieval English language production because Kempe sought to emulate the Virgin in bearing God's Word" (251-252). This chapter argues for greater sustained attention to the ways in which the *Book* reflects upon its own form through the inherent tensions surrounding motherhood and enclosure. The narrative folds of the book mimic the swaddling clothes presented to Jesus in the imaginative practices of Margery and the women she encounters. The book, like the womb, encloses. At once swaddled body and swaddling mother figure, this work of English vernacular devotion theorizes the book as a "privileged vehicle for an ethic of care."[47]

[45] Uhlman argues that the *Book* complicates strict definitions of literacy and divisions between oral and written expression: "… both the spoken word and the written give us confidence that language conveys significance and provides credibility for *The Book of Margery Kempe*" (69).

[46] Donavin briefly mentions two of the Chapters I will explore in detail, 30 and 39, on page 265.

[47] I borrow this phrase from Catherine Sanok, whose response to this paper for a panel at the Sewanee medieval conference of 2021 offered key insights on how the book and the body are co-constituted in this work.

1. Syntactical Enclosure

The sentence is the most elemental form in which enclosure shows itself in the *Book*. Karl Robert Stone's study on Middle English prose style in the *Book* and in the writings of Julian of Norwich stresses the *Book*'s use of alliteration, and even points to stress patterns found within it and in the poetic tradition of the Alliterative Revival.[48] Stone's impressive compilation of the various patterns of alliteration in the *Book* also reveals another stylistic feature of the *Book*'s style, as it makes frequent use of doublets, or synonymous word-pairs. Stone presents the *Book*'s alliterative lines in a few different lists according to grammatical structure. The first of these might have well been labeled as doublets. Here are a few of nearly a hundred examples he lists on pages 94-96, along with the pages he lists with reference to the Meech and Allen edition of the *Book*:

bareyn & bare (2)
bar-foot & bar-legge (179)
brokyn & bresyd (179)
clepyd & kallyd (11)
clothys & kerchys (19)
come & kyssyn (190)
her craft & her cunnyng (229)
so hy & so holy (50, 72, 230, inverted 201)
her lust & her likyng (179)
merueyl & myracle (234)

This Chaucerian habit of using two words in succession becomes stylistically characteristic of the *Book*'s prose.[49] This aspect of the *Book'*s style produces the ever-present themes of inclusion,

[48] Stone, Robert Karl. *Middle English Prose Style: Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich.* The Hague: Mouton, 1970.

[49] For a recent exploration of connections between the *Book*'s language and lyric poetry, see Killian, Ann, "Listening for Lyric Voice in Sermon Verses and *The Book of Margery Kempe*." *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, vol. 41, 2019, p. 211-237. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/sac.2019.0006.

partnership, community, and "felawship" running through the narrative and expressed most clearly in the common word "evyn Crystyn."[50] This concept of equality between all Christians is central in the *Book*, which uses Christian doctrine to critique hierarchies within the church, the home, and society more generally. The style of the doublet corresponds syntactically to the dyad in social relations. A work in need of a scribal witness in order to be written, the *Book* exalts continuous companionship, whether through physical sharing of space or through the meditation on the childhood and crucifixion of Christ.[51] Not even the nouns are left alone.

Chapter 28 introduces one of The *Book*'s repeated phrases—"as wel in the feld as in the town,"—a phrase that compresses many of the central themes in the book, when read alone, and, in the context in which the *Book* re-uses it, points to the particular characteristics of Margery's devotion and The *Book*'s prose style. The passage, which recalls the violence within the *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, reads as follows:

> And symtyme, whan sche saw the crucyfyx, er yf sche sey a man had a wownde er a best whethyr it wer, er yyf a man bett a childe befor hir, er smet an hors er another best wyth a whippe, yyf sche myth sen it er heryn it, hir thowt sche saw owyr Lord be betyn er wowndyd, lyk as sche saw in the man er in the best, as wel in the feld as in the town, and be hirselfe [a]lone as wel as among the pepyl. (2226-2232)

The parallelism of these final two clauses invites the reader to slow down here, just before the *Book* begins to tell of when she first "had hir cryingys." This single, if capacious, sentence, labors to explain why it is that Margery would cry so very much: anytime, anywhere. It is

[50] This word is used often enough in the book to be included in Windeatt's glossary of commonly used terms. For one example of several uses of this phrase in the *Shewings* of Julian of Norwich, see the final line of Part 1, Chapter 6: "For of all thing, the beholding and the lovyng of the Maker makith the soule to seeme lest in his owne sight, and most fillith it with reverend drede and trew mekenes, with plenty of charite to his even Cristen": *The Shewings of Julian of Norwich.* Kalamazoo, Mich.: Published for TEAMS in Association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 1994.

[51] Note how the *Book*, in this way, shares Chaucer's interest in potentially collaborative models of authorship, which I explored in the previous chapter.

because what she either sees *or* hears in the world makes her think of what she sees or hears when either speaking with God or while having her visions of his crucifixion. The use of the word "er" (or) asks the reader to try to equate the crucifix with the image of an abusive parent or horse-owner. One is not subordinate to the other in the *Book*; rather, they are right next to one another, which she performs in the structure of the sentence:

as wel in the feld as in the town

be hirself alone as wel as among the pepyl.

The *Book*'s coordination and adverbial use of "as well as" extends this line in what Julie Orlemanski calls a "stretching of syntax." The reader is invited to stop and sway with the cadence of these lines.

The existence of the skeptical reader of the *Book* is presented *within* the narrative in Chapter 83 as two men follow Margery out to the field to test whether her "cryings" are genuine or feigned for attention:

> They toke wyth hem *a childe er tweyn* and went to the seyd place al in fere. Whan thei had a while mad her preyerys, the sayd creatur had so mech swetnes and devocyon that sche myth not kepyn it prevy, but brast owt in boistows wepyng and sobbyng, and cryid as lowde er ellys lowder as sche dede whan sche was *amongys the pepil at hom*, and sche cowde not restreyn hirselfe therfro, ne no personys beyng ther present than the tweyn preistys and *a childe er tweyn* wyth hem.
>
> And than, as they cam homward ageyn, thei mett women wyth childeryn in her armys, and the forsed creatur askyd yyf ther wer any man-childe amonys hem, and the women seyd, 'Nay.' Tan was the mende so raveschyd into the childhod of Crist, for desir that sche had for to see hym, that sche mith not beryn it, but fel downe and wept and cryid so sor that it was merveyl to her it. Than the priestys haddyn the mor trust that it was ryth wel wyth hir, whan thei herd hir cryin *in prevy place as wel as in opyn place, and in the feld as in the town*. (6741-6757)

Paired with the passage from Chapter 28, then, this becomes and antistrophic pattern:

28: *in the feld as in the town*

among the pepyl

83: *amongys the pepil …*

In the feld as in the town

The use of antistrophe here reinforces the theme of inner turmoil that runs through this text, a theme that recalls Augustine of Hippo's description of the self as a house divided, or the *Book*'s own description of Margery's twisted body. Antistrophe also helps to illustrate, stylistically, the theme of betrayal that runs through the *Book*.[52] In Chapter 83, Margery is betrayed by the two priests who do not trust her, who think that she is one way in public and another on her own.[53] This particular example of repetition, then, allows for various contradictory forces, both internal to Margery and external in the form of the people who receive her, to come together in the resolution of Margery's devotional tears: "the preistys haddyn the mor trust that it was ryth wel

[52] Antistrophe is "…the name given to two rhetorical figures of repetition: in the first, the order of terms in one clause is reversed in the next ('All for one, and one for all'); in the second (also known as epistrophe), a word or phrase is repeated at the end of several successive clauses, lines, or sentences ('the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth'): Baldick, Chris. "antistrophe." The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms.: Oxford University Press, . Oxford Reference. Date Accessed 1 Nov. 2020 <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199208272.001.0001/acref-9780199208272-e-71>.

[53] Nancy Caciola's *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* offers a thorough exploration of the historical beliefs that would contribute to such attempts to "read" a woman who claimed to be divinely inspired in the Middle Ages. Caciola, who mentions Margery Kempe's devotional practices as well as her " 'gift of tears,'" writes that the inspired woman of the later Middle Ages could be described as "an urban laywoman, socially isolated by her own choice and pursuing a life of harsh asceticism, subject to trance states in which she recieves prophetic visions and occult knowledge… and considering highly suspect by her community because of these characteristics" (78, Cornell University Press, 2003). Additionally, Orlemanski's analysis of what she calls the "crying plot" in the *Book* is a remarkable one that takes seriously the connection between Margery's holy crying and the form of the *Book*.

wyth hir…" Through the use of the doublet, paralellism, and repetition in these two paragraphs, which repeat the phrases of Chapter 28, adding to them a third ("in prevy place as wel as in opyn place"), the *Book* creates syntactical enclosures that reinforce the intimacy of devotion set forth within the narrative. The "prevy" and the "opyn" mutually construct each other in their opposition, haunting one another throughout the *Book*. Antistrophe is an additional rhetorical figure, which, combined with the use of the doublet, parallelism, and repetition, reinforces the intimacy of devotion set forth in the *Book*.

2. Enclosed in the Vision

Unable to count on the church as a place of harbor, Margery makes every space a possible devotional site where she might receive the visions or the words of God. Various enclosures afford protection to Margery, her friend Richard, and her chosen spouse, Jesus. As Margery attempts to join her "felawshep" in pilgrimage to the Flood of Jordan, she begins to learn that it is precisely this group defined as her "fellow" people that treat her with the most disdain: "Than was sche sor athryste and had no comfort of hir felashyp… And sche fond alle pepyl good onto hir and gentyl saf only hir owyn cuntremen" (2444). As she approaches the Flood of Jordan, what matters is no longer the ties of town and country, but rather, the binding promises of God, revealed in the torn clothing of Richard. The first encounter between Richard and Margery reveals the importance of trust between two worshippers as that which will overcome physical circumstance or national allegiences. Because meditation can occur at any time, regardless of where Margery is at the time that God sends her contemplation, Kempe

redefines enclosure in terms of the private contemplation she experiences through her conversations with Jesus.[54] As Liz Herbert McAvoy notes in the introduction to the collection *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place and Body within the Discourses of Enclosure*, "…Margery, whose anchorhold was of the mind, becomes a paradigm for the permeability of the anchorhold walls and the extension of anchoritic influence far into the community" (10).[55]

On the way to Rome, considering a life in which she would only wear white, Margery meets Richard with the broken back. When Margery first sees Richard, she asks him what "eyleth" his back. When he shares that it has been "'brokyn in a sekenes,'" Margery recalls the prophecy given in Chapter 18:

> Than thowt sche <of> hir confessorys wordys, whech was an holy ankyr, as is wretyn befor, that seyd to hir whil sche was in Inglond in this maner:
> 'Dowtyr, whan yowr owyn felawshep hath forsakyn yow, God schal ordeyn a broke-bakkyn man to lede yow forth ther ye wil be.'

[54] As Shari Horner and others have shown, enclosure not only signals the individual's separation from the world, but also, crucially, the separ ation of men and women. Yet, as I will show, the male figure is ever present, either as the writer of the anchoritic rule or as the scribe or confessor in the cases of Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich.

[55] As Margaret Hostetler notes on *The Book of Margery Kempe*, "…the meaning of religious seclusion in the *Book* is malleable. The religious who have rejected the world are seen still actively participating in it, as Kempe's drama plays itself out in nunneries, anchorcells, and monasteries just as well as in private homes, prisons, and open fields" (74). She continues, "Kempe transfers the religious authority of the cloister to the prison: indeed, to various socially marginalised enclosures such as the sickroom, childbed, even the bodies of the insane. In Kempe's *Book*, religious actions or visions sanctify the enclosures – prisons, homes, sickrooms – that Kempe inhabits, thus engaging the expectation of enclosure for religious women while transforming and critiquing traditional authorised enclosures" (75). Hostetler reads two scenes in particular in order to illustrate Kempe's redefinition of enclosure. The first is a scene in which a man tells her he wishes she were enclosed in a house of stone. The other scene is a fascinating instance in which Margery stands at a window while imprisoned, preaching in exchange for food. Hostetler compares this to its opposite, described in Aelred's Rule: "'I wold thow wer closyd in an hows of ston': Re-imagining Religious Enclosure in the *Book of Margery Kempe*." *Parergon*, vol. 20 no. 2, 2003, p. 71-94. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/pgn.2003.0014.

This internalized dialogue represents the the metaphorical enclosure in which the creature speaks with, and receives visions from, God.[56] Remembering these words from God, Margery knows she is to ask Richard to travel with her; it is he who will "ledith" her safely to Rome.

The enclosures in the *Book* allow the reader to picture how the community is defined, or who belongs and who is left out. The *Book* encloses Margery by bringing her closer to other Christians, or her "evyn Crystyn." The enclosures of the *Book* are given by God, showing themselves in the concrete enclosures around which Margery and her friends gather in a state of worship. Before meeting Richard, recall, Margery has been forsaken by her "cuntremen." The difference between these people with whom Margery shares a national identity is emphasized in her repetition of the hyperbolic reference to "an hundred pounds." She writes, "And whan owyr Lord had browt hem ageyn to Venyce in safte, hir cuntremen forsokyn hir and went away fro hir, levyng hir alone. And summe of hem seyden that thei wold not go wyth hir for an hundryd pownd" (2459-2462). A few lines later, it is Richard who says he dares not to lead Margery to Rome either, but for a fundamentally different reason: "…for I wold not for an hundryd pownd that thu haddyst a vylany in my cumpany" (2504-2505). The use of repetition of the hyperbolic phrase "an hundryd pownd" allows the reader to see just how different Richard is from his English counterpart, the men who are desperate to abandon Margery. Margery's need for an "interpreter" reminds the reader that she is now in a community with people who are not English. What strikes her about the women she encounters in Chapter 30 as they pour over the Christ child is how they are at once different from her and how they remind her of the love she feels for Jesus when she is home in England. Despite the fact that these women share no common

[56] The forthcoming book by Barbara Zimbalist, entitled *Translating Christ in the Middle Ages: Gender, Authorship, and the Visionary Text* (University of Notre Dame Press, February 2022), promises to elucidate such moments in this book and others.

language, they come together through the gestures of Marian devotion. When Margery cries in response to their physical cradling of the holy doll, her lachrymose expression overcomes all barriers, and the women offer her a place to sleep.

Margery's visions, one kind of enclosure, often feature within them overwhelming imagery of concrete enclosures rooted in narratives of the life of Christ. One such vision from Chapter 84 helps us to understand the Marian foundations for the women's practice of dressing up the Christ child. Standing within "a chapel of owr Lady,"

> … sche sey, hir thowt, owr Lady in the fayrest syght that evyr sche say, holdyng a fayr white kerche in hir hand and seying to hir:
>
> 'Dowtyr, with thu se my sone?'
>
> And anon forthwyth sche say owr Lady han hyr blissyd sone in hir hand, and swathyd hym ful lytely in the white kerche, that sche myth wel beholdyn how sche dede. The creatur had than a newe or gostly joye and a new gostly comfort, wheche was so mervelyows that sche cowde nevyr tellyn it as sche felt it. (7047-7056)

The "kerche" is another enclosure in Kempe's book. Here it is used to cover Christ; elsewhere it is used by Margery to disguise herself. In the following chapter, Jesus thanks Margery, saying "thu clepist my modyr for to comyn into thi sowle, and takyn me in hir armys, and leyn me to hir brestys and yevyn me sokyn (7073-7074). A few lines later, Jesus tells her that with the "holy virginys" she will prepare her soul as a place within which he can rest: "…thei schulde arayn the chawmbre of thi sowle wyth many fayr flowerys and wyth many swete spicys, that I myth restyn therin" (7091-7903). The passage continues with an extended description of allegorical "cuschyns" of various colors, a description that is rendered visible in the images of the crib I include in the Appendix. Jesus' "dalliance" returns to this imagery in Chapter 86: "Also, dowtyr, I thanke the for as many tymys as thu hast bathyd me, in thi sowle, *at hom in thi chambre*, as thow I had be ther present in my manhod… I thank the for all the tymys that thu hast herberwyd

me and my blissyd modyr in thi bed" (7203-7208). This private conversation with Jesus, symbolized by the various beds described in the *Book*, named with the repeated term "herberwe," and contained within the sentence, is a form of enclosure that allows for an unsupervised, unmediated development of both religious belief and written expression. This previous set of chapters emphasizes Christian fellowship as an enclosure that relates portions of the *Book* to one another, by means of Margery's memory.[57] These immaterial enclosures accompany a number of concrete objects and spaces in the *Book* that unite Margery with God and with her fellow laypeople.

3. Bodily Enclosure: "Chist," "Cloke," "Hows"

In Chapter 30, Margery sees her Marian meditation come to life for the first time. Traveling to Rome with Richard, she meets two Franciscan friars and a woman who travels with them: "Sone aftyr ther cam too Grey Frerys and a woman that cam wyth hem fro Jerusalem, and sche had wyth hir an asse, the whech bar a chyst and an ymage therin mad aftyr our Lord" (2509-2512). Despite the *Book*'s concern with friendship and fellowship, not least in this chapter, this opening description of the group Margery meets as she travels from Jerusalem to Rome drastically *individuates*, dividing the group into distinct members, from the "Frerys" and the woman to the ass, "chyst" and the "ymage therin." This sentence begins to take on a Paulist tone, recalling the metaphor of the body from First Corinthians. Each member plays a distinct part.

[57] Recall the preface's remarkable description of the order of the *Book*: "Thys boke is not wretyn in ordyr, every thyng aftyr other as it wer don, but lych as the mater cam to the creatur in mend whan it schuld be wretyn…" (134-136).

Here, the ass carries no person, but is drawn along by the woman as if the entire pilgrimage were a procession. The chest on the donkey's back, I am suggesting, could not, alone, have been large enough to require the labor of an animal, especially an animal that usually carried human beings. The scale at work here is the scale of the journey the actual infant Jesus took, as depicted in paintings such as Sassetta's *Journey of the Magi* (See Appendix).[58]

This detail in the narrative description of the text gives the reader a clue, then, into the excesses of medieval devotion toward the Christ Child,[59] the practice Margery will soon encounter after she joins this group that is made up of various members, laid out before us in this opening sentence as objects to behold. The woman treats the effigy of Christ as Christ himself; despite the size of the doll, soon to be placed in the laps of women, an entire ass is devoted to him so that he can once again be carried to Jerusalum, just as Jesus was carried on a donkey to the Holy Land. This devotion is extreme, filled with imagination and attempts to reanimate the past. This woman has given up the rest she might have on the animal's back, so that, symbolically, the manger of Christ can travel along with her. In addition to caring for this

[58] See Appendix for doll that has been described by Van Os, Hamburger, Bynum, and Lähnemann: Os, H. W. van, and Rijksmuseum (Netherlands) *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500*. Princeton University Press, 1994; Henrike Lähnemann, Text und Textil. Die beschriebenen Pergamente in den Figurenornaten, in: Heilige Röcke. Kleider für Skulpturen in Kloster Wienhausen, ed. by Charlotte Klack-Eitzen et al., Regensburg 2013, p. 71-78; Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*. Zone Books, 2011. Art historian Jeffrey Hamburger links one of the devotional practices I explore below, that of carrying a "removable Christ Child" that can be held in one's hands in imitation of the Virgin Mary, to the work of fiction-making. He writes, "… the nun presented the object's imagined counterpart to God or the saints, then used it as a memory image to keep track of a complicated cycle of prayer. The objects existed only as fictions, yet simulated actual practice." Hamburger extends this analysis to one that reads devotional texts as self-reflexive literary works: "Texts that took works of art or other objects as their point of departure did not simply structure responses to images, they informed the very process of their manufacture. Rather than categorize the texts as 'sources' for an iconographic program, they can instead be read as part of a larger culture of literary experience" (79). Hamburger's implicit critique of scholarship that treats the literature of the cloister as pure historical document applies to much of the existing scholarship on Middle English prose. Hamburger's analysis highlights the extent to which prayer is a "craft," implicit in the name of the texts known as *Handwerkliches Beten* or "'craft-prayer.'" See Hamburger, Jeffrey F. *The Visual and the Visionary : Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany*. Zone Books, 1998.

[59] See Dzon, Mary. *The Quest for the Christ Child in the Later Middle Ages*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

devotional object, the image of God, she must also care for a large animal throughout the duration of the pilgrimage.

The Chest

The woman drawing the ass on the way to Rome is not identified by name. Instead, when the *Book* refers to her a third time in Chapter 30, it states that she is "the woman the which had the ymage in the chist." The woman is defined by what she carries, as the chest, along with the effigy within it, quickly becomes the central focus of the chapter. The woman with the chest resembles the pardoner or the traveling salesman. The fact that she travels with nothing but the donkey and the chest, coupled with the fact that no money is ever exchanged, suggests that this scene offers an image of an alternate economy.[60] No money is being traded; no actual children are present. Instead, the demands of medieval motherhood are here reshaped into an intimate scene in which women immediately relate to one another through a set of gestures, through their care for a symbolic child, a doll made in the likeness of Jesus.

Although the group travels together as a collective containing two men, a woman, and a beast, the meditative practice of worshipping the Christ child requires the woman to remove herself from the friars and to set up a separate space in which she can interact with the women of the town in an intimate way: "And the woman which had the ymage in the chist, whan thei comyn in good citeys, sche toke owt the ymage owt of hir chist and sett it in worshepful wyfys

[60] Recall that Margery, at the beginning of the narrative, is a brewer. Her need to convert to a religious life becomes clear to her when her horse mill falls apart: "Anoon as it was noysed abowt the town of N. that ther wold neythyr man ne best don servyse to the seyd creatur…" (311-312). For an illuminating account of the rise of a "commodity-oriented" society in the late Middle Ages, and the related attention to the figure of the artisan in literary works, see Lisa H. Cooper's *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late Medieval England.*

lappys" (2524-2526). This sentence replicates the repetitive action of coming into each town and taking the "ymage owt" every time, as if by ritual. The move from the plural subject, "thei," to the singular "sche" signals to the reader that the "chist" becomes a gathering place, a church in miniature. Around the chest, the woman creates a small and intimate community with the "worshepful wyfys," who in turn receive the effigy of Christ: "And they wold puttyn schirtys therupon and kyssyn it as thei it had ben God hymselfe" (2526-2527). The Christ child moves from the animal and from the enclosure of the chest to a new receptacle, the women's laps. Displaying intimate affection for the effigy in the sight of one another, the women kiss and dress the Christ child.

While art historians and conservators have uncovered the artifacts to which this passage alludes, the *Book* fails here to describe what these objects actually looked or felt like. The reference to the chest is specific enough, and the description of the women kissing the doll vivid enough, to offer a sense of a practice that is now available in scholarship on late medieval piety. However, one needs to look outside the text for this level of detail on the material objects held by this small group of women. The text emphasizes instead the community of women that is made possible through the act of worshiping the Christ doll. For there is only one, and the women simulteously dress him: "they wold puttyn schirtys therupon…" An attempt to visualize this scene may lead one to wonder if the women began to compete over the shared object, like children trying to share the same toy. Inevitably, their hands and arms must have at least brushed against one another. Perhaps they kissed the doll at the same time, and their lips met. This scene records not only the intimacy these women shared with Jesus in their meditative practice, but

also the intimate, physical—potentially erotic—experiences shared with one another.[61] The woman with the chest, after all, takes the image out and herself sets it in the laps of the other women. The chest, named three times but never described in any detail, begins to look less like a container for Christ and more like a figure for an enclosed space in which women lie together.

Although Margery is already on pilgrimage, this scene marks her continuous conversion throughout the *Book.* Margery stands outside the community at first, an onlooker learning from and admiring the fervor with which the women know to treat the doll. It does not take long, as any reader of the *Book* will expect, for Margery to burst into tears: "And whan the creatur sey the worshep and the reverens that they dedyn to the ymage, sche was takyn wyth swet devocyon and swet meditacyons, that sche wept wyth gret sobbyng and lowde crying" (2528-2531). This is the first time Margery is able to see with her "bodily eye" what she has previously, at home in England, only seen with her "gostly eye." The actual gestures of the women as they hold the figure of Christ in their hands moves Margery to tears, which in turn brings the women around to her: "Whan thes good women seyn this creatur wepyn, sobbyn, and cryen so wondirfully and mythtyly that sche was nerhand ovyrcomyn therwyth, than thei ordeyned a good soft bed and leyd hir therupon, and comfortyd hir as mech as thei myth for owyr Lordys lofe, blyssed mot he ben!" (2536-2540). While in the beginning of the scene the woman places the doll in the laps of the wives, here it is Margery herself who is laid upon the bed. The worshipping of the doll is quickly transformed into an equivalent level of physical and spiritual care for Margery; they "comfortyd hir *as mech as thei myth* for owyr Lordys lofe." The *Book*'s frequent use of the

[61] For a recent discussion of spritual exchange between medieval women as potentially "queer," see Miles, Laura Saetveit. "Queer Touch Between Holy Women: Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, Birgitta of Sweden, and the Visitation" in *Touching, Devotional Practices and Visionary Experience in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. David Carrillo-Rangel, Delfi I. Nieto-Isabel, and Pablo Acosta-Garcia (Palgrave, 2019), pp. 203-235.

language of analogy—"as mech as"—allows for the fusing together of the heavenly and the earthly. The women standing before her render the road to Jerusalem a holy place.

Whereas elsewhere in the narrative Margery can find no good place to rest, especially when she is aboard the ship and the men traveling with her steal her bedding, this chapter ends with a reversal. She now has a "good soft bed." The women care for her, guided by mimetic Marian devotion, a tradition in which worshippers often imagined an ornate bed for the infant Jesus, a luxurious replacement for the torn swaddling clothes and the roadside manger in which he first slept. As Caroline Walker Bynum and others have noted, the medieval cribs for the infant Jesus were built in order to resemble a Gothic cathedral.[62] Small enough in size to be held in a single woman's cell, they simultaneously exhibited the grandeur of the church itself.

The shift in scale—from the cathedral to the crib or chest—allows not only for a private devotional practice but also for one that is intimately shared with others in the religious community. The doll is small enough to need to be passed by hand from one woman to another. Sometimes, the *Book* suggests, the women would caress the image at the same time. And many times, they also cared physically for one another. The *Book*'s use of this structure of enclosure by way of the devotional object produces a text in which the characters depend upon one another, mimicking one another's movements and caring for one another, moving in and out of imitation of Christ and imitatation of his virgin mother. Textual repetition mimics the pilgrimage itself: each time the group enters a town, the ritual of worshiping the Christ child recurs.

[62] I had the pleasure of hearing Bynum deliver a talk in 2016 on the cribs held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See *Christian Materiality*, 62-64, for a beautiful analysis of liturgical cradles, two of which I include in the Appendix; see also Caroline Walker Bynum, "Encounter: Holy Beds," Gesta 55, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 129-131. https://doi.org/10.1086/687150. See also LeZotte, Annette. "3. Cradling Power: Female Devotions and Early Netherlandish Jésueaux". *Push Me, Pull You: Imaginative and Emotional Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004215139_024 Web.

The *Book*'s structure, which folds layer upon layer, is shaped by the Marian practice of swaddling the Christ Child. The paragraph beginning with "And the woman the which had the ymage in the chist," which brings the chapter to a close, uses the physical object of the chest to develop a scene in which women come together around small devotional objects, communicating with one another not through spoken language but through gesture, touch, and tears. That the *Book* describes the communion of human bodies rather than the physical features of the chest and the doll reveals the *Book*'s emphasis on the text's ability to develop a human community, intimately bound to one another. Before the chest scene opens, the *Book* describes the community to which Margery now belongs at this stage of the journey as one bound together both materially and spiritually, trading food for prayer, and maintaining a commitment to affective caregiving:

> And non of hem cowde undirstand hir langage, and yet thei ordeyned for hir every day mete, drynke, and herborwe *as wel as* he dedyn for hemselfe and rathar bettyr, that sche was *evyr bownden* to prey for hem. And every evyn and morwyn Richard wyth the broke bak cam and comfortyd hir *as he had promysed*. (2518-2523)

These lines emphasize the voluntary commitments the pilgrims make to one another despite the fact that they come from different places and speak different languages. Richard is Margery's interpreter; his ability to speak many languages and his daytime occupation as a beggar place him outside of the group of pilgrims, as he represents a mediator between secular and religious spheres. The language of the passage consistently refers to the differences between each pilgrim, only to insist that these bring the pilgrims closer to one another: "and *yet* thei ordeyned for hir…" This "yet" calls attention to the non-inevitability of this friendship and this deep commitment to the other's well-being. It is not only that they feed her, though; they share with her resources "as wel as" they provide for themselves, "rathar bettyr." This care, like the woman's donkey bearing the chest of the Christ child, is excessive, reaching beyond mere

necessity to greater heights of love for those with whom no biological or national ties are shared. These material provisions are returned with the spiritual commitments of Margery, who is "bownden" to pray for her new friends. Richard, too, maintains his promise to return to Margery every night.

These repetitive acts of feeding, praying, and returning home each night determine the rhythm and syntax of the *Book*'s prose, which, in its syntax, metes out the differences between Margery's "cuntremen" and those she meets while traveling. The *Book* encloses Margery, her friends, and the reader in the rhythms of the text. The consistent use of analogy in the *Book* reinforces the relationship between opposing forces: bodily and ghostly, heavenly and earthly, English and Irish. The *Book*'s "as" reminds the reader of the equality between the pilgrims, made concrete in the food they share, and of the choice to remain equivalent to one's own promises and commitments: Richard returns each morning and evening "as" he had promised he would. This style, with its frequent use of repetition and analogy, is built out of the religious culture in which every day resembles every other. So too are the *Book*'s sentences balanced and cyclical, bound to return, like a prayer, to the place in which they began. It is as though the *Book* sees itself as its own site of "herborwe," a place in which the characters are brought to rest with one another, in the sight of the reader.

The *Book* uses the chest as both a narrative device and as a physical object upon which to model itself formally. The lines I have explored here open the chest in order to create a community of women that gathers around Margery, putting her to bed just as the chapter comes to a close. The chapter ends, moreover, with a sermonic address to the reader, "blyssed mot he ben!" The intimacy between the women here is put on display for any reader. The text is, like so

many of its fellow devotional works, both "privy" and "open" at once. The next enclosure to which I turn is the cloak of Richard with the broken back, first introduced in this same chapter.

The "Forclowtyd Cloke Ful of Clowtys"

Midway through Chapter 30, the *Book* describes Richard's physical appearance: "Than anon, as sche lokyd on the on syde, sche sey a powyr man sittyng whech had a gret cowche on hys bakke. Hys clothis wer al forclowtyd, and he semyd a man of L wyntyr age" (2483-2485). Poor, old (by medieval standards), dressed in rags, and sitting as though in contemplation, Richard is the perfect image of the Franciscan devotee of the late Middle Ages. It is his cloak that Margery first notices as she approaches him: "Hys clothis wer al *forclowtyd*…." (emphasis mine, 2483-2485).[63] This adjective is most closely related to the Old English *geclūtod*, the past participle of *geclūtian*, meaning "patched, mended with patches" (1) or "furnished or protected with studs or nails." Richard's cloak results from intervention; it has been mended. It also serves as a form of protection, which he will describe when he speaks to Margery. The *Book*'s description of Margery's first sight of Richard as he sits off to the side places her, and the reader of the *Book*, in a privileged position, looking down on the sitting Richard, who is covered in rags.

[63] Stone presents this line as an example of the "concrete diction and homely terms" used by the "less intellectual, more colloquial Margery," and he notes his own difficutly in locating a useful etymology for the term "cowche." I am suggesting instead that this passage be read as one of those richest in symbolism and literary significance in the book.

The "clut," in other Middle English works, refers to an addition to a text, a patch that covers over the truth. For instance, in Part Four of the *Ancrene Wisse,* on temptations, the author warns the anchoresses that they must often repeat the rule meant to prevent the spread of gossip, making sure not to add anything when sharing it with her sisters:

> Ant makie hwa-se bereth thet word recordin hit ofte bivoren hire, ear ha ga - hu ha wule seggen, thet ha ne segge hit other-weis, ne cluti ther-to mare. For a lute clut mei ladlechin swithe a muchel hal pece. (947-950)
>
> And she should make whoever is carrying the message rehearse it several times with her before she goes, as she wants to have it said, so that she does not say it in any other way, or tack on more; because a small patch can ruin the appearance of a whole large piece of cloth. (Millett, 97)

An early 15th century work attributed to John Lydgate, the English translation of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pylgremage of the Sowle*, refers to the misinterpretation of scripture as "clouting, or, to return to a central term from my previous chapter, glossing: "Also alle Heretykes, and Scysmatikes, that presumptuously peruertyn hooly Scrypture by fals vnderstandynge, glosynge, cuttynge, kouerynge, and cloutynge with vycyous adinuencyons the lawe of Crystes Gospel" (49).[64] To "clout" is thus to cover up, decieve, and to interfere with the successful transmission of the scripture or the religious rule.

Richard, in his "forclowtyd" clothing, is a holy text to be read in the *Book*.[65] As Margery reads him visually, she remembers the words of God, spoken through the prophecy she recieves in Chapter 18. The ability to physically read a text, as compared to the ability to decipher the words of God, is first introduced in the preface to the book: "Whan the prest began fyrst to wryten on this booke, his eyn myssyd so that he mygth not se to make hys lettyr, ne mygth not se

[64] This metaphor is actualized in an early modern community of Little Gidding, studied by Adam Smyth. See "Cutting Texts: 'Prune and Lop Away.'" *Material Texts in Early Modern England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018, pp. 17–54.

to mend hys penne. All other thyng he mygth se wel anow. He sett a peyr <of> spectacles on hys nose, and than wast wel wers than it was befor" (140-144). The priest, whose sight only breaks down when he tries to read the "booke" of Margery, mistakenly turns to the human invention of the spectacle, which makes it even harder for him to see.[66] The preface also refers to the particular shape of the letters found in the book in its early stages: "The booke was so evel wretyn that he cowd lytyl skyll theron, for it was neithyr good Englysch ne Dewch, ne the lettyr was not schapyn ne formyd as other letters ben" (99-101). Richard, with the "couch" upon his back, is misshapen like these same letters.[67] Like these letters, he can only be seen by the converted Margery. If the priest who had written out her text had seen Richard, he would have seen only clouts.

Richard's role in the text, from this first description onward, is in large part to relay a warning that there is more to him than meets the eye. Yet, Margery's ability to see him, and to recognize him as the man with the broken back, is precisely what allows her to enact the prophecy that he will lead her to Rome. When Margery first asks Richard to take her along with him to Rome, he objects on account of the physical danger she might face, since he, as an unarmed man with a physical disability, will not be able to protect her from other men on the road:

> Nay, damsel,' he seyd, 'I wot wel thi cuntremen han forsakyn the, and therfor it wer hard to me to ledyn the. [For t]hy cuntremen han bothyn bowys and arwys,

[66] This opening lesson on the primacy of God's will is not unlike the lesson Augustine of Hippo relates in his *Confessions*, of the time when he tries to bathe away his tears after the death of his mother Monica: "I decided to go and take a bath, because I had heard that baths, for which the Greeks say *balaneion*, get their name from throwing anxiety out of the mind" (Saint Augustine, and Henry Chadwick. *Confessions*. Oxford University Press, 2008:175). Relying upon his own human knowledge of the Greek etymology of the term for bathhouse, he tries, unsuccessfuly, to will away his feelings of mourning.

[67] Readers of medieval manuscripts are accustomed to likening letters to bodies, not only because illuminations wrote bodies into letters, but also because paleographers often could find no better description of the shape of a particular "hand," or form of handwriting, than through the vocabulary of the body. See Parkes, M. B., *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250-1500*. Clarendon Press, 1969.

> wyth the [whec]h thei myth defendyn bothyn the and hemself, and [I have] *no wepyn save a cloke ful of clowtys*. And yet I drede me that myn enmys schul robbyn me, and peraventur takyn the awey fro me and defowlyn thy body, and therfor I dar not ledyn the, for I wold not for an hundryd pownd that thu haddyst a vylany in my cumpany. (2498-2505)

Richard's reply not only alliterates, but also metaphorizes his cloak, referring to it as a "wepyn" even as he insists that it provides no physical protection against thieves who might treat Margery as an extension of his personal property, raping or "defowlyn" her after robbing him. Although the *Book* has already introduced this cloak to the reader as the "clothis [that] wer al forclowtyd," it now places the description in the mouth of Richard, who reflects upon the quality of his own cloak. What makes this cloak a "wepyn," and why might Richard have mentioned it in the same breath as the "bowys and arwys" of the Englishmen?

The "forclowtyd" clothing of Richard introduces the torn swaddling clothes of Christ, which are imaginatively replaced by the "schirtys" carried within the chest of Margery's new friend from Jerusalem. God's delivery of Richard to Margery, furthermore, rests upon her promise to "be clad in white" (2468). Earlier in the preface, The *Book* refers its own making in a material way:

> …this creatur was inspyred wyth the Holy Gost, and bodyn hyr that sche schuld don hem wryten and makyn a booke of hyr felyngys and hir revelacyons. Sum proferyd hir to wrytyn hyr felyngys wyth her owen handys… (80-81)

This portion of the preface calls attention to the physical work of making the book, to Margery's desire to make it herself, and, at the same time, to the collaborative work required. First, Margery will collaborate with Christ, waiting to hear from him that she is ready to "don wryten hyr

felyngys" (86).[68] Richard's "forclowtyd" cloak provides the *Book*'s readers with an image of what it means to be English, and to write English prose, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It requires patching together a community, building a text out of diverse devotional practices and voices both male and female, English and French, German, Italian.

The Old English term "*clūt*," moreover, used in phrases such as "*mid cildclaðum*," can refer to swaddling clothes or to winding sheets (DoE 2).[69] Richard is not only sent by God, but he is also made to look like Jesus; when he is off humbly begging, he is replaced in the narrative by an effigy of Christ, carried by the women Margery meets in the same chapter. Such metaphorical language brings the imagery of the Passion into the text. Richard's "clouts" can be read alongside the wounds of Christ, which The *Book* describes in Chapter 28 as holes in an enclosure for doves: "… it was grawntyd this creatur to beholdyn so verily hys precyows tendyr body – alto-rent and toryn wyth scorgys, mor ful of wowndys than evyr was duffehows of holys, hangyng upon the cros wyth the corown of thorn upon hys hevyd…" (2268-2271).[70] This chapter, with which I open my own, is remarkable for the many narrative and stylistic patterns it introduces. For instance, as Margery approaches Jerusalem, the *Book* takes pains to mention that she is "rydyng on an asse." Her ability to keep her posture upon the donkey is tested when she begins talking to Jesus, so that she becomes, "… in poynt to a fallyn of hir asse" (2182-2188). This detail subtly introduces an image to which she will return two chapters later, when she sees

[68] Christopher Cannon reads this line as one that suggests Kempe was more literate than she lets on. He uses the term "secretarial production" to refer to her writing process, and relates her authorship to Chaucer and Langland; see 'Wyth her owen handys': What Women's Literacy Can Teach Us about Langland and Chaucer, *Essays in Criticism*, Volume 66, Issue 3, July 2016, Pages 277–300.

[69] DOE HyGl 2 (Milfull) 0214 (43.3); Hymns: Milfull 1996, 109-472, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church: A Study and Edition of the Durham Hymnal*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 17 (Cambridge).

[70] Barry Windeatt notes that this comparison is first articulated in English by Richard Rolle in his *Meditations on the Passion*, and that Rolle borrows from St. Bernard's translation of the Song of Songs (166).

a woman from Jerusalem approaching, riding on a mule. Such details within the narrative of the *Book* tie the characters together, linking them across the time and space Margery traverses throughout the course of the narrative, and linking all of these "worschypful" women back to Mary in the manger. Gibson highlights the importance of various garments in the meditations of Margery, the iconography of which were being reinvented at the time the *Book* was written. According to Gibson's reading, "The fair white cloth she sees in her vision is at once swaddling cloth and shroud" (51). Thus, the *Book* participates in a late medieval vernacular understanding of the Nativity of Christ as it links directly, through Marian meditation, to his Passion. Gibson cites a Marian lyric that repeats the word "clut" throughout, writing that "The poor frail cloth of humanity is what actually swathes the Christ Child in the *Meditationes vitae Christi* and in devotional texts like the fourteenth-century English lyric in which Mary sings…" (53).

The cloak of the Virgin in medieval Christianity represented Mary's ability to protect "the whole of Christendom," according to Henk Van Os.[71] Several paintings and woodcuts depict the Virgin in a large scale, opening up her robe in order to provide shelter to worshippers who look up at her, but, because of the cloak, cannot see her face directly.[72] Yet again, looking is required, but seeing the true image is impossible without a faithful orientation. According to Eamon Duffy, "The Mother of Mercy was one of Mary's most resonant medieval titles, unforgettably carved, painted, or engraved, extending her sheltering cloak over the suppliant

[71] Os, H. W. van. *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

[72] See Appendix for two examples of many of this popular image. Van Os also provides a woodcut of the Madonna della Misericordia on page 171.

faithful and enshrined in the most haunting of Marian prayers, the 'Salve Regina'" (264).[73] Duffy's historical analysis of the widespread Marian devotion of late medieval England, so dependent on his own reading of the *Book*, along with the sermons, lyrics, and images that circulated before the Reformation, helps to substantiate my view that the *Book* sees itself as another version of the sheltering cloak of the Virgin. It is not only true that Jesus thanks Margery for bringing him "herborwe" in the *Book*; it is also clear that the *Book* represents scenes of how Margery and her friends find harbor in one another. This protective community is the social structure around which the prose of the *Book* is ordered.

Richard's cloak opens up, symbolically, into a set of reflections within the *Book* about what it means to read in a holy way, and about how the holy prose work, like the Virgin's capacious cloak, can provide both "herborwe" and protection, serving as a spiritual "wepyn" to the all lay worshippers at once. The text, like the cloak and the chest I have explored here, offers an intimate gathering space, underneath the garments of the Virgin, in which individual community members press up against one another in the act of worship, either enveloping themselves in the Virgin's cloak or, in turn, enveloping the Christ child in their own garments or "schirtys." The "schirtys" that covered the medieval holy doll, moreover, incorporated manuscripts both for decoration and for material support. Henrike Lähnemann and others have been looking beneath the seams of these dresses only to find that they are backed with manuscripts such as a meditation on the passion.[74] The crown of Jesus (See Appendix) is backed

[73] Duffy relies a great deal on the *Book* in order to claim that the fifteenth century saw an increasingly "democratized" religious practice that resulted in "the social homogeneity of late medieval religion" (265). The eighth chapter of the *Book* opens with this title for the Virgin.

[74] See Lähnemann's chapter "Text und Textil," and a recent presentation she gave on the sacred dresses from medieval convents in Germany: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3891&v=xrVh6HhAI_A&feature=emb_title. See also Klapisch-

with manuscript material, and the worshippers have also used parchment to fold tiny flowers for decorations around the crown. Kempe's *Book*, in its brief reference to the women who put shirts on the Christ doll, directs us to this devotional practice, which concretely fuses text and textile. The *Book*, too, organizes itself around the "forclowted" cloak of Richard, the purple robe of Jesus, and the white garments Margery begins to wear "for love of God."

While the *imitatio Christi* practices of both Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe have been thoroughly traced by scholars, few have noted the more specific practices present in Chapter 30, as Margery encounters women from Jerusalem.[75] Here, imitation of the mother of Christ takes over, and this devotional practice requires layer upon layer of enclosure, from crib, cradle and manger to new "schirtys" to replace the "pitiful swaddling clothes" described by Mary Dzon.[76] These individual enclosures are the material out of which the *Book of Margery Kempe* is made. These are the elements that build the narrative of the book, as Margery herself struggles to find bedding and clothing suitable for her new vows. Furthermore, the *Book* builds this narrative through the enclosures of the clause, the sentence, and the chapter.

Zuber, Christiane. "Holy Dolls: Play and Piety in Florence in the Quattrocento," in *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 310-29.

[75] Gibson describes this as one of the most fascinating scenes from Margery's Italian pilgrimage; LeZotte, too, briefly mentions this passage. See also Hellwarth, J. (2002), *The Reproductive Unconscious in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*. New York: Routledge, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315024103.

[76] Dzon writes that this practice is based in the practices of St. Francis himself: "He was no doubt thinking about the Babe's poverty, and likely reflected on his pitiful swaddling clothes, as well as his makeshift crib" (90).

The "powr womanys hows"

The image of Mary as an ever-present mother on earth is nowhere clearer than in Chapter 39 of the *Book*, in which Margery is called into a breast-feeding mother's house. The chapter opens with a stand-alone episode that is easily overlooked as a stop along the way, a mere opportunity for refreshment and warmth during a long journey: "Another tyme, ryth as sche cam be a powr womanys hows, the powr woman clepyd hir into hir hows and dede hir sytten be hir lytyl fyer, yevyng hir wyn to drynke in a cuppe of ston" (3078-3080). The parallel structure of the final two clauses links house and fire, wine and cup of stone. The ambiguous use of the pronoun "hir" reveals the woman's gesture to be one of opening her home to Margery totally, so that "hir lytyl fyer" becomes Margery's, too.[77] The synchrony and spontaneity of the encounter is revealed in the temporal opening of the line: just as she is passing the woman's house, the woman calls her in. When we come to find that the woman is home breastfeeding a small child, we also come to realize how unlikely it would have been that she would notice a passerby, let alone to catch her, and have wine so ready to pour. As the objects that facilitate Margery's visit become smaller in size, the space between the two women decreases. As the narrative continues, it becomes harder to distinguish between the roles they play and the emotions each of the two women experience.

What unites Margery and the woman in the following line is not a thing, but a nursing infant: "And sche had a lytel manchylde sowkyng on hir brest, the whech sowkyd o while on the moderys brest; another while it ran to this creatur, the modyr syttyng ful of sorwe and sadnes" (3080-3083). In this sentence, as with the one preceding, syntax tells a story. The first two

[77] Chapter 28 and others refer to the notion of love for Jesus as a "fyer of love," a metaphor popularized by the mystical writer Richard Rolle, hermit of Hampole.

clauses tie mother and child to one another with the unecessary repetition of the verb "to suck" as the past progressive "sowkyng" and simple past "sowkyd." While such lines are often read in the *Book* as textual evidence of Margery's "spontaneous outpourings," her excesses, and her need to be better restrained, here the repetition has a specific purpose, which is to emphasize that the mother has a child sucking at her breast, but to introduce the limit placed upon this sucking, which will only occur for a "while." The most important thing about these two clauses, which Windeatt separates from the next two with a semi-colon, is that they insist upon the relationship between mother and child, which is established through the bodily act of breastfeeding. The following two clauses emphasize a break between the mother and child at the same time that they further unite Margery and the mother. As soon as the child runs to Margery, the "creature," Margery detects sadness in the mother. Although I have treated the sentence in two pairs at the urging of Windeatt's punctuation, the middle clauses, separated by the semicolon, tie Margery and the mother together through parallelism. The child

> sowkyd *o while* on the moderys brest;
> *another* while it ran to this creatur (3082-3083)

The sense here is that Margery and the mother, through the "manchylde," become united in a cycle of feeding, playing, and caring for the Christ-like infant. This brief scene, then, becomes another moment in which Margery encounters a perfect stranger on the road, but is instantly drawn into a deeply intimate connection through the enclosures of chest, house, and cup. Just as Margery is stirred by the women dressing up the effigy of Christ in Chapter 30, she is here moved by the momentary sorrows of the mother whose breastfeeding is interrupted by the child's

playful "running" to Margery. Both scenes cause Margery to cry. One significant difference between the two is that in Chapter 30, her weeping inspires the women to care for her physically (setting up a good bed for her), whereas here, the woman already has chosen to provide shelter and wine for Margery. The tears come later.

Far from the chapel, Margery finds the *mater dolorosa,* or the "modyr syttyng ful of sorwe and sadnes." Margery's response to what she percieves as the mother's sadness is to weep herself:

> Than this creatur brast al into wepyng, as thei sche had seyn owr Lady and hir sone in tyme of hys Passyon, and had so many of holy thowtys that sche myth nevyr tellyn the halvendel, but evyr sat and wept plentyvowsly a long tyme, that the powr woman, havyng compassyon of hir wepyng, preyd hir to sesyn, not knowyng why sche wept. (3083-3089)

Although the narrative suggests that the mother's sadness spurs Margery to tears, a careful reading reveals that it was Margery, who carries the sight of the Passion with her everywhere, who saw the sadness in the mother, and not the mother who expressed, or likely felt, any sadness.[78] She is, indeed, confused by Margery's weeping. She asks her to stop. The mother's body becomes a holy body that gives forth both the eucharistic blood of Christ in the form of wine for Margery, milk for her child. This otherwise ordinary moment becomes transformed in the *Book*, as it draws together the Nativity and the Passion through the mother who ministers with both milk and blood. Gathered around the fire, these three people allow for a reimagining of the Nativity in medieval England. This strange woman's house becomes a new manger. The "little fire" is both the sacred heart of Jesus and the fire of love that ignites medieval devotion. Margery does not need to be enclosed in a house of stone to be enclosed in the meditations she

[78] Watson describes this aspect of the work the "as if" topos of the *Book*: "Her contemplative recreations of the Passion bridge past and present in a related way, as she travles back in time in her body as well as soul, playing the part of a mourner when Christ is taken from the cross…" (420).

recieves and the conversations she shares with God.

This brief episode, which occupies the space of just over ten lines in the Windeatt edition, quickly propels Margery forth to Rome. The prose takes on the pace of an animated cartoon in the following paragraph: "And than sche ros up and went forth in Rome and sey meche poverte among the pepyl" (3901). The miraculous nature of the poor woman's home allows for what reads as a miracle in the prose of the *Book*, for suddenly, Margery is in Rome, looking out at the poor. While the prose form of this chapter is remarkable in its mirroring of the holy nature of this encounter between Margery and the nursing mother, this chapter also reveals the *Book* to be a work of literature in which the narrator is unreliable, a textual feature acceptable in fictional works, but not in works deemed "autobiographical." Margery's desire to see a sorrowful mother is what makes the mother sorrowful within the space of the text. This earthly, homely moment in the *Book* becomes, on closer inspection, more complex than many of Margery's visions, which are described in vivid detail. The opening of Chapter 39, moreover, requires the reader's willingness to see Mary in the poor woman. Margery is a new Mary in Chapter 39, sitting in an enclosed space, hearing the revelation through God's holy speech to her: "Thys place is holy." She is also the child, taken in by the mother. The house, through the meditations of Margery and the narration of the book, becomes another site of worship, a place just as worthy as any other pilgrimage site. Mothers on earth, inside little houses, are sanctified in the *Book*.

Conclusion

The *Book,* a work often criticized for its excessive style and its insufferable, ever-roaring protagonist, takes the excessive, affective piety of late medieval Christianity and molds it into a

narrative that mimics the miraculous womb of the Virgin Mary.[79] The repetitive, mimetic practices of enclosed women, for whom every day on earth is meant to resemble every other, informs the innovative prose style of the *Book of Margery Kempe*. The life of Margery incorporates meditation on the childhood and crucifixion of Christ; its structure, from the sentence and phrase to the narrative as a whole, is drawn out of the fabric of Marian devotion.

The devotional practices described in the *Book* determine the structure of the narrative as a whole, a narrative that jumps from "tyme" to "tyme," and place to place. God's prophecy that Margery will meet Richard becomes another device through which the *Book* speaks to the reader, reminding her of the structure of the book as a whole, and calling attention to a figure whose mysterious origins, along with the disability and the cloak that mark him, render him a symbol for the text itself. Through a remarkable use of repetition, the narrative structure breaks down chronological and spatial boundaries, allowing Margery to carry God with her everywhere she goes.[80] Chapters begin with "On a day" or "Another tyme" so frequently, I suggest, because the *particular* day cannot matter to a contemplative, even a road-bound one like Margery. This results in a text that is driven by experiential memories into which the reader is drawn as an active participant.

The *Book* uses the imagery and narrative of the Bible and of hagiographical texts to artfully construct an original narrative that builds upon the space of the manger and the metaphorical "weapon" of Richard's cloak. The chest in which her new friends carry an effigy of Christ becomes a figure for a text around which a community gathers. Finally, the text points

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[79] See "In the Meydens Womb: Julian of Norwich and the Poetics of Enclosure," in *Medieval Mothering*, edited by John Cardi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, 1996.

[80] Robert Karl Stone cites a critic who wrote of Kempe in 1942, "'…her personal mysticism seemed to reach its most characteristic form in a queer sort of self-transference to remote periods of time'" (B.G. Brooks, "Margery Kempe," *The Nineteenth Century and After,* 132 (July), 30-32, in Stone, 17).

beyond its own function, emphasizing the importance of the meditation held in the mind and the gesture expressed by the body. What I have suggested in this chapter is that the imaginative devotional practices of women in medieval Europe provide the material out of which the *Book* re-imagines the life of Margery. Far from a simple report of a single woman's life, the *Book* is a fictionalized work that purposely confuses the narratives of Mary, Jesus, Margery, and Margery's "even-Crystyn" (7233). The *Book*'s frequent use of the doublet, parallelism, and repetition becomes the prose equivalent of the medieval pilgrim's ability to see the heavenly on earth. The *Book* re-envisions the world as one no longer structured by the pains of childbirth and threats of violence but instead bound together by a voluntary form of maternal care modeled on the life of Mary and her son. The *Book*, moreover, becomes a mother to Margery, Christ, and the reader, offering up a space of rest and care—a bed.

This chapter has explored the *Book of Margery Kempe* as a Marian book, not only in the sense that the Virgin Mary is a role model to the protagonist, but also in the sense that the *Book* takes on the role of the Virgin herself, enveloping Margery and her felawship within the confines of the episodic chapters of the prose narrative. The following chapter will explore how England's first printer, William Caxton, continues to create books that he presents as Marian objects of devotion—books that are unique, valuable, and salvific. Through explicit references to Mary in his illustrations and paratexts, Caxton presents himself as a follower of Mary, not unlike Margery herself. Moreover, he presents the book as a reliquary, a receptacle for unique and yet repeatable acts of worship.

Chapter Three

Maternal Impressions: William Caxton and the Marian Book

> I was at Coleyn / and herd reherced there by a noble doctour / that the hooly and deuoute saynt Jeromme had a custome to vysyte the chirches at Rome / And so he cam in to a Chirche / where an ymage of our blessyd lady stoode in a chappell by the dore/ as he entryd/ and passyd for the by without ony salutacion to our lady/ And went for the to euery aulter / and made his prayers to all the sayntes in the chirche eche after other / And retourned ageyne by the same ymage without ony saleweng to her/ Thenne our blessyd lady called hym and spak to hym by the sayd ymage/ and demaunded of hym the cause why he made no salutacion to her sayng that he had done honoure & worship to alle the other sayntes/ of whom the ymages were in that chirche/And thenne saynt Jeromme kneled doune/ and sayd thus… "Sancta et inmaculata vyrginitas" ($a5^b$, ll. 9-25)[81]

Saint, Virgin, printer and reader are bound together in the space of this interpolation to the Life of Saint Jerome in the *Golden Legend* (*GoL*). This narrative depicts an intimate scene of solitary worship that comes to be overseen not only by the Virgin Mary herself but also by the overseer of the book, Caxton.[82] Jerome's visit to the church is first reported to a "noble doctour" and then passed on to the printer, whose experience of hearing the story "reherced" in Coleyn becomes the authenticating factor he needs in order to include his own rendering of the tale. His own "rehearsal" becomes important enough to interrupt the legendary. As such, Caxton's acts of hearing and retelling take on the importance of Jerome's private procession. Positioning himself as more than a mere compiler, Caxton offers something that even the author of the *GoL*, Jacobus

[81] A similar story appears in the passage on "The Finding of the True Cross," which Blake edits in his volume *Middle English Religious Prose*. In this passage, an "ymage of Seinte Savyoure" fixes his eyes upon a notary, an event that causes the "maister" of the notary to ask what he has done toward God to deserve this special attention from the saint.

[82] Caxton frequently uses the verb "oversee" to refer to the act of proofreading.

de Voragine, cannot access: the miraculous voice of Mary, transported through a vivid scene that is reported to him orally. The subjective experience of hearing the tale at a particular time, from an individual he remembers (even if he fails to name him) attains a greater value than the written "exemplars" from which Caxton translates this vast work.

Twice passed over, the surrogate for Mary takes a unique and singular form as she makes a verbal demand upon the neglectful saint. Both reproducible and singular, the image stands for Mary while her singular voice speaks to Jerome. The narrative emphasizes the repetition inherent in Jerome's visits to the church: this is not only his "custome," but, once inside, he makes prayers "eche after other" before returning "ageyne by the same ymage" of Mary. The reader of the legend of saints' lives, a text used both privately and liturgically, is also meant to place himself in the position of Jerome. Watched over by the Virgin Mary, careful not to miss any details in the book that currently serves as a miniature church, the reader imagines the printer of the book watching over him; Caxton, like Mary, expects to be praised by his readers.

This chapter argues that for William Caxton, England's first printer, Mary and her followers represented more than the traditional devotion of the past. Rather, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and other female saints I explore below offer models of innovative self-construction both in terms of social roles and in terms of literary production. The symbolism of non-biological maternal care I have explored in my opening chapters, modeled on Mary's miraculous pregnancy and the devotion her followers lavish upon Jesus, bears fruit for the secular male printer. Returning to one of the forms of enclosure in the *Book of Margery Kempe*, namely acts of maternal care that are not restricted by biological motherhood, this chapter explores the ways in which Caxton mobilizes this enclosure and the theme of non-biological reproduction with the miraculous advent of print. The symbolism of maternal care for the

children of others, including the Christ child himself, was central to the early press, this chapter and the following one will demonstrate. Non-biological or technological reproduction of texts allowed for increasing possibilities for social and educational mobility, what we might call "self-creation," in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[83] Images of foundlings and the mothers who *chose* to care for children who were not their own, themselves having decided upon a life of chastity as opposed to marriage, abound in early printed devotional literature. The following chapter charts the beginning of this significant and thus far underexplored trend, looking to Caxton's role as both author and printer in the first devotional texts printed in England.

In Caxton's textual innovations, we find a unifying set of reflections, written from the first-person perspective of the printer, in which he depicts both the medieval devotional culture found in the texts he prints and the process of disseminating texts for commercial gain. Imitating the fables of Aesop, the Lydgatean stanza, the preacher's *exempla*, and the Virgilian narrative of Aeneas's voyages at sea, Caxton writes in multiple forms. Each time he prepares a book for publication and for sale, he attends to its linguistic and literary features, participating in them as both writer and critic. As widely circulating texts in the vernacular and as texts with explicit lessons in manners—Caxton's works, especially the large collections of saints' lives he translated, mitigated the radical potential of mechanically reproducible texts that promote social mobility both materially and thematically by featuring highly wrought images and narratives of enclosed female saints, of *non-readers* whose lives could instruct the laity without suggesting that lay women ought to read at the increasing rates of their male counterparts. In the *contemptus*

[83] Here I am suggesting that Stephen Greenblatt's notion of Renaissance "self-fashioning" finds anticipation in the late medieval period: *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

mundi tradition, such women are well positioned as those excluded from participation in the world.

Exploring Caxton's largest work, the *Golden Legend*, and the related collection *Vitas Patrum*, I suggest that these may be the texts that tell us the most about the creative potential of both the printer and the devotional text printed between the late medieval and early modern periods.[84] These popular, richly illustrated collections of saints' lives allow Caxton to explore his role as both printer and author, as the life of the saint, with its attendant miracle narratives, is emblematic of vernacular literature that is spread to wide audiences. Caxton's collections, moreover, feature a number of female saints that allow him to offer to readers narratives of disguised identity, foster parenting, and personal transformation. The miracle narrative, a text shared orally, at the discretion of the hearer, is a textual form that both allows Caxton to establish his authority as a printer who has acquired new narratives and that reveals the difficulties inherent in the culture's assignment of the validity to such narratives. These are stories anyone can tell.

In the manner of a storyteller, Caxton advertised his books. Unwilling to share his business secret by describing the work of the press directly, moreover, Caxton initiated a sub-genre we can see in later work by printers, bibliographers, and antiquarians: imaginative narratives that attempt to reconstruct a process to which we have never and many never gain meaningful access.

[84] For instance, H.S. Bennett writes that Caxton "… prints what it was easy for him to know was popular by inquiry of the scriveners concerning manuscript circulation, or what the prevailing predilection for religious writings made a certain success" (17). Even scholars who explore the feminist and queer implications of these texts continue to read them as conventional choices for the printer. For instance, Katherine J. Lewis writes that "… both Caxton and de Worde were esstially businessmen; they produced works in response to demand, and thus their publications provide a good guide to the reading tastes of late-medieval men and women" (113): "Male Saints and Devotional Masculinity in Late Medieval England." *Gender & History*, 24 (2012): 112-133. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0424.2011.01671.x

Working simultaneously with the non-reproducible medieval object and with reproducible type, Caxton arrives at the center of a paradox to which he sacrifices himself, not so much as a suffering scribe as much as a potentially replaceable printer and absent writer.[85] The interpolations are drawn from Caxton's own experiences, and thus become written attempts to preserve unique objects of devotion within the printed book. Caxton—like Chaucer and like the *Book of Margery Kempe*–employs strategies of enclosure and dissemination simultaneously.

In her discussion of the move from manuscript to print versions of the *arma Christi* devotional image, Shannon Gayk describes the presence of both continuity and change in this particular set of fragmentary images.[86] The image of the suffering Christ and the tools used in his crucifixion are especially useful in discussing the historical moment in which Caxton brings the printed book to England. Caxton's *GoL*, for instance, may be seen as an example of what Gayk calls "monuments of absence." That is, the printed book memorializes the events and literary works of the past, but it also calls the reader's attention to that which can never be recovered. The book is, as John King calls *The Acts and Monuments* of John Foxe, a "symbolic reliquary " (8).[87] Nearly a century before Foxe's Protestant collection comes into print, Caxton uses absent

[85] I thank Sebastian Sobecki for pointing out the trope of the suffering scribe that Caxton emulates in several of his writings.

[86] See Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown, eds., *The Arma Christi In Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: with a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle'*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014. Gayk writes, "…the *arma* come to stand in for a suffering body that can no longer be seen or represented visually. They come to serve, in other words, as *monuments of absence*—not only of the suffering body of Christ but also of the medieval modes of piety that emphasized devotion to that body. Notably, most of these early modern visual and poetic representations of the *arma Christi* do not enact a replacement of image with text, but rather replace one image—the suffering body—with a set of images metonymically related to it—the instruments. These early modern visual and verbal refigurations of the *arma* thus embody both iconographic continuity and change; their presence insists on an *essential absence*—that of the suffering body of Christ—but even as they imply the limitations of the visual in representing Christ's Passion, they do so by means of the visual" (297, emphasis mine).

[87] King, John N., Foxe's *Book of Martyrs and Early Modern Print Culture*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. King writes that in the time of Foxe, "The enduring remains of martyrs who were denied Christian burial accordingly consist not of bones, fragments of clothing, or instruments of torture, but texts that undergo preservation within a tomblike history" (7).

authority—authority based in private experience, oral traditions, and untraceable objects such as the altarpieces and relics of pre-Reformation England—in a way that enables the printer to fashion himself as a new authority figure: a church father without a church. My focus on Caxton's liturgical approach to bookmaking differs from other recent scholarly approaches to Caxton's career. My definition of the liturgical relies upon the work of Bruce Holsinger, who has argued forcefully in favor of a view of liturgy as an artform worthy of literary study. He writes, "…medieval liturgy was at once an inspiration for endless musical and literary composition and a precise formal mechanism for fitting innumerable existing fragments of text and song together to shape stories eternally worth retelling" (296).[88]

Caxton's sources—conversations while riding with a friend, a response to an altarpiece, the blood and bone of Christ or the speech of the Virgin Mary, a sermon heard or a procession watched by a cardinal—are significant precisely because they cannot be reproduced. At the moment that he introduces the mechanically copied text to England, Caxton insists upon the particular, the unique event, object, or conversation that cannot be consulted because it cannot be duplicated. In this way, Caxton proposes the notion that the book is a reliquary. The relics it holds are little more than the personal experiences of the printer who has gathered treasures from the past in the service of the reader.

[88] See Strohm, Paul, and Bruce Holsinger. "Liturgy." In *Middle English*.: Oxford University Press, 2007-04-19. https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199287666.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199287666-e-019.

1. Caxton as Author and the Penitential Press

The most significant biographical fact regarding William Caxton is the sheer absence of information regarding his birth, origin, upbringing, and education. Precisely because we know so little about him, he is an ideal figure for working out the fantasies of the scholars and successors who saw in him an image of England itself: a blank folio and a virgin land, ripe for the printing of new possibilities. Reading Caxton in the context of modern theories of subjectivity, Alexandra Gillespie identifies in her reflection on Caxton's writings as a thus far unwritten "…account of the inventive otherness or resistant form of the work itself."[89] Caxton's innovation spreads over the many texts he translated and printed. Rather than merely reproduce the book, he is one of the first to develop a notion of the book as a space in which identity is both contested and formed.

Caxton's work as printer was fused with previous experience as a mercer along with his work as a translator, which he picked up during the years just before turning to the press full time.[90] Rather than think of Caxton's life as a conversion narrative that is split between Caxton's time as a merchant and his time and his time as a man of letters, I explore the continuity of these

[89] "Caxton and the Invention of Printing" in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature: 1485-1603,* 27). In addition to Blake, Gillespie, and William Kuskin, scholars such as Kathleen Tonry, Anne Coldiron, and Tim Machan have begun to establish a new portrait of Caxton as a creative writer and translator. For Machan, the act of reproducing the text is itself a creative one. He writes, "The reproduction of Malory's creativity… became someone else's creative act, whether this involved melding eight distinct books into a twenty-one-part whole or breaking up a coherent narrative into eight books" ("Sources, Analogues, Creativity," in *A Companion to British Literature* (eds R. DeMaria, H. Chang and S. Zacher, 2014, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118827338.ch16, 251). Joseph Dane's extensive writing on Caxton questions the "mythologies in book history" first established by the incunabulists who, he notes, can only imagine a manufacturing process from the distant past. Dane writes in 2013 that the most important recent discussion of Caxton is done by Hellinga in the BMC XI: *England*. While this may indeed be true, it reveals an investment in Caxton's physical work as a printer rather than his critical or imaginative work. Several other approaches to Caxton, including the approach of Seth Lerer, highlight the extent to which Caxton was the first to print and thus to inaugurate the English canon.

[90] H.S. Bennett states very clearly, for instance, that "Caxton's life divides into two parts": *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, *The Oxford History of English Literature*, Vol. II, pt. I: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1947, 203).

two professions. This division is one that early scholars of Caxton resisted. N.F. Blake, for instance, notes that Caxton's work as a mercer may have well included the trade of manuscripts.[91] Caxton's biographer George Painter also challenged the view of Caxton as a "mere merchant," even if he did not go so far as to question prevailing characterizations of merchants. He writes,

> The fashionable notion that Caxton was a mere merchant, who went over to printing because he found selling books a softer option than selling cloth, is far astray. A truer parallel would be William Morris, himself consciously influenced by Caxton, producing his own writings and translations and several of Caxton's at his Kelmscott Press; though Caxton might have protested, as Morris once did: 'I can't help writing, I must do it, but I'm as much a man of business as any of them' (148).

Painter emphasizes Caxton's impact on the prominent 19th century polymath William Morris, who, centuries after the press comes to England, fuses several types of artmaking from translating and writing poetry and fiction to designing textiles, books, windows, and furniture.

While Painter is unusual in making such connections, a few later scholars have joined him. Coldiron's study *Printers Without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance*, for instance, looks to Caxton's paratexts for their explicit explorations of textual authority and the means of production.[92] Kathleen Tonry's *Agency and Intention in English Print, 1476-1526*,

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[91] In his note, "Two New Caxton Documents," Blake writes that "… the mercers handled all types of merchandise; and it was for this reason that I suggested elsewhere that Caxton may also have traded in manuscripts in his earlier life" (1967, 86). William Pratte, Anne F. Sutton tells us, was indeed a special friend to Caxton**:** "Caxton was a Mercer: His Social Milieu and Friends," in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium***,** edited by Nicholas Rogers, Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1994: 141-142. So too was his friend, silkwoman Alice Claver. See "Alice Claver, Silkwoman (d. 1489)," the tenth chapter of *Medieval London Widows, 1300-1500*, Barron, Caroline M, and Anne F. Sutton, London: Hambledon Press, 1994.

[92] Coldiron's approach to Caxton, while centered on translation and the "engagement with the foreign past that founds English printed literature," confirms many of my own observations about Caxton's complex and varied roles. She writes, "His commercial motives… were compatible with his apparently genuine literary-intellectual and moral interests… My aim here is to examine additional aspects of Caxton's work in transformission that often appear in the paratexts: the remarkable range of tonality in his printed translations; his sometimes playful, gender-mining epilogues… his active use of literary devices such as catalogues, metatextuality, and ballade and rhyme royal poetic forms" (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2015, 37).

which starts with a close reading of Caxton's colophon, makes a powerful case for the creative aspects of bookmaking.[93] In an earlier study of Caxton and his friends, Sutton implies that the printer might have named particular individuals in his prologues because they would lend authority to the text. Another reason she offers, however subtly, is that these men may have told good stories.[94]

It is often difficult for scholars to locate creative acts in the space of liturgical practices, on one hand, or the print shop, on the other, but Caxton's interpolation on King David illustrates the creative potential in both spheres through a single, condensed anecdote. The following story is structured as a stand-alone unit, opening with "For as I ones was" and closing neatly with "Thus thys nobleman told me…" A highly wrought text that frames an instance of oral narration, it embeds another narrative that is about the physical performance of a literary text, the psalms, which David recites each time he buries himself in the dirt. An act of penance and a recitation of verses, David's action provides the material for Caxton's original prose writing, which situates itself with two men who are also speaking a text, moving up and down, making literature while riding on their horses "byyonde the see." It reads:

> For as I ones was by yonde the see rydyng in the compnye of a noble knight named Syr John Capons… It happend we comened of the hystorye of Dauid / and this said noble man told me that he had redde that dauid dyde this *penauce* folowyng for thyse said synnes /that he dalf hym in the ground standyng nakyd unto the heed so longe the the wormes began to *crepe in his flesshe*/ and made a verse of this psalme Miserere / and thene cam out /and when he was hole therof / he wente in agayn / and stode so agayn as longe as afore is said and made the

[93] My reading of Caxton is indebted to Tonry's observation that Caxton's *Golden Legend* is a primary example of what she calls religious print by and for merchants. Like Coldiron, Tonry uncovers the multi-pronged effects of Caxton's translations, writing, "…the intellectual work of translation emerges as a kind of labour that constitutes a legitimate response to the moral threat of idleness": *Texts and Transitions, 7*. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2016: 122.

[94] Trying to work out why Caxton might not have named certain friends in the prologues, Sutton surmises, "Perhaps they did not tell good stories…" (1994: 120).

> second verse / and so as many tymes he was dolven in the erth as ben verse in the said psalme of Miserere mei deus / and euery tyme was a bydyng therin tyl he felte the wormes *crepe in his flesshe*/ This was a grete *penaunce* and a token of grete *repentaunce*/ for ther ben in the psalme xx verses / And xx tymes he was dolven. Thus thys noble man told me rydyng bytwene the toun of Gaunt in Flaundres and the toun of Bruxellis in Braband.[95] (i6ª, emphasis mine)

David's payment for the sins of his flesh takes on a Dantean form as he, naked, penetrates the earth and is in turn penetrated by worms. Each verse of the psalm allows for another instance of David's twentyfold act of penance. The narrative repeats the description of "penance" three times, adding a fourth reference with the term "repentaunce" near the end. He reiterates, too, that David waits to feel the worms in his flesh before he comes out of the hole each time. The repetition of these lines both reinforce the imagery of the narrative and suggest Caxton may have thought his work as author and printer could also serve as penance. If he could have more lines the way David spoke more verses in order to repent, it might have served his soul. The text and the mortification of the flesh are in this tale united, allowing the production of Caxton's narrative interpolation, through which he establishes his connection to John Capons, his own ability to go on pilgrimage, and his ability to narrate, for the spiritual guidance of the readers of *The Golden Legend*, an *exemplum* of King David that is not accessible in Voragine's vast work.[96]

The repetitive act of burial with each iteration of a verse must have resonated with Caxton and his pressmen, who also had to thrust their bodies down along with the texts they

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[95] Jacobus, de Voragine, *Thus endeth the legende named in latyn legenda aurea, that is to saye in englysshe the golden legende ...* London, William Caxton, 1483. https://www.proquest.com/books/legenda-aurea-sanctorum-sive-lombardica-historia/docview/2240950786/se-2?accountid=15172. The uniform title of the work is *Legenda Aurea*; transcriptions are my own, drawn from STC 24873; references to the interpolations follow Hellinga's *BMC XI*.

[96] For a discussion of this and other depictions of David's penance, see Charles A. Huttar, "David as a Model of Repentance" in Raymond-Jean Frontain and Jan Wojcik, eds., *The David Myth in Western Literature*, West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1980. For additional close readings of this narrative, see Tonry and King'oo, Clare Costley. *Miserere Mei: The Penitential Psalms in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012.

printed. Without more explicit descriptions of the printing press in the fifteenth century, scholars continue to reconstruct the mechanism by way of words.[97] Blades's description of the earliest representations of sixteenth century presses, is nearly as imaginative as Caxton's tale:

> In all these presses the principle is the same. There is a simple worm screw, with a long pin for a lever; the head of the press and the table bear the pressure, and the 'hose,' as the transverse piece between the screw and the platen was called, served to steady the downward pressure. The platen was loose, and slung by hooks to the bottom of the screw-box… The girths, drum, and handle served to run the table out and in…
>
> To each press is assigned two workmen; one is pulling lustily at the bar, while the other is distributing ink upon the balls, previously to beating the form. (xiv)

Placing these words next to Caxton's description of David's self-burial allows us to see the body of the psalmist king as an apt symbol for the platen that would have been lowered onto the type in a repeated motion. Blades's vivid depiction of the two men at the press recalls Caxton's own tale of riding along with John Capons, recounting the penetration of David as he recites the psalms in order to pay for his sexual sins.

Caxton's introduction of subjective experience into what should have been mere translation or typographical reproduction results in the presentation of authorial subjectivity enclosed within the object of the printed book. As we come to consider how the artisan or laborer becomes an author throughout the process of completing a practical or commercial task, we can also question what it means to be an author.[98] That Caxton composed inventive prose narratives and essays was suggested long ago when N.F. Blake compiled *Caxton's Own Prose*. Suggesting

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[97] Blades, *The Life and Typography of William Caxton, England's First Printer, with Evidence of His Typographical Connection with Colard Mansion, the Printer at Bruges*. London: J. Lilly,1861. As Blades puts it, "… as we have no description of the mechanism of the early presses, we must, as in the instance of type founding, have recourse to the first dated engravings" (xiv). In the final section of this essay, I return to the imaginative style of the writings of Blades and his fellow incunabulists.

[98] Lisa H. Cooper's excellent study *Artisans and Narrative Craft in Late-Medieval England* argues that representations of artisans constitute a "fundamental aspect of late medieval cultural and narrative practice": Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011: 3.

lines of inquiry for other scholars, Gillespie cites Theodor Adorno and Maurice Blanchot in order to call attention to the complexity of Caxton's work, a complexity that is often reduced by scholarship that treats Caxton more like "George the bookseller" than his inventor.[99] William Kuskin and others have described Caxton's creative self-construction. Through his attention to Caxton as a cultural rather than merely historical figure, Kuskin helps us see that the printer ought to be read as a significant contributor to book culture rather than merely as a producer of books to be sold.[100] Caxton, while a reproducer of books, repeatedly defined the book in terms of its special and unique qualities. Caxton inserts himself into the book as an imitator and worshipper of Christ.

[99] Gillespie begins her chapter with a reference to "'George the booke sellar'" from Caxton's *Doctrine to Learn French and English* (21). See "'Folowynge the trace of mayster Caxton': Some Histories of Fifteenth-Century Printed Books" in William Kuskin (ed.), *Caxton's Trace: Studies in the History of English Printing.* Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

[100] Kuskin, *Symbolic Caxton: Literary Culture and Print Capitalism.* Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

2. The Printer's *Imitatio Christi*

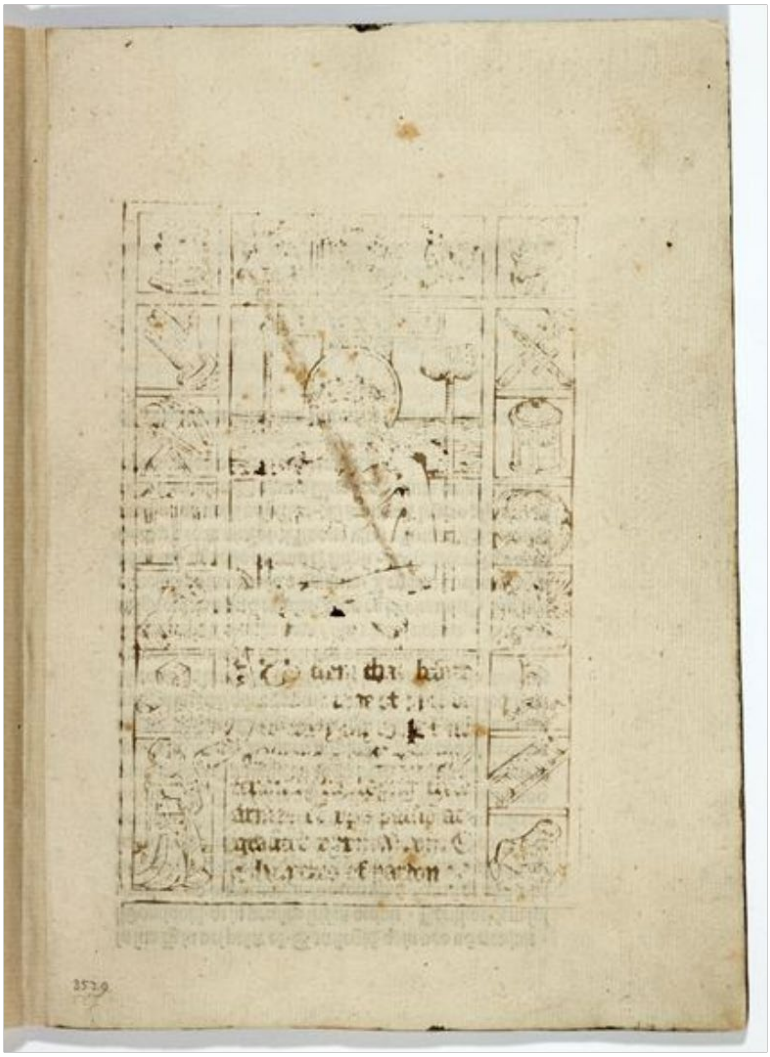

Figure 3.1: Cambridge University Library, Inc.5.F.6.3[3409]

In the bottom left corner of a full-page print known as the Image of Pity, a man in a monk's robe stands with his hands held together in prayer; his eyes, under pensive brows, look up in the direction of the central image of the suffering Christ, but what connects him to Christ is the scroll

that rolls its way across several of the engraved compartments that make up this large, elaborate, and almost entirely faded woodcut.[101] The scroll, indeed, is the only image afforded such movement across this printed page. The manuscript roll here might refer, paradoxically, to the press that allows the text to circulate as a reproducible image, moving outside the box on the page, here, and across the real spaces traversed by early printed books. The manuscript remains present here, but only in printed form.

In the woodblock, the man sits alone in his box, like the writer in his study. Who is this particular monk? Is it William Caxton himself, who, after translating *The History of Troy* finds himself in a state of physical decline?[102] Caxton's epilogue might serve as the appropriate text for the scroll on the Image of Pity, as it unites the printer, or humble servant, with the suffering Christ:

> Thus ende I this book whyche I have translated after myn auctor as nyghe as God hath gyven me connyng, to whom be gyven the laude and preysyng. And for as moche as in the wrytyng of the same my penne is worn, myn hande wery and not stedfast, myn eyen dimmed with overmoche lokyng on the whit paper, and my corage not so prone and redy to laboure as hit hath ben, and that age crepeth on me dayly and febleth all the bodye, and also because I have promysid to dyverce gentilmen and to my frendes to adresse to hem as hastely as I myght this sayd book, therfore I have practysed and lerned at my grete charge and dispense to ordeyne this said book in prynte after the maner and forme as ye may here see; and is not wreton with penne and ynke as other bokes ben to th'ende that every man may have them attones. For all the bookes of this storye named the *Recule of the Historyes of Troyes* thus enpryntid as ye here see were begonne in oon day and also fynysshid in on day. Whiche book I havee presented to my sayd redoubtid lady as afore is sayd. And she hath well accepted hit and largely

[101] This manuscript is held at the Cambridge University Library, Inc.5.F.6.3[3409], dated 1490, and attributed to William Caxton. Jessica Brantley refers to the same woodcut as an example of Carthusian devotional reading in her second chapter. See Brantley, *Reading In the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 351.

> rewarded me, wherfore I beseche Almyghty God to rewarde her [with] everlastyng blisse after this lyf. (100)

The Cambridge UL woodcut features the arms of Christ's passion, central images employed in the rich *arma christi* meditative practice of the late Middle Ages in England. At the center of this is Christ on the cross, the image with which Caxton ends his epilogue. But the beginning of this epilogue is about another set of wounds: the wounds of the printer. Even the technology Caxton uses has been wounded or worn with use:

> …my penne is worn, myn hande wery and not stedfast, myn eyen dimmed with overmoche lokyng on the whit paper, and my corage not so prone… (100)

From pen to hand to eye to heart to the entirety of the aging and "feble" body Caxton's self-description moves. Into the Christian narrative of the Passion of Christ, Caxton sets himself as one who has suffered with his pen and paper only to be resurrected with the advent of the printing press. After a brief note on why he has translated the history of the Trojan War, Caxton supplies an explicitly moral message intended for his readers, ending the epilogue with these lines:

> T[h]erfore th/apostle saith all that is wreton is wreton to our doctryne. Whyche doctryne for the comyn wele, I beseche God, maye be taken in suche place and tyme as shall be moste nedefull in encrecyng of peas, love and charyte; whyche graunte us he that suffryd for the same to be crucyfied on the rood-tree, and saye we alle 'Amen' for charyte. (101)

In this 1473 epilogue and this woodcut of nearly 20 years later, Caxton brings together the neo-classical and the Christian, the transition from manuscript to print, and new notions about how to translate and edit books for "dyverce men." In promising "everlasting blisse after this lyf" to his

"redoubtid lady," Caxton introduces an indulgenced form of secular reading.[103] With the final statement "saye we all 'Amen,'" Caxton implies a shared devotional experience with his readers. He is the printer of the engraved Christ on the cross, the translator who looks "overmuch" at the white paper, and he is also the monk or clerk whose eyes trace a scroll up to a heavenly image of Christ's wounds.[104]

When Caxton describes the transition from manuscript to print production in his epilogue to *The History of Troy*, it is as though he is already beginning to fear the consequences of reproducibility. For while print technology will allow "dyverce gentilmen" to have Caxton's books "attones," it will also render obsolete the laboring body of William Caxton. In Caxton's description of his aging, feeble body we find the most significant example of the particular, as opposed to the reproducible—the printer's own body. Caxton describes the benefits of print

[103] To speak of the indulgence more literally here would also be to question the dominant narrative of the sudden dominance of print technology. As Gillespie writes in her 2009 chapter, "Pardons continued to be conferred upon donors by oral performance of pardoners and priests, or as they recited prayers, or as they visited certain holy sites—without any sort of documentation of their actions—after the advent of printing. Like the strung and sealed Preston indulgence, such scribal and undocumented pardons require that we admit more complexity to familiar accounts of the radical changes wrought by printing. The printing of indulgences was never so 'efficient' that it replaced older ways of distributing them" (34).

[104] Ramey, Peter, 2015. "The Poetics of Caxton's "Publique": The Construction of Audience in the Prologues of William Caxton." *English Studies* 96 (7): 731-746. Ramey uses this same passage to begin his article on the prologues and epilogues. He writes, "This passage is the only moment in all his writings in which Caxton will deal directly with the topic of printing at any length…" (732). Ramey's interest in the passage is centered not on Caxton's body but on the "'frendes'" to whom he refers, which, for Ramey, imply "… a broad readership that the printer must construct" (732).

This excerpt also takes a primary position in the 2011 chapter by Daniel Wakelin entitled "Writing the words." See Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin, *The Production of Books in England 1350-1500,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Another scholar, David Harry, draws a connection between printing and theology in his chapter "William Caxton and Commemorative Culture in Fifteenth-Century England." Harry writes that "…the devotional material printed by Caxton remains somewhat neglected," and continues, "…Caxton begins to form something of a theology of the printer's art, implicating his books – and his printing activities – in the wider commemorative function of religious literature" (74, in Clark). While I am intrigued by Harry's phrase, "theology of the printer's art," I would like to note here that his chapter does not bear out this comment by finding examples of Caxton's self-referential descriptions of working at the press. See Linda Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century XIII: Exploring the Evidence: Commemoration, Administration and the Economy*, Boydell and Brewer, 2014, pp. 63–80.

technology: it allows him to produce a text in a day and to share it with "all men attones." However, the printer's work involves much more than the operation of the press. The printer reads and translates the text before it can be printed. Crucially, he guides the reader in both moral and intellectual terms. Both manuscripts and printed texts describe relics, texts from oral traditions, and images, but Caxton's printed books go a step further, offering to readers the particular benefits of one printer who worked in a way known only to himself, talked with certain friends and patrons, and who received books while enclosed in his study.[105] As Caxton narrates the friendships and events that made his translation projects possible, he establishes another unique bond, his relationship with the reader. Caxton presents narratives of shifting identities and unknown parentage, narratives that lend themselves to a notion of the book as a foster parent, a mechanism by which one can nourish and be nourished. It is often through the figure of the non-writing (and, often, the non-reading) woman that Caxton explores the possibility of lay authorship, including his own.

Caxton's version of the Marian book (including the actual Books of Hours he printed) considers the book to function as a reliquary, a space in which the individual can collect miracle narratives while charting his or her own autobiography. Books came to his hands as though by magic; as he worked to reproduce texts mechanically for the first time in England, Caxton presented the books he made as miraculous objects issued forth from the womb-like press. In the next section of the chapter, I turn to three additional instances of works to which Caxton adds his own writings modeled upon the genre and form he is printing in each case. As an imitating

[105] One of the most striking examples in which Caxton creates this impression of the book as a product that arises out of singular interactions between people is the prologue to the 1484 *Canterbury Tales*. Here, Caxton tells of a man who came to his study to tell him that his father had a superior copy of the text. Taking this man's word, Caxton revises his own version and prints the text again.

author, Caxton far exceeds the roles previously assigned to him. In the third section of the essay, I return to the interpolations Caxton adds to the *GoL*. In all of the narratives and images I present, we find traces of Caxton's literary endeavors, ranging from attempts to write original prose (and verse at times) in imitation of the authors he prints to narratives of enclosure that indirectly reflect upon processes of textual production and dissemination.

3. Caxton as Imitating Author in *The Eneydos*, *Aesop*, and *Life of Our Lady*

While the standard biographies of Caxton divide his life in two, separating the mercer from the printer, one of his best known narratives is drawn directly from his experience as a mercer. With this now famous tale on the pronunciation of "eggs" in fifteenth-century England, Caxton interrupts his own prologue to the *Eneydos* with an anecdote that opens and closes with general statements about "comyn Englysshe":

> And that comyn englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a nother. In so moche that in my dayes happened that certayn marchauntes were in a ship in tamyse for to haue sayled ouer the see into zelande/ and for lacke of wynde thei taryed atte forlond. and wente to lande for to refreshe them And one of theym named Sheffelde, a mercer, cam into an hows and axed for mete. and specyally he axyd after eggys And the goode wyf answerde. that she coude speke no frenshe. And the marchaunt was angry. for he also coude speke no frenshe. but wolde haue hadde egges and she understode hym not/ And thenne at laste a nother sayd that he wolde have eyren/ then the good wyf sayd that she understod hym wel/ Loo what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte. egges or eyren/ certaynly it is harde to playse euery man bycause of dyversite & chaunge of langage.[106]

[106] *Here fynyssheth the boke yf [sic] eneydos, compyled by vyrgyle, which hathe be translated oute of latyne in to frenshe, and oute of frenshe reduced in to englysshe by me wyll[ia]m caxton, the xxij. daye of iuyn. the yere of our lorde. M.iiij.clxxxx. the fythe yere of the regne of kynge henry the seuenth*, STC (2nd ed.) / 24796, 1490, London, Retrieved from https://www.proquest.com/books/here-fynyssheth-boke-yf-sic-eneydos-compyled/docview/2240853061/se-2?accountid=15172.

This charming narrative of a group of seafaring men who are blown off course is itself an egg-sized attempt to mimic the Virgilian epic. The anecdote documents the history of dialects in medieval England at the same time that it showcases Caxton's ability to write his own texts modelled on the canonical works he translated for the English public. The form of the parable helps to introduce the play of difference within it; a preface to the translated grand Latin epic, the tale assumes the "simple" form of a fable, parable or *exemplum*, offering a setting, a conflict, and a resolution: the "comyn Englysshe" shared by one of the merchants and the "good wyf."[107] This anecdote also provides further evidence for what Coldiron observes as "the first choices made in English print culture about the shaping of alterity" (36). As she argues in her chapter "Caxton, translation, and the Renaissance reprint culture," Caxton is a translator not only of texts in foreign languages, but also of a foreign past. The Troy story, she shows, is fundamental to his career as a translator and printer (40-58).[108] This anecdote is both a reflection on and a demonstration of Caxton's success in casting Troy stories for increasingly wide audiences.

It seems that Sheffield got his eggs, but the narrative ends with a less settled reflection on the "dyversite and change of langage." The tale traces a number of differences from the geographical (from the English "Tamyse" to "Zeland") and biological (the sea versus the shore) to the linguistic (English from one shyre to another; English versus French) and sexual (male

[107] This anecdote contains features of many of the "simple forms" Douglas Gray explores in his study by this name, which he opens with reference to Caedmon the cowherd. The key point here is that this anecdote bears relation to oral narration (as in "this one time this thing happened to me"). Yet it is also shaped by a printer who frames the narrative according to his larger concern about the English language's ability to both be intelligible and pleasing to "every man."

[108] For more on the literary life of the Troy narrative in medieval England, see Mueller, Alex. *Translating Troy: Provincial Politics in Alliterative Romance.* The Ohio State University Press, 2013. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/book/23955.

merchants and the "good wyf").[109] The wife's goodness consists in her conformance to the role of femininity which is meant to counter the international travelling businessman. Defined by her domesticity, she waits to feed the passer-by. While the wife's role seems to arise from her status as a woman, Caxton's narrative leaves open the possibility that he was also able to see himself as a wife serving eggs, wanting to please the men at the door. Both Caxton and the wife, in this tale, would have to agree that "certaynly it is harde to playse euery man bycause of dyversite & chaunge of langage."

The *Eneydos* tale is remarkable for the tension it raises between two opposing tendencies that run across Caxton's prose writings: the printer's need for a standardized and reproducible English, and Caxton's desire to insert his own unique, non-reproducible experience into each text he prepared. The egg anecdote provides particular place names in addition to a name for the mercer in search of eggs: "Sheffelde." Sutton's description of this very mercer, John Sheffield, provides further information about why this individual would have been remembered by Caxton, as he had initiated an argument of such great significance that the English mercers all had to leave Antwerp for a time.[110] This story is drawn from Caxton's own experience as a merchant, as

[109] "Tamyse" refers to the River Thames, "Zeland" to the island of Zeeland, Denmark. It is beyond the scope of this essay to compare with certainty the dates with regard to the Sheffield reference and a letter Caxton may have written regarding his requisition of ships from Holland and Zeeland: F. J. Bakker, J. Gerritsen, Collecting Ships from Holland and Zeeland: A Caxton Letter Discovered, *The Library*, Volume 5, Issue 1, March 2004, Pages 3–11, https://doi.org/10.1093/library/5.1.3

[110] "His youth, inexperience and hot temper may have been the cause of his argument with the meter of Antwerp, Martin van der Hove, over a bale of madder which split during the weighing. Sheffield became abusive and provoked Martin to come out with the age-old insult for Englishmen – that they were born with tails like devils, the mark of Cain, the result of a curse laid on them by St Augustine" (127-128).

we see in his phrase "in my dayes." His interrogative lament at the end, however, is about *writing*: "What sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte?"[111]

Caxton's concern over standardizing the English text, both for the purposes of marketing the book (being able "to playse every man") and for reaching new readers, is not a concern that can be attributed to his role as printer, bookseller, or writer exclusively. Instead, Caxton's roles as mercer, printer, and author unite here to shape an enclosed narrative that, if excised, can stand on its own. This portion of the prologue is itself an essay in miniature with a narrative at the center. The narrative implicitly relates the lives of Aeneas, Caxton, and his merchant friends; founding Rome, obtaining eggs on a long business venture, and standardizing the English language become analogous activities here. The greatness of Rome and the domesticity of England, epitomized in the good "wyf," must come together in Caxton's translation, and in the prologue that establishes its place in the yet early days of English literature.

In his epilogue to *Aesop's Fables*, Caxton inserts his own tale, writing a fifteenth century anti-clerical fable in the form of the collection he has just "fynysshe[d],"[112] Rather than an exchange between two animals or two people from obviously distinct social groups, Caxton's late medieval fable involves two men who differ in a moral sense, occupying similar positions, but different degrees: a "worshipful preest and a parsone." The tale reads,

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[111] Bennett, in the chapter "The Author and His Public," begins his discussion with this very anecdote, suggestion that while Caxton may have been lagging behind the poets in his writing style, he was well ahead of them in reaching a wide audience with a single text: "Authors had a parochial outlook: few of them hoped for much more than a local reputation, and perhaps some of them were wise enough to understand the dilemma which beset Caxton at the end of the fifteenth century when he came to print his materials and could expect to reach a much wider public" (106).

[112] See Axon, William E. A. "Caxton's Good Priest." *Notes and Queries* s9-V, no. 121 (04/21/1900): 310. Axon writes that the anecdote is "…worthy to be placed side by side with Chaucer's picture of the good parson." Axon cites a comment from Joseph Jacobs, who says that the story was "'… added by Caxton to clear out as it were the bad taste of the Poggiana from our mouth…'" (1900).

Now thenne I wylle fynysshe alle these fables wyth this tale that foloweth whiche a worshipful preest and a parsone told me late/he sayd that there were duellynge in Oxenford two prestes bothe maystres of arte, of whome that one was quyck and coude putte hym self forth/And that other was a good symple preest/And soo it happed that the mayster that was perte and quyck was anone promoted to a benefyce or tweyne/ and after to prebendys/ and for to be a Dene of a grete prynces chappel/ supposynge and wenynge that his felaw the symple preest shold neuer haue be promoted, but be alwey an Annuel / or at the most a parysshe preest/ So after longe tyme that this worshipful man this dene came rydynge into a good paryssh with a x or xij horses/ lyke a prelate/ and came in to the chirche of the sayd parysshe/ and fond [s 6^{v}] there this good symple man sometyme his felawe/ whiche cam and welcomed hym lowely/ And that other badde hym good morowe mayster Iohan/ and toke hym sleyghtly by the hand and axyd hym where he dwellyd/ And the good man sayd: /in this paryssh/ how sayd he/ are ye here a sowle preest or a paryssh preste/ nay syr said he/ for lack of a better though I be not able ne worthy I am parson and curate of this parysshe/ and thenne that other aualed his bonet and said mayster parson I praye yow to be not displeasyd/ I had supposed ye had not be benefyced/ But mayster sayd he/ I pray yow what is this benefyce worth to yow a yere/ Forsothe sayd the good symple man/ I wote neuer/ for I make neuer accomptes therof/ how wel I haue hit four or fyue yere/ And knowe ye not said he what it is worth/ it shold seme a good benefyce/ No forsothe sayd he/ but I wote wel what it shalle be worth to me/ why sayd he/ what shalle hit be worth/ Forsothe sayd he/ yf I doo my trewe dylygence in the cure of my parysshens in prechyng and techynge/ and doo my parte longynge to my cure/ I shalle haue heuen terfore/ And yf theyre sowles ben lost or ony of them by my defawte/ I shall be punysshed therfore/ and herof am I sure/ And with that word the ryche dene was abasshed And thought he shold be the better/ and take more hede to his cures and benefyces than he had done/ This was a good answere of a good preest and an honest/And here with I fynysshe this book/ translated & emprynted by me William Caxton at westmynstre in thabbey/ (228-229)[113]

[113] Aesop, and William Caxton. *Caxton's Aesop*. Edited by R. T Lenaghan. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967. The story is on pages 55-57 of Blake's edition (with modernized punctuation), and Bennett cites it fully as an example of the value to be found in Caxton's prologues and epilogues. Bennett, writing in 1947, was not convinced of the literary value of these writings, but rather saw them as ways into learning about Caxton's translation and printing processes, his "personal touches," and "occasional scenes" such as the one offered in the narrative (212-213). For context on what I call the anti-clerical sentiments of this story, see Palmer, Robert C., *Selling The Church: The English Parish in Law, Commerce, and Religion, 1350-1550.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. Palmer offers a thorough historical account of the increasingly commercial culture of the church. Caxton's tale reads as one of modern competition in the elite educational or financial institution of today. Palmer discusses Chaucer's attention to such pressing issues in the English culture of his time. As Palmer puts it, "… rectors and perpetual vicars leased out parishes and treated them as an organized business endeavor that included the religious services and obligations. That practice was the mercenary conduct that Chaucer found objectionable. When the parson thus received only a fixed return from the parish, he had essentially severed himself from involvement with the parish: the incumbent had become, in Chaucer's words, a mercenary instead of a sheperd who lived with and cared for his flock" (87). I thank John Craig for suggesting this connection.

Like so many *exempla* and fables we read, the moral here is not as simple as the final lines would suggest. While the "good answere of the good preest" is clearly marked as *good*, the tale becomes complex when we consider it alongside Caxton's project as a whole.

Caxton's vernacular didactic manuals such as the *Book of Good Manners* and the *Game and Playe of Chess* are clear indications of his support for those who, like him, climb the social ladder. Unlike the simple priest in the story, moreover, Caxton demands to be paid, perhaps most prominently in his prologue to the *Golden Legend* in which he states that he is content to receive "a bucke in sommer and a doo in wynter" (5).[114] But Caxton is uneasily aligned with both the good "preest" and the "ryche dene," as he refers in his own essays to his own yearly fee, to the diligence, "defawte," and abasshedness of the printer.[115] If the "tale" Caxton provides at the end of *Aesop* does not provide a clear moral lesson, it provides many other, more compelling, things. It is a vivid description of an interaction that is remarkably resonant today. Caxton's use of the analogy "lyke a prelate" signals his attempt to scrutinize the pride of the promoted "Dene" who only tips his "bonet" after learning that his former classmate has now been "benefyced."[116] The situation can easily be pictured as a contemporary scene: academics at a conference. The "good preest" is analogous to the professor who has accepted a low-paying position at an unknown school, but has nevertheless earned the same rank as the colleague who initually snubs her. The "good symple preest" takes the other by the hand, asking where he lives, not what his rank and salary are. The "Dene," unlike his counterpart, relies upon his assumptions, "supposynge and

[114] In Taguchi, Scahill, Tokunaga.

[115] In the prologue to *Caton*, Caxton laments the fact that the people of London "can unnethe contynue unto the thyrd heyr or scarcely to the second." He then addresses God, saying, "O blessyd Lord, whanne I remembre this, I am al *abasshyd*" (64, emphasis mine).

[116] "beneficed," that is, or, provided an ecclesiastical living.

wenynge that his felaw… shold neuer haue be promoted but be alwey an Annuel…" The tale is not so much critical of the one who has gained promotion as it is of the one who fails to recognize this promotion in another because he is also bound to a local duty. The simple "felaw" is a parish priest. This final tale, following the fables of "Poge the Florentyn," allows Caxton to explore the tensions he faces as a printer and a writer who must be present in every shire.[117] Both local and omnipresent, Caxton seeks to be perceived as the figure who might reasonably say to his reader, in the words of Chaucer, "Trust no man but me." One of the great achievements of Caxton's imitative writings is his ability to marry such medieval scenes as the small parish to the early modern possibilities that the press brings forth. Ever weary of becoming like the "ryche Dene," Caxton cloaks himself in the garb of a good preest. His final "I," written in the colophon of the printer who has just "fynnysshe[d]" the book, blends itself with the preceding "I" statements within the "good answere" of the simple priest. Caxton's punctuation, which leaves out the divisive quotation mark, renders this fluidity of identity on the printed page.

The final example I explore here, Caxton's epilogue to the 1484 *Life of Our Lady*, is distinctive both for the lines of verse it includes and, within these lines, for the reference to printing.[118] Its opening seven lines, composed in rhyme royal, read as follows,

> Goo lityl book and submytte the
> Vnto al them / that the shal rede
> Or here / prayeng hem for charite
> To pardon me of the rudehede
> Of myn enpryntyng / not takyng hede.
> And yf ought be doon to theyr plesyng

[117] Recall this desire as it is expressed in the egg anecdote in the prologue to the *Eneydos*.

[118] This passage is one of six out of the 106 prose entries compiled by Blake that use a form of the word "prynt."

Say they thyse balades folowyng (85)[119]

Caxton's singular use of the word "rudehede"[120] further demonstrates his attempt to imitate the poets whose work he prints. But unlike the authors upon which he models these lines, he does not say his writing is "rude"; it is his "enpryntyng" for which he seeks pardon here. Printing becomes an art that can be done rudely, but that can also authorize the printer, who has no university training, to write his own poems and to bless both the disseminated text and its readers. After these self-referential lines, Caxton places "balades" that are prayers to the virgin in both Latin and English. This epilogue is one that escapes the notice of most scholars, as it makes no claim about the canonical text or poet the way most other essays by Caxton manage to do. Instead, this epilogue charts the aspects of Caxton's work I emphasize: the conflation of the literary and the sacred, the poet and the printer.[121]

In the section that follows, I present the writings Caxton adds to *The Golden Legend,* the largest of all of his printed projects, a collection of stories as well as a manual for preachers that becomes a "medieval bestseller." According to Eamon Duffy, this text returned to favor during the Romantic period, when it was seen as "the distillation of both the imagination and the soul of

[119] *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*. Edited by W. J. B Crotch. Early English Text Society. Original Series, No. 176. London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1956.

[120] While Julian of Norwich frequently uses the suffix "-hede" for "-ness" and Chaucer and others use "rude" frequently to refer to an unrefined person or object, I have found no other use of this particular word. "Rudehede" appears to belong to Caxton alone.

[121] Very few scholars have looked to Caxton's devotional texts, especially his saints' lives, for what they can teach us about Caxton's literary interests and contributions. A 1983 essay by MJC Lowry makes a claim for the importance of the *Life of St. Winifred*, for instance, which is not picked up until it gets brief mention by Oliver Pickering: M. J. C. Lowry, "Caxton, St Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," *The Library*, Volume s6-V, Issue 2, June 1983, Pages 101–117, https://doi.org/10.1093/library/s6-V.2.101; *A Companion to Middle English Prose*. Edited by A. S. G. Edwards. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004.

the Christian Middle Ages."[122] Duffy notes that the text was produced in more editions than all of the known printings of the Bible in any language during the final decades of the 15th century. It is the source of Chaucer's "Second Nun's Tale" and of other hagiographical poems to come in the fifteenth century, including Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* and Capgrave's *Life of St. Katherine*.

The *Early English Text Society* O.S. 355 is the first modern edition of Caxton's work since F.S. Ellis's in 1892.[123] The editors begin the introduction with a general explanation for the popularity of the work, which met "…two demands from contemporary laity: for a comprehensive collection of saints' legends, and for an English Bible" (xviii). Additionally, they emphasize that it is a "notable product of the technology and culture of early printing in England" (xviii). These broader points lend themselves to my claim that the *GoL* deserves greater attention from scholars of Middle English, the history of English, and media studies. But the work also offers something new within the more rarefied field of Caxton Studies. The editors note several details that make this project significant, and even *unique*, in the broader context of the printer's career. For instance, the *GoL* is the only book Caxton printed on Royal paper in folio (xlii). Its layout, "… set in double columns with space for large initials and with subheadings in a display type larger than the body text…" is distinctive (xlvi). And the "*GoL* is also unique among Caxton's works in having a table and an alphabetical index with folio references which correspond to the running headlines and folio numbers at the top of recto pages" (xlvii). This book brings a number of words into English for the first time (and into the

[122] Duffy, Eamon. "Introduction." In *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, by Ryan William Granger, xx. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

[123] Ellis, Frederick Startridge. ed. *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton*. 7 vols. Temple Classics. London: J. M. Dent, 1900.

OED): *demeurte*, *palpacion*, *vertualyte*, *amolyfyeth*, *aromatous*, *arousemens*, *comestible*, *dime*, *direption*, *docile*, *lot*, *cariacares* (xxxv). To put it simply, as the editors do at one point: "the *GoL* is Caxton's largest and most ambitious enterprise in both translation and printing" (xxxviii). Caxton's innovations in the *GoL* are technological, linguistic, and, as I will suggest throughout, literary: his interpolations allow him to include autobiographical anecdotes that fuse liturgy with reproducible narrative texts.

In addition to a lengthy prologue and epilogue, Caxton adds a total of 14 interpolations, 11 of which Blake includes in his collection of Caxton's prose writings.[124] These brief additions occur in the following legends (listed in order of appearance): the Nativity of Our Lord, Circumcision of Our Lord, History of Joshua, History of David, History of Solomon, History of Rehoboam, History of Job, Life of St George, Life of St Augustine, Nativity of Our Lady, Life of St Ursula; not included in Blake are the final three on Saturninus, Bede, and Morant of Bruel. In the EETS edition of the text, the interpolations are marked in the footnotes with the simple phrase "An addition in *GoL*" (160,) or "Unique to *GoL*" (162).

[124] Tonry's attentive readings of several of the interpolations help her draw out what she calls the "value of immaterial labour" in addition to Caxton's "translations of mercantile experiences into English religious use…" (125-128). In the Appendix, I include complete transcriptions of the interpolations, both those that have been edited and those not yet republished.

4. Caxton's Additions to the *Golden Legend*

More than any other text he printed, the *Golden Legend* allowed William Caxton to explore the special, non-reproducible, the experience of late medieval lay piety that he represents in the printed text.[125] The brief narratives that make up Caxton's interpolations bring the unique testimonies of Caxton and his friends into the reproducible text. As Walter Benjamin's famous reflection on "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" tells us, attempts to reproduce works of art, including objects used in religious rituals, must always fall short: "Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (220).[126] The elements of time and space, and of objects tied to particular uses within cultural traditions, afford the same objects with an "aura," Benjamin proposes, which, like the transmission of light over the mountain range on a particular afternoon, can never be reproduced. As a reproducer of texts drawn from liturgical traditions of the late Middle Ages, Caxton attempted to render the transitory, embodied event—a singular conversation, a miraculous statement from the Virgin herself, or the drops of Solomon's blood during a procession through Jerusalem—concrete and repeatable. Caxton's mechanically reproduced anecdotes successfully record both the unique event of the miracle and the personal encounter that only he, the printer and writer, can describe.

In a manner similar to the David interpolation with which I begin this essay, Caxton offers at the end of the Life of Solomon a narrative of textual production that is located in the

[125] Scholarship on Caxton's *Golden Legend* remains incomplete in part because no scholarly edition of the text yet exists. A new EETS edition of *The Golden Legend* by Caxton is now available (Vol. 1), but a complete edition has yet to be undertaken.

[126] *Illuminations*, ed. Arendt.

penitent body rather than in the pen; drops of blood, and not words, emerge here as the most effective means of mass communication.[127] He writes,

> *What shal I aldaye wryte* of the rychesses glorye and magnyfycence of kynge Salamon it was so grete that it cannot be expressyd / for ther was never none lyke to fore hym ne never shal none come after hym lyke unto hym / he made the book of the parables conteynyng xxxi chapytres the booke of the canticles / the book of ecclesiastes conteynyng xii chapytres and the booke of sapience, conteynyng xix chapytres (i7^{b}, emphasis mine)

He ends this set of interpolations with another example, shared in speech rather than through text, of the king's penance: "It is said but I fynde it not in the byble / that Salamon repentyd hym moche of thys synne of ydolatrye / and dyde moche penaunce therfor / For he lete hym be drawe thurgh Jherusalem and bete hym self with roddes and scorgys that the blood followed in the sight of alle the peple" (i8^{b}). In Caxton's one-line *exemplum*, Solomon writes his penance into the earth, this time not through an act of burial, but through a trail of blood he leaves on the surface for all to see.[128] The public display of blood, as presented in the printer's interpolation, becomes an image of textual dissemination. Caxton's rewriting of Solomon emphasizes the king's performance of ritualized repentance before the people, on a single day in Jerusalem. The

[127] Martha Rust's essay (see Chapter One) examines a number of medieval works in which "bloody writing" is a prominent feature that unites text, image, and reader, suggesting, even, that the bleeding Christ becomes author in certain medieval works. The larger implication of Rust's reading, and the question with which she closes the piece, is whether self-reflexivity is "a general characteristic of Middle English literature" (*The Chaucer Review*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2013: 415). She writes that the metaphor of liquids allows for an understanding of the Middle English text that includes "a range of semiotic systems that flow and blend together, and ultimately seek a level, as liquids do" (391).

[128] See Linda Clark, ed. *Of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2005. In her essay "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," Sutton suggests that Caxton's interest in blood extended to his translation of the lives of female saints as well: "Caxton, like Prior Robert and John of Tynemouth, included the long prayer or sermon Beunow said over the decapitated body. On the matter of the stones and the moss the comments vary, but Caxton's version interestingly says that the stones of the well still look as though spattered with blood 'lyke as hit was the first day'… (113).

biblical text, the medieval *exemplum*, and the technology of the press are fused together in Caxton's additions to the *Golden Legend*.[129]

Throughout the interpolations, Caxton holds up forms of knowledge shared through speech, developed in the imagination, or drawn from the singular, temporal visual experience of watching a procession. In the next interpolation, to the "Circumcision of Our Lord," for instance, Caxton begins several lines with the phrases "Also it is said…," "And there I knowe…," or "I have herd saye…" To the story of the circumcision, Caxton adds,

> Also it is said that it is in the chirche of our lady at adwarp in braband / And there I knowe well þt on trynyte sonday they shewe it with grete reuere[n]ce / And is there born abowte with a greate and a solempne procession and that though I be unworthy hauve seen dyuerse tymes And haue rede and herd there of many myracles that god hath shewd there for it / And as towchyng I haue herd saye there / that there was a Cardynal sente fro Rome for to see it / And as he was at his masse solemply / it was leyd on the corporas at whiche tyme it bled thre dropes of blood on the said corporas / There they worshippe it as fore the flesh of our lord which was cutte of at his circunsicion & named it there prepucium [Domini]/yf it be trewe/to somme it semeth merueyll by cause it is so that the flesh that was cut of/ was of the very flesh that was cutte of his body humayne… (a8[a])

Here, Caxton provides the name of a specific church, a procession he has seen, and an unnamed "cardynal" who has seen a miracle to which Caxton himself was not privy. The miracle is the ever-bleeding foreskin of Christ, dripping "thre dropes" of blood on the corporal cloth. In this interpolation, as with the first, the relic takes a prominent position.[130] So too, does the "merveyll" or miracle, which is the continuously bleeding and yet "humayne" body of Christ.

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[129] Sarah M. Horrall claims that Caxton was using the *Cursor Mundi* for this additional narrative; See "William Caxton's Biblical Translation," *Medium Ævum* 53, no. 1 (1984): 91-98. Accessed October 1, 2020. doi:10.2307/43628790.

[130] The relic is also the focus of Caxton's interpolation to the Life of St. George, which describes the places dedicated to the saint, including a "noble college in the castell of Wyndesore," which holds "… the herte of Saynt George whyche Sygysmond the Emperour of Almayn broughte and gafe for a grete and a precious relyque to Kyng Harry the fyfthe… and also there is a pyece of his heed" (94).

Caxton provides an image of ink on the page through a narrative of Christ's circumcision. The blood on the cloth is described through ink on paper. Yet again, the source that lies beyond the text is, as by a miracle, reproduced in the printed text. The fact that this narrative is supplied by the printer himself further justifies my claim that these interpolations are set down to dramatize the place of the non-reproducible liturgical object within the space of the early printed book. The next interpolation, for the History of Joshua, relies upon the liturgical practice of reading certain histories in church. In this way, Caxton draws from late medieval sources in which texts and images work together to reflect upon the relationship between the making of the book and central metaphors of late medieval Marian devotional culture.

At the center of Caxton's translation of the Nativity legend lies the tension between the enclosed Virgin Mary and the disseminated story of the Trinity. The second paragraph details Jesus's birth within the stable and the naming of the same place the "chirche of Seynt Marie," while the third compiles three different accounts of dissemination of the miracle of Christ's birth. First, "…there sprange and sourded in Rome the same nyght a wel or a fountayne, and ran largely alle that nyght and alle that day vnto the ryuer of Rome called Tybre" (36 in EETS).[131] Secondly, the three kings, at prayer on a mountain, saw "the forme of a right fayr chyld whiche had a crosse in his forhed…" Finally, "ther appered in th'orient thre sonnes, which … sygnyfyed to us that thies thre thynges is the godhed, the soule and the bodye, whiche ben in thre natures assembled in one persone" (Ibid., 36). The disunity with which the legend opens, marked by the fact that the emperor requires all people to bring a "peny" on their way to Rome so that the "nombre of personnes" could be easily determined, is refigured in the "one" person represented

[131] Caxton, William, Mayumi Taguchi, John Scahill, and Satoko Tokunaga. *Caxton's Golden Legend*. Original Series /Early English Text Society, 355. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

by the Trinity. This story of the Trinity, fundamental to late medieval Christian thought, becomes one way Caxton is able to think about the work of standardizing the printed book, tailoring a single coherent text that can be read by all, like the miraculous sign the three kings once read in the sky. Moreover, the story of the miraculous birth of Jesus provides a template for single-parent reproduction, the likes of which only miracles and new technologies can afford. The "comyn place" or stable into which the Lord is born becomes a figure for the new form of the printing press.

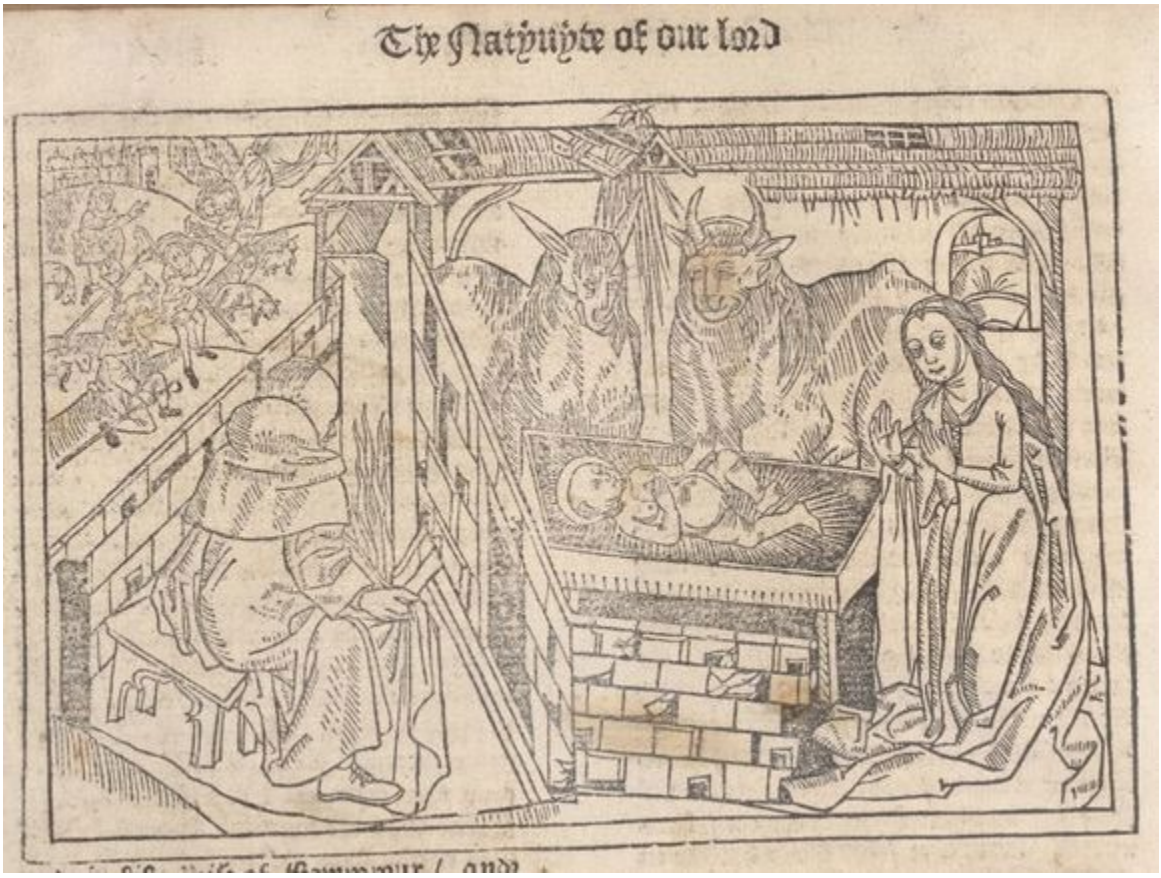

Figure 3.2: Nativity woodcut in *The Golden Legende*. Westminster, William Caxton, 1483, Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection

The woodcut supplied before the narrative, unlike many nativity scenes, includes a depiction of the three shepherds pointing up into the sky. An angel is squeezed into the frame, holding musical notations between her hands. In the distance—both in the left hand corner of the image and through a window in the stable itself—large buildings are carved to indicate the remote location of the stable in which Jesus was born.

Caxton's epilogue to the *Golden Legend* reflects the themes of enclosure and dissemination as he again offers a catalog of the many religious narratives he has included in the work, writing "wherin ben conteyned alle the hygh and grete festys of our lord / the festys of our blessyd lady / the lyues passyons and myracles of many other sayntes / and other hystoryes and actes / as al alonge here afore is made mencyon…" Caxton insists, throughout this long book, on the sources that lie *outside* of the text. Caxton offers tales, descriptions and narratives that are not included in the legend, suggesting that his printed edition can supply an account of the visual and oral elements of late medieval religious practices, and that the book would be incomplete without such accounts.

The little-studied interpolations of the *Golden Legend* tell us how Caxton began to theorize reproducibility and its limitations just as he brought the printing press to England. These brief narratives also reveal the creative potential of both the printer and of Marian liturgy. Finally, these textual additions call attention to the printer's desire to insert his own life story within the collection of lives of the holy fathers, as Wynkyn de Worde will come to do when he prints the related *Vitas Patrum* in 1495. De Worde adds to his colophon a detail about Caxton that makes Caxton's the final life included in the work: "Thus endyth the moost vertuouse hystorye of the deuoute & right renommed lyues of holy faders lyuynge in deserte / worthy of

remembraunce to all well dysposed persones/whiche hath be translated out of frensshe in to Englysshe by Wyllyam Caxton of Westmynstre late deed/and fynysshed it at the last daye of his lyff."[132] Caxton and his successors inserted the printer into the text. Like a saint, Caxton labored, de Worde tells us, up until his last breath, giving his body over to the "holy faders lyuynge in deserte." The following two sections of the chapter explore how Caxton and the authors he printed may have seen themselves, however surprisingly, in the figure of the virgin mother.

5. Nourished by the Word: Mary Magdalene and Her Followers in Caxton's Translations

One of the first things Caxton tells us about Mary Magdalene is that her name "is interpreted closed or shette," a statement he does not explain, but that nonetheless introduces crucial features of her legend. As a contemplative, she makes a dwelling place in the desert, covering herself only in her own hair, and living in isolation. But Mary Magdalene is also a preacher who travels across the land. She is, as Caxton writes, "Appostolesse of th/Appostles." Her virtues are made stronger in contrast to her previous sins. She is perhaps the most powerful convert in all of the biblical tradition, a feature Caxton emphasizes when he writes, "And it was no merueylle that the mouth that had kyssed the feet of our Lord so deboneyrly and so goodly shold be enspyred with the worde of God more than the other" (123 in Mycoff).

At the center of this version of her legend is a scene of a child breast-feeding from his dead mother:

> … they cam by the ordynaunce of God by the roche where the body of hys wyf was lefte, and his sone. Thenne by prayers and yeftes he dyd so moche that they

[132] *Vitas Patrum,* London, Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1495. https://www.proquest.com/books/vitas-patrum/docview/2264204025/se-2?accountid=15172.

> aryued theron. And the lytil chyld, whom Marie Magdalene had kepte, went ofte sythes to the see syde, and like smale chyldren, toke smale stones and threwe them in to the see. And whan they cam, they sawe the lytil chyld playeng wyth stones on the see side as he was wont to doo, and thenne they merueyled moche what he was. And whan the child sawe them, whiche neuer had seen people tofore, [he] was aferde and ranne secretly to his moder's breste and hyde hym vnder the mantel. And thenne the fader of the chyld went for to see more appertly, and toke of the mantel, and fond the chyld, whyche was right feyr, sukyng his moder's breste. Thenne he toke the chyld in his armes and sayd: 'O blessyd Marie Madgalene, I were wel happy and blessed yf my wyf were now alyue and myght lyue and come agayn with me in to my contrye. I knowe verily and byleue wythout doubte that thou, that hast gyuen to me my sone and hast fedde & kept hym ij yere in thys roche, mayst wel r'establisshe his moder to her first helthe.'(fol. 218r col. a., in Mycoff, 131)

Breastfeeding here is mediated, divinely initiated by Mary Magdalene, who is not the mother, and transmitted by the mother's body even after her death. This is a striking image of maternal care that is shared by two women, no longer tied to the biological processes of the mother feeding her child, described within the printed text. One of the terms Caxton repeats most often in the legend is "nourish," referring to the feeding of either oneself or one's child. Mary Magdalene, as a celestial figure, needs no "corporal norisshyng." Nourishing the reader, Caxton's press becomes like the mother who can go on breast-feeding whether or not she is alive. As Mary of Egypt will say elsewhere in this volume, she is "nourysshed and cladde only wyth the worde of [her] god" (lxx).

Mary Magdalene's legend is reflected in a number of other lives within both the *Golden Legend* and *Vitas Patrum*. The name "Lives of the Fathers" may not seem fitting for a text that includes quite so many women's lives. This discrepancy is precisely what I am tracing in this chapter, however, as I have been arguing that Caxton and his sources negotiate new social roles for lay men, indirectly, through female figures. *Vitas Patrum*, Sue Ellen Holbrook notes, was an immensely popular text in many vernacular languages, if not quite as popular as the *Golden*

Legend. It was, she writes, "a printer's book" by the late fifteenth century. What makes a book a *printer's* book? One of its key features, she notes, is the fact that it explores literacy nearly everywhere, with both men and women writing letters: "Caxton's translation presents to English people a world of humans bound in communicative interaction" (221, in Classen).[133] Holbrook's reading, which rightly centers itself on the importance of images and typographical design in the volume, begins with an analysis of the central woodcut of St. Jerome, a woodcut that offers to readers images of books, inviting them, as Holbrook notes, into Jerome's study.

[133] "Story, Picture, and Reading in Wynkyn de Worde's *Vitas Patrum*," *in The Book and the Magic of Reading in the Middle Ages, ed. Albrecht Classen, New York :Garland Pub., 1998.*

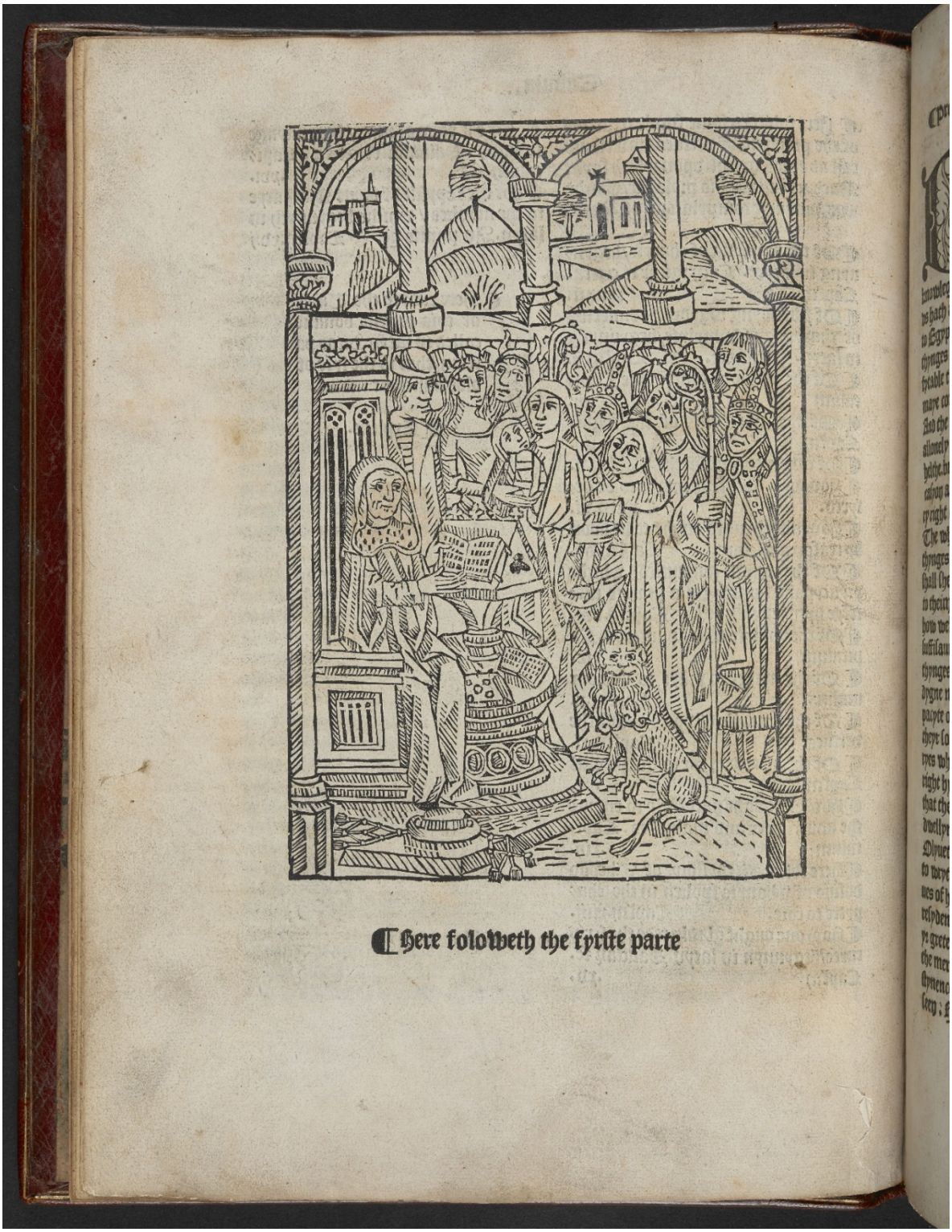

Figure 3.3: St. Jerome's Study in the *Vitas Patrum*.

They too are reading a book. De Worde's volume becomes no less important than the very book placed on Jerome's lectern. When Holbrook calls the *Vitas Patrum* a printer's book, then, this may be what she means: it is a book about books. But if we look carefully at the woodcut, another image is actually at the center of it, and this is an image of a female figure holding a child wrapped tightly in swaddling clothes. This is the figure who looks out at the reader. This is also the same image we will encounter at the end of the life of St. Marina, presented there as a solitary figure.

Several lives in the *Vitas Patrum* offer explicit lessons on the virtues of women at the same time that they question the value of biological motherhood or even living as a legibly female person. For instance, Caxton interrupts the legend of Mary of Egypt in the *Vitas Patrum*, writing,

> Lete vs thynke here how many alteracons as well by raynes and grete coldes. As by extreme hetes of the sonne … she endured / Thynke we also how many carnall temptacyons she threwe fro her / Whyche ben somoche dyffycyle to ouercome to theym that haue ben accustomed therin more thanne ony other temptacon / After she sayd to Zozimas / Alas my frende I am nourysshed and cladde only wyth the worde of my god… (lxx)

Zozimas then asks her if she has read the "bokes of Moyses," the Psaulter, and other "holy scrypture," to which she responds with a nearly visible smirk:

> She thenne smylynge sayde to hym Fader byleue me certaynly. That syth I passyd the flom Iourdan. I sawe neuer man lyuynge but the. Ne other beest of the worlde / I neuer lerned booke Ne neuer herde the Psaulter radde ne songen / But the worde of god whyche hathe soo grete vertue hathe enformyd myn entendement… (lxx)

St. Mary of Egypt's desert life renders her a figure who has no access to the book in which her life will later appear. Her naked body is the reading material here, enunciated to the male

interlocuter, later to be read by a primarily male audience of clerical readers and preachers alike. Caxton's translation emphasizes the smile on her face and the intimate tone of voice through which she assures Zozimas that she has only seen *him* for many years. It is thus against this image of extreme isolation, intimacy, and *lack* of access to the scriptural word that Caxton animates the word of God in the vernacular printed collection of saints' lives.

6. "this habyte dyssymyled": Followers of Mary Magdalene in the *Vitas Patrum*

One set of stories within the *Vitas Patrum* opens up the little house and the female body within, narrativizing enclosure, revelation, and dissemination. This cluster of chapters, placed before and after the life of Saint Marina, features female saints who imitate Mary Magdalene but who also depart from her legend by dressing as men for a period of their lives. The first of these figures is "Saynt Pelage." When "saynt Nonne" encourages Pelage to enter into a religious life, he dresses her as a man and tells her of the story of Mary Magdalene:

> And saynt Nonne cladde her wyth the heere / And a groos and cours robe of a man … And saynt Nonne comforted her in sayenge That she hadde chosen the ryght holy waye. Lyke as the Gospell conteyneth/ In the whyche is founde that oure lorde preferred Marye Magdalene. ledynge Contemplatyff lyffe. Tofore her faster Martha. Whyche ladde actyf lyfe/
> The good Pelage in this *habyte dyssymyled* wente to Iherusalem. In to the mounte of Olyuete/Where oure Redemer prayed to god his fader tofore his sorowefull passyion / And there she made a lityll house. Where she determyned to dwelle /… (emphasis mine)

Saint Nonne then sends a deacon to see Pelage:

> … he fonde the good relygyous in the mounte of Olyuete in whiche she hadde be all waye closed and shette in her lytyl house / whyche hadde none openyng but a lytyl wyndowe / at whyche the sayd deken knocked. And anone she opened it / And how be it that she hadde neuer be seen but ones syth that she had be in her grete beaulte and pomperye / yet neuerthelesse she knewe hym But he coude not knowe her by cause she was soo deffayted and dysfygured by the grete abstynences that she made in suche wyse that the bones perced the skynne / And hadd her eyen wythin her hede so depe and holow / that she semed better to presente a dede body than a lyuynge woman… (lxv)

The life ends with the same deacon visiting Pelage once more, this time finding her dead. The final moments of the tale anticipate the ending of the life of Saint Marina, as the anointing of the body leads to a moment of revelation of her female body, which the text uses as a spiritual lesson: "Thenne they began to synge and rendre graces and thankynges to god… [for his nobility], whyche ben hydde not oonly in holy men but also in vertuoule wymen…"

Madonna-like images of mothers appear several times in the collection of lives of the desert fathers. In each, the mother appears to be made out of wood and ink. She is positioned

Figure 3.4: Woodcut of Saint Marina, *Vitas Patrum* lxv

unnaturally and uncomfortably, becoming part of the artificial architecture that surrounds her. Hemmed in by the tiled floor and the Gothic pillar, she appears to be utterly unmovable. If the Virgin Mary has been heretofore considered a mediat*ing* mother, the mothers of Caxton's late woodcuts become mediat*ed* mothers, images of a denaturalized coupling of mother and child in settings that could never suit the needs of a parent and her suckling child.

The translation of the life of Saint Marina features the above woodcut at the beginning of "Maryne's life."[134] Caxton's two versions of this life appear in his *GoL* and in the *Vitas Patrum*. In the *GoL*, Marina's life follows the brief life of "Quyryne and Iulitte," or Quiricus and Julitta, a mother and son whose cult came to be associated with birth girdles in the fifteenth century. Joseph J. Gwara and Mary Morse refer to the "English childbirth cult of the two saints," arguing that "The printed birth girdle, with its series of prayers invoking the specific intercession of SS Quiricus and Julitta, presupposes a widespread familiarity with these two martyrs as protectors of women in labour" (37).[135] This legend exemplifies, as Gwara and Morse put it, "the resilience of the mother-child bond and the mother's crucial role in her child's Christian instruction" (36). However, it leads directly into the story of Marina, a young woman who dresses as a boy in order to join her father in an all-male monastery. Living in disguise and within the enclosed community, she nonetheless becomes a virgin mother when she is falsely accused of impregnating a woman in the neighboring town where Marina often went with the monks to fetch wood. For this crime, she is sent beyond the walls of the monastery, left to feed herself and the child on scraps of bread from the brothers.

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[134] Marina is included in Caxton's *GoL* (folio Clxxxi), but the version in *Vitas Patrum* is an extended one, and the woodcut is unique to it.

[135] Joseph J. Gwara, Mary Morse, A Birth Girdle Printed by Wynkyn de Worde, *The Library*, Volume 13, Issue 1, March 2012, Pages 33–62, https://doi.org/10.1093/library/13.1.33

Like Pelage, Marina enters the monastery "in abyte dyssymyled." Caxton writes that during her time in the monastery she was "suffycyently Instructe / as welle in letture as otherwyse in the waye of helthe…"[136] In other words, Marina, in the monastery, learns not only about her spiritual health, and about the importance of maintaining her virginity, as her father advises; she also learns about literature. The context of this line might suggest that she only learns "letture" because she lives as a boy. Indeed, the following line states that her father tells her she must not ever let anyone know she is a woman. However, the story breaks down such simple restrictions through the themes of disguise and non-biological maternal care. Marina gains entry into the all male community by assuming a male subject position. When the woman who accuses "Maryn" of adultery has her child, the text tells us that she "hadde leyen in a certain tyme for to *nourysshe* her chylde whyth her pappes." This act of nourishing, at first tied to the biological process of breastfeeding, quickly shifts when the woman brings the child to Marina: "She brought the chylde to hym sayenge holde Maryn take thys chylde / and nourysshe it lyke as thou haste made it. She receyued it benygnly / And two yere during she nourysshed it sweetly with suche as was gyuen to him for the loue of god…" (lxxii). The text shifts between gender pronouns for Marina depending upon the perspective of the person with whom she interacts. When the interaction is with the reader, she is female; with the female accuser, she is gendered male. Either way, she is asked to "nourish" a child *as though she had made it*. This line undermines biological pregnancy—and thus human reproduction—as the only way to make a child.

[136] A similar construction can be found in a number of late medieval texts, especially the *Revelations of St. Bridget*, in which she writes that "godely wysdom is nott onely in letturis, bot in herte and in goode lyvyng." See the *Middle English Dictionary* entry for "lettre" and OED "letter, 5a."

The narrative's smooth progression from the mother's feeding of the child to a new parent who presumably cannot feed the child in the same way calls into question the very basis of family origins. If the narrative can render a woman a mother, so too can the press. In these tales of cross-dressing within all male communities, moreover, suggests that Caxton and de Worde may have entertained the notion that a man, or, more specifically, a printer, could see himself playing the role of the mother. Marina's care for the child inspires the men of the monastery, who agree to take her and the child into the religious house so long as she continues to pay penance by cleaning "awaye the fylthe and unclene thynges." It is not until her burial that her female body is revealed to the men, at which point the burial site becomes a place where miracles will continue to occur.

A similar tale is found in the life of St. Eufrosyne.

Figure 3.5: Eufrosyne and her family, *Vitas Patrum*, lxxiii

The story begins with this image of a small family in an enclosure, the child holding a book and the mother pointing to it while the father takes a prayerful stance next to a window. This image depicts Eufrosyne and her mother before her mother dies, leaving the young girl and her father behind in the world. The woman is described as one living an honest "lyfe" that is tied to her family origins: she "… was extracte of noble parentes," but is "barayn & sterile." From the beginning of the narrative, the theme of nourishment returns as Caxton writes that "His wife had grete solycytude to nourysshe the poore people." Despite her attempts to please God and pray for a successful pregnancy, the couple cannot produce a child until Pafunce, the father, goes to a monastery to ask for prayers so that he might "haue generacyon." Eufrosyne, whose mother dies during her childhood, learns from her father both "letture" and good "maners" (lxxiii). Yet again, the book becomes a replacement for the mother, an inorganic womb in which Caxton and de Worde, together, reproduce.

Despite the discourse of motherhood in these narratives, the biological mother figure is conspicuously absent, dying off or giving away her children in order to make room for childrearing in all male monastic communities. The female figure becomes a role model not for female readers but for the male figures within the text and those who will come to read the printed book. The book, as though it were an extension of the monastery, replaces the mother. Her initial barrenness, with which the story of Eufrosyne begins, is overcome by the reproducible book, which is full of woodcuts featuring images of women holding or teaching children. The penance of Marina, moreover, takes us back to Caxton's interpolation of David, in which the penitential repetition of the psalms produces text. The repetitive motion of burying himself in the

ground, like the motion of the men at the press, replaces the sexual reproduction for which David atones.[137]

The image of the woman who nourishes the foundling becomes a figure for the self who reads in order to remake himself at a transitional time in history, as the printing press opened up new possibilities for widespread learning. Caxton's frequent use of the enclosed woman is clear—from his famous story of the traveling men who demand eggs from a "good" wife to the female saints of the desert. The book becomes a metaphor for maternity, offering itself as a space for surrogate breast-feeding.

[137] The replacement of natural reproduction with the technological is, in fact, the starting point of Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero's collection of essays *Premodern Sexualities*, in which they write, "Caxton sees history as a communicative technology whose purpose is to develop the homosocial (and national) bonds made possible by the sacrificial sufferings of masculinity… A masculinist technology of generation (which confers upon history generative powers of life and death) triumphs over material practices of reproduction, or the biosocial production of life" (). Edited by Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero, with the assistance of Kathy Lavezzo. *Premodern Sexualities*. New York: Routledge, 1996: xiv-xv.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored Caxton's role as both author and printer who offered readers narratives that served multiple, often contradictory, purposes. Scholars from Mary Erler to Morgan Ring have begun to read the annotations of sixteenth century readers of the *Golden Legend* and the *Vitas Patrum*.[138] Contrary to what I read in Caxton's translations and interpolations, the *Vitas Patrum* enjoyed popularity amongst certain female readers. Mary Erler describes a copy, held at the John Rylands library, as an important source for understanding both individual reading practices and familial relationships between women. On a note written in the book's margin next to the story of Paula, she writes,

> Its placement points to the models which the Bristol widow imagined for herself and her daughter. In the histories of the two wealthy and religiously radical Roman women, Joan Regent became Paula, her daughter Agnes the nun Eustocium, and perhaps John Colman represents their Jerome. The book thus provides a physical witness to the intellectual bond between this late medieval mother and daughter, enabling us to see the degree to which their natural connection was deepened by their reading (58).

Such readings are reminders that the printer's aim, just like the author's, is often undone by the reader. This material evidence is, however, tied to a particular religious house for women, the very sort of house that the cross-dressing saints of the *Vitas Patrum* avoided when they entered the monastery and learned "letture" along with the monks. The evidence we have of women's reading practices from the fifteenth century remains limited, primarily, to the few women who owned books, either because they lived in religious houses or because they were wealthy enough

[138] Ring, Morgan. 2019. "Annotating the Golden Legend in Early Modern England." *Renaissance Quarterly* 72 (3). Cambridge University Press: 816–62. doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.254; Erler, Mary. "Widows in Retirement: Region, Patronage, Spirituality, Reading at the Gaunts, Bristol." *Religion & Literature*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2005, pp. 51–75. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40059987. Accessed 31 Dec. 2020.

to have personal libraries at the end of the medieval period. The woman in the desert, who appears throughout the *Vitas Patrum*, is a figure for the disseminated text and the unsupervised reader. Permitted to travel, she must later tell the first man she meets that she has seen no man but him. Chaucer's "trust no man but me" becomes here a matter of factual encounter rather than one of the reader's discretion.

Feminist critics have long sought to better understand late medieval and early modern female reading practices.[139] This discussion might be enriched even further, however, by an exploration of how female exemplarity helped to establish *male* authorities in the history of English literature.[140] This male authority, some have shown, included the increasing lay population. Critics such as Anne Coldiron and Jennifer Summit have also explored the ways in which the woman, as constructed by medieval writers, could provide male authors with material against which to reflect upon their own status as writers in the vernacular. Summit writes, "…Chaucer offers the figure of the woman writer, such as he depicts her, as the embodiment of the literary-historical instability afflicting the vernacular author in the later Middle Ages" (58). Explicit discussions of gender with regard to translations from the canon of classical literature, Anne Coldiron points out, reveal the extent to which gender was a great concern, both materially and symbolically, for Caxton and the authors whose works he translated.[141]

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[139] See Brayman Hackel, Heidi. *Reading Material in Early Modern England : Print, Gender, and Literacy*. Cambridge University Press, 2005; Krug, Rebecca, *Reading Families*. Cornell University Press, 2018. The recent volume of Studies in the Age of Chaucer dedicates a colloquium, edited by Laura Saetveit Miles and Diane Watt, to "Women's Literary Culture and the Medieval English Canon."

[140] See Warren, Nancy Bradley. *Spiritual Economies : Female Monasticism in Later Medieval England*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

[141] Coldiron, A. E. B. (Anne Elizabeth Banks). *English Printing, Verse Translation, and the Battle of the Sexes, 1476-1557*. Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

It is perhaps fitting that Michel Foucault, connecting the author function to the "the manner in which Christian tradition authenticated (or rejected) the texts at its disposal," turns to the criteria of the same saint as the one with whom I open this chapter (110): "… Saint Jerome's four criteria of authenticity… do define the four modalities according to which modern criticism brings the author function into play. The author function, as Foucault theorizes it, effects the dispersion of "simultaneous selves." Within the text we find signs such as personal pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and verb conjugation. We learn who the author is, Foucault tells us, in the very scissions of the text, those places where the author is divided from the speaker, his distance from the work made clear. Caxton, as printer, editor, translator, and author of the prologue, epilogue, and interpolation, is an early example of the dispersed self Foucault theorizes, even if he does so without reference to the Middle Ages. Moreover, the subjects of the *GoL*, in which Mary and the saints get distributed as various voices, body parts, or droplets of blood, themselves operate in ways that allow Caxton to reflect upon his own "plurality of self" (112). Through the medium of the printed book, Caxton brings to the reader the voice of "our blessyd Lady," and a description of how her eyes are upon Jerome as he visits every altar but hers. Using rhetoric that privileges the seen and heard, Caxton writes a narrative that must serve as a substitute for both. The book draws the reader into the church, subject to the gaze of the Virgin, surrounded by the sound of Mary's voice. Although Jerome's practice of visiting churches was habitual, this particular visit, which gives rise to a Marian miracle, is singular.

Advertising the first printed books in England, Caxton emphasized the older and more familiar forms that preserved cultural knowledge and belief in late medieval England. Like the scroll that runs outside the engraved compartment in the image above, Caxton's sources for the narratives he supplies exceed the book itself. For Caxton, the text consists both in the works he

translates for wide distribution and in the images of Christ's wounded flesh, the altarpiece, the oral sermon, the church procession. Caxton puts himself forth as the figure who will replace the absent body of Christ, establishing the role of the printer as one who, like Christ, teaches, leads, and sacrifices his body.[142] Caxton's presentation of the book as a Marian reliquary models for the reader imitation of Christ as a devotional practice, which also allows for a dynamic in which the reader worships both the book and its producer, Caxton. Mimetic devotion is fundamental to another project of Caxton's, his edition of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ*, which Wynkyn de Worde will later print.

[142] Caxton's imitation of Christ is continuous with his presentation of the book as a surrogate mother as well as a symbolic reliquary of texts. Caroline Walker Bynum's *Jesus as Mother*, for instance, explored the popular attribution of maternal characteristics to Jesus Christ in the medieval period: *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Chapter Four

The Womb and de Worde

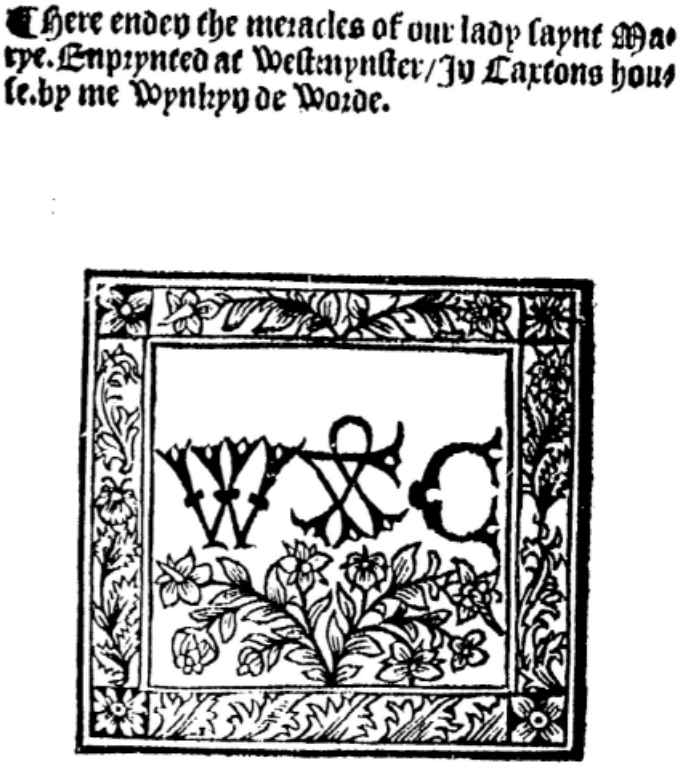

Figure 4.1: Colophon and printer's device for *The myracles of oure blessyd lady,* STC (2nd ed.) / 17539. In Caxtons house. by me Wynkyn de Worde, 1496.

Before setting up his own shop and presenting himself via his own colophon, Wynkyn de Worde printed a number of texts, himself enclosed, within "Caxtons house." These texts, were primarily Marian in focus, many of them addressed to the same individual holy women for which the original Middle English manuscripts were produced.[143] Just as England saw laypeople, including women, gain greater access to the books that would enable them to become their own "directors"—whether spiritual or secular—it also saw an increased effort on the part of printers to present books in the context of medieval enclosure. As the book went out, the reader went in.[144]

In Chapters Two and Three, I explored the ways in which the author of the *Book of Margery Kempe* and William Caxton drew creative inspiration from the metaphor of non-biological motherhood that originates with the figure of the Virgin Mary. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Wynkyn de Worde, Caxton's successor, continues to make use of the symbolism and literature of female enclosed devotion, printing texts that often address particular enclosed women and that feature woodcuts of the Virgin Mary and her followers. Through his illustrations and paratexts, de Worde recasts the symbolism of medieval enclosed devotion as the

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[143] While my emphasis is on the Marian elements of de Worde's output, book historians from Lotte Hellinga and Alexandra Gillespie to Tamara Atkin and Kathleen Tonry have establish the devotional focus of de Worde's press: Hellinga, *BMC XI: England* 49; Gillespie, *Print Culture and the Medieval Author* 88-100, Atkin, "Reading Late-Medieval Piety in Early Modern England" in *Medieval and Early Modern Religious Cultures: Essays Honouring Vincent Gillespie on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, D.S. Brewer 2019; Tonry, *Agency.* Elsewhere, Hellinga tells us that de Worde had, in particular, a "taste for mystics": *Texts in Transit: Manuscript to Proof and Print in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 372. Brenda M. Hosington's essay "Women Translators and the Early Printed Book" provides an engaging introduction to the religious focus of de Worde's career as well as his involvement with the publishers of Margaret Roper's translations. As she notes, illustrations for these and related works, including de Worde's *Gospelles of dystaues*, employ various illustrations of the "encasing of the female subject" (253): *A Companion to the Early Printed Book in Britain, 1476-1558, Vincent Gillespie and Susan Powell, Eds. Cambridge, England: D.S. Brewer, 2014.*

[144] My analysis, as I note in the introduction to this dissertation, is deeply informed by the work of Jennifer Bryan, whose *Looking Inward* claims from the start that as habits of literacy spread to new groups of readers in the Middle Ages, "… the figure of the religious recluse—the hermit, anchoress, or anchorite—assumed ever-greater importance in the English devotional imagination" (15). As this chapter and the last demonstrate, this trend only increases as print increases the number of people belonging to these new groups.

symbolism of the printed book. The miraculous reproduction of the Virgin Mary encapsulates the printer's reflections on the book and on his role as a reproducer of text and woodcut. The dissemination of the word of God, the blood of Christ, and the milk of the Virgin's breast find new expression in the dissemination of both sacred and profane printed books. Medieval anxieties about reproduction, and who controls it, also shift in the face of print, as can be seen most clearly in the story of the child begotten by the devil, *Robert the Devil*, and in the printed birth girdles that were used in efforts to protect mothers in childbirth.

Within medieval studies on women writers, de Worde is best known for his highly reduced edition of extracts from the *Book of Margery Kempe*. It is because of him, many readers of the *Book* lament, that we, until the late and nearly-missed date of 1934, lacked access to a fascinating book that has now become part of the canon of English literature. Because of de Worde's reshaping, or, as some see it, censoring, of the *Book* and its female protagonist, the study of medieval mysticism came to be without one of its most challenging and inspiring exemplars, Margery. Another view of the de Worde's extracts, however, might credit de Worde for bringing the book into print in 1501, for, regardless of the shape he gave it, it was, indeed, de Worde, who first published this female writer. It is possible that de Worde kept so much of Margery's *Book* to himself precisely so that he could print all of her favorite books.[145]

The invaluable list of books included in Chapters 17 and 58 of the *Book* are, in both cases, introduced in the context of medieval female literacy, which, whether this was true or not,

[145] For Karma Lochrie, what is at stake within these excerpts has much to do with the relationship between enclosure and dissemination I am tracing in this chapter: "Voice and body, which are so intrusive in Kempe's narrative, are noticeably absent from Wynkyn de Worde's text. The very publicity of Kempe's speech and her visions is converted into private acts of prayer" (221). On the positive end, Lochrie implies that indeed there may be an important connection between the extracted *Book* and de Worde's printing career: "Kempe would, no doubt, have approved of this visionary and devotional company even if she would not have approved of the drastically reduced form her treatise had taken" (223).

had to be "staged" as connected to male authorities. In Chapter 17, the *Book* describes Margery's interaction with a priest in Norwich, in which she tells him that "sche herd nevyr a boke, neythyr Hyltons boke, ne Bridis boke, ne *Stimulus Amoris*, ne *Incendium Amoris*, ne non other that evyr sche herd redyn, that spak so hyly of lofe of God but that sche felt as hyly in werkyng in hir sowle, yf sche cowd or ellys mygth a schewyd as sche felt" (1256-1261). Here it is Margery's feelings, rather than her reading or hearing of texts, that teaches her about the love of God. The priest's willingness to listen to her here, moreover, mimics the friendship Margery has with God, which is based not in her reading of the Bible but in the "dalliance" she shares with him in "…hir sowle as playnly and as veryly as o frend spekyth to another be bodyly spech" (1251-1253). While Margery—if not medieval scholars, who consider this brief list to be a crucial document of medieval reading practices—could certainly do without her books, then, it is also true that in Chapter 58, she "hungers" after them, and asks to be "refreshed" with the holy word. Margery meets a priest who reads to her within the chamber he shares with his mother: "He red to hir many a good boke of hy contemplacyon and other bokys, as the Bybyl wyth doctowrys therupon, Seynt Brydys boke, Hyltons boke, Boneventur, *Stimulus Amoris, Incendium Amoris*, and swech other" (4818-4821). The *Book* gives its later readers, whether the sixteenth century printer or the modern scholar, a sense of reading as at once collective and enclosed. It is in the chamber with a priest and his mother that Margery "reads." As the priest reads to Margery over the course of seven or eight years, he develops a deep bond so that he suffers "many an evyl worde for hyr lofe" (4826).

The list of Margery's books is both brief and capacious, as scholars of medieval devotional literature continue to work out who wrote many of the anonymous treatises that survive. Devotional works are often characterized, moreover, as "Bridgettine" or

"Bonaventuran," so that the single names listed in the narrative inventory above can account for a number of printed books.[146] One such "Bridgettine" work, *The Orcharde of Syon,* allows de Worde to explicitly describe the interdependence of the printer and the enclosed religious community. In the colophon, he writes that the book might never have come to light if Richard Sutton, steward of Syon Abbey, had not found it in a dark corner. Here sexual difference maps onto the other binaries upon which de Worde's project rests: the male confessor and the enclosed woman, the dark corner and the light of God (so often depicted in images of Bridget), the hidden book versus the disseminated text.[147] The colophon reads,

> Euery good thynge the more it be *communycate* and *dysparsed abrode* /the more fruyte and profyte cometh therof / as it is shewed in the gospell. whete yf it be caste abrode on the erthe / it bryngeth forte moche fruyte / and wher it is layde vp togyder / *it bryngeth for the nothynge* / but corrupteth / *norysheth* / & gēdreth vermyne. The phylosopher also sayth. Good the more comyn it be / ye more godly it is. Therfore yf worldly ryches / gyuen and *dysparsed abrode* where nede is / for ye loue of god / shall be rewarded / as he say the hymselfe / an hundreth folde here in this lyfe / and with euer lastynge ioye here after. Moche more *ghostli tresure cōmunycate & spred abrode* / wher of ī these dayes is moche nede /shall be rewarded moche more largely bothe here and in heuen. This consyderynge a ryghte worshypfull and deuoute gētylmā / mayster Rycharde Sutton esquyer / stewarde of the holy monastery of Syon / fyndynge this ghostely tresure these dyologes and reuelacyons of the newe seraphy call spouse of cryste seynt Katheryne of Sene / *in a corner by it selfe* / wyllynge of his greate charyte it sholde come to lyghte / that many relygyous and deuoute soules myght be releued and haue cōforte therby / he hathe caused at his greate coste / *this booke to be prynted* / trustige that moche fruyte shall come therof / to all ye shal rede or here of it / desyrynge none other thige therfore / but onely ye rewarde of god & theyr deuoute prayers / for helthe of his soule.

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[146] In "Margery Kempe and Wynkyn de Worde," Sue Ellen Holbrook offers a comprehensive list of mystical works printed by de Worde: 41-42 (in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition In England* (Cambridge : D.S.Brewer, 1987). 4 (1987): 27-46).

[147] See Martha Driver, "Nuns as Patrons, Artists, Readers: Bridgettine Woodcuts in Printed Books Produced for the English Market," in *Art Into Life: Collected Papers from the Kresge Art Museum Medieval Symposia,* Carol Garrett Fisher and Kathleen L. Scott (Eds.), Michigan State University Press, 1995: 243.

> ¶ And thus endeth this booke / Imprynted at London / in Flete strete / at ye sygne of ye sonne / by me wynkyn de worde. The yere of oure lorde .M.CCCCC. & .xix. and the .xxviii. daye of Septēber. (emphasis mine)[148]

De Worde uses the vocabulary of maternal nourishment here to claim that if the book had not been discovered by Sutton, it would bear no fruit. In other words, enclosed bridal spirituality is in need of both the discovery of the male religious authority and of the printer, who will ensure that the private "dyologes and reuelacyons" of Catherine of Siena will be "communycate and dysparsed abrode." The "corner" here is a convenient metaphor for the covered head of the female saint who receives the word of God. This reception, or "revelation," is made incomplete by de Worde's colophon. Without his intervention, the word of God, held within Saint Catherine, will be turned over to "vermyne."[149] I have thus far identified two prominent female figures that help de Worde establish the need for his press: Margery Kempe and Catherine of Siena. It is not my aim in this chapter to identify de Worde as a "misogynist" printer, nor as a proto-feminist one. Rather, I hope to show how the Marian devotion practiced especially by female communities in late medieval England provide de Worde with both the sure audience he needed commercially and, more surprisingly, with the symbolism of enclosure that helped him produce new kinds of books within a context of traditional devotional reading. Alongside books of manners and Latin instructional texts, in other words, books of devotional literature keyed to idealized female readers played a crucial role. Books produced for growing numbers of lay readers, male and female, became less threatening when they appealed to the obedient figure of

[148] *Here begynneth the orcharde of Syon in the whiche is conteyned the reuelacyons of seynt [sic] Katheryne of Sene, with ghostly fruytes [and] precyous plantes for the helthe of mannes soule*, 1519; STC 4815.

[149] Such imagery will be picked up by William Blades in *Enemies of Books*, in which he claims that both women and rodents are impediments to the scholarship of men.

the Virgin Mary.[150] De Worde inherited and built upon this same strategy that was used by Caxton, as I demonstrated in Chapter Three.

Scholarship on de Worde, even outside of criticism on the early printed editions of the *Book*, has often addressed questions of gender.[151] While the importance of the *Book of Margery Kempe* within medieval feminist studies may account for this emphasis, I suggest in what follows that de Worde's self presentation invites such scholarly emphasis on the role of gender in his printed books.[152] The printer's device with which I open this chapter is one of many

[150] This may explain, for instance, a 1496 math textbook produced in Paris, to which a woodcut of the visitation has been added. This work, *Arithmetica Speculativa*, was written by English theologian and mathmetician Thomas Bradwardine. Bradwardine, according to the LOC catalog, was "one of the earliest English mathemeticians" and his arithmetic was "of the Boethian type, relating to the theory of numbers: Goff, Frederick R., and David C. Mearns. "A Catalog of Important Recent Additions to the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection Selected for Exhibiton at the Library of Congress, June 1948." *Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1948, pp. 3–51. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/29780505. Accessed 9 Mar. 2021. See Appendix for the colophon above a woodcut of the Visitation scene. The *DNB* entry on Bradwardine reminds us, too, that he makes an appearance in Chaucer's "Nun's Priest's Tale": Leff, Gordon. "Bradwardine, Thomas (c. 1300–1349), theologian and archbishop of Canterbury." Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. May 25, 2006. Oxford University Press. Date of access 9 Mar. 2021, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-3213>. The line in Chaucer lists "the hooly doctour Augustyn, Or Boece, or the Bissop Bradwardyn" and appears just before the narrator introduces the tale as one that teaches how "Wommannes conseil broghte us first to wo": *Riverside Chaucer,* 3241-3257. The printer of this work, Guy Marchant, was a prominent printer in France, well known for his editions of *Dance of Death*: Duff, *Early Printed Books*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

I read related gestures to temper scientific knowledge for laypeople with references to Christian devotion throughout de Worde's De Proprietatibus Rerum, which makes frequent reference to the "help of Jesus" within a work about almost exclusively secular concerns for the purpose of educating the laity through the printed book.

[151] Julia Boffey, "Wynkyn de Worde and Misogyny in Print" in Lester, Geoffrey (Ed.), *Chaucer in Perspective: Middle English Essays in Honour of Norman Blake,* Bloomsburty Publishing Plc, 1999; Hanks, D. Thomas, Jr. "Women in Wood in Wynkyn de Worde's 1498 *Morte Darthur*." *Arthuriana*, vol. 30 no. 1, 2020, p. 54-72. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/art.2020.0002.

[152] As I will discuss in Section IV of this chapter, one of de Worde's devices, to the 1500 edition of *Robert the Devil*, places the printer in the same frame as the Virgin.

examples in which de Worde sets his name next to the Virgin Mary and her followers. Another example of this trend in de Worde is the following:

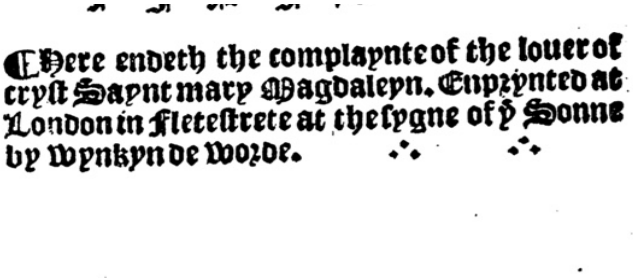

Figure 4.2: Colophon for *The complaynte of the louer of Cryst Saynt Mary Magdaleyn*, 1520, STC 17568

The physical proximity between the "the louer of cryst Saynt Mary Magdaleyn" and the name of de Worde introduces the possibility of the printer's identification with the female saint who is also, in this title, represented as one who speaks a "complaynte" as the "louer" of Christ.[153] In yet another example, de Worde reiterates Margery Kempe's name in his colophon to the extracts he prints "out of" her book:

Figure 4.3: Colophon to de Worde's *Shorte treatyse called Margerie kempe de lyn*.

[153] A text I discuss in Section III, the *Treatise of Love*, similarly presents the voice of the Virgin Mary as one that issues a complaint, or a "plaint," which reads as an early version of the Renaissance love poetry I will discuss in the next chapter. This colophon may even, for some modern readers, read as an early Renaissance pun, as de Worde might be seen as a "Sonne" to the Virgin.

The texts de Worde printed in the years after Caxton's death marked a continuation of Caxton's devotional works. It was Marian devotion, in other words, that allowed de Worde to print his first works, situated, as he was, in Caxton's "house." Just as I argued that for Caxton Marian imagery represented more than what scholars have assumed (practical choices that guarantee sales), I argue here that de Worde's career begins with a Marian emphasis and paves the way for later printers who will continue to incorporate the figure of the Virgin Mary in their work. While Caxton makes use of Marian imagery in order to establish his role as a printer who contributes to literary culture in every recognizable way, de Worde's projects begin to shape a new use of Mary as a patron for both the sacred and the profane. Like the barren mother in *Robert the Devil*, de Worde places himself in a theologically improper position, as printer next to the virgin, suggesting that the profane process of reproducing the book has attained the status of the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ.

These books, once produced as manuscripts intended to be read by a few named women, now appear in print, and despite this new anonymous context, they insist upon enclosure. The Marian texts and images printed by de Worde raise crucial questions for book historians. For instance, how can we account for the proliferation of misogynist texts at the same time that the printing house relies upon both real and symbolic narratives of virtuous women? Scholars have typically accounted for these devotional works as safe business ventures commissioned by female patrons. I argue in Chapter Three that these works accomplished much more than this, however, as they allow the early printer to develop a persona that is not unlike the role of Mary as intercessor. The printer appropriates the mediating role of the Virgin Mother, incorporating traditional religion into the modernizing project of movable type. Speaking directly to the reader, he ensures him or her that the book he or she is reading is a good one that will lead to moral and

intellectual improvement. Joseph J. Gwara notes that de Worde dominated the market in the selling of Robert Whittington's Latin grammars, for instance. As I will sugest below, the figure of the enclosed woman who does not read any book independently, let alone books of a secular nature, complements the figure of the layman seeking greater education through the printed book.[154] Both symbolically and commercially, the holy woman helps to round out the challenges and controversies of the early press. Narratives of conversion and of the discernment of spirits draw from medieval spirituality; but in the printed book, they become narratives of how the book converts and the printer discerns.

[154] Joseph J. Gwara, "Four Fragments in the Folger Shakespeare Library," *Journal of the Early Book Society* 17 (2014).

1. Inside “Hyltons Boke”: de Worde, the Virgin, and the Paratext

Nowhere clearer is the paradoxical fusion of enclosure and dissemination than in the early title pages of de Worde, the first of which appears for the book *The Chastising of God’s Children* (Duff Printers Stationers etc., 25).[155]

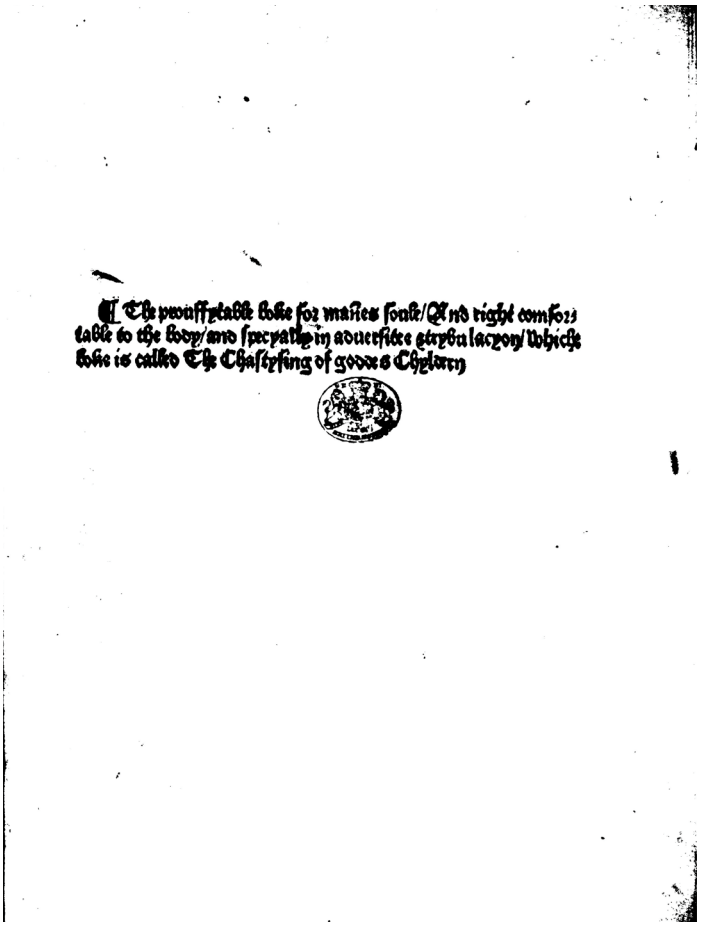

Figure 4.4: The first title page printed in England, 1493.

[155] *The prouffytable boke for mannes soule, and right comfortable to the body, and specyally in aduersitee and trybulacyon, whiche boke is called The chastysing of goddes chyldern,* 1493, STC 5065 (Second Edition). See Appendix for the title page to the work with which I open the chapter, *The myracles of oure blessyd lady*. I explore the *Chastising* in the next section of the chapter. Its status as the first printed book in English with a title page is an ironic one, as the text may have been “in the first place written for a Barking nun” (36). As the editors of the book, Joyce Bazire and Eric Colledge tell us, however, this is not the only irony scholars find when it comes to *Chastising*, as its manuscripts were preserved by badly behaved nuns. Remarking upon the remaining wills that list copies of the text, the editors note, “It is not without irony that these records should have survived of the presentation of a work which presupposes in the women religious for whom it is written the highest standards of personal conduct to what must surely have been two of the worst-conducted nunneries in fifteenth-century England”: *The Chastising of God's Children and The Treatise of Perfection of the Sons of God*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1957: 38.

The first title page in English introduces the book as a source of both bodily comfort and spiritual "profit."

De Worde's first printed project in his own name, *Scala Perfeccionis*, features a title page illustration of the Virgin and her son, in a scene of holy "nourishing" or breastfeeding.[156]

Figure 4.5: Title page for *Scala Perfeccionis*, 1494

[156] *Scala Perfeccionis* or *The Scale of Perfection,* 1494*,* STC (2nd ed.) / 14042. Of this book Duff writes that the *Scale* is a rare book when it includes the second part, which exists in only two or three copies. The title page, as he describes it, also introduces complex innovations to the book: "It has on the title-page a woodcut of the Virgin and Child under a canopy, and below this the sentence beginning "Sit dulce nomen domini nostri Jesu Christi benedictum," but the engraver in cutting the block has not attempted to cut the words properly, but merely to give their general appearance, so that the result though decorative is almost impossible to decipher": *Printers, Stationers and Bookbinders of London and Westminster in the Fifteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2011: 22. The rarity of this book will explain why I cite the envoy from a secondary source below, having noticed it first described in a Christie's auction listing.

According to Hodnett, the woodcut is likely a copy, but is nevertheless of great value: "In this cut we have one of our rare opportunities to observe a border and an illustration by the same hand… and we wonder… how he and his fellows acquired such skill and left so little trace of it outside of conventional designs" (8). See also Pollard, Alfred W. *Early Illustrated Books: A History of the Decoration and Illustration of Books in the 15th and 16th Centuries*.

In this doubly enclosed Madonna and child, a non-perspectival floral border gives way to the roughly perspectival image that resembles the altar. The woodcut, carved to mimic the stone walls and crevices of the church, likens the physical sanctuary to the body of the virgin, whose gown echoes both the windows behind her and the flowers in the frame around the main image. The mother of mercy, the church itself, gives milk to her son; her single breast, located unnaturally at the center of her chest (leaving no room for the second breast) issues milk in a line that is visually continuous with the banderole that connects the Christ child to the unknown figure beneath him in the image. This figure, who is roughly the size of the baby, is a miniaturized religious man, meant to look as though he is spiritually proximate to the Virgin but also physically distant from her, like the reader of the text.

Hope Emily Allen notes that the publication of this work "… must have marked the triumphant end to any legal difficulties which Wynkyn may have had in taking control of Caxton's press" (185).[157] Dibdin refers to this work as a "strange performance," and transcribes the verse envoy de Worde included:

> Infynyte laud, with thankynges many folde,
> I yielde to God, me socouryng with his grace

London: New York: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner; E.P. Dutton, 1917: 236. Driver's work on images in print is perhaps the most thorough in all of the field of Book History. On the topic of the title page, in particular, see "Wynkyn de Worde and the Title Page." *Texts and Their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, 87-149, 1997.

For both an overview and a model of how book historians have read de Worde's placement of illustrations as important interventions into English literary history, see Seth Lerer, "The Wiles of a Woodcut: Wynkyn De Worde and the Early Tudor Reader." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 59, no. 4, 1996, pp. 381–403. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3817694. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.

[157] Allen notes that "…this highly influential monument of medieval English piety owed its first edition to a direct command conveyed to Wynkyn by the king's mother, the 'Lady Margaret'"… (185). The *Scale* was, moreover, likely at press at the same time as the *Treatise of Love*, according to Allen. This was a time, Allen adds, "…when secular persons became authors—even a nobleman like Lord Rivers, and the Lady Margaret herself (who translated a pious work from French)": "Wynkyn de Worde and a Second French Compilation from the 'Ancren Riwle' with a Description of the First," *Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown*, New York: 182-219. For more on the *Treatyse of Love* as it relates to the *Ancrene Riwle* and its Continental sources, see Fisher, John H. "Continental Associations for the Ancrene Riwle." *PMLA*, vol. 64, no. 5, 1949, pp. 1180–1189. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/459557. Accessed 9 Mar. 2021.

This boke to finyshe, whiche that ye beholde,
Scale of perfection calde in euery place;
Whereof thauctour Walter Hilton was,
And Wynkyn de Worde this hath sett in print,
In William Caxton's hows so fyll the case,
God rest his soul. In joy ther mot is stynt.

'This heuenly boke, more precyous than golde,
Was late dyrect, wyth great humylyte,
For godly plesur thereon to beholde,
Unto the right noble Margaret, as ye see,
The kynges moder, of excellent bounte,
He[n]ry the seventh, that Ihu hym preserue.
This myghty pryncesse hath commanded me
Temprynt this boke, her grace for to deserue. (36)

In imitation of Caxton, de Worde writes verses that place him in a position of supplication to various actors in the following order: God, "thauctour Hilton," Caxton, the "right noble Margaret," and the king, Henry VII. The printer enclosed in his master's "hows" sends the book out, which is "calde in euery place" the *Scale of Perfection*. Enclosure and dissemination in these verses allow de Worde to present a book that is already well known, along with its author, "in euery place." The king's "moder," as patron of this and many of the books printed by Caxton, becomes the source of both the king and the book. The envoy, which the reader gets only at the end of certain editions, can be read productively next to the title page for the text, in which the Virgin Mary feeds her child, whose head gives forth a scroll that leads its way down to a monk who sits in supplication. The virgin's milk runs parallel to the text that flows across this rolling page. The monk becomes a figure for anyone who reads or writes in the service of the Virgin and her child. He is the reader, the author (who is, in this case, also a Carthusian monk), the printer. In the context of the envoy, he is Wynkyn de Worde, whose verses perform a reduplication of praise for God, Virgin, author and master (Caxton).

Although de Worde made few changes to the books he printed, many of his paratexts relate, recursively, to the central themes of the text. Consider the opening of the *Scale*, for instance, with its insistence upon uniting inner understanding and outer display. The title of the first section reads “That the Inner hauynge of mannes soule sholde be lyke the utter.” The text opens with a garden enclosed within a large initial G for “Ghostli suster.”[158]

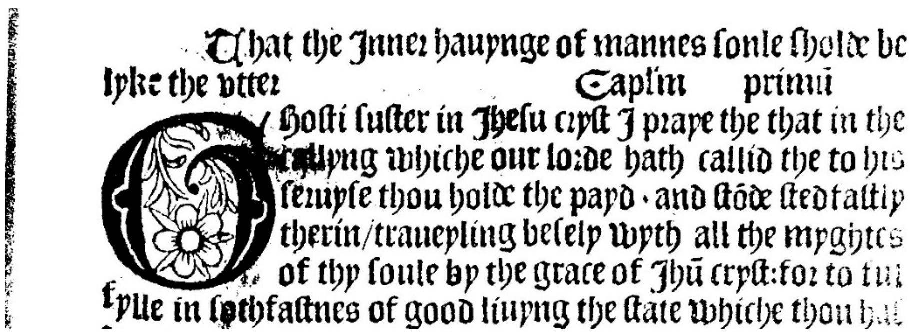
That the Inner hauynge of mannes soule sholde be
lyke the utter Capl'm primu
Ghostli suster in Jhesu cryst I praye the that in the
callyng whiche our lorde hath callid the to his
seruyse thou holde the payd · and stonde stedfastly
therin/trauelyng besely wyth all the myghtes
of thy soule by the grace of Jhu cryst:for to ful
fylle in sothfastnes of good lyuyng the state whiche thou ha

Figure 4.6: Fol. Vi . British Library copy, STC 14042

The spherical G has in this printing attracted the letter “f” from the “ful-fylle” of the following line, so that here the manuscript-like accidents of typography and the illuminated printed initial enact the “shaping” the text is about to describe.[159]

The first chapter, which covers the first printed page of the book, is about a double enclosure of both body and mind. Hilton tells the “suster,” “… turne thyne herte with thy body

[158] The floral initial is one that de Worde uses in many of his devotional works addressed to women, including the extracts from the *Book of Margery Kempe.*

[159] My reading of this initial follows book historians of both medieval manuscripts and of early modern print. As Rachel Stenner writes in *The Typographic Imaginary in Early Modern English Literature*, “To a highly self-conscious book culture, authors from William Caxton onwards add a typographic focus that assesses the significance of the printed book as a material object, and the specific processes that create it” (1).

principali to God, and schape thee withinne to His likenesse bi mekenesse and charité and othere goostli vertues, and thane art thou truli turned to Hym" (I.14-16).[160] Hilton instructs the sister to enclose her body within a house: "… bi fulheed of vertues as thu may with thi bodi be speryd in an hous… knowe that the cause of thy bodily enclosynge is that thu might the betere come to goosteli enclosynge" (18-20). Within the house, in other words, the body is enclosed, so that the "hert" might also be enclosed, allowing the anchorite to turn herself entirely over to the service of God. As de Worde takes over the first printing house in England, the book becomes ever the more like a house in which one is enclosed for the better "shaping" of the self.

2. Discernment of Spirits and Discernment of Texts: *The Chastising of God's Children*

The *Chastising of God's Children* is the first of its kind to treat the problem of spirits and, as Tonry puts it, is "one of the first texts published by de Worde that is concerned with the unmediated lay apprehension of religious truth" (113). While the effect of the printed edition of this treatise might be such "unmediated" understanding, the book itself frequently refers to the translator's role as mediator of texts. The book, as several scholars have noted, bears the traces of female readers in the centuries leading up to the Reformation.[161] The central analogy of the

[160] Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, ed. Thomas H. Bestul, TEAMS: Middle English Text Series (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2000).

[161] Mary C. Erler wrties that a 1493 printed copy of the *Chastising* bears the names of Syon's Edith Morepath and Katherine Palmer. A later inscription of "Dorothe Abington" also appears. Erler notes that this book, along with the *Orchard* and the *Mirror* would change hands at the Dissolution, moving the books from religious owners to secular women. She concludes that "…the acquisition of these books may suggest a continuing attachment on the part of women to older forms of female life, now changing radically or passing from existence": Erler, Mary Carpenter.

book, as its opening pages state, is the analogy of the mother and child ("bi ensample of þe modir and þe child"), which is compared to the relationship between Christ and humanity.[162]

The theme of presence and absence frames the text, and is introduced in the opening chapters through a charming description of the mother playing hide and seek with the child:

> Also whanne oure lord suffrith us to be tempted in oure bigynnynge, he pleieþ wiþ us as þe modir with hir child, whiche sumtyme fleeth awei and hideþ hir, and suffreþ þe child to wepe and crie and besili to seke hir wiþ sobbynge and wepynge. But þanne comeþ þe modir sodeinli wiþ mery chier and lauȝhynge, biclippynge hir child and kissynge, and wipeþ awei þe teeris… (98: 3-9)

So is the reader to understand why the Lord is present some of the time and absent others. The author returns to the matter again in the fifth chapter: "… wymmen whiche bien newe conuertid to a louynge modir þat listeþ to pley wiþ hir sowkynge child, whiche modir in hir pley sumtyme hideþ hir and comeþ aȝen to know bi þe countenaunce of þe child how wele it loueþ þe modir…" (113: 6-10). This playful analogy sets up a model for the discernment of spirits, the core concern of this unusual work. Inward and outward obedience on the part of the child is now to be taught through the act of reading. The presence of the mother within the analogy ultimately is to be undersood as the presence of the Lord. But the reader learns all of this through another present figure: the author of the treatise. The work is presented as a slow revelation; the author frequently states what he will show "openli" to her later in the work. At several points, the author refers to the texts he is not including, those of which the reader does not need to learn. The

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Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England. Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002: 47.

For a detailed analysis of the changes de Worde makes to the manuscript sources, see Rozenski, Steven. "*The Chastising of God's Children* from Manuscript to Print", *Études anglaises*, vol. 66, no. 3, 2013, pp. 369-378.

[162] Citations are from the Colledge and Bazir edition.

discernment of good or bad spirits thus runs parallel to the the discernment of good and bad books.

While the treatise purports to teach the reader how to independently mediate her visions, what the text actually teaches is a dependence upon the author who is also the spiritual director. As he writes of St. Bridget, it is not her powers of discernment that are to be praised, but her obedience:

> …þer may no man be disceyued þat lyueþ vnder doom and ensample of elder and discreet men. Of þis ȝe han ensample of þat hooli ladi, seint and princesse, seint bride: as longe as she lyuede, ȝonge and oold, she lyuede euer vndir obedience and techyng of hooli clerkis and uertuouse and discreet elder men. Þerfor bi þe wordis of þat hooli man Moyses and oþer hooli fadirs accordyng to þe same, clierli it is preued alle her reuelacions in her bookis camen of þe hooli goost, and nat of þe deuel. (178: 4-12)

Thus the "inward" visions of Bridget are made to rely upon the outward authorities of "discreet elder men." The "tokenes" the author presents to the reader, by which she is to understand whether her visions come from God or the devil, are interspersed with texts the author has read and distilled for the reader of the treatise. After stating that the reader can trust any feeling of "inward charite and / swetnesse of loue" because it can only come from God, the author cites the clerks and fathers whose writings, he claims, have allowed him to identify the proper criteria for judging the divine origin of visions: "…þis proueþ an hooli clerk, Hugo de sancto victore, also seint antony in vitis patrum, also seint gregori, where he shewiþ hou god spekiþ to us bi hymsilf, as I shewed bifore in þe eiȝtene chapitle…" (178: 24-25, 179: 1-2). The author extends this brief survey of church fathers' writings by saying that the reader can simply trust him when he says that "many oþer doctours agree": "To þis matier accordiþ many oþer doctours, whos wordis it nediþ nat to shewe, for it sufficeþ ȝou to heere þat clerkis accorden to þat ȝe seen of oþer mens

writyng" (179: 17-19). This "take my word for it" tone on the part of the author suggests that the goal of this book is not to increase the independent reading of books and spirits; rather, it is to create an interdependence between the female visionary and the literate spiritual advisor.[163]

The discernment of spirits, in the *Chastising,* is inseparable from the obedient reading taught throughout the work. This work, which brings into the English printed book the title page for the first time, also introduces a notion of supervised reading, of a printer who, like the mother within this work, plays peek-a-boo with the reader, ensuring that the reader truly loves him back.

3. The Womb as Book in *Speculum Vitae Christi*

Bonaventure's *Speculum Vite Christi,* also known as the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* or *Meditationes vitae Christi,* was, according to Michael G. Sargent, "…the most important literary version of the life of Christ in English before modern times" (ix).[164] In terms of the print history of the book, Hodnett writes that the series of illustrations most useful to both Caxton and de Worde was the one for this book; these cuts are special, too, he notes, because "… no work by the same hand occurs outside of this series in an English book" (5). Like most of the texts I address in this chapter, this one begins with an address to a female reader or listener. In the "Prohemium," the unknown translator explains the title of the text, which "maye skylfully be

[163] My reading of this particular aspect of the treatise differs from the reading of Maureen Cré, who sees in such lines a suggestion that the visionary's spiritual advancement allows her to actually do without the texts the author mentions leaving out of the text: Cré, Marleen. "'Ȝe Han Desired to Knowe in Comfort of Ȝoure Soule': Female Agency in *The Chastising of God's Children*." *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2016, pp. 164–180. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jmedirelicult.42.2.0164. Accessed 8 Mar. 2021.

Rozenski notes that in the twentieth chapter of the text, de Worde "…omits 'and outward, and lyueþ,' retaining the importance of obedience to one's spiritual adviser, but otherwise limiting the role of the social performance of humility in response to a visionary experience" (375).

[164] Love, Nicholas, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*: *a Reading Text*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004.

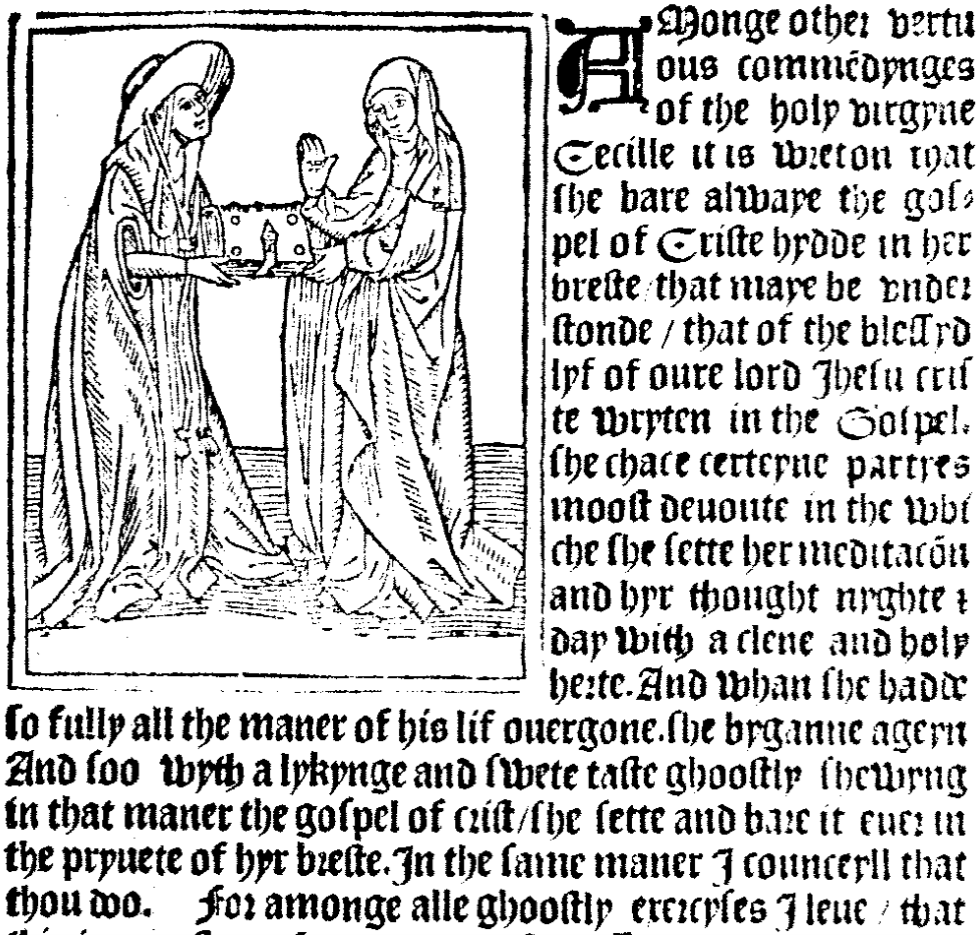
cleped the Myrroure of the blessyd lyf of Jhesu Cryste," and reminds the reader that it was first written by "the forsayde Clerke Bonaventure *spekynge to the woman forsayd*." The printer's decision to retain such lines, which clearly place the text within a context of private manuscript production, is a curious one related to the chief subject of this dissertation on enclosure and dissemination. The address accords, however, with the themes that run through the text. That is, the book insists upon being closed and open at once.

Lotte Hellinga writes that de Worde held a "…notion that Nicholas Love's text should be treated as destined for private, intimate reading and meditation in a spirit of simplicity" (373). Moreover, texts such as this one help to identify trends in printing after England's break with Rome. Hellinga writes, "The end of Wynkyn de Worde's career as a printer coincides with the beginning of the Reformation in England. After his death, no printer in England continued publishing the *Mirror*. In the early decades of the seventeenth century the text was rediscovered by recusant printers in Douai and Saint-Omer, who produced (at least) three editions in duodecimo format, *very small books for very private reading*" (373, emphasis mine). Despite the insistence upon the enclosed, private reader across printed editions of the *Mirror*, Hellinga's collations help us to see how de Worde's changes, especially throughout the second half of his edition, suggest his goal was to reach a wider readership.[165]

The preface ends with a section reflecting on the "holy virgyne Cecille" (Saint Cecilia), who "bare alwaye the gospel of Criste hydde in her breste that maye be understonde / that of the blessyd lyf of oure lord Jhesu criste wryten in the Gospel." This description, which traditionally

[165] Hellinga explores the difference between Caxton and de Worde's editions, noting that the linguistic forms in Caxton's edition were close to those of the earliest surviving manuscripts: "Perhaps Caxton printed his editions of Nicholas Love's *Mirror* with a regional readership in mind; they were possibly even commissioned by a monastery in Northern England, instead of, as usual, a metropolitan patron" (*Texts*, 383).

refers to the devout woman's ability to remember and internalize the gospel as she hears it preached, is now firmly grounded in the printed book of 1494. The woodcut next to it features a book held by two people, so that the gospel "hydde in [the] breste" is publicly displayed in the book.[166]



Among other vertu ous commendynges of the holy virgyne Cecille it is wreton that she bare alwaye the gos pel of Criste hydde in her breste that maye be vnder stonde / that of the blessyd lyf of oure lord Jhesu cris te wryten in the Gospel. she chace certeyne partyes moost deuoute in the whi che she sette her meditacõn and hyr thought nyghte & day with a clene and holy herte. And whan she hadde so fully all the maner of his lif ouergone. she brganne agein And soo wyth a lykynge and swete taste ghoostly shewyng in that maner the gospel of crist / she sette and bare it euer in the pryuete of hyr breste. In the same maner I counceyll that thou do. For amonge alle ghoostly exercyses I leue / that

Figure 4.6: Prohemium, *Speculum vite Christi*, 1494, Wynkyn de Worde, STC (2nd. ed.) 3261

The translator continues by likening the devotion of Cecilia to that of the current reader, who is addressed directly: "…And soo wyth a lykynge and swete taste ghoostly shewyng in that maner

[166] Hodnett describes this woodcut as "A cardinal presenting a book to a woman" (141).

the gospel of crist/she sette and bare it euer in the pryuete of hyr breste. In the same maner I counceyll that *thou doo*" (emphasis mine). The private devotion of the woman, located in her virginal "breste," is thus opened up to the unknown and ever multiplying readers of the printed "Myrroure."[167] The design of the book, moreover, places the illustration directly next to the image of the woman who is enclosed within the engraved frame. Displayed as though apart from the world, with nothing behind them in the image, the woman and the cardinal offer an image of book distribution as an intimate act. The cardinal's hand comes out of his robe, through a gap that is wrought as clearly as a window or a door. The clasped book is the central image of enclosure in the scene.

The book, opened, reflects the pair of miraculous wombs of Mary and Elizabeth. But how can two pregnant women speak to the stationers, scholars and merchants at the center of early modern print culture in England? A woodcut of Mary and her cousin Elizabeth presents an etching that closely resembles the reliquary of the Visitation Group from St. Katharinenthal bei Diessenhofen, from the Workshop of Henry of Constance, now held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (17.190.724; see Appendix). The crystalline wombs, which may have been removed by medieval viewers, offer an image of an interior that is open to public view, transparent and yet obscuring.[168] The lines in the woodcut that are meant to replicate a similar image also invite the

[167] For a thorough account of the metaphor of the mirror as it applies to the Virgin Mary and to medieval devotional literature more generally, see Bryan's second chapter, "Seeing a Difference: Mirrors and Texts."

[168] The crystal womb will come into use in 18th century midwifery. As Lucia Dacome writes, "The use of crystal presented the gravid uterus as an allegedle transparent object of knowledge, but the students had to extract the puppet without using their eyes": "Exhibit 21: A Crystal Womb," in Hopwood, N., Flemming, R., & Kassell, L. (Eds.), (2018), *Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781107705647. On the Met sculptures and their relation to medieval mysticism, see Jung, Jacqueline E. "Crystalline Wombs and Pregnant Hearts: The Exuberant Bodies of the Katharinenthal Visitation Group". *History in the Comic Mode*, edited by Rachel Fulton and Bruce W. Holsinger, New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2007, pp. 223-237. https://doi.org/10.7312/fult13368-021

viewer into what appears to be an open space while simultaneously shutting off from view the contents of the womb.

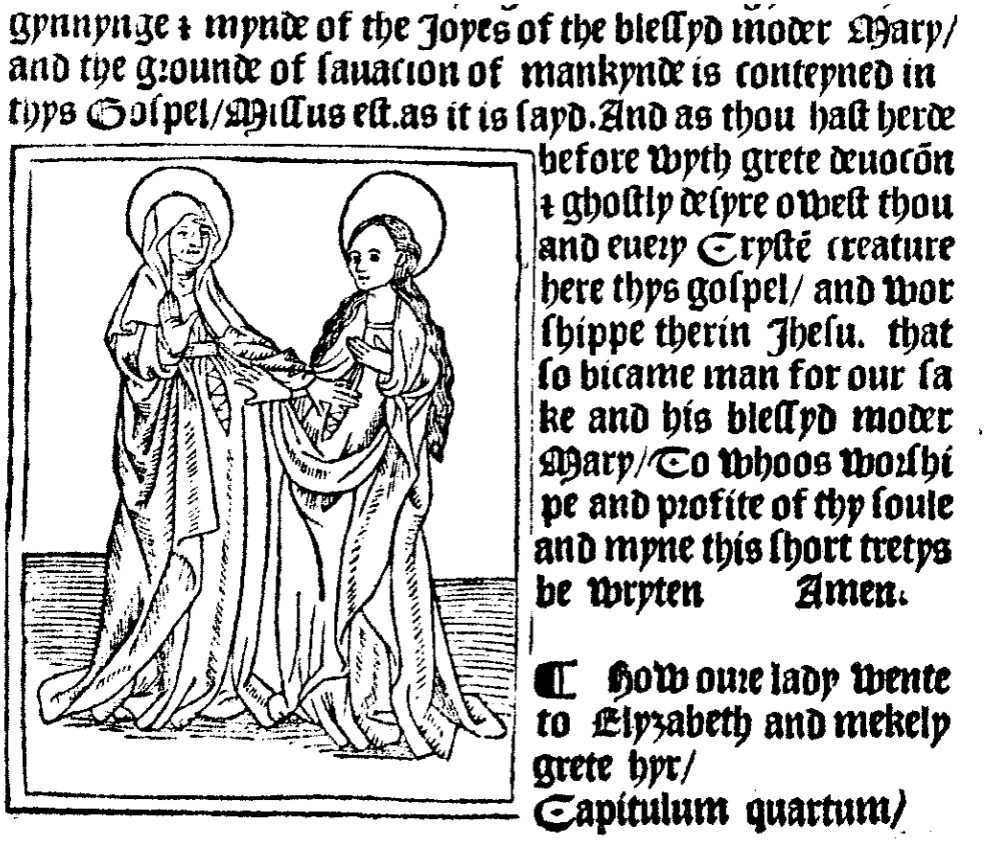


Figure 4.7: Visitation woodcut in *Speculum* (cii.v).

Viewed side by side, these woodcuts help to tell a story of how the book becomes equated with the womb.[169]

[169] See Appendix for another visitation woodcut, which appears in the *Crafte to Lyue Well and to Dye Well* and is placed next to an annunciation scene.

Figure 4.8: The book and the womb, pictured in *Speculum vite Cristi ... the booke that is cleped The myrroure of the blessyd lyf of Jhesu Cryste*, Westminster: William Caxton, 1490; J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress

The lines that make up the pages of the book in the first woodcut are replaced by lines meant to represent the open space within the two facing wombs. The first creates symmetry with the hands touching the bottom corners of the book, while the second creates a deeper sense of intimacy as Mary and Elizabeth place their hands on one another's wombs. The first set of hands remain closed in order to hold up the book, while the second presents fingers that are splayed open, spreading out and reaching into the diamond shaped womb of the other figure. The facsimile I present here retains the image of the ink that bleeds through from the opposite page. These are images that draw us into the bodies within each frame, into the book and the wombs, but behind them is not a wall or a sky; it is black letter print.

The penetrable wombs through which John and Jesus communicate is visible here in the ink that bleeds through the page. At the bottom of the page that shows through is the following passage:

> Johan in hys moders wombe was fulfylled with the holy ghost.and also his moder. Nou… the moder tofore the sone. But the sone fulfylled[the] moder thoruȝ his deserte in as mykel as in hym was more fully the grace of the holy ghoost and fyrste he felte &(?) receyued grace for as he felte the comynge (&) the presence of our lady / soo he felte the comynge of oure lord/And therfore he wythinforth Joyed (&) she spake and prophecyed without forth. (Ciiir.-ciiiv)

This remarkable scene, in which the feeling of one being in the womb parallels the speech of another about the salvation of humankind, unites two kinds of communication. The similarity of the two pregnant women who make the encounter possible helps to establish this union. It is, moreover, the enclosure created between the intimacy of the cousins that brings forth the prophetic announcement. "Wythinforth" and "without forth" existence is established across these two female bodies, with the child gestating in one womb understanding the speech of the mother who carries Jesus inside of her. John feels the presence of Jesus, but the words of the gospel must still be spoken.

The scene continues with an emphasis on the "dwelling" together of these two women, who share an experience and treat each other as equals.[170] Mary, out of "souerayne mekenes" sits down "in the lower place" at Elizabeth's feet, which Elizabeth rejects: "…she anone rysynge up suffred not/but took hir up/and so they sytten downe to geder/And thene asked our lady of Elyzabeth the maner of hyr conceyuynge… and soo they tolden eyther to other gladly the grete goodnes of our lord and loueden (&) worshyppeden god of eyther concepcion…" (ciii.r). The

[170] For a close reading of this scene that ties this manuscript to the concept of "play and piety" as seen in the use of the holy dolls I discuss in Chapter One, see Clarissa Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation*, pages 154-156: *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctvn1t9zn. Accessed 8 Mar. 2021.

phrase “eyther conception” reinforces the physical equality of the two women, for whom the experience of miraculous conception has established a position that is shared between them, in one sense, but is also unique to them. The text insists, moreover, that Mary continues to treat Elizabeth with deference throughout the visit, another attempt at leveling the status of the two women. While in the previous line Mary places herself below Elizabeth, in a subsequent one, Love describes Mary humbling herself to her older cousin, “seruyng Elyzabeth in al that she myght mekely: reueretly (&) deuoutly as a serua[n]t foryetyng that she was gods moder (&) quene of al the world…” Love interrupts the text at this point to reflect upon the “chamber” in which the two women meet: “O lorde what hous was that/what chamber (&) what bedde in the whiche dwelleden to gyder (&) resteden so worthy moders with so noble sones…” This prayer interrupts the narrative with a trinity of domestic enclosures: house, chamber, bed.

Despite the sheer symmetry and equality described between the two women, or perhaps even in response to it, the author concludes the scene with a didactic revision of what we have just read: “In this forsayd processe of the visitacion of our lady we haue ensample that it is leeful & oft spedeful deuoute men and wymmen to vysite other for edyfycacion and ghostly recreacion/& namely the yonger to the elder” (c.iiii). Indeed it is the example of Elizabeth and Mary that Margery Kempe and other holy women pick up when, as I discuss in Chapter One, they kiss and play with the baby Jesus in their devotional practice. Just after saying the scene ought to be taken as an example for those desiring religious instruction, he describes the physical connection between Elizabeth and her son John: “… the childe …understondyng what she was sette his eyen sadly upon hir when she wold take hym to his moder. He tornyd his hede & his face to hyr as hauyng in hyr al only his lykynge & she gladly played with hym & louely clypped & kyssed hym” (c.iiii). The mirroring between mother and child here, as John looks upon his

mother as the one who has "in her al only his lykynge," suggests that the miraculous pregnancy is one that allows the child to only reflect the mother, since no human father has played a part in the conception of the child.

This interaction, moreover, recalls the original mirroring between Elizabeth and Mary, depicted so strikingly in the woodcut with which I open this section. These acts of mirroring, through the printed book, are reflected once again when the reader imitates the maternal devotion of Elizabeth, playing with, embracing, and kissing Jesus in imaginative acts of Marian devotion. The chapter ends in the "bare hous" of Mary, to which she returns after visiting the finer house of her cousin Elizabeth. Herein lies the final "example" to the reader in the chapter, Mary's poverty.[171]

[171] Sargent's edition includes a marginal notation here that reads "Nota paupertatem Marie."

At the end of the text he printed in 1500 and again in 1517, *Here beginneth the lyf of the moste myscheuoust Robert the deuyll whiche was afterwarde called ye seruaunt of god*, de Worde placed an image that resembled the title page for the first work he printed in his own name (the *Scale*):

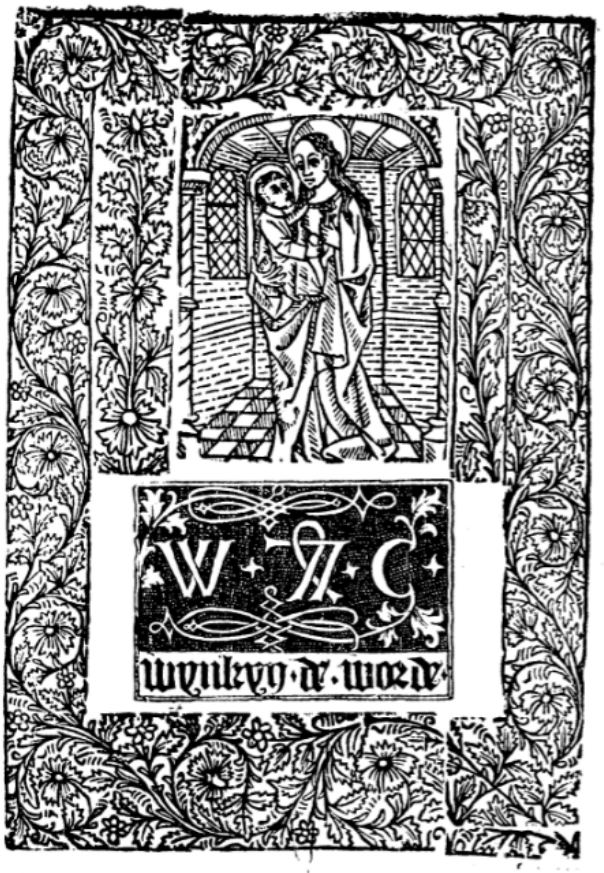


Figure 4.9: De Worde's device, featuring Mary, in *Robert the Devil*

This device places de Worde in arrangement with the Virgin and child, creating a Trinitarian image in the frame of a floral woodcut. The book for which de Worde uses the device, *Robert the*

Devil, comes from a verse text in French.[172] De Worde draws from the themes of enclosure throughout the text, inserting a number of woodcuts featuring people in bed or hermits within tight frames. These images culminate in the unique printer's device, which is not included in the standard overviews of his career despite the fact that he uses it in at least four of his works.[173] The printer's use of the Virgin's image in such a variety of non-religious texts reveals a shift toward the ways in which the outward display of Marian devotion could lead to secular advancement at the turn of the Sixteenth Century in England. But de Worde's creative interventions to this work are not limited to the already rich illustrations he includes. In addition to these visual forms of narration, he ends the text with a versified colophon, a quatrain that is recorded in the DIMEV (5922).

> Thus endeth the lyfe of Robert the deuyll
> That was the seruaunt of our lorde
> And of his condycyons that was full euyll
> Enprynted in London by Wynkyn the worde

If the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Christ* sanctifies the house, book, and womb, the following work, *Robert the Devil*, offers something very different. In it, we find not a chamber, but an anti-

[172] For context on the various print editions of this work, see Sajavaara, Kari. "The Sixteenth Century Versions of 'Robert the Devil'." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, vol. 80, no. 4, 1979, pp. 335–347. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43345668. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021. For a modern translation of the work, see Rosenberg, Samuel N., trans., *Robert the Devil: The First Modern English Translation of Robert le Diable*, an Anonymous French Romance of the Thirteenth Century, University Park, PA, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018.

[173] Library closures and travel restrictions during the global pandemic have rendered my survey incomplete, but thus far I have also located this device in the following works printed by de Worde between 1503 and 1505: *Fabule Esopi cum commento* (STC (2nd ed.) / 169, 1503); *Ordinale Sarum siue directorium sacerdotu[m] quod pica vulgariter dicitur* (STC (2nd ed.) / 17728.3, 1504); *Here begynneth the boke of comforte agaynste all trybulacyons* (STC (2nd ed.) / 3295, 1505).

chamber. Conception is the key theme of the text, but it is not a conception rooted in God's will. Rather, it is initiated by a woman who welcomes the devil into her womb. This striking example expresses the concerns of the printer about reproduction, both technological and biological. The popular translation of *Robert le Diable* tells the story of satanic, rather than immaculate, conception. In this case, the wife of an infertile couple gains control over the capacities of her womb by conceiving with Satan himself and then giving birth to Robert, who wreaks havoc across the land. It is not until Robert visits a hermit in Rome, a moment in the text that is twice illustrated with the same woodcut, that he begins to live in conformance with Christian morals.

After a bloody spree on which he murders a number of hermits, Robert returns to his parents' home covered in blood. Just as his mother's conception of him reversed the order of the immaculate conception, here Robert's character perverts the sacrificial blood of Christ. Robert's conversion process begins when his own mother fears him. Leaving the horse at the gate, Robert enters

> …vnto the Halle where the duchesse his moder was wh— ye (the) duchesse sawe Roberte her sone come in this wyse with a blodysworde in his Honde. She was sore a ferde & wolde haue fledde awaye frome him for she knewe well his condicions. Robert seynge that euery body dyde feel from hym & that his owne moder wolde haue fledde in lyke wyse. He called vnto her pyteously a ferre and sayd. swete lady moder be not aferde of me / but stonde stylle tyll I haue spoken with you & flee not from me in the worshyp of chrystes passion. than roberts herte beinge full of thoughte and reptauce wente nygher her saynge thus: dere lady moder I praye and requyre you tell me how and by what maner or by wherby commeth it that I am so vicyous and curste for I knew well I haue it other of you or of my fader / wherfore incontinent I hertely desyre and praye you that ye shewe me the trouth here of.

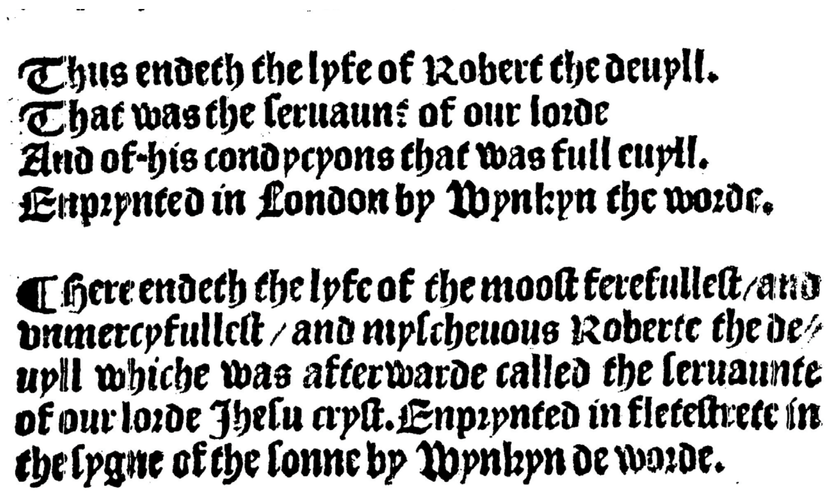
Much in the style of the *Book of Margery Kempe*, the following exchange between the mother and son draws from the language of the sorrowful Mary, but here it is not the son who might die but, once again, the mother who attempts to take God's will into her own hands and to ask for her own death: "… she herde her sone speke thyse wordes & pyteuously wypynge. With a sorowfull herte saynge thus to hym. My dere sone I require you hertely (yt ye) wyll smyte of my

hede." The narrator then explains that she says this because "she had gyue hy to the deuyll in his concepcyon," a point that is repeated not long after in the words of the mother herself: "… then the Duchesse herynge his hertely desyre tolde vnto hym the cause why he was soo vicious and full of myschefe and how she gaue hy to the deuyll in his concepcion. herself myspraysynge."

By the end of the narrative Robert has converted his indiscriminate killing to only killing on behalf of the emperor. Each time he goes out to fight the Saracens, the daughter of the emperor, who cannot speak to share this with others, sees him from her window. It is later only by a miracle that she is able to speak on Robert's behalf, at which point they marry and return home, so that Robert finds himself, on account of his father's death by murder, at peace with the two women in his life: "… Robert was thus at Rowane with his moder and his ladye in Grete Ioye and solace…" The translation ends with a summary of the end of Roberte's life, including the detail that his [unnamed] wife gives birth to a child called "Rycharde," who goes on to live an honorable life so that "… all his comente (community) loued hym / in lyke wyse as Roberte his fader was beloued."

This work offers not only a reformation of the man but also of the womb, opening as it does with an infertile couple and closing with the success of the next generation. The paratexts de Worde provides for this text contradict both the plot and the didactic content. While the work suggests—through Robert, when he asks his mother how he could behave so badly if not because of something passed down from his parents—that behavior is innate rather than learned, de Worde's colophon and device offer models for self-fashioning, for making the self outside of one's family lineage. The miraculous motherhood of the Virgin Mary, who holds her child above the initials in the lower portion of de Worde's device, becomes an image for the nearly miraculous notion that one can shape himself through the reading, writing and printing of the

book. De Worde’s quatrain above the colophon (cited above), moreover, offers an unusual construction of his name, so that he *is* “the worde.”



Thus endeth the lyfe of Robert the deuyll.
That was the seruaunt of our lorde
And of his condycyons that was full euyll.
Enprynted in London by Wynkyn the worde.

Here endeth the lyfe of the moost ferefullest/and vnmercyfullest/and myscheuous Roberte the de/uyll whiche was afterwarde called the seruaunte of our lorde Jhesu cryst. Enprynted in fletestrete in the sygne of the sonne by Wynkyn de worde.

Figure 4.10: Colophon to *Robert the Devil*.

As though aware of his own blasphemy, de Worde’s verses in the quatrain link him both to “Robert the devil,” which parallels his own name “Wynkyn the worde,” and to “the lorde” with which his name rhymes. If Robert is converted through the course of the narrative, de Worde is made anew, conceived not with the devil, but with the printed word.

5. Printing for the Womb: Birth Girdles and the Passion in Print

The simultaneous enclosure and dissemination I have been tracing throughout this dissertation is well documented in the woodcuts printed by de Worde. As an object that is passed down from one printer to another, it documents the intimate collaboration of printers within the competitive book trade of sixteenth century London. In this final section of the chapter, I explore the markers of continuity both with the medieval past and with the future of devotional print, looking specifically at Henry Pepwell's anthologized extract of the *Book of Margery Kempe*. This work, we will see, draws from medieval manuscripts, including those used as birth girdles, and from the woodcuts shared between de Worde, Pepwell, and others.

The printing house, moreover, is itself an enclosure for the printer and his assistants. The woodcut passed between printers becomes an object of distinct value. We read in Hodnett's study of English woodcuts such details as this one: "In 1521 De Worde lent the block to Pepwell and sometime before 1530, at which time worm-holes first appear, to Skot, but in each instance the cut was returned" (16). This material evidence of who had the woodcut when, and who allowed it to begin to decay, is one of the ways we can begin to trace how printers collaborated, sharing privately owned woodcuts, passing down their press to their successors, and modeling for other printers how to please both reader and patron in the paratext. Images of containment, woodcuts are, as objects, far from contained. Rather, they move in and out of print shops and books, shared between printers before being distributed to readers. The woodcut that de Worde uses in his edition of the *Book of Margery Kempe* is the same crucifixion woodcut that Caxton used for the work *Fifteen Oes*. De Worde also used the woodcut for *The Myracles of Oure Blessyd Lady* and other works. In Pepwell's anthologized version of the *Book,* we find not the

same woodcut that de Worde uses in his but a different woodcut from de Worde's stock, one he used for a work called *The chirche of the euyll men and women* (1511).

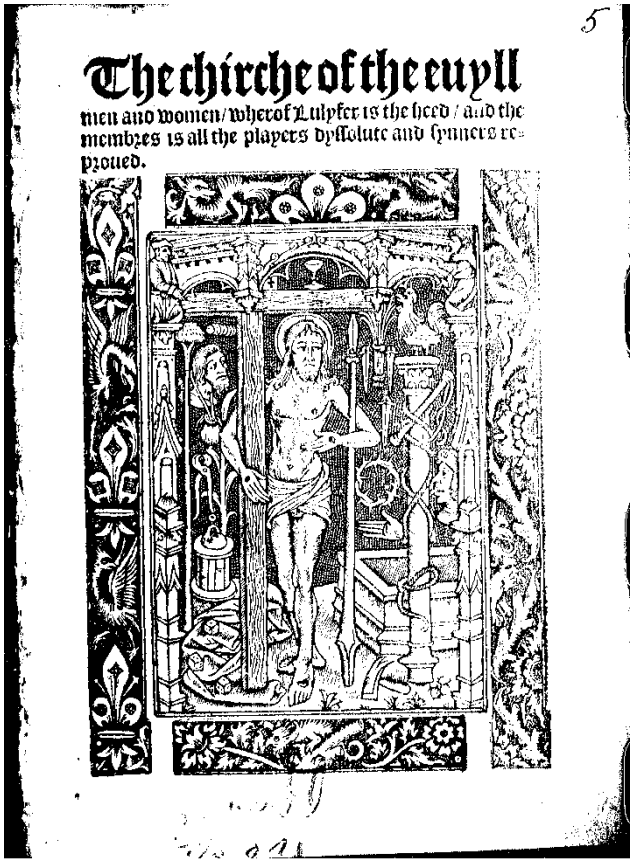


Figure 4.11*: Arma Christi* woodcut in *The chirche of the euyll men and women wherof Lulyfer [sic] is the heed, and the membres is all the players dyssolute and synners reproued*. STC (2nd ed.)/1966.1511.

Figure 4.12: *Arma Christi* woodcut in *Here foloweth a veray deuoute treatyse (named Benyamyn)*, "compyled" by Rycharde of saynt Vyctor. Henry Pepwell, 1521

Pepwell's reuse of the woodcut incorporates text around the frame of the image and includes a well known lyric at the bottom. The lyric reads as follows, and also appears in an indulgence scroll held at the Beinecke library:

O man vnkynde
Bere in thy mynde
My paynes smerte
An þu shall fynde
Me true and kynde
Lo here my herte (DIMEV 3984)

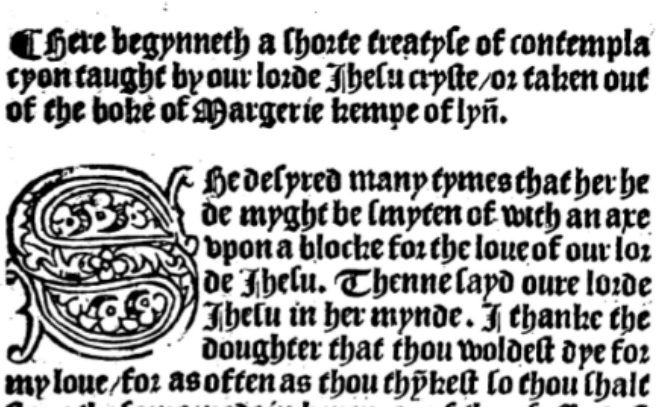
The indulgence scroll in which this lyric appears may have been used as a birth girdle.[174] The woodcut shared by Pepwell and de Worde is not the only reason to connect de Worde's press with the birth girdle, however, as de Worde prints, late in his career, a roll that, according to Joseph J. Gwara and Mary Morse, was a paper strap that was likely "placed on the womb of a woman in labour, held over her by someone assisting in the birth, or used as a guide for requesting divine aid during different stages of pregnancy."[175]

Early modern anxieties about the continuation of the family line are present here alongside other lines of continuity: the line linking the sixteenth century to the religious culture of late medieval England, the line from one printer to the next (from Caxton to de Worde, de

[174] Shannon Gayk explores the different uses of these verses in both the Beinecke roll and in de Worde's title page woodcut in her chapter "Early Modern Afterlives of the Arma Christi": in Cooper, Lisa, & Denny-Brown, Andrea (Eds.). *The Arma Christi in Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture: With a Critical Edition of 'O Vernicle*' (1st ed.), 2014.

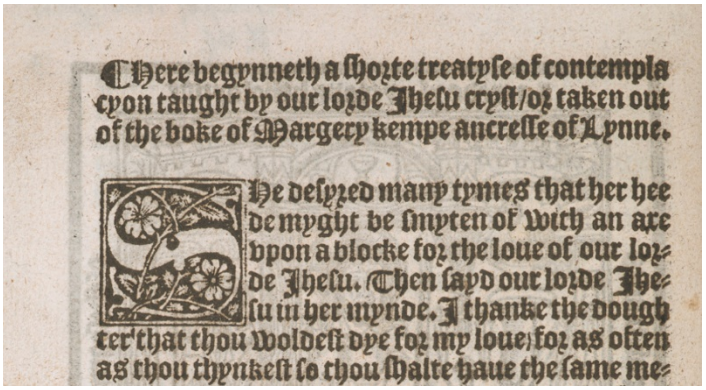
[175] Gwara, Joseph J. and Mary Morse. "A Birth Girdle Printed by Wynkyn de Worde." *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, vol. 13 no. 1, 2012, p. 33-62. The article provides a facsimile of the printed roll as well as images from Beinecke MS 410, the roll that preserves the "O man unkynde" lyric. The potential dating of this roll, they suggest, "could reflect popular anxieties about unsuccessful procreation that led to King Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, his secret marriage to Anne Boleyn, and the civil and religious crises of the day. The crown's fixation on the survival of a male child, firmly rooted in the English social consciousness by the early 1530s, arguably created a mass market for birthing talismans and charms for both public and private use" (56).

Worde to Pepwell), and the line of the text itself, which changes shape with each printing. The detail that has interested scholars of Margery Kempe and the earliest circulating editions of her books is Pepwell's decision to describe Margery as an "ankres."[176] See here the slight difference in the opening lines to the two extracted editions:


There begynneth a shorte treatyse of contempla cyon taught by our lorde Jhesu cryste/or taken out of the boke of Margerie kempe of lyñ.

She desyred many tymes that her he de myght be smyten of with an axe vpon a blocke for the loue of our lor de Jhesu. Thenne sayd oure lorde Jhesu in her mynde. I thanke the doughter that thou woldest dye for my loue/for as often as thou thynkest so thou shalt

de Worde, 1501


There begynneth a shorte treatyse of contempla cyon taught by our lorde Jhesu cryst/or taken out of the boke of Margery kempe ancrelle of Lynne.

She desyred many tymes that her hee de myght be smyten of with an axe vpon a blocke for the loue of our lor= de Jhesu. Then sayd our lorde Jhe= su in her mynde. I thanke the dough ter that thou woldest dye for my loue/for as often as thou thynkest so thou shalte haue the same me=

Pepwell, 1521

Figure 4.13: Opening lines to the first printed editions of the *Book of Margery Kempe*

[176] Jennifer Summit devotes a sub-section of the third chapter of *Lost Property*, "Margery Kempe as 'Devout Anchoress'" to this edition, noting that "Pepwell's edition of Margery Kempe places her text squarely in the conventions of pre-Reformation devotion that were embodied in *The Fifteen Oes*, as well as demonstrating the tactically important role those conventions played at a critical moment in the early history of the English Reformation" (128).

While the two printers differ on the score of Margery Kempe's enclosure, I have shown throughout this chapter that the desire to enclose, through paratexts and illustrations, was a common feature throughout de Worde's career as a printer. In his printer's device for *Robert the Devil*, de Worde even encloses himself when he places his initials underneath the etching of the Virgin and Child. Pepwell retains de Worde's choice of extracts, so that both editions begin with the line, "She desyred many tymes that her heede myght be smyten of with an axe upon a blocke for the loue of our lorde Jhesu." To have any work of literature begin with the simple phrase "she desired" is striking indeed. Margery, not unlike the mother of whom we read in *Robert the Devil,* desires her own beheading. Finally, the phrase "upon a blocke" links Margery's "desire" to the physical making of the book and the woodcut. Margery's *Book*, like the woodcuts it held, was produced by extraction, just as the woodcut is produced out of elimination. The postpartum depression with which the full manuscript of the *Book* begins is here instead a desire for dismemberment. This "desire" for a loss of self that has already occurred, may have been well imagined by de Worde, Pepwell, and other printers who presented themselves via the printer's device, disseminating parts of themselves each time they sent a book out.

Conclusion

Fueled by but departing from existing critiques of de Worde's editions of the *Book of Margery Kempe*, this chapter has considered how her book, along with the Marian devotion it documents, might serve as a key to de Worde's early career as he imagines himself placed next to the Virgin, enclosed in a singular house and yet reaching a wide audience. De Worde's strategies as a disseminator of texts rely heavily upon the imagery of enclosure. Reproduction introduces a need for authenticity. Medieval enclosure, and the singular miraculous womb of the Virgin Mary, which is nevertheless shared with her cousin Elizabeth in the visitation woodcuts, helps early printers achieve this paradoxical end. The figures of mother and child were central to de Worde because, I argue, the child represented not just the issuing of offspring, as is well attested in common metaphors for masculine creative production, but also the externalization of a feminized interior. The book, like the crystalline womb in the sculpture, is both open and closed. A bound series of enclosed images and words, it enters the world; the printer imagines the reader to be one whose interiority will be formed mimetically, reflecting the goals of the printed text, the goals of the printer himself. The book, and the texts it houses, is a record of power relations. In the paratexts of de Worde, we find a printer's creative self-construction, a process by which a man printing "from Caxton's house" developed a vocabulary that accommodated both the enclosure of the idealized reader and the dissemination of the word.

Chapter Five

"Within these noombers closde":
Richard Tottel and the Indexical Book

Richard Tottel, the first printer to obtain the charter for printing legal texts in England, sought to enclose the reader within a highly structured book.[177] If the book has thus far been seen as a space for mothering, worshipping, or gestating, it shall now be explored as space for indexing. Printing *Tottel's Miscellany* at the time the Stationers' Company is first incorporated, Tottel establishes new systems for ordering both text and book. He is the first to print blank verse in English; he is also the first to develop a system of cross-referencing that is still praised within the legal trade today.[178] The address to the female reader I have explored thus far disappears in Tottel's works, which presume a readership of professional men. The professional status of such men is explored through the vocabulary of sexual difference. The ordering of the book gets bound up with attempts to demarcate the space of the female body, so that it becomes

[177] Tottel's particular right was to print 'almaner bokes of oure temporall lawe called the Common lawe'"; he was 67th of 97 named in the May 4 charter of the Stationers' Company. Owner of 2 houses and 3 shops near the Hand and Star, he nonetheless charged one Ellen Cowper for stealing £3 from his house, according to Anna Greening: (2015, September 17). Tottell [Tottel, Tothill], Richard (b. in or before 1528, d. 1593), printer and bookseller. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* Retrieved 6 March. 2021, from https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27573.

[178] See the thorough introduction to Tottel and Sixteenth-Century legal citation at the Texas Law Tarlton Law Library: https://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/tottel.

fragmented, or, as Nancy J. Vickers has put it, "scattered."[179] The blazon, in this context, serves the dual function of advancing the status of English verse and of offering models for ordering the world through the symbolic (and dismembered) female body. Wendy Wall has argued that "…in the production and transmission of Renaissance sonnets, the female reader acts not only as a median space marking the forging of alliances, but more particularly as the *privileged* median space on which a specific class-identified understanding of reading and writing is expressed" (40). This dissertation has so far explored the female reader in the figure of the Virgin Mary, who mediates both text and world. It is my aim now to extend Wall's analysis by considering how the printed book figures in the systems of cultural and commercial exchange that gave rise to *Tottel's Miscellany*. My approach, to emphasize Tottel as a printer of many other books in addition to the now-famous miscellany, allows for a reading of the poetry collection as *miscellaneous* in a greater sense, incorporating the concerns and forms of medieval and early modern cultural producers of written and oral forms of literature (including the sermon and the

[179] Vickers writes, "It would surely seem that to Petrarch Laura's whole body was at times less than some of its parts; and that to his imitators, the strategy of describing her through the isolation of those parts presented an attractive basis for imitation, extension, and, ultimately, distortion": "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1981, pp. 265–279. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1343163. Accessed 4 January 2021.267.

song) as well as the protectors of capital—the aspiring lawyer or landowner.[180] Tottel's approach toward the book is consistent with the dominant definition of enclosure as property.[181]

Announcing in his preface that he is releasing previously "hoarded up" verses, Tottel becomes yet another disseminator of enclosure, printing the standard medieval text on property law alongside the famous poetic miscellany initially entitled *Songes and Sonettes*.[182] This opening-up, however, requires sustained efforts to enclose both reader and text, in the system of the book. Tottel supplies numbered titles in his first edition, and introduces an index for subsequent editions of the miscellany.[183] As Lerer notes, *Tottel's Miscellany* establishes, along

[180] The fact that Peter C. Herman stops to note that Tottel "also had a genuine interest in poetry" suggests to me that scholarship on Tottel, which has almost exclusively explored the miscellany, has employed book historical methods quite selectively: (in Hamrick, S. (Ed.). (2013). *Tottel's Songes and Sonettes in Context* (1st ed.). Routledge, 112). While scholars of late medieval printers like Caxton and de Worde tend to consider the printer's work in the context of the broad career, scholars of *Tottel's Miscellany* have busied themselves, somewhat understandably, with the multiple editions of this compendius work. My approach of looking to Tottel's other projects, in the context of what other printers of sixteenth-century England were printing, may lend further credence to Jason Powell's claim that "…Tottel was not the originating force behind the first broadly successful printed verse miscellany in English": "The Network Behind 'Tottel's' *Miscellany*." *English Literary Renaissance*, 46: 193-224: 224: https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6757.12064.

[181] The enclosure of land in English literature has a long history from William Langland's *Piers Plowman* to William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*. For a feminist approach toward enclosure as property, see Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch. Brooklyn, NY : Autonomedia, 2014.* For other recent work on common law and literature, see Elsky, Stephanie. *Custom, Common Law, and the Constitution of English Renaissance Literature.* : Oxford University Press, 22. Oxford Scholarship Online. Date Accessed 5 Nov. 2021 <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198861430.001.0001/oso-9780198861430>.

[182] Christopher J. Warner describes the miscellany as an enclosure or "haven" for readers in search of a "community of eloquent literati": *The Making and Marketing of Tottel's Miscellany 1557: Songs and Sonnets in the Summer of the Martyrs' Fires*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.yale.idm.oclc.org/lib/yale-ebooks/detail.action?docID=1389019. 214. While censorship is not my subject here, it may interest some readers that the Index Expurgatorium is introduced in the same year as the *Miscellany.*

[183] For a detailed analysis of these developments of the paratext and their relationship to other projects of Tottel's, see Carol, Blosser, *Making "English Eloquence": Tottel's Miscellany and the English Renaissance*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2005. Tottel's other major intervention, whether he did this on his own or with collaborators, was to regularize the meter of the poems he printed. See Steven W. May's discussion of Tottel's revisions to the poems of the miscellany and of previous poetic works he printed, especially the *Fall of Princes*: "Popularizing Courtly Poetry: Tottel's Miscellany and Its Progeny," in Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603*. Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 418-31. On the use of titles in this and other anthologies, see "For Public Consumption: The Origin of Titling the Short Poem." *The Journal*

with John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, "…the book maker (whether he be author or editor/printer) as arbiters of authorship, textuality, and the body in culture".[184] The following set of readings will explore the miscellany in the context of Tottel's other typographical projects—*Lytylton's Tenures*, *XX Songes*, and Stephen Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure*—in order to claim that Tottel helped to establish a theory of the book as a closed system in which the reader can increase his hold upon material and cultural resources, including those issued from within the female body. An exploration of Tottel's various projects and their sources reveals sustained attempts to standardize both the English language and the form of the book. In the poetry collection, the erotic quest becomes bound up with the promise of a navigable space that is described in the accessible English vernacular. The printer seems to declare, "I can help you find what you want," even if the speaker of the poem laments the loss of the love object. *Tottel's Miscellany* performs a rhythmic dance between the denial of worldly goods and the fulfillment of the book. The book becomes a site for easy navigation and quick access, rather than a dwelling place for imaginative union with the inaccessible divine.

The fact that the poem Tottel calls "Of a new meried Student" appears in every edition of the *Miscellany* says a great deal about the ways in which the printer sought to position his book

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of English and Germanic Philology, vol. 97, no. 2, 1998, pp. 190–204. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27711639. Accessed 6 April 2021.

[184] "Literary Histories," *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History*. Brian Cummings and James Simpson, eds. Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016: 89. A recent study by Michelle O'Callaghan reads Tottel's paratexts along with those from other poetry anthologies in order to show how printers represented their work by drawing from "civic humanist vocabularies": *Crafting Poetry Anthologies in Renaissance England: Early Modern Cultures of Recreation*. Cambridge University Press, 2020; see Chapter 1, "Books in Process," in particular. This emphasis on serving the common good, implied in Tottel's preface to the miscellany, accords with his primary concern with legal matters. For a brief overview of English phrases derived from legal disputes, see Bond, Donald F. "English Legal Proverbs." *PMLA*, vol. 51, no. 4, 1936, pp. 921–935. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/458075. Accessed 5 April 2021.

in the context of a newly divided, specialized book trade that linked reading to professional advancement within particular fields. This unremarkable, and yet influential, poem reads as follows,

> A Student at his boke so plast,
> That welth he might haue wonne:
> From boke to wife did flete in haste,
> From wealth to wo to runne.
> Now, who hath plaied a feater cast,
> Since iuglyng first begoon?
> In knittyng of him selfe so fast,
> Him selfe he hath vndoon. (9-16)

These verses adapt the language of clerical celibacy—that most irksome topic for Chaucer's Alisoun—to early modern economic aspirations, tying the "boke" to "welth," and pitting both against the domestic life associated with the figure of the wife and the imagery inherent in the term "knittyng." Tottel's selection and presentation of verses in the context of his career as a printer curiously "undoes" (to borrow a phrase from this poem) the classical allusions that tie weaving to writing, suggesting to the reader the superiority of print. Despite the concerted effort to present the feminine as a snare that engulfs both the male speaker of the poem and the male reader who fails to understand the didactic warnings against marriage, the miscellany nonetheless preserves a large number of poems reliant upon the figurative language of this very work.[185] Ambivalence toward the female exemplar is one of the defining features of the

[185] Marriage is the subject of several of the poems included in the miscellany, and a high number of books being printed in the 1550's. For instance, Robert Crowley prints the Welsh-English text *Ban wedy i dynny air yngair alla o ben gyfreith Howel da bay ladell bren hin kymbry, ynghylch ch wechant mlynedi aeth heibia wrth yr h wn ban y gellir deall bot yr offeiriait y pryd hynny yn priodi gwragedryn dichwith aryn kyttal ac wynt in gyfreith lawn. A certaine case extracte[d] out of the auncient law of Hoel da, kyng of Wales in the yere of oure Lorde, nyne hundred and fourtene passed: whereby it maye gathered that priestes had lawfully maried wyues at that tyme* (1550), Katherine Herford prints *Erasmus vpon diuorsement* in 1550 (with the colophon "by the wydowe of Ihon Herforde"), and Tottel will print Thomas Tusser's A hundreth good pointes of husbandry, lately maried vnto a hundreth good poynts of huswifery (the title for which uses the language of marriage to describe the features of the book for sale) in 1562. In the decades leading up to the printing of *Tottel's Miscellany*, works on marriage begin to appear, such as Robert Copland's *A Complaynt of them that be too soone maryed*, printed by de Worde in 1535,

miscellany. Not only are its forms "miscellaneous"; so too are its views on the women it seems to unequivocally exclude. The consistent inclusion of this poem suggests that Tottel's main goal with the collection may not have been to present inspiring poems so much as it was to present poems that helped him form a community of professional male readers.

Despite attempts to exclude female readers from the book, *Tottel's Miscellany*, especially the first edition of June 5, 1557, unwittingly records a network of women connected to Queen Mary, so that the early modern sense of enclosure as property continues to be printed alongside the imagery of medieval Catholic enclosed devotion. Print allows for a virgin birth that advances the careers of poet and printer. Simultaneously taut and loose, open and closed, the miscellany grows out of the tensions between public and private, withheld affection and professions of love. It is through female figures, from Mary and Minerva to the mothers of the Tudor poets, that *Tottel's Miscellany* dramatizes these grounds of difference.

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which revises a 1518 title on marrying too late (STC 5728.5); de Worde composes verse colophons for both, rhyming his name with "accorde."

The first poem in *Tottel's Miscellany* refers to the speaker as one who is "tangled" in lace; Wyatt writes a now well-known sonnet that begins with a line about a mother singing with her maids. Grimald, in his funeral song to his mother, refers to and enumerates the activities that might be included in definitions of "womans work." See Lees-Jeffries, Hester. "'My Mother's Maids, When They Did Sew and Spin': Staging Sewing, Telling Tales." *Shakespeare Survey 70: Creating Shakespeare*, edited by Peter Holland, vol. 70, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 165–173. Shakespeare Survey.

2. “So dothe this cornet gouerne me alacke”: Enclosure as Lack in the verses of Surrey

My previous chapters have shown that the Virgin Mary was a moral exemplar for men and women throughout the medieval period. Medieval devotion offered a model of what Richard Rolle called the “fire of love” or “longing love.”[186] Mary and her followers did not simply love Jesus in the obligatory sense; they desired him actively. When Jesus was killed, Mary became a martyr to love. Wynkyn de Worde’s *Treatise of Love* and *Complaynt of a louer of Christ*, printed in the decades leading up to Tottel’s first projects, help to establish the early modern notion of “love’s martyr.” In these texts, Mary is a martyr because she gives her heart over to the son she knows will die: her foreknowledge collapses womb into tomb. Mary Magdalene, in search of her lover after finding his empty tomb, picks up this role of love’s martyr, this time as a lover of one who is already dead. Mary is a model for the speaker of the complaint.

In 1520, de Worde prints, the *Complaynte of the louer of Cryst Saynt Mary Magdaleyn*, the rhyming verses of which prefigure the language of love as a wounding experience for which the only cure is exile[187]:

> This sodeyne chau[n]ce perseth my herte so depe
> That nothynge can I do but wayle and wepe
>
> Yet my wofull herte after hym doth seke
> And causeth teeres ren downe by my cheke
>
> They haue hym conueyde to my displeasure
> For here is lefte but naked sepulture

[186] Peters, Brad. “Rolle's Eroticized Language in The Fire of Love.” *Mystics Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1995, pp. 51–58. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20717243. Accessed 6 May 2021.

[187] STC (2nd ed.) 17568.

The final stanza reads

> In to wylderness I thynke best to go
> Syth I can no more tydynges of hym here
> There may I my lefe lede to and fro
> There may I dwelle and to no man appere
> To towne nor yet village wyl I not drawe nere
> Alone in woodes/ in rockes / & caues depe
> I may at myn owne wyll both wayle & wepe

Love of Christ makes a desert hermit out of Mary Magdalene.[188] Such verses lend themselves to Tottel's collection of love poetry within the tomb-like book that offers a new place to dwell, wail, and weep, away from the sight of onlookers.[189]

The active lovers of Christ, namely the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, however, become in the poems of Wyatt and Surrey figures for something very different.[190] The fusion of classical and medieval imagery of women weaving, linking text and textile, shifts in the miscellany. What was once considered the female virtue of chastity becomes the woman's willful and manipulative rejection of the male suitor. Her refusal to accept his advances, which

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[188] In her discussion of this and a related work de Worde prints called *The Lamentation of Our Lady* (1520?), Alexandra da Costa writes that "Mary Magdalene encourages a female readership to imagine what she saw of the Passion. She instructs 'veryous women' to withdraw from the world, resorting in their imagination to her 'sepulture/To synge my dyrige with grete deuocyon'—meaning the complaint itself—…": Da Costa, Alexandra. *Marketing English Books, 1476-1550: How Printers Changed Reading.* Oxford :Oxford University Press, 2020: 60. One of few writers to discuss de Worde's career as a precursor to *Tottel's Miscellany* is Julia Boffey: "Early Printers and English Lyrics: Sources, Selection, and Presentation of Texts." *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, vol. 85, no. 1, 1991, pp. 11–26. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24302966. Accessed 6 February, 2021.

[189] See "Cultivation and Inhumation: Some Thoughts on the Cultural Impact of Tottel's *Songes and Sonettes*," by Lerer, in Hamrick, 2013.

[190] One of Wyatt's best-known poems, "Who so list to Hounte," is not included in the miscellany, but, as Susan Brigden discusses, exemplifies Wyatt's interested in looking inward, including to scripture as he does in writing the line "noli me tangere, for Cesars I ame" in one of the lines. Brigden writes, "No courtly reader could mistake the sacred text with which the profane venery is so tellingly counterpoised": *Thomas Wyatt: The Heart's Forest.* London: Faber and faber, 2012. 159.

leads to his metaphorical martyrdom, reveals itself not as a commitment to Christ—expressed through virginal bridal spirituality—but as sacrilege.

Surrey's "I Neuer sawe my Ladye laye apart" describes a speaker's pain over the fact that the woman he desires willfully hides her face—and hair—from view. The second half of the first line introduces an image of a woman spread open, the desire for which is closed off by the opening "I Neuer" and the object named in the second line: "Her cornet blacke." Rollins' version of the poem reads as follows:

> I Neuer saw my Ladye laye apart
> Her cornet blacke, in colde nor yet in heate,
> Sith first she knew my griefe was growen so great,
> Which other fansies driueth from my hart
> That to my selfe I do the thought reserue,
> The whiche vnwares did wounde my wofull brest:
> But on her face mine eyes mought neuer rest.
> Yet, sins she knew I did her loue and serue
> Her golden tresses cladde alway with blacke,
> Her smilyng lokes that hid thus euermore,
> And that restraines whiche I desire so sore.
> So doth this cornet gouerne me alacke:
> In somer, sunne: in winters breath, a frost:
> Wherby the light of her faire lokes I lost. (11:33-12:12)

Surrey appears to be the first to use the term "cornet" to refer to either a "kind of head-dress formerly worn by ladies" or a "part of a head-dress consisting of lappets of lace or the like hanging down the sides of the cheeks."[191] Prior to his use in about 1547, the term referred to "a brass musical instrument of the trumpet class" or to "A piece of paper rolled in a conical form and twisted at the apex, used for wrapping up groceries," as J. Palsgrave wrote in 1530: a "Cornet to put spice in." The headdress is thus linked to several of the features Tottel will

[191] "cornet, n.2. 1. a-b," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/41651. Accessed 25 February 2021.

highlight in his preface to the miscellany, with its references to music and spices, and, surely, its status as paper. Surrey's "cornet" thus combines the woman's head with the sounds it might omit (like a trumpet) and with the food he might like to ingest. Wrapped in paper (again, not unlike the "parcell" to which Tottel's preface refers), the woman's face cannot be seen. The cornet was perhaps shaped like a trumpet, too, fanned open at the end. The cornet, which encloses the woman, is laid apart in the way the speaker wishes *she* were.

The speaker attributes the woman's choice to cover her face with the knowledge that his "griefe [has] growen so great." It is not grief that wounds the speaker, but the "other fansies" that he drives from his "hart" so that "vnwares," his "wofull brest" is wounded. The headdress is, according to the speaker, not used practically, being removed "in heate," bur rather reigns all year round, hiding the face of the beloved. A curious "But" begins the seventh line of the sonnet, which is elsewhere corrected as "For," and the following line begins with a "Yet" that leads into the reiteration of the speaker's claim against the woman: "Yet, sins she knew I did her love and serue/Her golden tresses cladde alway with blacke." The hair, here clad golden by the poet, is "cladde alway" by the woman, "sins" (since) she knows it will hurt him. The "tress," moreover, is a second form of embroidery, like the cornet; both are meant to display or reveal but are equally capable of covering and binding. Other poetic uses, in Chaucer and Spenser, for instance, focus on the "broyded" and "wrought" nature of tresses.[192] The cornet and the tresses of hair carry with them the tensions inherent in the love complaint, between bondage and restraint on one hand and the open display of desire on the other. These are also the tensions of enclosure and dissemination that undergird the printed poetry collection in the sixteenth century.

[192] See quotations in OED entry 1.a.: "tress, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, March 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/205606. Accessed 26 March 2021.

The final line of the sonnet undoes the opening premise by claiming that in the frost of winter, "the light of her faire lokes" he *lost*. This is not, in other words, a speaker who has *never* seen the lover, but rather one who once could see her, and then could no more. This shift appears to have occurred at the same time that the speaker expressed his desire for the woman. The speaker's claim—"So dothe this cornet gouerne me alacke"—assigns overwhelming power to the woman, whom he claims to "loue and serue." "Govern" here refers to the female sovereign and to the law of metrical verses. Tottel's title for this sonnet, "Complaint that his ladie after she knew of his loue kept her face always hidden from him," supplies the word "after," providing a narrative sequence for the woman's acquisition of knowledge about the speaker's desire for her. In the context of the miscellany, her knowledge becomes tied to publication through print.

3. The Order of the Book from de Worde to Tottel

If de Worde sets the precedent for the Marian martyr in printed English texts on love, he also initiates features of the book that will become fundamental to the printing career of Tottel, namely, the use of tables and numbers in texts that provide guides to pilgrimage and to the art of love. De Worde's *Informacion for pylgrymes unto the holy londe* is a remarkable work that offers detailed directions to pilgrimage sites as well as conversion rates ("Chaunges of money") across countries and brief phrase books for pilgrims (or perhaps more generally, travelers).[193] When de Worde prints *The flores of Ouide de arte amandi with theyr englysshe afore them and two alphabete tablys*, he provides a printed text that instructs the reader about Latin, English, love,

[193] The text offers conversion for different currencies as well as for measurement of liquids: "…ye must ordeyne for yourself & your felowe yf ye haue ony thre barelles eche of a quart. whiche quart holdyth .x. galons. Two of thyse barels sholde serue for wyne & the thyrde for water."

and the navigation of the book.[194] These will become the key features of Tottel's collections of legal texts and love poetry.

Matthew Zarnowiecki notes that his approach toward the book was influenced by his practice of printing legal texts.[195] The linguistic and thematic connections between the texts on land tenure, which Tottel was printing at the same time as he was the miscellany, have yet to be explored. As I will suggest below, Tottel's legal texts, and the network to which they belong, offer new ways of interpreting the early modern poetry collection. While I will argue that Tottel's books tend to address themselves to male readers exclusively, I will also suggest that his preface to the miscellany calls our attention to the exclusion of women, who are only meant to hear or taste the poems, rather than to read or write them. I locate this attempt to exclude female readers in the broader context of Tottel's career, which was ultimately dedicated to the creation of highly ordered legal texts.[196] The sixteenth-century *St. German's Dyaloge in Englysshe* stated that "There is a custom in Kent that is callyd gauelkynde, that all the bretherne shall enheryt togyther as susters at the common lawe," suggesting that the possibility of women's equal status before the law seems so outlandish that the term "suster" can be used to refer, exclusively, to economic parity between men.[197]

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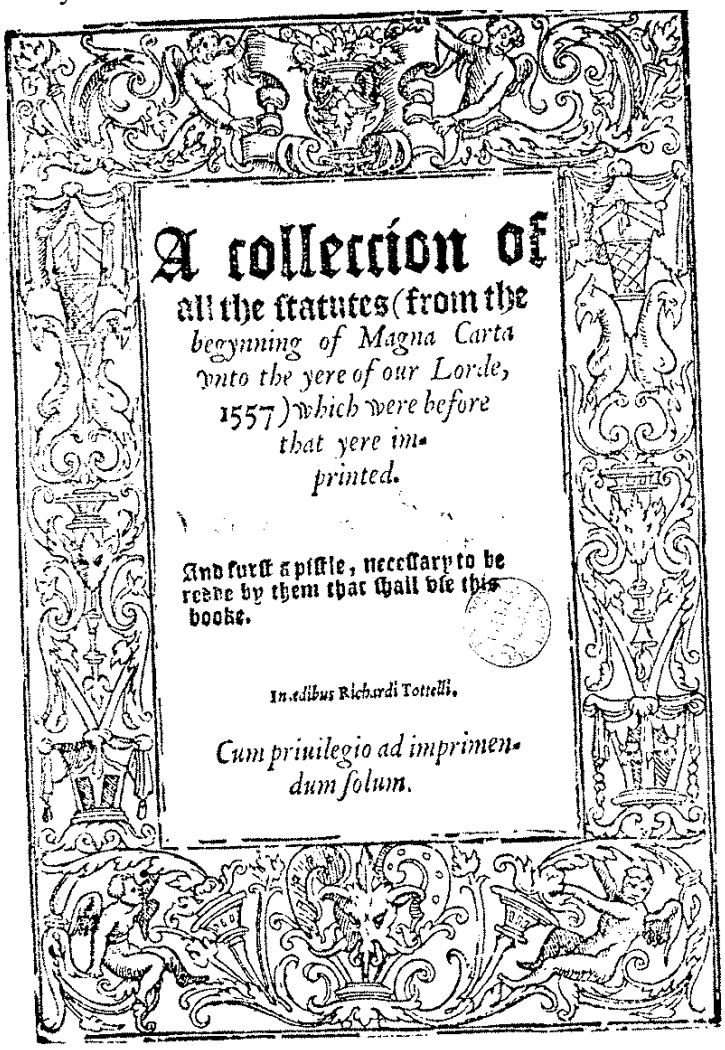
[194] This is the first translation of Ovid's *Art of Love* into English. See Matei-Chesnoiu, Monica, *Geoparsing Early Modern English Drama*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

[195] Zarnowiecki writes in the chapter "Richard Tottel's Lyric and Legal Reproductions," "… the legal texts can inform our understanding of Tottel's reproductive strategies, his ways of keeping the law and the lyric in the present": Zarnowiecki, Matthew. *Fair Copies: Reproducing the English Lyric from Tottel to Shakespeare*. University of Toronto Press, 2014.

[196] See Martin, Peter W. "Pre-Digital Law: How Prior Information Technologies Have Shaped Access to and the Nature of Law." *Revue Juridique Thémis* 30, no. 2 (1996): 153-171. Martin writes, "Richard Tottel, the genius who published this issue of Littleton with section numbers, also commenced consistent pagination of successive editions of law reports… Tottel established the practice of numbering the judicial opinions within each term" (158-159).
[197] Folio xxv, as cited in definition 2: "gavelkind, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2021, www.oed.com/view/Entry/77175. Accessed 5 September 2021.

While few would accept this notion today, scholarship on the early modern miscellany has praised its attempts to create a "common" reader, despite the implicit acceptance, even amongst today's scholars of the collection, that the "common reader" was clearly—if only in intention and not necessarily effect—a male one.[198]


A collection of
all the statutes (from the
begynning of Magna Carta
vnto the yere of our Lorde,
1557) which were before
that yere im-
printed.

And furth a pistle, necessary to be
reade by them that shall vse this
booke.

In aedibus Richardi Tottelli.

Cum priuilegio ad imprimen-
dum solum.

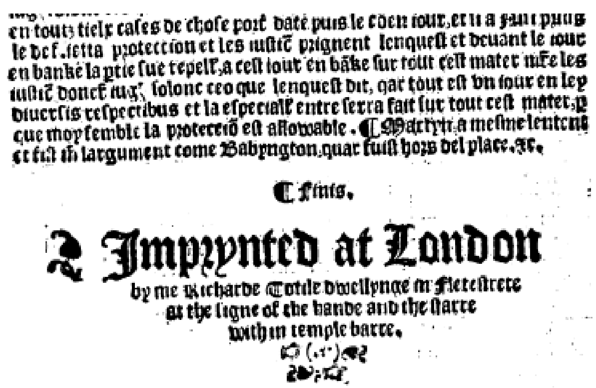
Figure 5.1: Title page and instructions to the reader, *A colleccion of all the statutes (from the begynning of Magna Carta vnto the yere of our Lorde, 1557) which were before that yere imprinted…*STC (2nd ed.) 9306

[198] For one of many examples, see *Common: The Development of Literary Culture in Sixteenth-Century England*. Neil Rhodes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. The Devonshire manuscript provides evidence of female readers of the verses printed by Tottel. Since my focus is on what Tonry calls the agency of the printer, however, I leave aside this fascinating manuscript for now.

For more on sixteenth century statutes, see H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers: 1476 to 1557*, 76-85. Bennett's discussion of these books coheres with my own presentation of their ready use for male lawyers: "Busy men, however, required something shorter than the complete statutes, and abridgements were popular" (81).

Tottel was one of the printers who played a significant role in this new definition of the book as a site of order and professional use for the male reader. The preceding figure is the cover page of another text he printed in 1557, the same year as the miscellany: In the center of this page, Tottel places a crucial announcement: “And furst a pistle, necessary to be reade by them that shall use this booke.” Reading, in Tottel’s books, gets pushed to the paratext, while the main text becomes an object for use.

Tottel’s self-presentation in these early texts is not impressive, most likely because it did not need to be; he made his name, it seems, by hiding it:


en touts tielx cases de chose port date puis le coen iour, et il a fait puis le def. fetta protection et les iustic prignent lenquest et deuant le iour en banke la ptie fue repell, a cest iour en bāke sur tout cest mater nuls les iustic donet iug, solonc ceo que lenquest dit, qar tout est vn iour en ley diuersis respectibus et la especiall entre serra fait sur tout cest mater, p que moy semble la protectiō est allowable. ¶ Martyn a mesme lentent et fuit en largument come Babyngton, quar fuist hors del place. &c.

¶ Finis.

Imprynted at London

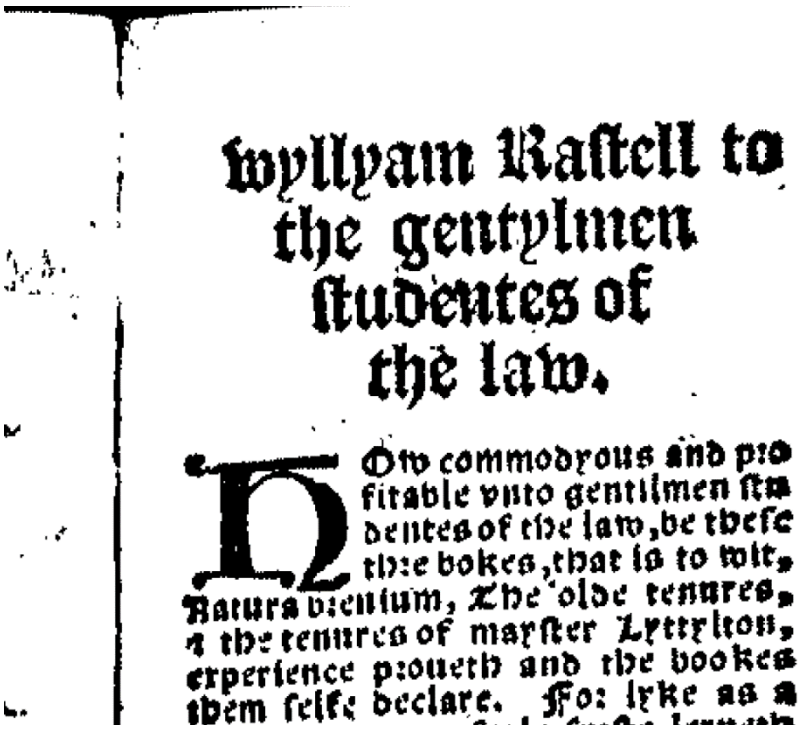
by me Richarde Totile dwellynge in Fletestrete at the signe of the hande and the starre within temple barre.

Figure 5.2: Tottel’s colophon, 1553, STC 9670.5

What stands out in this brief colophon, fitted to the page and not given its own, is the large and bold phrase “Imprynted at London.” Compared with the printed books of Caxton and de Worde, we are now looking at a printer who needs not distinguish himself so much as he needs to own

the titles he prints within the book; more important than his name is the Latin legal phrase "*Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum*."

Tottel's modern readers might be disappointed if they are looking for his description of the book as an object. Much more than the miscellany, Tottel's other projects reveal more directly how he envisioned the purpose of the book. In the "Breife Declaracion of the table to the reders" for *Lyttylton tenures*, which Tottel reprints after William Rastell, the translator offers line-by-line directions for how to use the book, which is organized as a table of land tenures. Before the "declaration," the original text printed by Rastell in 1534 contained a preface addressed to the "gentylmen students of the law."[199]



wyllyam Raſtell to the gentylmen ſtudentes of the law.

How commodyous and profitable vnto gentilmen ſtudentes of the law, be theſe thre bokes, that is to wit, Natura brevium, The olde tenures, & the tenures of mayſter Lyttylton, experience proueth and the bookes them ſelfe declare. For lyke as a

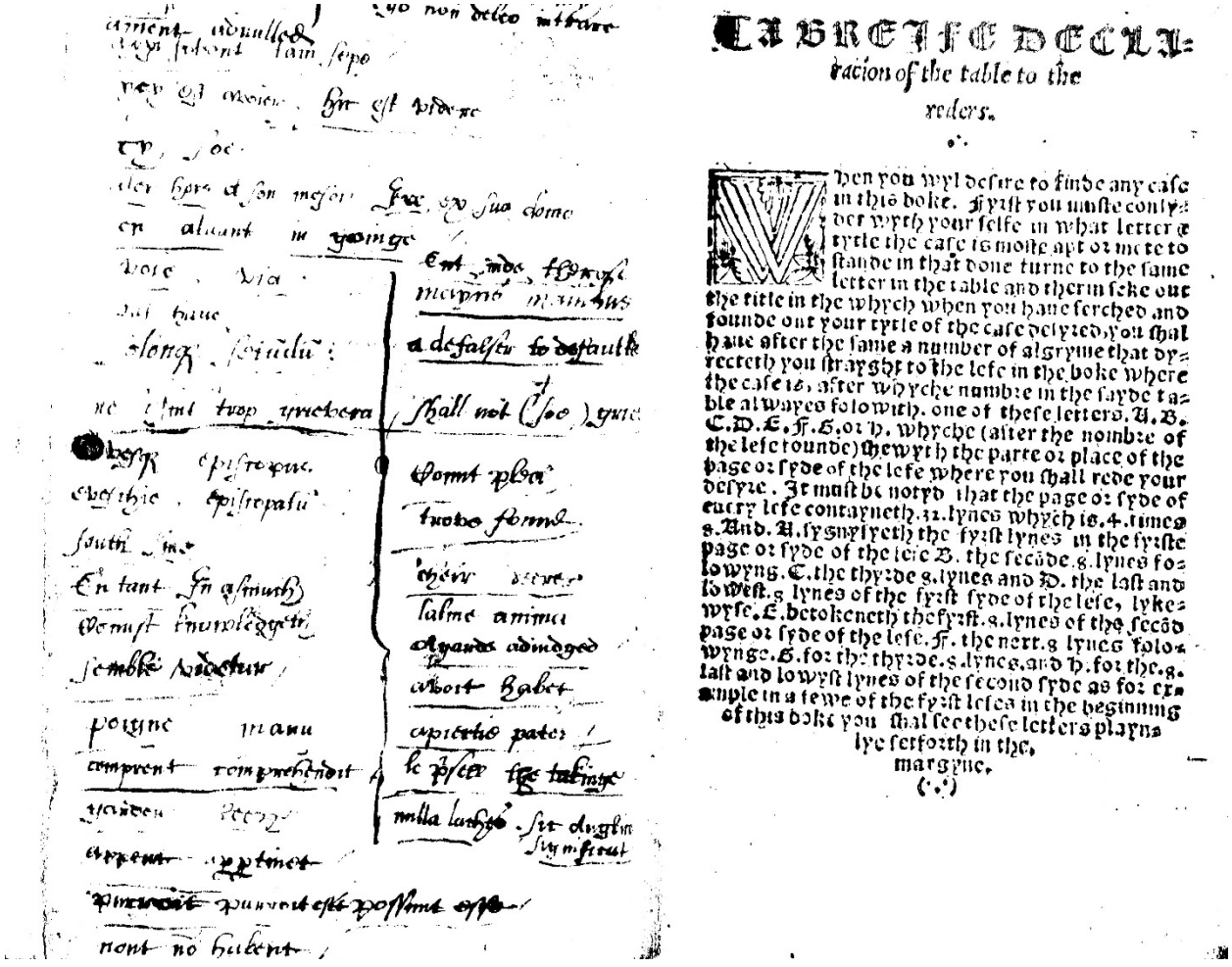
Figure 5.3: "Wyllyam Rastell to the gentylmen studentes of the law. Preface to *Natura breuium The olde tenures. Lyttlton tenures. The new talys.* W. Rastell, 1534, STC 18394.5

[199] In his laudatory essay from 1923, "The Editor of Sir Thomas More's English Works: William Rastell," Arthur W. Reed counts this "dignified and business-like preface" amongst the impressive accomplishments of Rastell's brief career as printer before he was "called to the bar" (39). Rastell's father, John Rastell, had also been a printer.

> Thus haue ye all these. xii. small bokes (but conteynynge very great lernynge) compacte into one volume. ryght studiousley corrected. And the boke of the new talys, as necessary as it is, was neuer yet imprinted in the small volume before. But though these bokes be so necessary as ye se: yet bycause there is some one case in diuers seuerall places / and also by cause the maters that ye somtyme wolde perhappyes loke for, standeth so confused in the boke, that they can not be very lyghtly found out: ther-fore is here deuised a table, wherby ye may the redyer fynde out suche casys as ye wolde, and se the conformyte of those maters that be in diuerse places.

Rastell's description of the table, which allows the reader to "redyer fynde out suche casys as [he] wolde, and se the conformyte of those maters that be in diuerse places" is a reflection upon standardization itself, which is still in its nascent stages when it comes to printed books and the English words printed within those books. The full "declaration" is much abbreviated by William Powell and reproduced by Tottel in 1554:[200] Although Tottel is not the author of this address to the reader, it nonetheless tells us a great deal about his relationship to the early modern books he printed.

[200] See Appendix for the original preface by Rastell.



A BREIFE DECLAracion of the table to the reders.

When you wyl desire to finde any case in this boke. Fyrst you musse consyder wyth your selfe in what letter & tytle the case is moste apt or mete to stande in that bone turne to the same letter in the table and therin seke out the title in the whych when you haue serched and founde out your tytle of the case desyred, you shal haue after the same a number of a grynne that directely you straygbt to the lefe in the boke where the case is, after whyche numbre in the sayde table alwayes folowith one of these letters. A. B. C. D. E. F. G. or H. whyche (after the nombre of the lefe founde) shewyth the parte or place of the page or syde of the lefe where you shall rede your desyre. It must be notyd that the page or syde of euery lefe contayneth .22. lynes whych is .4. times 5. And. A. sygnifyeth the fyrst lynes in the fyrste page or syde of the lefe B. the secõde .5. lynes folowyng. C. the thyrde 5. lynes and D. the last and lowest .5 lynes of the fyrst syde of the lefe, lykewyse. E. betokeneth the fyrst .5. lynes of the secõd page or syde of the lefe. F. the nexte .5 lynes folowynge. G. for the thyrde .5. lynes. and H. for the .5. last and lowyst lynes of the second syde as for example in a fewe of the fyrst lefes in the beginning of this boke you shal see these letters playnly set forth in the margyne.

Figure 5.4: *A BREIFE DECLAracion of the table to the reders*. 1554, Tottel, STC 15737, A1r

> When you wyl desire to finde any case in this boke. fyrst you muste *consyder wyth your selfe* in what letter & tytle the case is moste apt or mete to stande in that done turne to the same letter in the table and therin seke out the title in the whych when you haue serched and founde out your tytle of the case desyred, you shal haue after the same &(?) number of algryme that dyrecteth you *strayght to the lefe in the boke* where the case is, after whyche numbre in the sayde table *alwayes folowith.* One of these letters. A.B.C.D.E.F.G. or h. Whyche (after the nombre of the lefe founde) shewyth the parte or place of the page or syde of the lefe where *you shall rede your desyre*. It must be notyed that the page or syde of euery lefe contayneth .32. lynes whych is .4. times 8. And.A. sygnyfyeth the fyrst lynes in the fyrste page or syde of the lefe B. the secude 8 lynes folowyng .C. the thyrde 8. Lynes and D. the last and lowest. 8 lynes of the fyrst syde of the lefe, lykewyse .E. betokeneth the fyrst .8. lynes of the seco[n]d page or syde of the lefe .F. the next .8. lynes. And h. for the .g. last and lowyst lynes of the second syde as for example in a fewe of the fyrst lefes in the beginning of this boke you shal see these letters playnlye ferforth in the margyne. (emphasis mine)

This description may remind modern readers of the instructional videos to which younger generations turn first when learning new practical skills. The Christian love of the printer in Caxton and de Worde is here replaced with an anonymous instructor whose loving gestures lie in the careful and efficacious descriptions of how to navigate the legal text. While the declaration offers step-by-step directions, it begins with an emphasis on the reader's independent judgement: "consyder wyth your selfe." The declaration also emphasizes the book as a space of standardized order: "after whyche numbre in the sayde table *alwayes folowith.*" Not only can the reader expect that the book will conform to this general description of the table; he can also expect speed: he will be directed "strayght to the lefe in the boke." Finally, the book's contents are here described as offering the reader's "desyre." This is a "declaration" in all ways, an address to the reader that announces new features confidently. In this brief text we find none of the insecurities that many readers have identified in the famous preface with which Tottel begins the miscellany three years after reprinting this legal text.

Tottel's "Printer to the Reader," should rather be called the "Printer to the Readers" or even to the "Hearers," as it divides up the readership of the miscellany by addressing the "gentle" reader first, and then the "good" reader, closing with a mocking description of the "vnlearned":

> It resteth nowe (gentle reder) that thou thinke it not euill doon, to publish, to the honor of the Englishe tong, and for profit of the studious of Englishe eloquence, those workes which the vngentle horders vp of such treasure haue hertofore enuied thee. And for this point (good reder) thinge own profit and pleassure, in these presently, and in moe hereafter, shal answere for my defence. If parhappes some misliked the statelinesse of stile remoued from the rude skill of common eares: I aske help of the learned to defent their learned frendes, the authors of this work : And I exhort the vnlearned, by reding to learne to be more skilfull, and to purge that swinelike grossenesse, that maketh the swete maierome not to smell to their delight.

Why are the prefaces of Rastell and Tottel so different in tone and purpose, and who is really addressed by Tottel, called the "reader"? Rastell makes it clear he is writing to "gentylmen" law students, while Tottel is writing to "gentle" and "good" readers. What would it mean to read the miscellany as a legal text? What if the preface had walked the reader through the steps of finding "cases" like his, according to the narratives Tottel will provide in the titles to the poems?

Is it possible that Tottel's reader is not meant to be the owner of the book but rather the aural recipient of the verses within? If the organized book, such as Rastell's book of land tenures, needs to be introduced with a guide to that organization, for ease of use, why does Tottel introduce his highly organized book of songs and sonnets by describing the tastes of the reader? This language does not in fact fit the way scholars have convincingly described the use of the book, as a portable collection of poems that would allow [primarily] male readers to open it at any time in order to recite a fitting verse. Tottel's preface does not allude to such use, but instead

reveals a printer fearful of larger questions of taste and reception. Thomas Wyatt's line "How like you this?" underlies Tottel's defensive preface.

In both Tottel's legal texts and in the collection of poetry he repeatedly prints, the question of who gains or loses in relationships between men and women looms large. Some of the poems are about marriage explicitly, while others describe the male speaker's feelings of empty-handedness, blocked vision, or general rejection. Tottel's famous preface marks a shift away from the dynamic in which the printer hands off a book to a trusting, devout reader (recall the cardinal and the woman depicted in Chapter Four). Now, the reader is one who has several options from which to choose, from the language in which the poems are written to the form in which they are read.[201] Tottel vacillates between a defensiveness about English in comparison to romance languages to a class-based rhetoric of "taste." The reader is now, first and foremost, a consumer. The reader who can appreciate the miscellany is one who can also appreciate fine foods, like marjoram. This new figure of the discerning reader is developed throughout the collection as a woman who refuses the male suitor, as figured by Surrey's lady in her cornet black.

Before entering *Tottel's Miscellany*, let us consider one further example of the typographical and cultural contexts for the collection. Peter Blayney notes in one of his characteristically intriguing footnotes, "I have no idea by what route the T found in both *Twenty*

[201] Certainly, the growing number of female writers and translators at this time, some of whom are either named in the miscellany or are related, like Margaret Roper, to the writers Tottel prints (including Thomas More) should inform our reading of this line in the preface. See Hosington, Brenda M. "Women Translators and the Early Printed Book." *A Companion to the Early Printed Book in Britain, 1476-1558*, edited by Vincent Gillespie and Susan Powell, Boydell & Brewer, Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY, 2014, pp. 248–271. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt3fgngz.22. Accessed 7 March 2021; and Goodrich, Jaime. "Thomas More and Margaret More Roper: A Case for Rethinking Women's Participation in the Early Modern Public Sphere." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2008, pp. 1021–1040. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/20479136. Accessed 7 March 2021.

Songes (C3^{v}) and the statute (A2^{r}) came to be used in 1556 by Richard Tottell (STC 9639, CI^{v}).”[202] The network of printers who shared woodcut initials serves to remind us too of the connections between the legal text, the songbook, and the early modern collection of poetry, a “book in process” that had no clear precedent in print.[203] This book of songs, moreover, is named by number, and uses some of the organizational features I have just described in the context of Tottel’s legal projects, including an opening table with the names of all of the songs listed along with the composers of each. This mysterious book, of which only two copies survive (British Library and Westminster Abbey), could almost be considered an early version of the miscellany Tottel will print 27 years later. As Milsom writes, “Even from a summary description it will be clear that *XX Songes* is a remarkably varied collection, in which the sacred rubs shoulders with the secular, the bawdy with the refined, and vocal with instrumental” (283).

The third song in the book shifts perspectives between the speaker, who hears a mother sing to her child, and the mother who speaks to her son:

> By by lullaby by by lullaby rockyd I my chyld by by by by by by lulla
> by rockyd i my child i[n] a dre[am] late as I lay me þought i hard a madyn
> say & spak thes wordys mylde my lytl sone with the i play-
> eð the so[ng] by lul lay th[at] rockyd she
> her chyld by by lullabi by by lullabi rockid I my child by by.
> The[n] merueld I ryght sore of thys a mayd to haue a child Iwys By
> By lullay th[at] rockyd she her chyld by by lullaby by by lulla
> by rockid I my chyld by by by by by lullaby rockyd I my chylde. finis.[204]

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[202] Blayney, Peter W. M. *The Stationers' Company And the Printers of London, 1501-1557*. Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2013: 271. See Appendix for image of the woodblock initial used by Tottel in 1556.

[203] I borrow O’Callaghan’s phrase here. An excellent visual accompaniment to this summary is the song-sheet John Milsom uses as his second figure in his article “Songs and Society in Early Tudor London.” The top of the sheet includes musical notes, under which are four stanzas of poetry identified in the British Library catalog as a ballad, possibly written by the printer, John Rastell. At the bottom is a colophon reading “Justicia Regat”: *Early Music History*, vol. 16, 1997, pp. 235–293. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/853804. Accessed 2 April 2021: 244. Arthur Vogel mistakenly attributes the book to Wynkyn de Word in a 1938 entry to the *Bulletin of the American Musicological Society*.

[204] DIMEV 2445; for a modernized edition of the song, see Edith Rickert, *Ancient English Christmas Carols, 1400-1700.*

The *Digital Index of Middle English Verse* editors have removed the opening refrain to identify "In a dream late as I lay" as the first line of the song. Their description reads "On the Virgin Mother – two 6-line stanzas with a lullaby burden." This song, however, could be about any mother, and it leads into a secular song that begins "be ware my lytyl fynger" (called "Ye wring my hand so sore," DIMEV 6851). This collection allows for smooth transitions between the divine, maternal, earthly, and erotic, including songs on fortune and love as well as songs in praise of Henry VIII and the Virgin Mary.

The initial T of which Blayney writes appears just after the second Marian lyric in the book, for which the refrain is "She may be callyd a souerant lady / That ys A mayd and beryth a baby" (DIMEV 105). The lyric reads:

> She may be callyd a souera[n]t lady That ys A
> mayd and beryth a baby
> A mayd pereles hath borne godys son nature gaue place
> when gostly grace subdude reson she may be callyd A
> souera[n]t lady that is a mayd
> As for bewty or hy gentry she is the floure by god electe for this ef-
> fect ma[n] to socour she may be callyd a souerant lady
> That ys a mayd
> Of vyrgyns quene lodster of lyght whom to honor we ought
> endeuer us day & nyth She may be
> callyd a souerant Lady That ys a mayd and beryth

The bel …

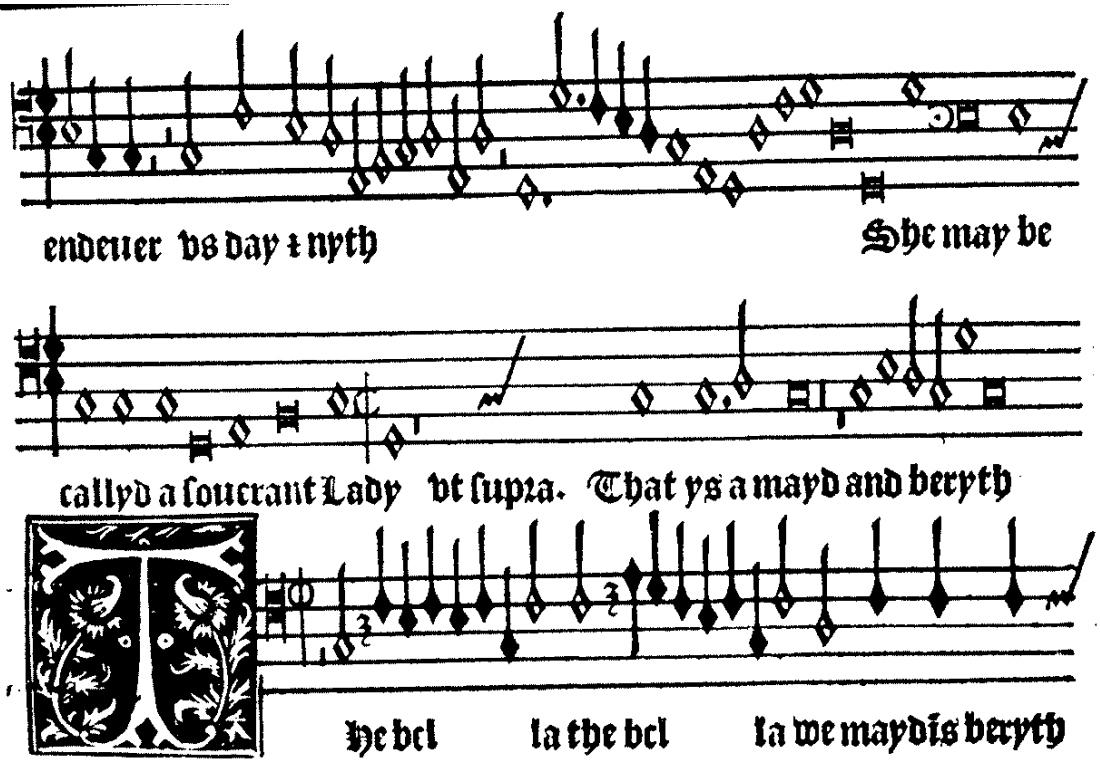


Figure 5.5*: In this boke ar conteynyd xx songes*, 1530,
Impryntyd in London At the signe of the black Mores, STC (2nd ed.) 22924.

The woodblock capital "T" pictured here presents a typographical interruption between the song praising the Virgin Mary and one that follows, which is, as Carissa Harris calls it, a didactic carol for four voices that "… gives voice to young women's ardent desire, and stages peer pedagogy to illuminate the inequalities that must be rectified for women to enjoy agency in the sexual marketplace" (162).[205] On the page I include here, the songs run together (even with the interpenetrating T) so that the "beryth" of one anticipates the "beryth" in the next. One song describes the Virgin bearing God's son, while the other refers to the fact that women bear "the

[205] *Obscene Pedagogies*, 2018.

bella," the vulva.[206] This typographical arrangement requires a re-reading of both of the songs, so that now the "souerant Lady" who can accomplish virgin birth is joined by the "singlewomen" (to use Harris's term) who have enough bodily autonomy to try the "spyce" of men, or leave it: "She may be callyd a souerant Lady That ys a mayd and beryth the bella." The union of these two songs on the page suggests a range of definitions and options for bodily sovereignty in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, an independence that might not fit the historical record as we know it, but does help to contextualize the narrative of female withholding that runs across *Tottel's Miscellany*. The final lines of the lyric are "Assay you then non of ther spyce/for it wyl make your bely to swell-a." This sexual metaphor provides a new and strange precursor to Tottel's opening preface, with its anxieties over the taste of the reader.

As a printed text, *XX Songes* offers a visual representation of how printers saw their work as a way to negotiate and to order the female body and voice. Women are presented as objects of exchange, like the book itself; praise for the Virgin Mary blends seamlessly into carols warning women about enacting sexual desire. Printers, on the other hand, are afforded individual names and patents. The scholarly quest to find the unknown printer of this songbook only serves as a reminder of the printer's increasing authority in the decades leading up to the establishment of the Stationer's Company. Milsom nearly calls for a typographical paternity test when he writes, "To make any progress with the identification of the printer of *XX Songes*, we will need to locate use being made of the actual pieces of wood used in its production" (285). While print offers a form of reproduction that is technological rather than biological, and thus requires no female

[206] The *Middle English Dictionary* records confusion over this double meaning in the definition for "bell (n.)": "?Maidenhead, ?vulva."

body, the books Tottel printed returned frequently to the image of the mother, whether it were the Virgin Mary herself or the mother of the poet.

4. "Minerua me taught": Mother and Son in the Miscellany

The June 1557 edition of the miscellany frequently presents poems about reproduction and motherhood, from Surrey's opening poem "The sonne hath twise brought furth his tender grene" to Grimald's funeral song to his mother ("Yea, and a good cause why thus should I playn" (no. 162)). Grimald's encomia, in particular, link the writing of verses to the mother's issuing forth children, as he writes in the song beginning "Gorgeous attire, by art made trym, and clene" (no. 146). Referring to his "hert," he writes "Yet here itself dot it resigne agayn,/Within these noombers closde." He uses this same word, "noombers," to refer to the number of children his mother has in song 162, labeled by Tottel "A funerall song, vpon the deceas of Annes his moother.": "Of yssue fayr with noombers were you blest…" (11). The miscellany opens with an image of regeneration made possible by the "sonne," the spelling of which allows the reader (with Shakespeare's wordplay in mind), to link the cycles of nature to the cycles of human reproduction. The printed poem becomes a replacement for both.

Surrey is not merely a poet, but he is also a son. While the "sonne" brings forth spring flowers, the press of Tottel "hath twise brought furth" a son of England: Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and this at a time when the royal family could only produce unwanted daughters.[207] The press allows for a birth that is technological and thus virgin. Men, like the god Prometheus, can

[207] David Loades writes that "On 9 November Catherine was delivered of a daughter 'to the vexation of everyone'" (16): *Mary Tudor: A Life.* Oxford, UK; New York, NY, USA: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

have wombs too, reproducing without the female body, and without the risk of "issuing" anything that is not the desired male son.[208] The first edition of *Songes and Sonettes*, published in the early summer (June 5) of 1557, placed next to one another two poems featuring mother's voices, numbers 123-124. While the fifteenth century books I explore in the first three chapters allow us to see the book *as* a mother in the tradition of Marian devotion, poems such as these two attributed to Thomas Wyatt reveal a shift toward distrust with regard to the mother. In both of these poems, the female voice is used to conjure a sense of bodily disorder and of orality that must be corrected, contained in print. While the second poem, which Tottel calls "Of the meane and sure estate written to Iohn Poins," allows for the female speaker to issue a moral fable, the title supplied cuts out this orality, referring to the writing passed between men and summarizing the "lesson" of the didactic poem: one must not seek greater social status.

The first of these two poems, titled by Tottel "Of the mother that eat her childe at the siege of Ierusalem," reads as follows,

> IN doubtfull breast whiles motherly pity
> With furious famine standeth at debate,
> The mother sayth: O childe vnhappy
> Returne thy bloud where thou hadst milke of late
> Yeld me those lymmes that I made vnto thee,
> And enter there where thou were generate.
> For of one body agaynst all nature,
> To an other must I make sepulture.

If the miscellany is, as Lerer and King have argued about this collection and Foxe's *Actes of Monuments*, a tomb, the mother's body in this poem is too. Tottel's placement of this poem just above the one on "mothers maides," which counsels the reader against class mobility, seems to

[208] In poem 129, Grimald writes, "So plains Prometh, his womb no time to faile:."

purposely replace the natural womb with the codicological tomb. “And enter there where thou were generate,” if read as an address to the reader rather than the sacrificial child within the poem, issues a command that the reader never leave the logical arrangement of the book.

The next poem begins with “MY mothers maides when they do sowe and spinne:/They sing a song made of the feldishe mouse,” and continues with the theme of inward movement, which the next several poems will emphasize. As though to liken the speaker of these poems to the country mouse in song 124, the following poem, also addressed to “Iohn Poyns,” ends with a favorable comparison of the country to the city:

> I am not now in Fraunce, to iudge the wine:
> With savry sauce those delicates to fele.
> Nor yet in Spaine where one must him incline,
> Rather then to be, outwardly to seme.
> I meddle not with wyttes that be so fine,
> Nor Flaunders chere lettes not my syght to deme
> Of black and white, nor takes my wittes away
> With beastlinesse: such do those beastes esteme.
> Nor I am not, where truth is geuen in pray,
> For money, poyson, and treason: of some
> A common practise, vsed nyght and day.
> *But I am here in kent and christendome:*
> Among the Muses, where I reade and ryme,
> Where if thou list myne owne Iohn Poyns to come:
> Thou shalt be iudge, how I do spende my time. (29-43, emphasis mine)

The orality of the mother, which frames poem 124, is linked to the inward turn Wyatt’s speaker defends here. The hometown, Kent, its Christian values, and the mother tongue are conjoined in Wyatt’s verses to convey a sense of authenticity, humility, and faith. As he writes earlier in poem 124:

I can not crouch nor knele to such a wrong:
To worship them like God on earth alone:
That are as wolues these sely lambes among.
I can not with my wordes complaine and mone,
And suffer nought: nor smart without complaynt:
Nor turne the worde that from my mouth is gone. (5-10)

The word is, in these verses, a lost object that is physically missing from the mouth. While Tottel's titles for these sonnets emphasize the written (and indeed, *printed*) word, the poems themselves praise the truth of the mouth that speaks and the hand that spins.

The June 1557 miscellany was the only one of Tottel's ten editions to include a set of poems praising virtuous women, poems that incorporated vivid Marian imagery, sometimes referring directly to the Virgin Mary, and that otherwise praised women.[209] The poems, as Tottel arranges them, are as follows; I include next to each one the historical figure scholars have come to associate with each:

139: "To L. I. S." (Jane Seymour)
140: "To maistres D.A." (Damascene Awdley?)
141: "Of. m. D.A." (Damascene Awdley?)
142: "A neew yeres gift, to the l. M.S." (Margaret Seymour, sister of Jane)
143: "An other to .l.M.S." (Margaret Seymour)
144: "To .l.K.S." (Katherine Seymour)
145: "To .l.E.S." (Elizabeth Seymour)
146: "To. m. D.A." (Damascene Awdley?)
147: "To. m. S.H." (Susan H. unidentified)
158: "An Epitaph of the ladye Margaret Lee. 1555."
159: "Vpon the tomb of A.w." (unidentified, with possible connection to Anne Wentworth of poem 213, or to the Maid of Ipswich)
162: "A funerall song, vpon the deceas of Annes his moother." (Agnes Grimald?)

[209] See Marquis, "Politics and Print," 149, for a brief discussion of these historical figures.

The first nine of these twelve offer titles more fitting for private letters than for published poems. These poems, many of which are addressed to particular women and assigned titles accordingly, employ the imagery of Minerva alongside the imagery of Mary as the exemplary mother. Poems 139-163 represent a cluster that is remarkable for its attention to the female exemplarity typically associated with medieval hagiography. The role of the woman extends beyond that of love object into a figure that makes poetic production possible because *she* brings forth the son and helps to fashion him into a poet (with help from the muses).

In song 139, "To L. I. S." Tottel's parenthetical address to the "(good reder)" becomes one to a "(good Lady)" (since identified as Jane Seymour), who can read several languages but who can also "spare, to read a rurall poets ryme…" The speaker places himself in a position of deference to the hyper-literate Jane, noting first that she serves a "goddess" equal to "Diane," meaning the "quenes most noble grace." The maid of honor to the queen is here described as one with every courtly skill:

> Allhayle, and while, like Terpsichor, much melody you make:
> Which if the field, as doth the court, enioyd, the trees wold shake:
> While latine you, and french frequent: while English tales you tel:
> Italian whiles, and Spanish you do hear, and know full well:
> Amid such peares, and solemne sightes, in case conuenient tyme
> You can (good Lady) spare, to read a rurall poets ryme: (7-12)

Song 139 treats "English tales" like "rurall" rhymes, which the female addressee must suffer despite her facility with the Romance languages against which Tottel measures English verse in his opening preface. The virtue of the woman is here tied to her facility with language, her skill in courtly "melody," and her service to both the queen and to divinity: "diuine your doings be" (17). This description of virtue differs not only from Tottel's expressed aim to elevate the status of the English language, but also from what scholars have identified as the miscellany's role in

developing a conduct manual for men who want to learn the customs of court. In this cluster of encomia by Grimald, virtue is traced instead to something greater, a history of female virtue that links medieval Marian devotion to the figure of Minerva, and that sees the nine Muses as a group of women associated with the mothers of sixteenth century England.

Songs 140 and 141, to Damascene Awdley, feature the language of enclosure, chastity and Minerva's lacemaking. Compared to Surrey's use of lace and weaving to refer to the deception of women and the entrapment of men, Grimald's lace emerges as instead a figure for a female chastity that gives way to male literary production. "To maistres D.A." begins with references to the virgins of England and to the muses, or the daughters of "Mnemosyne":

> WHat cause, what reaso[n] moueth me: what fansy fils my brains
> That you I minde of virgins al, who[m] Britan soile sustains
> Bothe when to lady Mnemosynes dere daughters I resort. (100: 24-26)

The final four lines return to the image of lace, presented negatively at the beginning of the *Miscellany*, in order to present it as a metaphor for "chastefull loue imprest,/ In frendships lace, with such a lasse, doth knit, and fast combine:/Which lace no threatning fortune shall, no length of tyme vntwine (101: 13-14). The lace cannot be vntwined because the woman is of such great virtue and because the poet is able to record these virtues. The poem ends "And I that daye, with gem snowwhite, will mark, & eke depaynt/With pricely pen: which, Awdley, first gan mee with you acquaint" (15-16). The classical connection between writing and weaving is preserved here, creating a mutual bond between the virginal woman and the poet with the "pricely pen."

Song 141 is written in an acrostic of "DAMASCENE AWDLEY," which Holton and Macfaul suggest may have been a nickname referring back to this popular medieval fabric.[210] In

[210] In another work Tottel prints, Lydgate refers to damascene fields, and in the Troy Book, Lydgate refers to "Wevers also of wolne & of lyne, Of cloth of gold, damaske, and satyn." See *MED*, "damask" n. 1.b.

some ways a shorter version of the praise poem that precedes it, this poem refers to the "fingerfeat" of Minerva:

> No fingerfeat Minerue hid from her sight.
> Exprest in look, she hath so souerain chere,
> As Cyprian once breathed on the Spartan bright.
> Wit, wisdom, will, woord, woork, and all, I ween,
> Dare no mans pen presume to paint outright. (101: 25-29)

The emphasis on sexual difference here again links female virtue to the "fingerfeat" of the classical goddess and literary production to "mans pen." Minerva was not only a figure for the act of weaving but she was also the subject of a number of tapestries woven in late fifteenth century. As Rudolf Wittkower demonstrates, "That ancient conception of Minerva's virginity was kept alive right through the Middle Ages, so much so, indeed, that the goddess even appeared as a symbol of the Virgin Mary."[211] In one of the poems attributed to Wyatt (115), the riddle spoiled by Tottel's title "Discripcion of a gonne," Minerva appears as the "teacher" of the object that speaks: "Vvlcane begat me: Minerua me taught:/ Nature, my mother: Craft nourisht me yere by yere" (80:2-3).

Minerva appears again in poem 162, Grimald's funeral song to "Annes his moother." Of the poems that will not see a second printing, this one is most remarkable for its attempt to define "womans work" in ways that simultaneously link the feminine to the literary while suggesting that only sons can become poets. Grimald uses the term "noombers" in this poem, the same one

[211] "Transformations of Minerva in Renaissance Imagery." *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, vol. 2, no. 3, 1939, pp. 194–205. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/750097. Accessed 12 Apr 2021: 199. Rebecca Olson notes that the Ovidian myth of Minerva, who "weaves her own rape and mutilation by her brother-in-law, Tereus," … leads to a tradition in which "tapestries have become symbols of female resistance to patriarchal suppression…": *Arras Hanging: The Textile that Determined Early Modern Literature and Drama*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2013: 69.

he uses to describe metrical units in "To. m. D. A." (no. 146) to describe the number of children his mother had, which, his speaker holds, did not keep her from loving him best of all:

> I, in your frutefull woomb conceyued, born was,
> Whyle wanderyng moon ten moonths did ouerpasse.
> Mee, brought to light, your tender arms sustayned:
> And, with my lips, your milky paps I straynd.
> You mee embraced, in bosom soft you mee
> Cherished, as I your onely chylde had bee.
> Of yssue *fayr with noombers were you blest*:
> Yet I, the bestbeloued of all the rest (4-12, emphasis mine)

The speaker's claim to be his mother's favorite may refer to the fact that Grimald was "the only son among several daughters of a happy rural family."[212] Grimald credits his mother for sending him to the Muses as soon as he began to speak (getting rid of the lisping sound, as he says):

> Good luck, certayn forereadyng moothers haue,
> And you of mee a speciall iudgement gaue.
> Then, when firm pase I fixed on the ground:
> When toung gan cease to break the lispyng sound:
> You mee streightway did too the Muses send,
> Ne suffered long a loyteryng lyfe to spend,
> What gayn the wooll, what gayn the wed had braught,
> It was his meed, that me there dayly taught.
> When with Minerue I had acquaintance woon:
> And Phebus seemd to loue mee, as his soon (13-22)

Grimald's use of the word "noombers" in "To.m. D.A.," appears just before another reference to Minerva:

> Yet here itself doth it resigne agayn,
> *Within these noombers closde*. Where, think you best
> This to repose? There, I suppose, where free
> Minerue you place… (15-18)

[212] Brennan, Michael G. "Grimald, Nicholas (b. 1519/20, d. in or before 1562), poet." Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. September 23, 2004. Oxford University Press. Date of access 15 Apr. 2021, <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11629>

These lines, which define numbers as both children and verses, also suggest, with their proximity to references to Minerva, the numbers of the loom. Parenthood is both biological in these verses to the mother, and allegorical. Phebus loves his "as his soon."

5. Privy Chambers: Marian and Metrical Enclosure in the 1557 Miscellany

In a sentence describing the parents of Mary Tudor, biographer David Loades distills great volumes of writing on sexual difference in the pre-modern era when he writes, "While he hunted she visited neighbouring shrines, and while he danced late into the night, she frequently sought an early bed" (16). This reduced account of the married couple's preferred activities would seem to explain much about a text like *Tottel's Miscellany*, especially why it is usually read as a book of men's poetry. Filled with metaphors linking the hunt to romantic and sexual conquest, it has seemed to most scholars to ignore the voices of women who visit shrines.

At the time when Tottel first publishes the miscellany, England is Marian in two senses. It is undergoing a return to Catholicism at the same time that it is under the reign of Queen Mary. Stephen Hamrick has made the case for reading in *Tottel's Miscellany* a "Catholic poetics," or a poetics that encourages the fusion of religious devotion located in the body and in the image and earthly love located in the body and directed toward a human love object.[213] The printer's

[213] Hamrick, Stephen (2002) "*Tottel's Miscellany* and the English Reformation," *Criticism*: Vol. 44 : Iss. 4. In an essay with a minimalist title, "*Songes and Sonettes*, 1557," Herman argues for the importance of studying this collection in its earliest form, paying attention to the likelihood that Tottel wanted to "… participate in the creation of a distinctly English, distinctly Catholic culture…" (in Hamrick, 112).

attempt to edit out this language of Catholic Marian devotion, through his titles and through the omission of several encomia in the second printing, is only a partial success, as the interplay between female enclosure and textual dissemination is ultimately productive. It is the very reproductive framework upon which the miscellany rests.

The laments for lost virgins and mothers, most notably present in Grimald's poems from the first edition of the miscellany, can be read as laments for the Virgin Mary herself, and for her role as exemplar to all "maydens" in early modern England. In the context of a collection that presents its poets as men (regardless of whether this is the case), Grimald's poems contribute a sense of the poet as a son who thanks his mother for sending him to the muses. His poetic skill is, like meter ("measure") itself, tied to her chastity. While the poems in which Grimald praises his mother and other exemplars of female virtue will not appear in subsequent editions of the miscellany, several poems praising women remain in print, including the well known poem in which Surrey praises Geraldine, and another poem remembering Anne Wentworth, who died in childbirth. These poems take us to the birthing chambers of England, including the one in which the Princess Mary was born.

If the symbolism of "womans work" is tied to poetic production in the poems I describe above, more direct connections between the miscellany and Marian medieval culture can be traced to the lives of Mary Tudor and the women who attend to her in the years leading up to the establishment of the Stationers' Company and the printing of the miscellany in 1557. Just as de Worde's reduced account of the life of Margery Kempe was printed, surprisingly, alongside the canon of mystical works she read, the miscellany unwittingly records both a network of women

and a vivid set of allusions to a female world that is described by the poet just as he attempts to flee from its control.[214]

Mary Tudor was born into a royal birthing chamber, a sacred space modeled on the medieval anchorhold. John Edwards notes that Mary's mother, Catherine, paid several visits to the "'Holy House of Nazareth,' at Walsingham in north Norfolk, where some of the breastmilk of the Virgin Mary was believed to be preserved, and where women prayed to have children, and gave thanks when they were born."[215] Edwards notes that Mary's chamber would have looked like those described by J.L. Laynesmith, who writes in *Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship, 1445-1503* that the queen would retreat into a private world about a month before giving birth: "She was then accompanied to the great chamber, hung like the inner chamber with 'riche Arrass,' furnished with a chair of estate, where she would receive wine and spices, much as at her coronation banquet" (113).[216] In the birthing chamber, Laynesmith explains, "…

[214] This network, as I have begun to identify it in the previous section of this chapter, includes Jane Seymour (1541-1561), who was for a time maid of honour at Mary's court; another important figure here is Susan Tonge nee White, known as Susan Clarencius, who was appointed mistress of the robes. A third example in this incomplete survey is, of course, Elixabeth Fiennes de Clinton, called "Fair Geraldine" after Surrey's poem. See the following articles on these historical figures: Loades, David. "Tonge [née White], Susan [known as Susan Clarencius] (b. before 1510, d. in or after 1564), courtier." September 28, 2006. https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-94978; Stevenson, Jane. "Seymour, Lady Jane (1541–1561), writer." September 23, 2004. https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-68051; Brigden, Susan. "Clinton, Elizabeth Fiennes de [née Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald], countess of Lincoln [other married name Elizabeth Fiennes Browne, Lady Browne; called Fair Geraldine] (1528?–1589), noblewoman." January 03, 2008. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press. Date of access 6 March. 2021, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9549. One further poem I would like to mention is number 159, "Upon the tomb of A.W., which may refer to Anne Wentworth, or, perhaps a Jane [Anne] Wentworth who was known as the Maid of Ipswich.

[215] *Mary I*. Yale University Press, 2011: 5. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1nq95m. Accessed 6 March 2021.

[216] J. L. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship, 1445-1503*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004: Chapter 2, "Rituals of Queenship."

women took on the roles of butlers, servers, and so forth within her chamber, collecting what they needed from the male officers at the door" (115).

The royal birthing chamber became a holy place in which cradle and altar sat side by side. Drawing from the *Ryalle Book*, Laynesmith describes

> The colouring and quality of furnishings for the queen's bed and the pallet bed which lay at its foot, complete with down pillows, ermine-edged scarlet counterpane, and borders of velvet or cloth of gold. The pallet, which was probably for use during the day, and as such half throne, half bed, was to be surmounted by a crimson satin canopy, a mark of privilege, embroidered with crowns and the arms of the king and queen. (113)

Are these furnishings of the queen's bed not the very same as the furnishings for the Tudor poetry Tottel prints? The poems of the miscellany dramatize the speaker's exclusion from such a space. And nor was this space a natural or static one. Rather, it was surely a private stage about which we know little more than the fact that rituals were performed there. As Gail McMurray Gibson notes, "It is surely because the ritual of churching was so much a part of the ordinary fabric of women's lives that so few medieval written sources think to comment upon it—and so few medievalists have paused to notice it. Churching is no less than the purloined letter of women's experience, in such plain view it is invisible."[217] Like the lady whose head is always covered, the birthing chamber is kept from the view of all men.

If childbirth was a duty expected of pre-modern women regardless of their personal desires, the rituals around it could become a space in which a temporary society of women is

[217] Gibson, Gail McMurray. "Blessing from Sun and Moon: Churching as Women's Theater." *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, edited by Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace, NED - New edition ed., vol. 9, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, pp. 139–154. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttsd71.11. Accessed 1 April 2021.

constituted. While this society would not have been without its hierarchies, it was one in which the only requirement for belonging in this privileged and holy space was one's female status. In other words, the second sex became first for a month or two, existing together in a space out of which the next ruler of England would emerge. The birthing chamber may be linked to Andromache Karanika's notion of the "poetics of interruption" that arise from scenes of women's weaving. She writes that "Penelope's weaving becomes the foil for delaying the change in her status. While on the surface it serves to encapsulate her feminine activity, the process of weaving and unraveling enables her to maintain a tenuous status quo."[218]

It is difficult to read the poems of the miscellany without considering that some of them are written from the perspective of the men excluded from this birth chamber. The miscellany promises its reader a key to this inaccessible, exclusively female, space. In this chapter, I have read *Tottel's Miscellany* alongside his legal texts and a songbook from which he must have borrowed a woodblock initial in order to argue that the newly indexical form of the book becomes an important form of enclosure for Tottel and his readers. While the imagery of weaving and lacemaking throughout the miscellany suggests a clear difference between the collaborative team of the male poet and printer and the women represented in the text, my reading of the book as indexical space offers an opportunity to liken the loom to the press, connecting the printer's impulse to order and the "fingerfeat" of Minerva.

Tottel's book is not the enveloping one I explore in previous chapters. Rather, it is an example of an exclusive enclosure made possible by the increased specialization of texts and by the creation of the Stationers' Company. If late medieval books sought to enclose the reader, it

[218] Karanika, Andromache. *Voices at Work: Women, Performance, and Labor in Ancient Greece*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014: 88. In a recent lecture at UC San Diego, Karanika described the loom as both clock and mast.

was a corrective for the openness of the text and its various interpretations. By rendering the book an object of practical use, Tottel aims to create a closed system in which the reader only traces references within one volume. By the mid-sixteenth century, the English book, made for the medieval virgin, has stopped asking its reader what else she might have read, as in the question, "Nabbe ye alswa of Ruffin the deovel, Beliales brother, in ower Englische boc of Seinte Margarete?" The sense of an intertextual, communally owned "Englische boc" contracts with the creation of the printer's charter, into a book that sees itself as private property.

CONCLUSION

Following Elizabeth Eisenstein's landmark publication of *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change,* book historians of the early modern period have gone on to question the author's premise that "print culture" prompted a sudden cultural revolution. Some question that this culture exists at all.[219] This dissertation has explored the late medieval and early modern book trade in England, dating back to some of the earliest devotional prose works, which were allegedly translated and presented to particular female readers. These early instances of editorial intervention, I have argued here, were already picking up the questions that would later vex printers. How can the book retain value if just anyone can read it? Caxton, de Worde, and Tottel answered this challenge in various ways, but all of their strategies for textual dissemination involved a simultaneous attempt to enclose the book and the reader—to delineate *who* should read the book, and *how*.

Margery Kempe composed her book well before the advent of print, and she refused to present herself as the writer of the book. Rather, her book came to be out of collaboration, with Jesus and with the various male scribes that scholars continue to identify today. Margery's dramatization of the process by which her book was made constitutes an early example of vernacular literary theory. More particularly, the *Book* presents the late medieval book trade as an enterprise that is in need of holy intervention. The verification of manuscripts, to which Caxton alludes and upon which modern scholars now rely, is in the *Book* an act that only Margery can successfully complete, in conversation with God. In Chapter 24 of Book One, we

[219] Hudson, Nicholas. "Challenging Eisenstein: Recent Studies in Print Culture." *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 26 no. 2, 2002, p. 83-95.

read of one of the priests who wrote the book for Margery, and how he often would not "yevyn credens to hir wordys." The chapter details two different events involving the priest as he first lends money to a younger man and later buys a book from an older man. The book-selling scene reads as follows:

> In schort tyme aftyr this was passyd, comyth another fals schrewe, an elde man, to the same preste and proferyd hym a portose, a good lytyl boke, for to selle. The preste went to the forseyd creatur, preyng hir to preye for hym and wetyn whedyr God wold he schulde by the boke er not, and whyl sche preyd, he cheryd the man as wel as he cowde, and sythen he came ageyn to this creatur and askyd how sche felt.
>
> 'Syr,' sche seyth, byith no boke of hym, for he is not to trustyn upon, and that schal ye wel knowyn yyf ye medyl wyth hym.' (1840-1848)

Prompted by Margery, the priest questions the bookseller and refuses to pay him for the book he has yet to see. Having lent money once only to lose track of the borrower, the priest prevails this second time because he listens to Margery's "felyng." In this chapter, the *Book* presents Margery as an authority on the early English book trade, not for her textual knowledge, but rather on account of her feeling, or what Chaucer's Wife of Bath so famously calls "experience."

Englishing the Virgin has argued that the development of the early printed book in England did not mark a swift break with the Catholic past of England. Rather, the first printers of the English book drew from the devotional culture of the enclosed women to whom the first prose texts were addressed. The image of Mary's miraculous womb found its way into the presses of Caxton, de Worde, and Tottel. In order to disseminate the text to a wide readership, the book itself had to be enclosed. The suspicion with which Margery treats the "good lytyl boke" within the *Book* she has written for her continued to exist in early modern England, creating a need for a priestly printer who could earn the trust of his readers.

APPENDIX

Chapter 2

2.1: Sassetta (Stefano di Giovanni), *The Journey of the Magi*; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

2.2: Crib of the Infant Jesus, 15th c., South Netherlandish, On view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

2.3: *Jesueau* (Christ Child in Crib), Namur, Musee des Arts Anciens, Early 15th century, Belgium (accessed via UMich Digital Archives)

2.4: Christ Child Blessing, Mecheln, c. 1500, held at Staatliches Museum Schwerin

2.5 Master of the Orcagnesque Misericordia, active late 14th century.. Madonna of Mercy.. c. 1375.

2.6 Madonna della Misericordia, Bargello; photograph taken by Clementine Keith-Roach

Chapter 3

Interpolations to the *Golden Legend* (continued from in-text citations):

"Feste of the Natyvyte of Our Lord"

But at this tyme I shal leve and pass over sauf one thynge that I have herde ones prechyd of a worshipeful doctour that what persone beyng in clene lyf desire on this day a bone of God, as fer as it is rightful and good for hym, Or Lord atte reverence of this blessyd and hie feste of his Naytyvte wyll graunte it to hym. Thenne lete us always make us in clene lyf at this feste that we may so plese hym that after this short lyf we may come unto hys blysse. Amen. (in Blake, 91)

"The Life of Saint Augustine"

It was soo that this gloryous doctor made and compyled many volumes as afore is sayd among whome he made a book of the Trynyte. In whiche he studyed and mused sore in his mynde soo ferforthe that on a tyme as he wente by the see-syde in Auffryke studyeng on the Trynyte, he fonde by the see-syde a lytel childe whiche hadde made a lytel pytte in the sonde, and in his honde a lytel spone. And wyth the spone he tooke oute water of the large see and poured hit into the pytte. And whanne Saynt Augustyn behelde hym he merveyled and demaunded hym what he dyde. And he answerd and sayde: 'I wylle lade oute and brynge alle this water of this see into thys pytte.'

'What,' sayd he, 'hit is impossyble. How maye hit be done sythe the see is soo greete and large and thy pytte and spone soo lytylle?'

'Yes, forsothe,' sayd he. 'I shalle lyghtlyer and sonner drawe alle the water of the see and brynge hit into this pytte than thow shalt brynge the mysterye of the Trynyte and his dyvynyte into thy lytel understandynge as to the regard therof, for the mysterye of the Trynyte is greter and larger to the comparyson of thy wytte and brayne than is this grete see unto this lytel pytte.' And therwyth the childe vanysshed awey. (94-95)

“The Nativity of Our Lady”

Thenne late us contynuelly gyve laude and praysyng to her as moche as we maye and late us saye with Saynt Jeromme this response: *Sancta et inmaculata vyrginitas*. And how this hooly response was made I purpose under correction to wryte here. It is so that I was at Coleyn and herd reherced there by a noble doctour that the hooly and devoute Saynt Jeromme had a custome to vysyte the chirches at Rome. And so he cam into a chirche where an ymage of our blessyd Lady stoode in a chappell by the dore as he entryd and passyd for the by withoute ony salutacion to Our Lady and wente for the to every aulter and made his prayers to all the sayntes in the chirche eche after other, and retourned ageyne by the same ymage without ony saleweng to her. Thenne our blessyd Lady called hym and spak to hym by the sayd ymage and demaunded of hym the cause why he made no salutacion to her seyng that he had done honoure and worship to alle the other sayntes of whom the ymages were in that chirche.

And thenne Saynt Jeromme kneled doune and sayd thus: ‘*Sancta et inmaculata vyrginitas quibus te laudibus referam nescio; quia quem celi capere non poterant tuo gremio contulisti;’* which is to say ‘Holy and undefowled virgynyte, I wote never what lawde and praysynges I shalle gyve unto the, for hym that alle the hevenes myght not take ne conteyne thou hast borne in thy wombe.’

So syth this holy man thought hymself insuffycyent to gyve to her lawde thenne what shal we synful wretches doo but put us hooly in her mercy, knowlechyng us insufficient to gyve to her due law[d]e and praysyng? But late us mekely byseche her t’accepte oure good entente and wylle, and that by her merytes we may atteyne after this lyf to come to her in everlasyng lyf in heven. Amen. (95-96)

Saint Saturninus

This feste is the laste feste of the
yere / for to begynne at the feste of saynt andrewe /
and herafter shal folowe dyuers feestys whiche been added
and sette in this sayd book callyd the
golden legende/

STC 24873, cc5[a], col. 2, ll. 7-14, held at Cambridge University Library; also transcribed in Hellinga, BMC XI, page 148

Additions to the lives of Bede and Saint Morante

…In the book of polycronycon is reherced that is wonder/ that a man that was so wythoute use of scole made so many noble volumes in soo sobre wordes/ in soo lytell space of his lyf time/" (cc7[b], ll. 39-44).

From the end of the life of Saint Morante:
I haue sayd before that whiche I now say/the lyf of sayntes were nyghe loste and alle theyr legendes by the normans / whiche wasted and spylte the londe wyth ii hondred and two and fyfty shyppes of men of armes whiche aryued and came in that same londe/ and walked thorugh fraunce unto Romanye / gooyng and comyng by the space of fourty yere and beganne about the yere viii hondred and one and fyfty / yf one scaped there were tweyne loste / and yet over alle other dyuers werrys were that merueylle it is /how we knowe of none /Therfore we shal praye to our lord Jhesu cryste /

4.1: Title page, *The myracles of oure blessyd lady*, 1496.

¶ Secũda die Julii celebrat festũ visitacionis marie.

Among deuoute cryſten peo-
ple in this daye is ſyngulerly
worſhypped our bleſſed lady
Mary for her grete mekenes
& lowly viſytacyon of her co-
ſyn Elyzabeth/the wyfe of zacharye the
prophete & moder to ſaynt Johan bap-
tyſt. Saynt Jherome ſayth. Quidq̃d hu
manis poteſt dici verbis: minus eſt a lau
de virginis gḷioſe que diuinis. ꝛc.) The
whiche may be englyſſhed thus/what ſo euer laude or pray

4.2: Visitation Scene from *Festyuall*, 1508, STC 17971

reason to thende that he were nou-
ryssshed by Joseph the whiche is na-
med his fader nutratyf. In lyke wy
se was it conuenable of the partye &
behalue of the vyrgyn mary. Fyrste
to the entent that she were not sto-
nyd in lyke wyse as sayth saynt Je
rome. Secondly to the ende that she
were preserued frome shame. And
thyrdely to thende that she were hel
ped & socoured of ꝑ sayd Joseph / &
in effecte the sayd maryage was ry-
ght conuenable of our party & behalue
Fyrste for ꝑ / that by the vertues and
testacion of Joseph vnto vs it hath
ben prouyd that Jhesu cryste was
borne of the vyrgyn. Secondly to ꝑ
ende ꝑ by the sayd maryage it were
sygnefyed vnto the churche vnyuer-
sall ꝑ notwithstondyng that she is a
Allhayle mary full of grace our lorde
is with the.

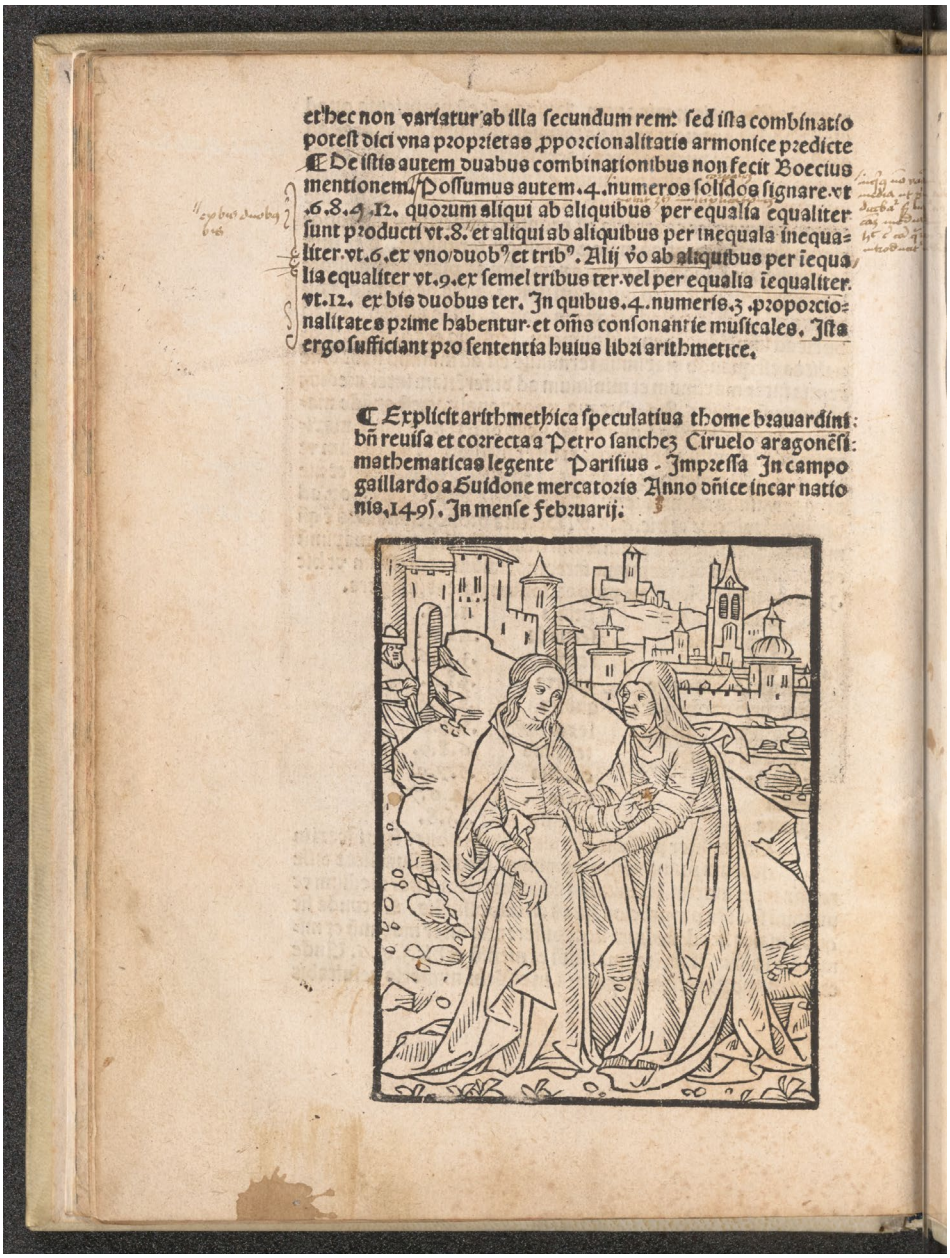
vyrgyn / neuertheles she was the es
pouse of a man / ꝑ was of Jhesu cry
ste in lyke wyse as sayeth saynt Au-
styn. And fynably was the sayd ma
ryage conuenable to the ende that the
vyrgynyte & maryage were honou-
red in the persone of the sayd glory-
ous vyrgyn mary.

¶ The thyrde chapytre shall treate
of the salutacyon wherwith the aun
gell gabryell salewed the sacryd and
glorious mary / & of the exposycyon
of the same with some prerogatyues
of the sayd sacred vyrgyn mary.

Blessyd be thou aboue all women &
blessyd be the fruyte of thy wombe
Jhesus.

4:3: *The crafte to lyue well and to dye well* or *Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir*, STC (2nd ed.) / 792, London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1505.

4.4: The Visitation, c. 1310's, Attributed to Attributed to Master Heinrich of Constance, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Accession number 17.190.724



er hec non variatur ab illa secundum rem: sed ista combinatio
potest dici vna proprietas ppozcionalitatis armonice predicte
¶ De istis autem duabus combinationibus non fecit Boecius
mentionem. Possumus autem .4. numeros solidos signare vt
.6.8.9.12. quozum aliqui ab aliquibus per equalia equaliter
sunt producti vt.8. et aliqui ab aliquibus per inequala inequa-
liter vt.6. ex vno/duob⁹ et trib⁹. Alij vo ab aliquibus per iequa
lia equaliter vt.9. ex semel tribus ter vel per equalia iequaliter.
vt.12. ex bis duobus ter. In quibus .4. numeris .3. propozcio-
nalitates prime habentur et oim consonantie musicales. Ista
ergo sufficiant pro sententia huius libri arithmetice.

¶ Explicit arithmethica speculatiua thome brauardini
bñ reuisa et cozrecta a Petro sanchez Ciruelo aragonēsi
mathematicas legente Parisius - Impzessa In campo
gaillardo a Guidone mercatozis Anno dñice incar natio
nis.1495. In mense Febzuarij.

4.5: Colophon and Visitation woodcut in *Arithmetica Thome Brauardini*, Bradwardine, Thomas, Ciruelo, Pedro, ed. Paris, Printed by Guy Marchant, Paris: 1495/96. Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection (Library of Congress).

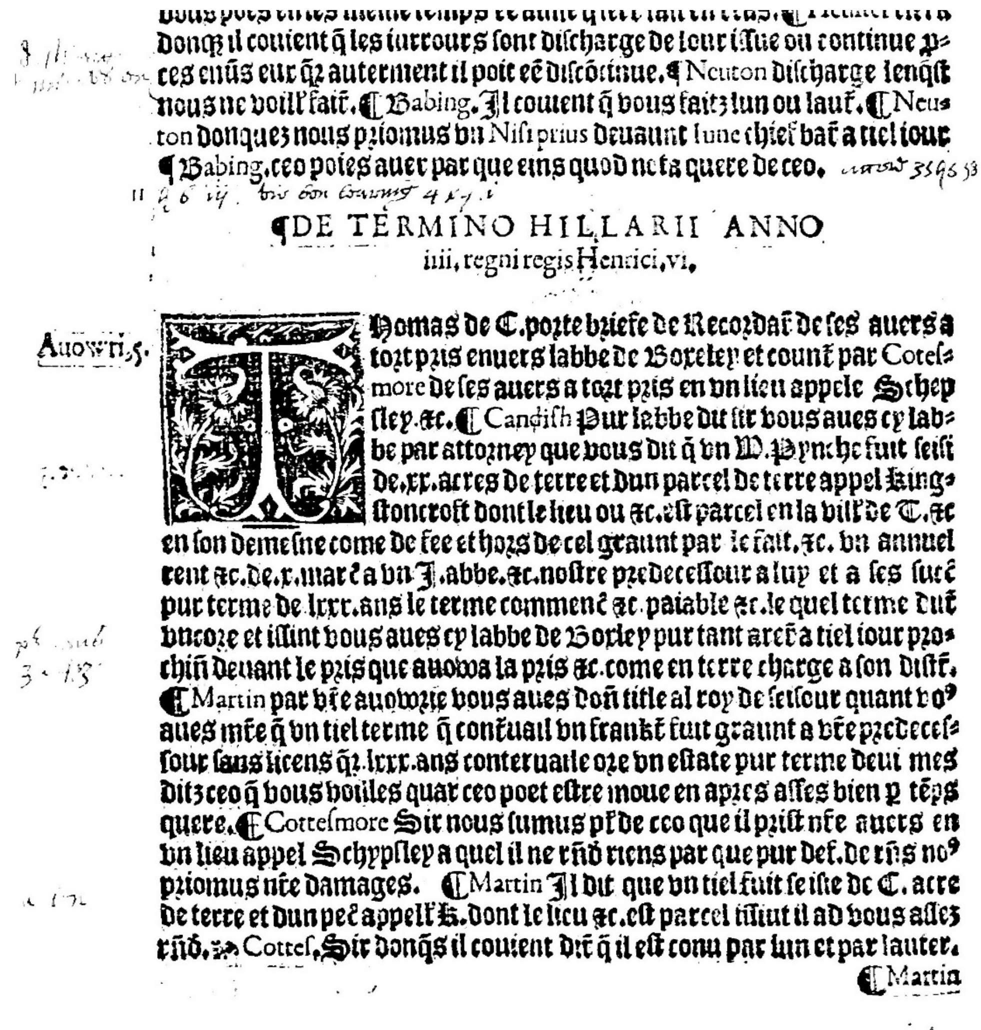
Chapter 5

William Rastell's 1534 Preface to *Natura breuium*, or *Lyttylton tenures*

Wyllyam Rastell to the gentylmen studentes of the law.
how commodyous and profitable vnto gentilmen studentes of the law, be these thre bokes, that is to wit, Natura breuium, The olde tenures, & the tenures of mayster Lyttylton, experience proueth and the bookes them selfe declare. For lyke as a chylde goynge to scole, fyrste lerneth his letters our of the a.b.c. so they that entende the study of the law, do fyrste study these. iii. bokes, as in whiche be conteyned many the gross??, principles, and maximis of the lawe. The bookes also of the newe talys, & the artycles vpon the same, be no lesse necessary for them that vse morynge/(?) to whome as concernynge the forme of declaracyons and defences, they surely bene vnto, as theyr foundacion and president. Than as for the boke of the diuersite of courtes, the very name therof right aptely declareth the sequele of the same sauyge that therin are also certeyne maters concerning plees of the crown besyde yet diuers other thynges necessary to be knowen. Than haue ye the boke of Justice of peace, not onely
necessary to those iustices them selfe, to knowe therby what authorite they haue and what they ought to do, but as requysite to all theym that any thynge entermedelyth them with the lawe, includynge the forme of certeyn proces and very many enditementes. The chartuary declarynge the form of dedes, euidences, feffementes (?), grauntes, obligacious, relesses, and such other: who is it that can scantly ryde, but that it maye stande hym in stede? and yet more necessary to any vsynge to make suche writynges.
The two lytell bokes concernynge the tone the maner of holdynge of a court baron or a lete, the tother the maner of kepynge of a court of hundred or a court of record, is dayle loked on, or at leste dayly folowed, in all suche courtes which be as who sayth innumerable. The boke entytuled Returna breuium, is the onely president to all shyryffes, baylyffes, and other officers hauynge the retourne of wryttes. The laste of these bokes sheweth to the accountauntes in thescheker, what fees they oughte there to paye. And though these vi bokes last remembred, be very necessary to dyuers seuerall persons, as the nature of the same bookes largely do declare yet be they also most necessary vnto lawyers, as to them whom there ought nothynge that any thyng perteyneth to the lawe, to be vnredde or vnlerned, but fully and rypely knowen.
Thus haue ye all these. xii. small bokes (but conteynynge very great lernynge) compacte into one volume. ryght studiousley corrected. And the boke of the new talys, as necessary as it is, was neuer yet imprinted in the small volume before. But though these bokes be so necessary as ye se: yet bycause there is some one case in diuers seuerall places / and also by cause the maters that ye somtyme wolde perhappyes loke for, standeth so confused in the boke, that they can not be very lyghtly found out: ther-fore is here deuised a table, wherby ye may the redyer fynde out suche casys as ye wolde, and se the conformyte of those maters that be in diuerse places.

The declaracyon of the table. (a partial transcription)

Consyder fyrst in what tytle or in how many tytles, the case (that ye be desyrous to know) were most lykele to stand. And that done, torne vnto one of the same tytles in the calender, and within that loke yf ye finde the name of the other tytle. whiche yf ye do : thanne loke what nomber of algryme (?) foloweth it, and what letter. And than torne vnto the same nomber in the boke / and there in that lefe in the mergent fynde out the letter. And than rede from that letter vntyll ye come vnto the nexte letter, or to the ende of the case, and than there shall ye fynde your case, or at leste some other lyke mater. And yf ye fynde it not there: than seke it in an other tytle of the calender where ye thynke your case myghte be / and in that tytle loke tyll ye fynde the tytle wherin ye loked before / & than loke what nomber and what letter foloweth it/ and than torne in the boke to the same nomber and the same letter, and there shall ye percase fynde your case or some lyke mater. And so many nombers as foloweth the name of the tytle in the cale[n]der, in so many places in the boke shal ye fynd cases of the same mater. As for ensa[m]ple, ye desure to know what is the defe[n]ce in a repleuyn. Now se you that that myght conueniently be in the tytle Defence, or in the tytle Repleuyn, Than loke in the table in the title of Defence/ and vnder that shal ye fynd the worde Repleuyn. After whiche word, foloweth the nomber 401 & loke in the mergent for the letter M/ and betwene that and the next letter, shal ye there fynde the defence in a Repleuyn. And in as many places of the boke shall ye find cases of the same, as ye se nombres folowe the sayde worde…



Donqz il couient q̃ les iurrours sont discharge de lour issue ou continue p-
ces enũs eux q̃ autrement il poit eẽ discõtinue. ¶ Neuton discharge lenq̃st
nous ne voill fait. ¶ Babing. Il couient q̃ vous faitz lun ou lauť. ¶ Neu-
ton donquez nous priomus vn Nisi prius deuaunt lune chief bať a tiel iour
¶ Babing. ceo poies auer par que eins quod ne ta quere de ceo.

¶DE TERMINO HILLARII ANNO
iiii, regni regis Henrici, vi,

Thomas de C. porte briefe de Recordaŕ de ses auers a tort pris enuers labbe de Borsley et count par Cottesmore de ses auers a tort pris en vn lieu appele Schepsley. &c. ¶ Candish Pur labbe dit sir vous aues cy labbe par attorney que vous dit q̃ vn W. Pynche fuit seisi de. xx. acres de terre et dun parcel de terre appel Kingstoncroft dont le lieu ou &c. est parcel en la vill de T. &c en son demesne come de fee et hors de cel graunt par le fait. &c. vn annuel rent &c. de. x. marc a vn J. abbe. &c. nostre predecessour a luy et a ses succ pur terme de. lxxx. ans le terme commenc &c. paiable &c. le quel terme dur uncore et issint vous aues cy labbe de Borley pur tant arer a tiel iour prochein deuant le pris que auowa la pris &c. come en terre charge a son distr. ¶ Martin par vre auowrie vous aues doñ title al roy de seisour quant vo⁹ aues mre q̃ vn tiel terme q̃ consuall vn frankt fuit graunt a vre predecessour sans licens q̃ .lxxx. ans conteruaile ore vn estate pur terme deui mes ditz ceo q̃ vous voiles quar ceo poet estre moue en apres asses bien p teps quere. ¶ Cottesmore Sir nous sumus pŕ de ceo que il prist nre auers en vn lieu appel Schypsley a quel il ne rñd riens par que pur def. de rñs no⁹ priomus nre damages. ¶ Martin Il dit que vn tiel fuit seisie de C. acre de terre et dun pec appell K. dont le lieu &c. est parcel issint il ad vous asses rñd. ¶ Cottes. Sir donqs il couient dir q̃ il est conu par lun et par lauter.
¶ Martin

5.1: Initial T used by Tottel in 1556, which is also used in the book of XX Songes in 1530. *De termino Michaelis anno. iiii. regni regis Henrici. vi*, STC 9636, Fol. ix. V. (image from *Early English Books Online*)

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