Behold Your Mother

The Virgin Mary in English Monasticism,

c. 1050-c. 1200

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the place of the Virgin Mary in the intellectual culture of Benedictine and Cistercian monasticism in medieval England, between *c*. 1050 and *c*. 1200. Drawing high profile thinkers, including Anselm of Canterbury (*d*. 1109), into dialogue with lesser known figures, it reveals the richness of monastic contributions to Marian doctrine and devotion, in many cases for the first time. The shape of the analysis is provided by five key 'moments' from Mary's life, unfolded consecutively across six chapters. Chapters 1 and 2, on Mary's conception, reveal a confident and pioneering monastic culture which drove the evolution of an obscure Anglo-Saxon feast into a theological doctrine, despite fierce opposition at home and abroad. Chapter 3 explains how Mary's virginity was adopted as a blueprint for the monastic life by Ælred of Rievaulx (*d*. 1167) and Baldwin of Forde (*d*. 1190), both of whom were inspired by its fruitfulness in the Incarnation of Christ. Chapter 4 brings to light the contributions made to exegesis of the Song of Songs as a poem about Mary's humility by the mysterious Honorius Augustodunensis (*d*. 1140) and John of Forde (*d*. 1214). Chapter 5, on the divine maternity, demonstrates how English monastic theologians gave new life to understanding of Mary as *Theotokos* ('God-bearer') by drawing out its significance for their own spiritual maternity as leaders of religious communities. Chapter 6 shows how Mary was believed to have entered into the pain of the Crucifixion through her own spiritual martyrdom, and how monks sought to share the experience with her by a communion of charity. These and other insights offer a compelling glimpse into the culture of English monasticism between the demise of the Anglo-Saxons and the advent of the friars. Inspired by a desire to understand and ultimately to know Mary, Benedictine and Cistercian monks produced theological and spiritual works which were imaginative, often intimate and occasionally pioneering. Most of all, they were profoundly pastoral, composed in the belief that Mary could inspire and support those who had embarked upon the monastic *via perfectionis*.

For my grandparents

Contents

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Abbreviations

CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*
CF	*Cistercian Fathers Series*
CS	*Cistercian Studies Series*
CSCO	*Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*
NPNF	*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
SC	*Sources Chretiennes*
SAOp	*S. Anselmi, Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, Opera Omnia*
SBOp	*S. Bernardi Opera*

Introduction

> Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory.[1]

These words from Paul's letter to the Colossians speak of both the essence and the promise of monastic life in the Middle Ages, including as it was experienced by Benedictines and Cistercians in England between *c*. 1050 and *c*. 1200. In particular, they point to the tension which lay at its heart: the challenge for monks to look beyond the world of sensory experience in which they were living, to the heavenly realm which they sought to inhabit.[2] The monastic vocation called individuals to live apart from the world, the more keenly to focus on 'the things that are above'. Benedictines and Cistercians lived according to precepts articulated by Benedict of Nursia (*c*. 480-540) in his short *Regula* – known, affectionately, as his 'little rule for beginners' (*minimam inchoationis regulam*)[3] – and, whilst they interpreted the text differently, they shared a vision of the monastic life as a *via dolorosa*, a sacrificial path, which entailed hardship in the world for the sake of eternal glory: 'faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death, we shall through patience share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom'.[4]

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[1] *...quae sursum sunt sapite non quae supra terram, mortui enim estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo; cum Christus apparuerit vita vestra tunc et vos apparebitis cum ipso in gloria*. Col. 3:2-4.

[2] Gert Melville has provided a powerful characterisation of the monastic flight from the world, describing monks as 'those who, though still living had already entered the realm of Paradise and who, because of the power granted to them there, stood closer to God than all others. And to be close to God meant salvation. One could thus see monks as points on a moral compass, as exemplary figures, and as models for the fact that the hope of salvation could be realised. Yet the Paradise of the monks was only attainable through *anachoresis*, the renunciation of the mundane world. Only then could one lead an unconditionally religious life – a *vita religiosa* – that was both ultimately fulfilling and lived to the exclusion of all else.' G. Melville, *The World of Medieval Monasticism: Its History and Forms of Life*, CS 263 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2016), p. 2. For a slightly different formulation of this point, see Melville, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 353.

[3] *Regula Sancti Benedicti* LXXIII, 8. See *RB1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. by T. Fry (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981).

[4] *...in eius doctrinam usque ad mortem in monasterio perseverantes, passionibus Christi per patientiam participemur, ut et regno eius mereamur esse consortes*. *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, 'Prologus', 50; see also LXXIII, 8. This may be compared to

Although it is impossible to be sure exactly how many men became monks in our period, the scale of the phenomenon and its exponential growth in the wake of the Norman Conquest (1066) is suggested by a comparison of the number of monasteries which the new regime inherited from the Anglo-Saxons and, in turn, introduced. At the time of the Conquest, there were at least thirty-five Benedictine foundations in England.[5] These were autonomous houses – they had neither mother houses nor dependencies, nor any federation to bind them to one another – concentrated in the south of England and varying in wealth, from Glastonbury (£828 per annum) to Horton in Dorset (£12 per annum).[6] Curiously, though, whilst homogeneity was less characteristic of monasticism than local variation in wealth,[7] not to mention custom, the monks themselves probably had much in common if, as David Knowles has suggested, most 'were…of the class of landowners, great and small', with many close links to the royal family.[8] The preponderance of such well-connected monks throughout the Benedictine community as a whole would certainly begin to explain why some of the great abbots and

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the description of monasticism as a penitential way of life by Conrad of Eberbach (*d. c.* 1221) in his *Exordium Magnum*, a compilation of Cistercian history and teaching, which demonstrates the persistence and intensification of Benedict's vision over the centuries. See Conrad of Eberbach, *Exordium magnum ordinis cisterciensis* I, 1 (PL 185, 995-1198C (995-997C)); trans. by B. Ward and P. Savage, *The Great Beginning of Cîteaux*, CF 72 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2012), pp. 47-48.

[5] Robert Bartlett has estimated that there were thirty-seven Benedictine houses in England at the time of Conquest. See R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 417. For useful surveys of English monasticism in our period, see D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 943-1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1963); J. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, pp. 412-439.

[6] David Knowles has estimated that the aggregate income of the monasteries was £11,066 in 1086. See Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 100-101; see, also, Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 9-10, 22.

[7] See *ibid*., p. 20; see, also, J. G. Clarke, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011), p. 2.

[8] Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 103; see, also, H. Lawrence, 'The Monastic Revival', in N. Saul, ed., *England in Europe, 1066-1453* (London: Collins & Brown Ltd, 1994), pp. 55-64 (p. 55). There was greater scope for men of lower social status to enter the monastic life in the later Middle Ages; see Clark, *The Benedictines*, p. 70. Janet Burton has described how the reigns of kings Edgar (*r*. 959-975) and Cnut (*r*. 1016-1035) were highpoints in the relationships between monasteries and the Crown. Whilst the monasteries themselves benefitted from the wealth and prestige of royal patronage, the Crown arguably gained a greater advantage in the form of the stability and uniformity of much of the realm. Through the monasteries, the Crown extended its influence into geographical areas which had previously been under aristocratic or Danish control and, by practices such as appointing abbots rather than thegns to oversee hundredal courts, it prevented members of the nobility from using the judicial system to nurture bases of personal power and resistance. See Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 3, 5, 12.

monasteries, such as Glastonbury, were focal points of resistance in the early days of Norman rule.[9] They were beneficiaries of, and therefore wedded to, the tenurial and governmental customs of the pre-Conquest era,[10] predisposed to oppose changes made by the new king, William I (*r*. 1066-1087), and his successors.[11]

The sometimes tempestuous relationships between monasteries and the Crown did not, however, discourage monastic vocations, which greatly increased during the reforming tenure of Lanfranc as archbishop of Canterbury (*abp*. 1070-1089), and beyond. In the final decade of the eleventh century, poor relations with Normandy under William II (*r*. 1087-1100) encouraged the Anglo-Norman nobility to endow English rather than continental monasteries, but the reign of Henry I (*r*. 1100-1135) was by far the most significant time, witnessing the genesis of two-thirds of those houses founded between 1066 and his death, including eighty Benedictine cells.[12] Statistics from some of the largest houses also show a strong upward trajectory in vocations. Christ Church, Canterbury, became the largest monastic community in England, with over one hundred monks, closely followed by Gloucester which increased from ten to one hundred under abbot Serlo (*ab*. 1072-1104). Evesham and Worcester also increased, from twelve each to thirty-five and fifty respectively; Rochester grew from twenty-two to over sixty under bishop Gundulf (*bp*. 1077-1108); and the community at Westminster was over eighty strong when abbot Gilbert Crispin died in 1117.[13]

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[9] On the vulnerability of the wealthy Anglo-Saxon houses, see E. Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1135* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), p. 207.

[10] This was a matter of survival for the monasteries, since 'revenues which derived from the possession of land were required for the maintenance of the monastic community, to feed and clothe its members, and to provide them with the material means to perform their task of corporate prayer for the welfare of humankind'. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, p. 11.

[11] See Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 103-106. On the reign of William I and its gradual transformation of the monastic order in England by the substitution of almost all native abbots with Normans, see Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 22-23; Lawrence, 'Monastic Revival', p. 56. It is important to note: 'The Anglo-Saxon monastic chroniclers who charted the progress of the Norman settlement did not, on the whole, complain about the wholesale replacement of their abbots by alien rulers except, as at Glastonbury, where they created havoc by their high-handed methods. They did, however, complain vociferously on other matters, principally that the Normans carried off treasures from their churches to enrich the religious houses of Normandy; that their estates were devastated; that Norman abbots granted away abbey property; and that estates were lost because of the need to provide land for knights.' Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, p. 25.

[12] See Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 185-188.

[13] See Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 126.

In the twelfth century, English monasticism received a further boost from the arrival of the Cistercians to Waverley (1128), who found particularly receptive audiences in Yorkshire and Northumberland for their strict interpretation of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*.[14] This was in marked contrast to the Benedictines, whose northernmost house at the time of the Conquest was Burton in Staffordshire.[15] The support of Cistercian mother houses and the white monks' basic requirements for living meant that, even in the most hostile environments, new foundations could spring up rapidly within the Cistercian franchise, precipitating what has been described as 'the great invasion' of England and Wales by the white monks.[16] By 1200, some forty-eight Cistercian houses had been established (forty-nine, including Melrose on the Scottish border), all of which were dedicated to the Virgin Mary;[17] she was the most popular patron of monastic foundations in medieval England and Wales, and the number of dedications to her is estimated to have risen from twenty-four at the time of the Conquest, to two hundred and thirty-five by 1216.[18] The astonishing success of the Cistercians may be glimpsed

[14] Knowles has described northern England in the first-quarter of the twelfth century as 'a field ready for sowing' and 'largely virgin soil'. He has explained: 'If in 1130 a line had been drawn across England from the mouth of the Welland to the estuary of the Mersey, the district north of it would have been found to contain only five abbeys, the cathedral priory of Durham, and two or three smaller houses.' Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 229.

[15] See Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, p. 5. This began to change when Benedictine monks returned to Whitby under Reinfrid in *c.* 1078/79 and replaced the secular custodians of St Cuthbert's shrine at Durham in 1089. Norman monks, too, made their mark in the north; for example, Benedictines from Marmoutier in Normandy took over the church of the Holy Trinity in York in 1089. See Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 18, 31-33. Marmoutier also provided monks for the Conqueror's own foundation at Battle. See Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 30-31.

[16] 'All the white monks needed was a sufficient area of waste land, capable of being cultivated for the needs of a group of men which did not in the beginning exceed thirty. Buildings were of course necessary – indeed, the Cistercian constitutions were explicit on the point – but it was enough that these should in origin be of wood or wattle work. Thus the sacrifice and outlay on a Cistercian foundation might well be almost negligible.' Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 246-247; see, also, pp. 227, 230; P. King, *Western Monasticism: A History of the Monastic Movement in the Latin Church*, CS 185 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999), p. 179. Simplicity was also characteristic of early Cistercian churches, vestments and sacred vessels; see *Capitula* XXV-XXVI, ed. by C. Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux: Latin Text in dual edition with English Translation and Notes* (Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses, 1999), pp. 408-413 (p. 413). On the importance of lay patronage, see Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 71-72.

[17] See Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 707-709 ('Appendix XI'); King, *Western Monasticism*, p. 179; *Capitula* IX, 2, ed. by Waddell, *Texts from Early Cîteaux*, p. 408.

[18] The second most popular patron after the Virgin Mary was St Peter, whose number of dedications rose modestly from nine in 1066 to twenty-nine (plus, forty-seven with St Paul) by 1216. See A. Binns, *Dedications of Monastic Houses in England and Wales, 1066-1216* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), pp. 18, 21.

from the example of Rievaulx in Yorkshire, which increased the size of its community from twenty-five to over three hundred under abbot William (*ab*. 1131-1145) in its first twelve years.[19] With these foundations, the Cistercians introduced to England a new form of monastic organization – a federation, undergirded by common legislation and enforced by visitations and an annual general chapter – which has been called their 'unique contribution…to the monastic life of the twelfth century'.[20] Furthermore, the advent of Cistercian monasticism brought the English church even more securely within the orbit of continental Christianity – at least in respect of the religious life – than Lanfranc's reforms of the previous century. All this serves to illustrate the scale of the phenomenon with which any study of monasticism in medieval England – even one aspect of it, such as the Marian cult – is dealing.

Paul's words to the Colossians also point to the reason why individual men and women responded in vast numbers to the peculiar invitation of *fuga mundi* ('flight from the world'): the hope that they would be glorified with Christ.[21] The potency of this promise was especially acute in the medieval world on account of the pervasive sense that salvation, the great prize, was far from guaranteed. Moreover, salvation was seen by many as the least likely outcome in the game of life, in which the possibility of eternal damnation loomed largest. Escape from the temptations of the world into a monastery was thought to offer the best hope of salvation; Gert Melville has characterised perseverance in the monastic life as a 'struggle for salvation'.[22] This was certainly the opinion of one of the monastic authors whose work is analysed throughout this study, Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109), abbot of Bec and later

[19] See Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 245.

[20] Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, p. 65; for an example of how this federal structure worked in practice, see *Summa Cartæ Caritatis* V, ed. by Waddell, *Texts from Early Cîteaux*, pp. 404-407 (pp. 406-407). On the evolution of these ideas as the Order spread and abbeys were founded in more remote territories, see Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, p. 66. For a more detailed analysis of the distinctiveness of the Cistercians, see Melville, *Medieval Monasticism*, pp. 136-157; King, *Western Monasticism*, pp. 176-178.

[21] Although this study focuses upon male religious, for analysis of female monastic life in England before and after the Norman Conquest, see S. Foot, *Veiled Women*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); S. Thompson, *Women Religious: The Founding of English Nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[22] Melville, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 356. Hence, Lanfranc's *Constitutions* set out 'what is necessary for salvation'; see G. R. Evans, 'The Meaning of Monastic Culture: Anselm and his Contemporaries', in J. G. Clark, ed., *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2007), pp. 75-86 (p. 76).

primate of England from 1093 until his death. For Anselm, salvation required total self-abnegation and the consecration of the heart and mind to God which, as one of his letters expressed, he thought that it was extremely difficult to achieve amidst the attachments and temptations of the world:

> If you say, 'not only monks reach salvation', it is true. But who are more certain [to do so], who higher? Those who strive to love God alone or those who want to couple love of God and love of the world at the same time? […] Moreover, if someone who endeavours to love God alone keeps his intention to the end, his salvation is certain. But if someone who wishes to love the world does not abandon his intention before the end, his salvation is either non-existent or doubtful or of a lesser degree.[23]

Even for monks, however, the road to salvation was perceived to be littered with obstacles and challenges, a sobering reality which Anselm summed-up with a phrase from Matthew's Gospel in letters of encouragement he wrote to a pious laywoman, Countess Ida of Boulogne (*c*. 1160-1216), and an anonymous nun: 'Many are called but few are chosen' (*multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi*; Mt 22:14).[24] Such a sense of the precariousness and uncertainty of salvation was pervasive, even for those in the religious life or sincere in their commitment to holiness, as these two female correspondents of Anselm certainly were.

Nevertheless, it was also the faith of medieval monks that they were not alone. They did not believe themselves to have been abandoned by God in the wilderness of the world, forced to make their

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[23] *Si dicis: non soli monachi ad salutem perveniunt: verum est. Sed qui certius, qui altius: illi qui solum deum conantur amare, an illi qui amorem dei et amorem saeculi simul volunt copulare?* […] *Denique si ille, qui solum deum nititur amare, servat propositum usque in finem: certa est salus. Si vero ille, qui mundum vult amare, non deserit suum propositum ante finem: aut nulla aut dubia aut minor est salus*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Ep*. CXXI, lines 22-25, 28-31 (SAOp III, p. 261); trans. by W. Fröhlich, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 1, CS 96 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), pp. 288-290 (p. 289). For comment, see R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought, 1059-c. 1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 108-109; R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 163; B. P. McGuire, '*c*. 1080-1215: culture and history', in S. Fanous and V. Gillespie, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 29-47 (p. 33).

[24] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Epp*. CLXVII, CLXXXIV (SAOp. IV, p. 42, lines 20-21; p. 69, line 7).

way back to him without map or compass. (Indeed, they did not think that independence from the Divine was possible nor that anything good could be accomplished without God's sanctifying and life-giving grace.) Rather, monks believed that they had been given the tools for the job. They were moulded and supported by the precepts of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, the liturgy – especially the Divine Office – the Mass and the sacraments, and other indispensable means of grace. They also believed that their communities, by which they were shaped and sustained, were a participation in and a foretaste of the still greater community of the saints in heaven. The saints already enjoyed the glory spoken of by Paul to the Colossians and, medieval monks hoped, they interceded – offering prayers and petitions to God, not to mention a multitude of holy examples to be emulated – on behalf of faithful earthly pilgrims. Hence, thirteen of the nineteen prayers composed by Anselm were addressed to the saints – from John the Baptist and Mary Magdalene, to Benedict and Nicholas – and sought their aid.[25] The Virgin Mary, Mother of God – to whom Anselm addressed his three greatest prayers – was considered to be chief amongst the saints and, thereby, the principal exemplar and intercessor for monks with God.[26] By entering the monastic life, medieval Christians believed that they were passing through the narrow gate (Mt 7:14), taking up their cross and following Christ (Mt 16:24). In suffering for, with and in the crucified Christ, however, they also understood themselves, like John the beloved disciple who stood at the foot of the Cross, to have been placed into Mary's loving care: 'behold your mother' (*ecce mater tua*; Jn 19:27).[27]

Unsurprisingly, therefore, medieval monks yearned to know Mary, to meet her in prayer, to understand the mystery of her election and her divine maternity more deeply, and to emulate her more perfectly. It is the central contention of this thesis that, through their theological and spiritual works, English Benedictine and Cistercian monks contributed significantly to the manifestation of and response

[25] See SAOp. III, pp. 5-75. Anselm's prayers have been beautifully translated into English; see B. Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion* (London: Penguin, 1973), pp. 91-219.

[26] On the preeminent quality of Anselm's three Marian prayers, see R. W. Southern, 'Foreword', in Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 9-15 (pp. 12-13).

[27] Rachel Fulton has noted the increased frequency with which Mary's presence on Calvary was mentioned in prayers from the eleventh century. See R. Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 535, n. 15.

to these desires in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. As described later in this introduction, the precise ways in which they did so – the nature of their contributions and, where especially noteworthy, the backgrounds and consequences of their ideas – are analysed in six chapters, each of which focuses upon a particular Mariological theme and which are ordered to correspond to the monks' understanding of how Mary's vocation unfolded: her conception (chapters 1 and 2), her fruitful virginity (chapter 3), her espousal to Christ and her humility (chapter 4), her divine maternity (chapter 5), and her suffering at the foot of the Cross (chapter 6). The Virgin Mary became central to monastic culture – thought and experience – during the Middle Ages, especially from the eleventh century onwards.[28] This meant, too, that she became central to medieval religious life in general since, as Miri Rubin has observed in her own survey of the development of Marian doctrine and devotion, monks 'set trends' for the devotional lives of the faithful.[29]

Through their efforts to understand, encounter and emulate Mary, however, English monks also participated in an ancient aspect of their tradition, since Mariology had been a feature of Christian life from its earliest days. As multiple surveys have demonstrated, there was curiosity about Mary from the beginning of the church, illustrated by the emergence of apocryphal stories about her life in the second century – most famously, the *Protevangelium of James*, which has survived in over one hundred and fifty Greek manuscripts – which sought to supplement the paucity of information about the Mother of Jesus in the canonical scriptures and, so, to satisfy the curiosity of the faithful.[30] In such texts may be found the origins of a number of significant elements of the Marian cult, including the motifs of her virginity, miraculous conception, intercession and, from the fifth century, her Dormition or Assumption.[31] In art, too, Mary's cult manifested itself early, especially in the form of frescoes depicting the Adoration of the Magi – not, interestingly, the Nativity – which have been traced to the

[28] It is not uncontroversial to speak of a single 'monastic culture'; culture has been described as 'a set of assumptions hanging together in the make-up of a person or system or style, and determining their ways of approaching or doing things', and medieval monks acquired theirs by a process of formation. Evans, 'The Meaning of Monastic Culture', pp. 75, 77.

[29] M. Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 121. On the significance of the Marian cult in England during our period, see Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, pp. 469-471.

[30] See J. K. Elliott, 'Mary in the Apocryphal New Testament', in C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Burns and Oates, 2008), pp. 57-70. See chapter 1 of this thesis.

[31] See Elliott, 'Mary in the Apocryphal New Testament', pp. 63-67.

fourth century.[32] Likewise, the earliest surviving prayer seeking Mary's intercession – *Sub tuum praesiduum* – has been dated to the third century.[33]

Alongside these expressions of cultural and devotional interest in Mary, the Fathers of the early church also reflected theologically upon her place in the mystery of human redemption. Amongst the earliest to do so was Justin Martyr (*c.* 100-165) who proposed to interpret Mary as the 'new Eve', the counterpart to Christ, the 'new Adam' (see Rm 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22).[34] A slightly later but more decisive theological development occurred in the fifth century when, following the Council of Ephesus (431AD), Mary was officially proclaimed *Theotokos* ('God-bearer'), a title which may itself have been in use from the third century.[35] This proclamation was significant for a number of reasons. Fundamentally, since it was made to safeguard the reality of the Incarnation and since it focused upon Mary's role as 'mother', it ensured that subsequent Mariological speculation would take place within and in relation to the field of Christology – Mary was rarely considered apart from the mysteries of her son – and that the ground or *fundamentum* of Mariology would be the divine maternity; Mary's life and experience were, thereafter, often read using a maternal hermeneutic. Alongside this proclamation, the early church ensured its abiding influence, including in medieval England, by the writings of Ambrose

[32] Geri Parlby has sought to distinguish genuine representations of Mary from the early church from others, such as a third-century fresco from the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, which have been misinterpreted. Interestingly, she has also observed how the popular apocryphal texts of Mary's life, to which we have referred, do not seem to have influenced Marian art until the fourth century. See G. Parlby, 'The Origins of Marian Art in the Catacombs and the Problems of Identification', in Maunder, ed., *Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 41-56 (p. 50, on the influence of the apocrypha).

[33] See L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco, NC: Ignatius Press, 1999), p. 69. *Sub tuum praesidium* came to be recited in Cistercian monasteries before Mass; see E. Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe, 1090-1500* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 229.

[34] See Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 100 (PG 6, 709-712); trans. by T. B. Falls, in *The Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, ed. by L. Schopp (New York: Christian Heritage, Inc., 1948), pp. 141-366. For comment, see Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, pp. 46-48; H. Graef and T. A. Thompson, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2009), p. 30; B. K. Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven: Marian Doctrine and Devotion, Image and Typology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods*, vol. 1, 'Doctrine and Devotion' (New York: New City Press, 2012), p. 55.

[35] See R. M. Price, 'The *Theotokos* and the Council of Ephesus', in Maunder, ed., *Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 89-103 (pp. 89-91). It is important to note that Price has contested the idea that the Council of Ephesus itself gave the vital impetus to the emergence and accelerated development of the Marian cult. On the contrary, he has emphasised that the Council was Christological not Mariological and drew upon, rather than initiating, a pre-existing title gleaned from a pre-existing Marian cult which was then in its infancy. See Price, *Theotokos*, p. 99.

of Milan (*c*. 337-397), Jerome (*c*. 347-420) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430), the three giants of western theology who brought Mariology into the theological mainstream. It does not seem necessary to summarise their contributions here, however, since we return to them throughout this study, alongside other antecedents to the English Benedictine and Cistercian theologians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

In respect of medieval England, in particular, Mary Clayton's wide-ranging analysis of the Anglo-Saxon cult has helpfully provided an outline history of Mariology and an explanation of how Mary's feasts and an understanding of her privileges spread to and developed in England before the Norman Conquest. The importance of Bede (*c*. 672-735) must be highlighted here, since it was chiefly through his exegetical works that the ideas of the Latin Fathers were transmitted.[36] Bede bequeathed to his English successors a vision of Mary which was fully integrated within his Christology; in no sense did the mystery of Mary stand apart from the prerogatives or redemptive purpose of her son. Her divine maternity was Bede's fundamental principle, with everything which took place before the Incarnation (namely, Mary's sanctification in the womb) making sense only as a preparation for it, and everything which took place afterwards (namely, her Assumption) being understood as its corollary or consequence.[37] Bede was also faithful to the ecclesial dimension of patristic Mariology, seeing Mary as a type of the church, which Giles Gasper has suggested was one of the hallmarks of western Mariology over against that of the east.[38]

The most important justification behind a thesis examining the development of Mariology in English monasticism in this period, especially after the Conquest, is to recognise and analyse the significant contributions of monks to the tradition just described, in most cases for the first time.[39] The

[36] See M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 15-19.

[37] See *ibid.*, p. 15. For helpful summaries of Bede's Mariology, see Graef and Thompson, *Mary*, pp. 127-129; L. Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of the Medieval Latin Theologians* (San Franciso, NC: Ignatius Press, 2005), pp. 36-42; M. O'Carroll, *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), pp. 72-73.

[38] See G. E. M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and his Theological Inheritance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 144-152.

[39] One sign that the Mariology of English monastic theologians from this period – especially the Cistercians – has been neglected is that, as Henrietta Leyser has pointed out, the best survey remains Hilda Graef's classic work originally published

specific authors whose treatises, sermons and prayers are scrutinised here, are: three Benedictines, Anselm, Eadmer of Canterbury (*c*. 1060-1126) and Nicholas of St Albans; four Cistercians, Ælred of Rievaulx (*c*. 1110-1167), Gilbert of Hoyland (*d. c*. 1172), Baldwin of Forde (*c*. 1125-1190) and John of Forde (*c*. 1150-1214); and a mysterious defender of monasticism with close ties to the Benedictines in Canterbury, even though he did not take their vows himself, Honorius Augustodunensis (*d. c*. 1140).[40] All of these monks contributed to the English church – including two, Anselm and Baldwin, as archbishops of Canterbury (from 1093-1109 and 1185-1190, respectively) – in the century and a half following the Norman Conquest.

Secondly, this thesis seeks to use the Marian cult to shed further light upon the impact of the Conquest on English monasticism more generally. On the whole, both the theology and spirituality of the English church and its Mariology in the period between the demise of the Anglo-Saxons and the advent of the friars in the thirteenth century, have been neglected. The parameters of this study, *c*. 1050 to *c*. 1200, keep this period in clear view. In respect of monasticism in general, the Conquest had a remarkable impact, for better and sometimes worse. As Janet Burton has explained, in its wake there came changes which meant that monasteries were required to provide quotas of knights for the king (this was possibly a pre-Conquest practice, but it was 'sharpened and defined' by William I);[41] the English phenomenon of monastic cathedrals, which the Normans seem to have admired, more than doubled in the first half-century of Norman rule; new foundations were established in England with mother houses in Normandy (so-called 'alien priories'); new English monasteries were founded, including in the north (beginning at Selby in York, in *c*. 1069) where the new regime needed to shore

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as two volumes in the 1960s. This thesis uses Graef's study in its most recent form, revised and updated by Thomas Thompson. For our period, see Graef and Thompson, *Mary*, ch. 5. See H. Leyser, 'Christina of Markyate: The Introduction', in S. Fanous and H. Leyser, eds, *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth-Century Holy Woman* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 1-11 (p. 11, n. 20). In respect of Marian devotion in the monasteries, notwithstanding the contribution which this thesis hopes to make by providing some valuable signposts for future work, see N. Morgan, 'Texts and Images of Marian Devotion in English Twelfth-Century Monasticism, and their Influence on the Secular Church', in B. Thompson, ed., *Monasteries and Society in Medieval Britain* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1999), pp. 117-136.

[40] See chapter 4 of this thesis.

[41] This was the view of Marjorie Chibnall, cited in Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, p. 27; see M. Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1166* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 28-30.

up its hold on power; a number of autonomous Cluniac houses received royal patronage, starting with Reading in 1121 under Henry I; and, finally – in part vicariously through these Cluniac foundations and in order to facilitate liturgical changes introduced by Lanfranc's *Decreta* – the Conquest resulted in major changes to the building and ornamentation of the monasteries.[42]

Most significantly, however, the Conquest opened England up to what Hugh Lawrence has called the 'currents of thought and learning that were transforming the intellectual world of the eleventh century' and which had begun to take root in Normandy itself from 1001.[43] Thus, it might be claimed that the Conquest began to remedy what William of Malmesbury (*c*. 1080-1143) and other contemporary chroniclers described as the parochial, moribund and impoverished condition of English Benedictine monasteries in the eleventh century. William claimed that the eleventh century witnessed 'the swift ebb of that great tide of [monastic] reform which was associated in all men's minds with Edgar's reign [*c*. 959-975]',[44] and whilst his view cannot be accepted uncritically, neither can it be ignored. It was certainly true that the Conquest brought in its train England's most important intellectual of the period, Anselm of Canterbury, who cultivated a circle of English monks (not to mention many others on the continent) who would themselves contribute significantly to the native church, including its Marian cult. These included Eadmer and Honorius – whose works are analysed in this thesis – and others, amongst whom Gilbert Crispin (*c*. 1055-1117) is notable, although he did not write about the Virgin Mary.[45] Alongside the Conquest, only the reign of Henry I was as significant for the development of the Marian cult in the monasteries. Henry's reign saw the arrival of the Cistercians,

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[42] For discussion of all of these developments, see Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, pp. 28-33, 35-42.

[43] Lawrence, 'Monastic Revival', pp. 55, 56; see, also, Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 191, 207. Lawrence has also provided a helpful insight into the situation at the end of the twelfth century, by which time such changes had taken root: 'By the end of the century, monastic communities were normally bi-lingual in French and English. In the Benedictine abbeys, while a native tradition visually reasserted itself in the great schools of manuscript painting at Winchester, Canterbury and Bury St Edmunds, the products of their *scriptoria* and the contents of their libraries show that the monks shared with their overseas brethren a literary culture that was common to western Christendom.' Lawrence, 'Monastic Revival', p. 64.

[44] F. Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066: A Constitutional History* (London: Longmans, 1963), p. 25. See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, trans. by D. Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), p. 4. See, also, Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders*, p. 7. For an account of tenth-century monastic reform and its impact, see H. R. Loyn, *The English Church, 940-1154* (Essex: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), pp. 1-47.

[45] See G. R. Evans, *Anselm and a New Generation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

complete with royal approval and patronage, who would make a number of significant contributions to the development of Marian doctrine and devotion during the twelfth century, not least under the influence of Anselm. In addition, Henry himself was instrumental in obtaining approval for the feast of Mary's Conception by a legatine synod held in London in 1129.[46]

Finally, by adopting an intellectual lens (broadly defined to include both theology and spirituality), this thesis seeks to complement scholarship which has focused primarily upon the church in this period as a secular body and upon its relationships with other institutions in the realm, especially the Crown. Frank Barlow's work, for instance, whilst indispensable was self-confessedly 'constitutional'. As the programmatic statement from the preface to his study of the Anglo-Norman church clarified, his perspective was 'determined by an interest in [the] structure, function, and activity' of the church, to the exclusion of its 'intellectual history' or '*spiritualité*'.[47] In practice, this meant that his consideration of monasticism focused upon subjects like the dynamics of patronage in the orders' relationships with the Crown, rather than the contributions of particular monastic authors to medieval theology or spirituality.[48] The limitations of this approach were evident in, for example, his treatment of saints' cults and hagiography in the eleventh century, which he presented as modes of historical education; vehicles for the indoctrination of the medieval faithful into the church's preferred narrative of its own history.[49] This view is partial and incomplete because it neglects the significance of the saints' miracle-working shrines and their perceived intercessory power for animating medieval religious experience, as well as their important function as teachers in the school of virtue;[50] a 'gallery of good examples' and 'ideals of sanctity', embodying unchanging virtues made relevant in different

[46] See chapter 2 of this thesis.

[47] F. Barlow, *The English Church, 1066-1154* (London: Longman, 1979), p. vi.

[48] This limitation in works of ecclesiastical history touching the medieval English church is not new; in the 1940s, David Knowles was lamenting the narrowness of focus in studies of Lanfranc: 'in so far as they have treated of [him], it has been as statesman and ecclesiastic rather than as monk and spiritual leader'. Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 107.

[49] See Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066*, p. 9.

[50] Cistercian monasticism, in particular, understood itself to be a school of virtue; see, for example, *Exordium Cistercii* I, 5, ed. by Waddell, *Texts from Early Cîteaux*, pp. 399-404 (p. 400).

generations, to offer consolation, encouragement and hope to the faithful.[51] Throughout this study, it is evident that these features of saints' cults in general, when viewed from the perspective of *spiritualité*, also became central features of Marian devotion in the English Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries in our period.[52] Our theological and devotional focus acts as a counterweight to constitutional histories by recalling that the secular body and operation of the medieval English church was also animated by an intellectual culture and spirituality.[53]

This thesis has six thematic chapters, each of which focuses upon some aspect of the Virgin Mary's vocation as the medieval monks believed it to have unfolded. At the end of each chapter, there is a brief conclusion, drawing out the implications of the main findings for the argument as a whole; at this point, by way of preparation, it may be apposite to draw attention to the main topics under consideration in each case. To begin with, chapters 1 and 2 analyse the tumultuous history of the feast of Mary's Conception and its development from an obscure commemoration of the miraculous pregnancy of St Anne, pioneered by a small number of reforming Benedictine monasteries, into a celebration of the origin of Mary's sinlessness. Dividing the discussion across two chapters makes it possible to do justice to the two developmental phases through which the history of the feast and its accompanying theology passed: roughly, 1050-1090 and 1090-1200. Although the question of the relationship between these periods is kept in view – it may not, in fact, be possible to speak of distinct Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-

[51] The phrase a 'gallery of good examples' comes from J. Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London: Continuum, 1995), p. 25, which included a reprint of his article, 'Bede', from T. A. Dorey and E. A. Thompson, eds, *Latin Historians* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 159-190; see, also, P. Wormald, *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and its Historian*, ed. by S. Baxter (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 62. The phrase 'ideals of sanctity' is taken from K. Madigan, *Medieval Christianity: A New History* (New Haven, CT; London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 320-322. On the significance of medieval saints' cults in general, see Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, pp. 460-472; R. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013).

[52] For a general comment on Mary's significance, see Madigan, *Medieval Christianity*, p. 340.

[53] Such a theological and spiritual lens has been employed before but rarely have scholars had the luxury of being able to focus on a single subject throughout an entire work as we have been able to do here in respect of the Marian cult. For useful snapshots of the English theological and devotional milieu in our period, see Loyn, *The English Church*, pp. 138-155; McGuire, '*c.* 1080-1215: culture and history', p. 33; H. Leyser, '*c.* 1080-1215: texts', in Fanous and Gillespie, eds, *Medieval English Mysticism*, pp. 49-67.

Norman celebrations – this separation helpfully demarcates two definitely distinct periods, separated from one another by the official suppression of the feast and characterised by a shift in the monastic theologians' understanding of its significance.

In chapter 3, consideration is given to the paradox of Mary's fruitful virginity and, in particular, to the question of how monastic leaders attempted to draw lessons from it for their own communities. This is the first chapter to bring the writings of members of different religious orders into dialogue; namely, the Benedictine, Anselm, and the Cistercians, Ælred of Rievaulx, Baldwin of Forde and John of Forde. Chapter 4, on Marian exegesis of the Song of Songs, continues this approach by comparing the perspectives of Cistercian theologians, especially John of Forde, to that of Honorius Augustodunensis on the subject of Mary's humility. This chapter also evaluates the extent of the contribution made by these theologians to the allegorical interpretation of the biblical text as a poem about Mary, which became popular in our period but is generally associated with Rupert of Deutz (*c*. 1075-1129) and Alain of Lille (*c*. 1128-1202). Although Honorius was probably neither English nor a monk, he has been included here as a defender of monasticism and a notable student of Anselm, who composed his Marian commentary on the Song of Songs – *Sigillum beatae Mariae ubi exponuntur cantica canticorum* – during several years he spent in England.

Chapter 5 covers what might be described as the most 'traditional' subject matter of the thesis, namely, the divine maternity. Mary's most ancient and well-known title is *Theotokos* ('God-bearer'), which she received following the Council of Ephesus as part of an effort to defend the truth of the Incarnation against the accusations that Christ's humanity was merely a pretence, or that the man Jesus was adopted by or assumed divinity during the course of his life. Following the Council, the acceptance of Mary as *Theotokos* became a sign of Christological orthodoxy and the idea itself has been a key Mariological principle ever since. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were no exception to this general rule, and both Benedictine and Cistercian monks in England contemplated the divine maternity in their treatises, sermons and prayers. This chapter considers how monastic theologians like Anselm, Ælred, Gilbert and John affirmed and rearticulated for their own times a Theotokoin orthodoxy which they had received from the Latin Fathers, Ambrose and Augustine, and the leading lights of a bygone age of monastic theology in the English milieu, Bede and Alcuin of York (*c*. 735-804).

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with analysis of the cult of the *Mater Dolorosa* – Mary as the suffering mother at the foot of the Cross – and its correlative theological ideas of her co-Passion and mediation. It also offers a perspective on the scholarly debate surrounding the nature and development of monastic spirituality at this time which, although not the primary purpose of the chapter, is more than an interesting by-product because it locates the Marian cult in broader spiritual trends both within and beyond England.

1

Miraculously Conceived

Celebrating Mary's Conception to c. 1090

> In her desolation, Anne cried out a prayer to God for the gift of a child, vowing that any child she bore in answer to this prayer would be consecrated to the Lord's service. The Lord heard her appeal, and while Joachim was tending his flocks in the fields, an angel appeared to him to announce that his wife would conceive a child.[1]

> O God, who foretold the conception of the blessed virgin Mary to her parents by an angelic prophecy, grant to this your family here present to be strengthened by her protection, the sacred fitting festival of whose conception is honoured by a celebration.[2]

Prayers and theological reflections on the mystery of Mary's conception represent the most important contributions made by English Benedictine monks to the unfolding of western ideas about the Virgin in the Middle Ages. This chapter, the first of two on this subject, considers the Anglo-Saxon feast of the Conception, from *c*. 1050 until its suppression during the primacy of Archbishop Lanfranc (*abp*. 1070-1089). Celebrated in this early period as the first event of salvation through Christ, Mary's conception was regarded as the precursor to her divine maternity and the Incarnation. Unlike their Anglo-Norman successors, the Anglo-Saxon monks did not think of Mary's conception in terms of her freedom from original sin. Instead, they built upon three theological traditions – apocryphal, patristic

[1] S. J. Boss, 'The Development of the Doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception', in S. J. Boss, ed., *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 207-235 (p. 208).

[2] *Deus, qui beate Mariae virginis conceptionem angelico vaticinio parentibus predixisti, presta huic presenti familiae tuae eius presidiis muniri, cuius conceptionis sacra sollempnia congrua frequentiatione veneratur*. *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 93, ed. by D. H. Turner (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1962), p. 190; trans. by M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 82, n. 92.

and Byzantine – which held that Mary's conception was holy because it was miraculous, signified by that fact that it was announced to her parents by an angel and that it entailed the cessation of her mother's barrenness.

Surviving evidence that the feast of the Conception was celebrated in the Benedictine monasteries of the mid-eleventh century is found in three kalendars marking the date of the observance (8 December) and a collection of prayers providing the main texts for Mass on the day.[3] In celebrating the Conception at that time, England was alone in the west.[4] First adopted at New Minster, Winchester, by *c*. 1029, the feast spread to Christ Church, Canterbury, in the next quarter of the century, to Exeter under Bishop Leofric (*bp*. 1050-1072) and to Worcester at or around the time of the Norman Conquest. Major centres of monastic reform in the tenth and early-eleventh centuries, these powerful Benedictine houses were confident enough to celebrate and promote new feasts, including Mary's Conception and her Presentation in the Temple (21 November), which had only ever been celebrated in Byzantium.[5]

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[3] These comprise seven collections, in total. (1) A Benedictional from Christ Church, Canterbury, from the second-quarter of the eleventh century; see *The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harl. MS 2892)*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 51, ed. by R. M. Woolley (Norwich: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1995), pp. xiii, 118-119. (2) A prayerbook from New Minster, Winchester, composed for the monk, later abbot, Ælfwine (*d. c*. 1057), from the second-quarter of the eleventh century (by *c*. 1029); see *Ælfwine's Prayerbook (London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii)*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 108, ed. by B. Günzel (London: For the Henry Bradshaw Society by the Boydell Press, 1993), p. ix. Ælfwine's prayerbook contains the earliest surviving office of the Virgin (see *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, ed. by Günzel, pp. 53, 133-136) and a kalendar to which the Conception was added; this is no. 9 in F. Wormald, ed., *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100, vol. I. Texts*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 72 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1934). (3) A missal from New Minster, Winchester, from the second-half of the eleventh century; see *The Missal of the New Minster,* ed. by Turner, p. 190. (4) A missal from Exeter, to which Mass prayers for the Conception were added, probably under Bishop Leofric (*bp*. 1050-1072), though the missal in its entirety was formed over several centuries; see *The Leofric Missal*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vols 113, 114, ed. by N. Orchard (London: The Boydell Press, 2002), vol. 2, p. 510 (nos. 2195-2197). (5) A pontifical-benedictional from Exeter, dating from the third-quarter of the eleventh century; London, British Library, Add. 28188, see Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 45, 84-85. (6) A kalendar from New Minster, Winchester, dating from the mid-eleventh century; see London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius E.XVIII, ff. 3r-7v, no. 12 in Wormald, *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*. (7) A kalendar from Worcester, one of the contents of a *portiforium*, from sometime after Lanfranc's consecration in 1070; see Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 391, pp. 3-14, no. 17 in Wormald, *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*. See also Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 42-47, 82-88; R. Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 117 (Woodbridge: For the Henry Bradshaw Society by the Boydell Press, 2008).

[4] Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 51.

[5] Winchester, Canterbury and Worcester produced some of the most effective reformers of the age: Æthelwold (*c*. 908-984) was Bishop of Winchester from 963 until his death; Oswald (*d*. 992) studied at Canterbury and was Bishop of Worcester from 962 until his death; Wulfstan (*d*. 1023) was Bishop of Worcester from 1002 to 1016 (he was also Archbishop of York from

Anglo-Saxon beliefs about the Conception

In kalendars from Winchester (London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius E.XVIII, ff. 3r-7v) and Worcester (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 391, pp. 3-14), variations of the formula *Conceptio sancte dei genetricis Mariae* were used to describe the feast of the Conception, in which the significant phrase *sancte dei genetricis* ('holy mother of God') pointed to Mary's fundamental role as mother. This indicates that the Anglo-Saxons' primary reason for celebrating the feast was the unfolding of Mary's vocation as the Mother of God. When the New Minster Missal was created (second-half of the eleventh century), monks who composed prayers for the feast chose to refer to it alongside her conception of Christ because there was no clear doctrine of Mary's conception:

> Many of the texts for the feast of the Conception, then, manifest a confusing ambiguity in the use of the word *conceptio*, but this probably does not indicate confusion on the part of the authors so much as a desire to mark the feast of Anna's conception of Mary with a celebration, even though a doctrinal basis for this celebration had not yet been formulated. The authors frequently fell back, therefore, on praise of Mary in her fundamental role as mother of God, her *conceptio Christi*, but alluded too to the apocryphal account of her own conception by Anna.[6]

The New Minster Missal, to which Mary Clayton was referring here, included the main prayers for a Mass of the Conception (*proper*, *prefatio*, *secreta* and *postcommunio*) which eventually became the standard prayers for the Anglo-Saxon feast. With the exception of the *prefatio*, they also appeared in full in the Leofric Missal, whilst other prayers of blessing were included in the benedictionals of Christ Church, Canterbury, and Exeter. These prayers are the only surviving sources for Anglo-Saxon beliefs

1002 until his death); Ælfric (*c.* 955-1020) began his religious life as a monk of Winchester. Whilst these churchmen may not have championed the Conception, they are illustrative of the significance of their communities during the era of Benedictine revival and reform. See H. R. Loyn, *The English Church, 940-1154* (Essex: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), pp. 24-66. Their self-confidence was also evident in the art they produced, which incorporated apocryphal scenes into manuscript illuminations depicting the Virgin's life for the first time. See Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 178.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

and their existence may certainly be taken as evidence that the feast was actually observed in the monasteries. It is always possible, of course, that the Leofric Mass was copied from the New Minster Missal as part of the bishop's efforts to build up his library and by Anglo-Saxon monks who made a business of copying manuscripts.[7] In reality, though, the most compelling explanation for the composition of prayers at Winchester and the copying of them at Exeter is the intention of those communities to keep the feast; given how labour intensive it was for medieval scribes to copy liturgical books, as Richard Pfaff has argued, the best explanation for their doing so is that they were intended for practical use.[8] In respect of Exeter, this hypothesis is reinforced by the holdings of its library, which indicate an appetite for Marian doctrine and devotion conducive to the popularity of the feast; as well as texts on pertinent themes, including the *De virginibus* and *De virginitate* of Ambrose of Milan (*c*. 337-397), Exeter held a number of explicitly Marian works, including *De assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis* by Paschasius Radbertus (*c*. 785-865) and some 'Lessons on the Life of the Virgin'.[9]

The Anglo-Saxon prayers reveal that monks celebrated the Conception on account of Mary's divine maternity and that they depended for some of their content upon texts composed for other feasts, especially the Conception of St John the Baptist which was 'widely celebrated in the Anglo-Saxon Church'.[10] Just as John's conception was thought to have been announced by an angel (Lk 1:5-25), for example, so this became an important idea connected with Mary's conception; a prayer for John's feast day in the Leofric Missal began: 'O God, who on this day foresaw that John the herald of truth was to be conceived by a message of an angel' (*Deus, qui hodierna die sanctum Iohannem preconem veritatis angelico concipiendum ministerio previdisti*).[11] The idea that an angel heralded Mary's conception

[7] See Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 45.

[8] 'In the abstract, it stands to reason that the more trouble a scribe goes to…the likelier it is that the feature in question is seriously intended for use. The copying of liturgical books must have been an intensively laborious task, and we may well balance our basic caution, that appearance of something in a liturgical book does not necessarily guarantee its use, by remembering that every feature a scribe includes adds to the labor of producing the book.' R. W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 4-5.

[9] H. Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), p. 44 (no. 175.5).

[10] R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 293.

[11] Trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 83, n. 93.

appeared in the Canterbury and Exeter benedictionals, and the New Minster and Leofric missals, although it should be noted that these works used three different terms to describe the angel's action: in the Canterbury Benedictional, Mary's Conception was 'proclaimed' (*preconavit*); in the New Minster and Leofric missals, it was 'foretold' (*predixisti*); in the Exeter Benedictional, it was 'announced' (*declaravit*).

Unlike the Anglo-Norman feast, addressed in the next chapter, the Anglo-Saxon celebration did not witness to a belief in Mary's preservation from original sin; the *prefatio* of the New Minster Missal unambiguously stated that Mary had to be sanctified by God before she was born (*quam ante ortum ita sanctificasti*),[12] whilst the second part of the threefold Canterbury blessing claimed, somewhat enigmatically, that she had been 'sanctified beforehand' (*prius sanctificavit*). The latter may have been referring to the time before Mary's animation, but it seems more likely that it was pointing to the period before her birth, or her *conceptio Christi* at the Annunciation. Mary Clayton has opted for the first of these two likelier possibilities, suggesting that since the prayer associated its reference to her sanctification with the moment when she was given her name, it was probably pointing to the moment when she was born.[13] For this reason, also, Clayton has seen in the prayer a direct reference to the apocryphal narratives of Mary's life, which were circulating in England in this period and which, unlike the canonical gospels, dealt with her conception and infancy: 'The reference here to the angel's announcement of Mary's name…seems to depend on the *Liber de nativitate Mariae*, the post-Carolingian retelling of the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, as it is only in the apocryphon that the angel reveals Mary's name'.[14] However, the Canterbury prayer did not actually use Mary's given name (only a reference to its being bestowed) and there is no sense from the text that its composer meant to refer to

[12] *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 83, n. 94.

[13] '[God] sanctified her beforehand with the dignity of her name' (*Et qui illam prius sanctificavit nominis dignitate*). *The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harl. MS 2892)*, ed. by Woolley, p. 119; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 86, n. 101.

[14] Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 87. Like the Anglo-Saxon prayers, these apocryphal narratives had also taken inspiration from the narrative of John the Baptist's conception in Luke's Gospel, the pattern of which they followed. See *ibid*., p. 83.

anything other than her theological name, 'mother', which was mentioned explicitly and which the Anglo-Saxons regarded as the Mariological *fundamentum*:

> May the inspirer of celestial gifts and restorer of earthly minds, who proclaimed the conception of the blessed mother of God by an angelic prophecy, deign to enrich you with the abundance of his blessings and to adorn you, as you have deserved, with flowers of virtues. Amen. And may he help you to be strong with an abundance of virtues who sanctified her beforehand with the dignity of her name, who was born and brought forth of human frailty, and to endure indefatigably in the venerable acknowledgment of his name. Amen.[15]

As this excerpt shows, Mary's given name did not appear in the prayer but her theological name did; perhaps the composer sought to link these two supplications together by his conjunction, such that the second could also be read like this: 'And may he who sanctified her with the dignity of that name, who was born and brought forth of human frailty, help you to be strong with an abundance of virtues'. This reading focuses back upon the divine maternity, just mentioned, as the reason for Mary's sanctification and, given its intended use, as the justification for the feast. Mary's sanctification may have taken place before her birth, as Clayton has suggested, but with her conception it anticipated her future role; all the prayer was claiming was that it had definitely taken place by the time she became 'mother'. This reading may be supported by the only other reference to Mary's being named comparable to the Canterbury text, in a prayer from the Exeter Benedictional:

> May the pious supplication of the blessed Virgin Mary request everlasting benediction from God for you, whose conception the Omnipotent announced by an angelic message and from whom was conceived his only-begotten son and whom you may perceive to support you perpetually with kind

[15] *Caelestium carismatum inspirator terrenarumque mentium reparator, qui beatam Dei genitricem angelico concipiendam preconavit oraculo, vos benedictionum suarum ubertate dignetur locupletare et virtutum floribus dignanter decorare. Amen. Et qui illam prius sanctificavit nominis dignitate, quam edita gigneretur humana fragilitate, vos virtutum copiis adiuvet pollere et in nominis sui veneranda confusione infatigabiliter perdurare. Amen. The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harl. MS 2892)*, ed. by Woolley, pp. 118-119; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 86, n. 101.

> help. Amen. May he who designated her by name before the conception by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, grant you to receive divine grace with your mind in the acknowledgement of the holy Trinity and may he strengthen and protect you from all evil by his deifying blessing. Amen.[16]

Clayton has concluded that this blessing was referring to Mary's conception of Christ – which, of course, took place by the power of the Holy Spirit (*Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi*; Lk 1:35) – and there is no sensible reason not to interpret it in this way; even, perhaps, to see it as an attempt to clarify the meaning of the earlier Canterbury prayer. The Exeter blessing was also trifold and its reference to Mary's being named made sense only in light of its opening verse, which spoke of her maternity: 'from whom was conceived his only begotten son' (*ex qua eius conciperetur unigenitus*).[17] Throughout the Anglo-Saxon prayers there was a clear emphasis on Mary's maternity as the reason for the feast and upon its soteriological implications. In the *secreta* of the New Minster and Leofric Missals, for example, her 'saving intervention' was closely linked to her blessed maternity.[18] Likewise, in the lengthy *prefatio* of the New Minster Missal, the focus quickly shifted away from Mary's passive conception to her active conception of Christ:

> …through Christ our Lord. Honouring anew the solemnity of his virgin mother with devout minds, we do not stay silent respecting the celebration of your great deeds, who sanctified her thus before

[16] *Sempiterna[m] a Deo benedictionem vobis beate Marie virginis pia deposcat supplicatio, quam concepiendam omnipotens, ex qua eius conciperetur unigenitus, angelico declaravit preconio, quam et vobis iugiter suffragari benigno, ut est benignissima, sentiatis auxilio. Amen. Quique illam ante conceptum presignavit nomine spiritus sancti obumbratione, vos divinam gratiam mente annuat concipere in sancte trinitatis confessione, atque ab omni malo protectos deifica confirmet sanctificatione. Amen.* Exeter Benedictional (British Library, Add. 28188), f. 161; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 85, n. 97. For the name 'Mary' being used in the context of requests for her intercession, see the *proper* and *postcommunio* prayers of the New Minster and Leofric Missals: *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; *The Leofric Missal*, ed. by Orchard, vol. 2, p. 510 (nos. 2915 and 2917); see Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 82-83.

[17] Exeter Benedictional (British Library, Add. 28188), f. 161; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 85, n. 97.

[18] *Sanctifica, domine, muneris oblati libamina, et beate Dei genitricis saluberrima interventione, nobis salutaria fore concede. The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; *The Leofric Missal*, ed. by Orchard, vol. 2, p. 510 (no. 2916); trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 82, n. 92.

> birth; likewise before conception you overshadowed her by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Highest One so that as a result she had merited to be made the temple of the Lord, the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, the mistress of the world, the queen of heaven, the spouse of Christ and the fruitful mother of the only son of God and after the birth to be adorned perpetually with the honours of virginity.[19]

To be precise, Mary's passive conception was understood to have prefigured her active conception and, as in the Exeter Benedictional, the two were often linked.[20] It was, though, Christ's *unique* privilege to be born of a pure mother. Whereas Mary was described as being 'born and brought forth of human frailty' (*quam edita gigneretur humana fragilitate*), her son came forth from one who was 'adorned perpetually with the honours of virginity' (*insigniis perpetualiter meruisset decorari*).[21] The mystery of Mary's virginal maternity was central to the prayers for the Conception, suggesting that the monks who composed them wrote in the shadow of the Latin patristic tradition, especially Ambrose, Jerome (*c*. 342-420) and Augustine (354-430), for whom this had also been the fundamental principle of Mariology.

According to the Exeter Benedictional, Mary's birth marked the 'beginning of salvation' (*salutis exordium*) and at the heart of her soteriological significance lay her power as an intercessor.[22] The *proper* of the New Minster and Leofric Missals suggested that Mary would take special care of those who celebrated her conception: 'O God…grant to this your family here present to be strengthened

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[19] *...per Christum dominum nostrum. Cuius virginis matris conceptionis sollempnia devotis mentibus recolentes, tue magnificentiae preconiae non tacemus, quam ante ortum ita sanctificasti, ante conceptum sic sancti spiritus illustratione et virtute altissimi obumbrasti, ut templum domini, sacrarium spiritus sancti, mundi domina, celi regina, sponsa Christi, et unici filii Dei foeta mater effici, et post partum virginitatis insigniis perpetualiter meruisset decorari*. *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 83, n. 94.

[20] See Exeter Benedictional (British Library, Add. 28188), f. 161, in Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 84-85.

[21] *The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harl. MS 2892)*, ed. by Woolley; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 86, n. 101. Cf. *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 83, n. 94.

[22] Exeter Benedictional (British Library, Add. 28188), f. 161; Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 84-85.

by her protection, the sacred fitting festival of whose conception is honoured by a celebration'.[23] From the same collections, the *postcommunio* asked God, 'by the pious intervention of the blessed Mary ever virgin, whose venerable conception we celebrate', for the people 'to be rescued from the domination of monstrous and foul deeds'.[24] Most notably, though, Mary's intercession was associated with the gifts of peace and joy which, in a beautiful phrase, the Canterbury blessing called 'splendid sacraments' (*magnifica sacramenta*) of her conception:

> May she, by her glorious intercession, obtain for you successful times, pleasant and peaceful, and, after the present ages, lasting joys without end, the splendid sacraments of whose venerable conception you are celebrating. Amen.[25]

Anglo-Saxon Sources: Apocryphal, Patristic and Byzantine

The Apocryphal Tradition

Before the community at Winchester had begun to celebrate the Conception (pre-1029), an apocryphal account of Mary's conception and infancy from the second century, the *Protevangelium of James*, was known in England.[26] It may have been circulated in full, or in the later adaptation attributed to Matthew (known to scholars as the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*), or both. These apocryphal texts exerted an important influence on the development of ideas about Mary, of whom the canonical gospels had little

[23] *Deus…presta huic presenti familiae tuae eius presidiis muniri, cuius conceptionis sacra sollempnia congrua frequentiatione veneratur. The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; *The Leofric Missal*, ed. by Orchard, vol. 2, p. 510 (no. 2915); trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 82, n. 92.

[24] *…beate Mariae semper virginis cuius venerandam colimus conceptionem pia interventione, a squalorum erui inmanium dominatione. The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; *The Leofric Missal*, ed. by Orchard, vol. 2, p. 510 (no. 2917); trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 82, n. 92.

[25] *Obtineat vobis gloriosis intercessionibus prospera tempora, iocunda et pacifica, et post presentia secula gaudia sine fine manentia, cuius venerande conceptionis frequentamini magnifica sacramenta. Amen. The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harl. MS 2892)*, ed. by Woolley, p. 119; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 86, n. 101. Compare part three of the Exeter blessing. Exeter Benedictional (British Library, Add. 28188), f. 161; Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 84-85.

[26] See Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 23-24, 188.

to say. This was especially true of ideas about Mary's childhood (until she was taken into the care of Joseph), to which the *Protevangelium* devoted its first eight chapters whilst the canonical tradition was silent. The influence of the *Protevangelium* might also explain the similarities between the Marian prayers and those composed in honour of John the Baptist, since it used the canonical account of John's conception in Luke's Gospel (Lk 1:5-25) as its blueprint; just as John's conception was heralded by an angel (Lk 1:11-20), so an angel appeared to prophesy the birth of Mary (Prot. 4:1-2).

Of course, there are differences between the accounts. Luke stated explicitly that Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children because she was barren and they were both 'getting on in years' (Lk 1:7), whereas the originator of the *Protevangelium* did not explain why Joachim and Anne were unable to conceive. Also, whilst both sources suggested that the fathers prayed for children (Lk 1:13; Prot. 1:4), the circumstances in which they received the angels' salutations and their responses differed markedly. Both received the news at an appropriate time: Zechariah offering incense in the sanctuary of the Lord (Lk 1:8-11) and Joachim in the wilderness, having determined to fast for forty days and nights, 'until the Lord God looks upon me' (Prot. 1:4). However, the priest did not immediately believe his herald and was struck dumb for his faithlessness (Lk 1:18-22), whilst Joachim 'immediately' celebrated, ordering the preparation of a great feast in thanksgiving (Prot. 4:3).

Nevertheless, several striking similarities between the Lucan and apocryphal narratives point to their relationship. For example, both depicted the parents as upright Jews: Zechariah, a priest, and Elizabeth (John's parents) were 'righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord' (Lk 1:6); Joachim (Mary's father) 'always brought to the Lord a double portion of his gifts' (Prot. 1:1) and Anne (Mary's mother), whilst she appeared in the *Protevangelium* without introduction, was described singing dirges and lamentations, hinting at a deep piety. The failure of both couples to produce offspring was their major transgression in the eyes of Israel, and a source of embarrassment and humiliation. After John's conception, therefore, Elizabeth praised God for giving her a child, which finally 'took away the disgrace I have endured among my people' (Lk 1:25). In the *Protevangelium*, Joachim was rebuked by Reuben on account of his childlessness (Prot. 1:2) and Anne, too, felt the pain of rejection: 'I was born only to be cursed before the children of Israel, and reproached, and mockingly cast out of the temple of my God' (Prot. 3:1). In

the eyes of ancient Israel child-bearing was a claim to righteousness, which neither Zechariah and Elizabeth nor Joachim and Anne, righteous in all other ways, could make.[27]

The most striking similarity between these narratives was that in both cases angelic heralds first appeared to the parent whose role would most define their child's place in salvation history. Each account gave priority to the parent in whose footsteps their child would most clearly tread; in Luke it was the father, whilst in the *Protevangelium* it was the mother. In Luke, the angel appeared to Zechariah, the priest, to herald the conception of his son who, as the trailblazer for Christ, performed a sacramental ministry, baptizing people for the forgiveness of sins (Lk 3:1-22; cf. Mt 3:1-12; Mk 1:4-8; Jn 1:19-28). In the *Protevangelium*, the angel appeared to Anne, the mother of Mary, to herald the conception of her daughter who would become the most famous mother in human history ('your child will be spoken of in all the inhabited world', Prot. 4:1; cf. Lk 1:48). As this demonstrates, even before she was born, Mary was defined by maternity – her mother's and later her own – and this constant emphasis in the *Protevangelium*, which it shared with the canonical gospels, may have accounted in part for the emphasis of the Anglo-Saxon prayers in so far as they were informed by the apocrypha.

The Patristic Tradition

The western patristic tradition was dominated by three theological giants, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine, each of whom left an indelible mark on the church's understanding of Mary in works that were certainly extant in England in the mid-eleventh century. The pre-Conquest holdings of the library of New Minster, Winchester, are almost unknown, but those of other Benedictine monasteries which celebrated the Conception, including Exeter, can be glimpsed from surviving manuscripts. These demonstrate that the libraries of some Anglo-Saxon monasteries, including Salisbury and St Augustine's, Canterbury, housed important patristic texts on Mary to which monks from neighbouring

[27] See Prot. 1:3: Joachim 'found that all the righteous raise up seed in Israel'.

monasteries, like New Minster and Christ Church, may have had access.[28] For example, both Salisbury and St Augustine's held Ambrose's *De virginibus* and *De virginitate*, as well as Augustine's *De natura et gratia*,[29] and such works were undoubtedly joined by those of native scholars and students of the Fathers, like Bede (*c*. 672-735) and Aldhelm (*d*. 709). Bede's commentary on Luke's Gospel, *In Lucae evangelium expositio*, was especially important for the development of Latin Mariology, and both Bury St Edmund's and Salisbury are known to have held copies.[30] The prose version of Aldhelm's *De virginitate*, in many instances glossed in Old English, has the distinction of originating at or being held by several Benedictine monasteries which celebrated the Conception, as well as some others.[31]

The characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon prayers which most reflected the Latin patristic tradition was the centrality of the paradox of Mary's virginal maternity.[32] To begin with, the English Benedictines of the mid-eleventh century celebrated the feast of Mary's Conception on account of her divine maternity, for which it prepared her by sanctification. The *prefatio* of the New Minster Mass described the feast as 'the solemnity of the conception of his virgin mother…who sanctified her before birth' (*virginis matris conceptionis sollempnia…quam ante ortum ita sanctificasti*).[33] In the other prayers, too, she was described as the 'blessed mother of God' (*beatam Dei genitricem*) and the 'blessed

[28] See R. Sharpe, J. P. Carley, R. M. Thomson and A. G. Watson, eds, *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 4 (London: The British Library, 1996). On Worcester monks travelling to Oxford and St Augustine's, Canterbury, to lecture in theology, see Sharpe, et al., eds, *English Benedictine Libraries*, p. 651.

[29] For Salisbury, see Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 96 (no. 596), 110 (no. 722); for St Augustine's, Canterbury, see *ibid.* pp. 136 (no. 881), 120 (no. 805.5, may be twelfth-century).

[30] See Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 41 (no. 134, Bury St Edmund's), 109 (no. 706, Salisbury).

[31] See *ibid*., pp. 36-37 (no. 93, Christ Church, Canterbury), 80 (no. 458, Christ Church, Canterbury), 81 (no. 462, Worcester after 1100*; no. 464, Christ Church, Canterbury; no. 466, Exeter after 1100*), 82 (no. 473, Wessex? Glastonbury? after 1100*), 87 (no. 509, St Augustine's, Canterbury; Waltham Abbey, Essex, after 1100*), 91 (no. 545, Christ Church, Canterbury, after 1100*), 98 (no. 613, Abingdon; Durham? after 1100*), 109 (no. 707, Canterbury, Christ Church or St Augustine's?), 120 (no. 806, Abingdon), 132 (no. 857). For the *De virginitate* in verse, see *ibid.* pp. 27-28 (no. 12, Canterbury, St Augustine's?), 36 (no. 82), 91 (no. 542, Old Minster, Winchester, after 1100*), 95 (no. 584, Christ Church, Canterbury), 104 (no. 661, Glastonbury? Bury St Edmund's after 1100*). *Whilst all of these are pre-Conquest manuscripts, some can only be reliably attributed to particular monasteries after 1100; see Gneuss's explanatory note on p. 12.

[32] Cf. Chapter 3 of this thesis, on Mary's fruitful virginity in the twelfth century.

[33] *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 83, n. 94.

Virgin Mary' (*beate Mariae virginis*).[34] On the face of it, of course, virginity and maternity were mutually exclusive; they could not both be realised in a single person because each one precluded the other. However, by referring to Mary under both titles the prayers for the Conception pointed to the central Marian mystery, the paradox of a virgin who conceived and gave birth to a child. This mystery was at the heart of the celebration of Mary's Conception and it was summarised most eloquently at the end of the New Minster *prefatio*, which described her as 'the fruitful mother of the only son of God and after the birth to be adorned perpetually with the honours of virginity'.[35]

In patristic tradition, Ambrose had recommended Mary's life as a model of virginity, describing it as a mirrored reflection of virginity itself. There was no difference, he wrote, between Mary's virginal life and the reality of virginity, and it was by looking to Mary that consecrated virgins could come to understand 'what you have to correct, to effect, and to hold fast' (*quid corrigere, quid effingere, quid tenere debeatis*).[36] Ambrose's treatise, *De virginibus*, manifested a central characteristic of patristic writing on Mary, namely, the desire to ascribe to her the highest degree of dignity on account of her virginal maternity. 'What is greater than the Mother of God?', Ambrose reflected, 'What more glorious than she whom glory itself chose?' (*Quid nobilius Dei matre? Quid splendidius ea, quam Splendor elegit?*).[37] As these words suggest, Mary was elevated by her election as the Mother of God which, for Ambrose, was consequent upon her virtues; by the purity of her body and mind she merited an ultimate communion with Christ in her womb. Ambrose described Mary's virtues in several passages which read like a rule for religious life (for those struggling to live in community, in the shared pursuit of

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[34] See *The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harl. MS 2892)*, ed. by Woolley, pp. 118-119; *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190. See also Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 86, 82.

[35] *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 83, n. 94. Not until Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109) was there another such succinct and eloquent statement of this mystery: 'Mother with virginity to be wondered at, Virgin with fertility to be cherished, you bore the Son of the Most High' (*mater admirabilis virginitatis, virgo amabilis foecunditatis, quae filium altissimi genuisti*). Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* V, lines 4-6 (SAOp. III, p. 13); trans. by B. Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 107, lines 3-5.

[36] Ambrose of Milan, *De virginibus* II, ii. 6 (PL 16, 187-232B (208C)); trans. by H. De Romestin, NPNF II, vol. 10 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, repr. 1997), p. 374.

[37] *Ibid.* II, ii. 7 (PL 16, 209A); trans. by De Romestin, NPNF II, vol. 10, p. 374.

virtue) and it is not difficult to appreciate their potential appeal for English Benedictines in the mid-eleventh century.[38] In particular, he believed that Mary was a model virgin, someone in whom virginity was not merely physical but spiritual as well, extending to her interior life. Ambrose was not seeking Mary's own aggrandisement but, rather, to emphasise that her son, Jesus Christ, was an exception to the usual mode of human generation by which, it was coming to be believed in the west, original sin was transmitted.[39] Ambrose believed Mary to have been free from any trace of personal sin on account of her divine maternity, and that her virginity was a sign of this.

Indeed, he went still further, arguing for the *necessity* of Mary's virginity, given her divine maternity, and championing the idea that she was a virgin before, during and after the birth of Christ (*ante partum*, *in partu*, and *post partum*).[40] He did not, therefore, take Mt 1:25 – 'And he knew her not till she brought forth her first born son' (*et non cognoscebat eam donec peperit filium suam primogenitum*) – to imply that Mary and Joseph had a normal sexual relationship after she had given birth to Jesus. Brian Reynolds has explained that '[Ambrose] demonstrates with a variety of examples from the Old Testament that 'till' [*donec*] does not necessarily mean that something happened afterwards; besides, Jesus would not have entrusted his Mother to John (John 19. 26) if [she] had had other sons to take care of her.'[41] Most importantly, Ambrose believed that the mystery of Mary's virginity was inseparable from the mystery of her maternity and the Incarnation of Christ. He explained that her virginity was a precondition for the Incarnation of the God-Man, who had to be exempt from the usual mode of conception, but that she could not take credit for this as it was Christ, in his divinity, who had preserved her virginity intact. Christ, who was both 'before the Virgin' (*ante virginem*) and 'of the Virgin' (*ex virgine*),[42] willed to be born from her but was not subject to her, because 'virginity is of Christ, not Christ of virginity' (*virginitas enim Christi, non virginitatis est Christus*).[43] The

[38] See, for example, Ambrose of Milan, *De virginibus* II, ii. 7.

[39] See J. Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 190.

[40] See B. K. Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven: Marian Doctrine and Devotion, Image and Typology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods*, vol. 1, 'Doctrine and Devotion' (New York: New City Press, 2012), p. 95.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 95; see Ambrose of Milan, *De institutione virginis* V-VII, 35-48 (PL 16, 305-334B (314A-318C)).

[42] Ambrose of Milan, *De virginibus* I, v. 21 (PL 16, 195A).

[43] *Ibid.* I, v. 22 (PL 16, 195A).

eleventh-century Canterbury Benedictional and New Minster Mass echoed this ideal, crediting Mary's purity entirely to God.

Augustine also made a causal connection between Mary's virginity and Christ's Incarnation, regarding the former as a necessary precondition for the latter: 'God had to be born in this way, when he deigned to become man. Thus did he make her, who was made by her' (*Deum sic nasci oportuit, quando esse dignatus est homo. Talem fecit illam, qui est factus ex illa*).[44] Augustine's most important statement on Mary's sinlessness can be found in *De natura et gratia*, his polemic against Pelagius (*c*. 360-418), in which he asserted the necessity of grace for growth in holiness. Pelagius, Augustine claimed, said of Mary, 'we must needs allow that her piety had no sin in it' (*sine peccato confiteri necesse esse pietati*),[45] and Augustine himself did not disagree with this, but he regarded it as a consequence of grace rather than her efforts alone. He believed that Mary was an exception to the general rule of sin on account of her divine maternity but not that *any* human being could achieve holiness without God. Like Ambrose, he intertwined Mary's maternity with her purity (of which her virginity was thought to be the preeminent sign), and gave all the credit to God-in-Christ:

> We must except the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom I wish to raise no question when it touches the subject of sins, out of honour to the Lord; for from Him we know what abundance of grace for overcoming sin in every particular was conferred upon her who had the merit to conceive and bear Him who undoubtedly had no sin.[46]

Jerome took up the question of Mary's perpetual virginity, too, in his treatise against Helvidius, who claimed that Mary did not remain a virgin *post partum*, but instead enjoyed a normal conjugal

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[44] Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* CLXXXVI (*In natali Domini*, III), 1 (PL 38, 999-1000 (999)); trans. by L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999), p. 220.

[45] Augustine of Hippo, *De natura et gratia* XXXVI, 42 (PL 44, 247-290 (267)); trans. by P. Holmes and R. E. Wallis, rev. by B. B. Warfield, NPNF I, vol. 5 (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887).

[46] *Excepta itaque sancta virgine Maria, de qua propter honorem Domini nullam prorsus cum de peccatis agitur, haberi volo quaestionem: unde enim scimus quid ei plus gratiae collatum fuerit ad vincendum omni ex parte peccatum, quae concipere ac parere meruit, quem constat nullum habuisse peccatum? Ibid.* XXXVI, 42 (PL 44, 267); trans. by Holmes and Wallis, rev. by Warfield, NPNF I, vol. 5 (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887).

relationship with Joseph and bore other children. Jerome began by challenging Helvidius' interpretation of the preposition 'before' (*antequam*) in the phrase 'before they came together' (*antequam convenirent*) from Mt 1:18: 'Now the generation of Christ was like this: when his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child, of the Holy Spirit' (*Christi autem generatio sic erat cum esset desponsata mater eius Maria Ioseph antequam convenirent inventa est in utero habens de Spiritu Sancto*). He offered three examples to demonstrate that the occurrence of one event before another did not itself suffice as evidence that the subsequent event actually took place. For example, to say that 'the apostle Paul, before he went to Spain, was put in fetters at Rome' (*Paulus apostolus antequam ad Hispanias pergeret, Romae in vincula conjectus est*) does not mean that Paul ever went to Spain; in this case, 'before' denotes an intention to go to Spain but not necessarily its realisation.[47] In the case of Mary and Joseph, Jerome argued, 'before' denoted the time prior to their coming together as husband and wife, but did not imply anything about subsequent events:

> When, then, the Evangelist says *before they came together*, he indicates the time immediately preceding marriage, and shows that matters were so far advanced that she who had been betrothed was on the point of becoming a wife. As though he said, before they kissed and embraced, before the consummation of marriage, she was found to be with child.[48]

Thus, Jerome sought to safeguard Mary's virginity *post partum*, but this also meant addressing two scriptural references used by Helvidius to deny it. The first, to Christ himself as the 'first-born' son of Mary (*filium suum primogenitum*; see Lk 2:7), which Helvidius took to imply that Mary had other children. Jerome answered him by defining 'first-born' as 'everything that openeth the womb' (*Omne…quod aperit vulvam*), which gave it a special status in the Law but did not necessarily imply

[47] See Jerome, *De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae, ad. Helvidium*, 4 (PL 23, 183-206B (186A)); trans. by W. H. Fremantle, NPNF II, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, repr. 1996), p. 335.

[48] *Igitur cum Evangelista dicat: priusquam convenirent, proximum nuptiarum tempus ostendit, et in eo jam rem fuisse ut, quae prius sponsa fuerat, esse uxor inciperet. Quasi dixerit: Antequam oscula amplexusque miscerent; antequam rem agerent nuptiarum, inventa est habens in utero. Ibid.*, 4 (PL 23, 186B); trans. by Fremantle, NPNF II, vol. 6, p. 336.

that it was the eldest of a group of siblings.[49] The second scriptural reference was to Jesus' *fratres* or 'brethren' (see, for example, Mt 12:46; Jn 2:12, 7:3-4, 7:5), which Jerome dismissed by citing several different uses of the term and concluding that they were 'brethren in virtue of the bond of kindred, not of love and sympathy, nor by prerogative of race, nor yet by nature' (*fratres eos intelligas appellatos, cognatione, non affectu; non gentis privilegio, non natura*).[50]

These arguments enabled Jerome to maintain Mary's perpetual virginity, which he saw as the necessary precondition for her maternity. In considering Joseph and whether or not he would have expected to enjoy a normal conjugal relationship with his future wife, Jerome's language prefigured the eleventh-century prayers. Like the New Minster *prefatio*, Jerome described Mary as a 'temple', insisting that Joseph would not have countenanced sexual intercourse with her once it was clear that she was the Mother of Christ because such a thing would have been tantamount to an act of sacrilege. It was thought to be impossible that Joseph – who had received an angelic message (Mt 1:18-25), heard the testimony of the shepherds (Lk 2:17), saw Simeon embrace the Christ-child (Lk 2:25-35), and so on – would have dared to touch 'the temple of God, the abode of the Holy Ghost, the mother of his Lord' (*Dei templum, Spiritus sancti sedem, Domini sui matrem*).[51]

The Byzantine Tradition

The liturgy and some surviving homilies from Byzantium may have been the third tradition to influence Anglo-Saxon beliefs about Mary's conception. In the east, the feasts of St Anne's Conception of Mary (9 December) and Mary's Presentation in the Temple (21 November) were celebrated from the late-seventh century, spreading throughout the eighth, and it is notable that the English Benedictine kalendars which included the Conception also included the eastern feast of Mary's Presentation.[52] Nor

[49] See Jerome, *De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae, ad. Helvidium*, 10 (PL 23, 192C); trans. by Fremantle, NPNF II, vol. 6, p. 339.

[50] *Ibid.*, 15 (PL 23, 199A); trans. by Fremantle, NPNF II, vol. 6, p. 342.

[51] *Ibid.*, 8 (PL 23, 191A); trans. by Fremantle, NPNF II, vol. 6, p. 338.

[52] On the spread of the Conception, see V. Kontouma, *John of Damascus: New Studies on his Life and Works* (Farnham: Ashgate Variorum, 2015), pp. 12, 17.

were these the only eastern celebrations to have appeared in England; the feasts of St John Chrysostom (27 January) and St Catherine (25 November) were added to the mid-eleventh century kalendar of the psalter of New Minster, Winchester, at the same time as the Conception.[53] Neither of these feasts was celebrated in the west in the eleventh century and they did not appear in the kalendar of the Latin church as a whole until at least a century later.[54] Two theories have sought to explain how the feasts of the Conception and Presentation found their way from Byzantium to Anglo-Saxon England at this time. The first is that they came via Italy, from either the Greek monasteries of the Magna Graecia in the south or St Sabas in Rome.[55] In both arguments the conventional wisdom, following Edmund Bishop, is that Rome was important either as the starting point of their journey to England or as an intermediate step. Bishop himself cited 'the long stay' of King Cnut (*c*. 990-1035) in Rome in 1027 and the visit of Æthelnoth of Canterbury (*d*. 1038) in 1022 as 'particular occasions that suggest themselves as not unlikely to have brought about the importation of our two feasts [the Conception and Presentation] into England'.[56]

In the absence of compelling evidence, however, is it unnecessary to propose a circuitous route when a simpler alternative was possible; namely, that Mary's Conception and Presentation came to England directly from Byzantium. This could mean, of course, Byzantine controlled territory in Italy; around the time he visited Rome, Cnut had also travelled to Gargano in Southern Italy, close to Byzantine lands, so even an Italian connection would not necessarily involve Rome, nor preclude a direct Anglo-Byzantine link.[57] On the other hand, the feast may have come straight from the heart of

[53] See London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius E. XVIII, ff. 3r-7v.

[54] See H. F. Davis, 'The Origins of Devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Conception', *The Dublin Review*, 228.466 (1954), pp. 375-392 (pp. 377-378); Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 43-44.

[55] This is the view of Edmund Bishop, S. J .P. van Dijk, C. A. Bouman and Marina Warner. See E. Bishop, *Liturgica Historica* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1918), pp. 258-259; S. J. P. van Dijk, 'The Origins of the Latin Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (I)', *The Dublin Review*, 228.465 (1954), pp. 251-267 (pp. 262-267); C. A. Bouman, 'The Immaculate Conception in the Liturgy', in E. D. O'Connor, ed., *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, History and Significance* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), pp. 113-159 (p. 123); M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books edn, 1983), pp. 239-240.

[56] Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, pp. 258-259.

[57] See D. A. E. Pelteret, 'Not all roads lead to Rome', in F. Tinti, ed., *England and Rome in the Early Middle Ages: Pilgrimage, Art and Politics* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2014), pp. 17-42 (pp. 34-36).

Byzantium, as a result of just one of many transcultural exchanges which were then taking place throughout Christendom. By the eleventh century, contact between England and the Greeks was long-standing and Byzantine visitors would hardly have been the most outlandish at the time.[58] Albrecht Classen has shown that Muslim authors travelled to, and wrote about, the British Isles from the ninth century, and that trade for profit was trans-linguistic.[59] Anglo-Greek links took several forms: in 668, the Greek monk, Theodore, became archbishop of Canterbury and reigned for over two decades, overseeing a revival of Latin learning and infusing it with Greek ideas,[60] and by the 1030s, Krijnie Ciggaar has suggested that it is 'not altogether impossible' that Anglo-Saxons were serving in the Greek army (perhaps amongst the Varangians).[61] There were also Greeks living in England; for instance, William of Malmesbury (*c*. 1090-1142) recorded that a saintly monk-archbishop, Constantine, was living out his life at Malmesbury, where he had planted a vineyard. Easy to talk to, according to William, Constantine dedicatedly and solemnly observed the eastern church's feasts. Perhaps he, and

[58] Frank Barlow has provided a useful summary of the evidence for England's cultural relations in the eleventh century, including its links with Byzantium, although, in respect of the Conception he tentatively followed Bishop in accepting transmission via Italy. He has suggested that, for English travellers, Byzantium was not usually an end in itself but a staging post on the preferred route to the Holy Land and, in particular, Jerusalem: 'There were two main routes from Western Europe to the Holy Land in the eleventh century, overland by way of Bavaria, Hungary, and Byzantium, and by sea from some Italian port. The latter was the more rewarding as it included Rome both old and new, but it was probably the more dangerous. Even men as far south as Angoulême seem to have preferred the northern journey by land, which, indeed, only took from four to five months. English pilgrims were to be found on both routes.' See F. Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066: A Constitutional History* (London: Longman, 1963), pp. 20-23 (p. 21).

[59] See A. Classen, ed., *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 16-19, 26.

[60] 'Theodore's teaching in Canterbury…left a tradition of learning based on the Bible, and indeed introduced into England the sober tradition of "Antiochene" exegesis that supplemented the traditions that had developed in the Latin West.' A. Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681-1071* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007), pp. 16-19 (p. 19). On the same point, see R. H. Hodgkin, *A History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 3rd edn., 1952), pp. 308-309; P. H. Blair, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 314-315.

[61] K. Ciggaar, 'England and Byzantium on the Eve of the Norman Conquest (The Reign of Edward the Confessor)', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, V (1982), pp. 78-96 (p. 82-84); Ciggaar has tentatively concluded that 'in all likelihood relations existed between the Byzantine court and the Anglo-Saxon king Edward. That these relations were very highly developed or followed a regular pattern cannot be proved, but does not seem very likely.' Ciggaar, 'England and Byzantium', p. 96. See, also, A. A. Vasiliev, 'The Opening Stage of the Anglo-Saxon Immigration to Byzantium in the Eleventh Century', *Annales de l'Institut Kondakov (Seminarium Kondakovianum)*, 9 (1937), pp. 39-70, cited by Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066*, p. 20.

others like him, described the festivals of their homeland to the Anglo-Saxons.[62] William also gave an account of an embassy (a knight, a bishop and an abbot) sent by Edward the Confessor (*r*. 1042-1066) to the imperial court of Constantinople to verify one of his dreams.[63] Evidence like this may point towards a direct link between England and Byzantium, and it seems plausible to suggest that the feast of Mary's Conception was one of its beneficiaries. Whether it was couriered by soldiers, pilgrims or monks is unclear, but all of these journeyed to and from England, Constantinople and Jerusalem (via Ephesus on land) before the Norman Conquest. Thus, given the lack of firm evidence either way, it seems to be quite unnecessary to insist that the eleventh-century feast of Mary's Conception came to England by way of the Magna Graecia in southern Italy or Rome.[64]

Notwithstanding the challenge of establishing how the feast came to England, the eastern roots underlying its Anglo-Saxon theology are betrayed by the clear resonances of the English prayers with Byzantine liturgical and homiletic tradition. Both gave priority to the supernatural circumstances of Mary's conception (shown in the angelic annunciation), agreed that it marked the beginning of redemption through Christ, and witnessed to a profound belief in Mary as an advocate for the faithful on account of her favour with God. Homilies for the feasts of the Conception and Presentation were composed by Germanus of Constantinople (*c*. 634-733), Andrew of Crete (*c*. 660-740), John of Damascus (*c*. 675-749) and the mysterious John of Euboea. All four of these ardent defenders of Mary's purity were also iconophiles, writing at the time of the iconoclastic controversy in Byzantium, where holy pictures of the Mother of God were ubiquitous. Marian iconography was perhaps the greatest victim of iconoclasm but these loyal devotees, determined to defend her, extolled her sanctity with little of the reserve of the patristic period. They did so by drawing on the canonical scriptures as well as the

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[62] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* V, 260, 1-3; see *William of Malmesbury, Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 621. In his commentary on the text, Thomson has noted that this was 'not a unique instance of a Greek cleric in England before the Conquest', see William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, vol. 2, ed. by R. M. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 307-308. For a brief comment, see Barlow, *The English Church, 1000-1066*, p. 21.

[63] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* ii, 225, 3; Thompson has offered a brief comment on the text in William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, vol. 2, ed. by R. M. Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 209.

[64] This seems to be the view of H. F. Davis; see Davis, 'The Origins of Devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Conception', pp. 375-392.

apocryphal accounts of the miracle of her conception from her mother, Anne, believed to be barren, and her consecration to God as a temple virgin in the *Protevangelium*,[65] which had been largely accepted in Byzantine liturgical and theological tradition by the early-eighth century.[66] Indeed, its popularity in the east (over one hundred and fifty Greek manuscripts have survived, some from the third century) made the *Protevangelium* immensely influential for the development of Mariology.[67]

Like the Latin patristic tradition, eighth-century Byzantine homilies for the feast of St Anne's Conception of Mary and her subsequent Presentation in the Temple extolled Mary's purity and honoured her with illustrious titles. Germanus of Constantinople's first homily *On the Entrance [to the Temple] of the Supremely Holy Theotokos*, is especially notable because it demonstrated his indebtedness to the *Protevangelium*.[68] In a gloss on the apocryphal description of Mary's arrival at the temple, Germanus paralleled her consecration with her presentation of the infant Jesus (Lk 2:22-40). Like the Latin Fathers, he credited Mary's purity to God, as well as drawing out the soteriological significance of her presentation as foreshadowing her divine maternity, out of which the salvation of the world would flow.[69] In his most important homily touching the purity of Mary, Germanus praised her in extravagant terms in her fundamental aspect as the 'God-bearer' (*Theotokos*), calling her the 'sealed gate of Emmanuel' who was 'raised in a most marvellous way beyond even the glory of the

[65] See J. K. Elliott, 'Mary in the Apocryphal New Testament', in C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London; New York: Burns and Oates, 2008), pp. 57-70 (pp. 59-60); C. Maunder, 'Mary in the New Testament and Apocrypha', in Boss, ed., *Mary*, pp. 11-46 (pp. 39-44).

[66] M. B. Cunningham, 'The Use of the *Proteuangelion of James* in Eighth-Century Homilies on the Mother of God', in L. Brubaker and M. B. Cunningham, eds, *The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and Images* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 163-178 (p. 167).

[67] See J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament: a collection of apocryphal Christian literature in an English translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 48.

[68] Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Entrance into the Temple* I; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, pp. 145-162.

[69] 'For today she enters the temple of the law at the age of three, she who alone will be dedicated and called the spotless and highest temple of the Lord, [who is] High Priest and Author of consecration of all, having dissipated by the innate radiance of her divinely shining splendour the gloom [which resides] in the letter. Today an infant is offered to the priest, [the infant] who will [later] dedicate the forty-day-old High Priest God, who alone was made an infant in flesh on our account, holding in her own arms the Limitless One who is beyond all mortal understanding. Today the newest and most pure, unblemished volume, which will not be written on by hand, but will be gilded in spirit, sanctified by blessings according to the law, is brought as a gift of thanksgiving.' *Ibid.*, 2; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, pp. 146-147.

cherubim…stored up in a most holy way and gloriously in the holy of holies, for a greater sanctity'.[70] As Mary Cunningham has noted, Germanus surely understood the 'greater sanctity' for which Mary was being prepared by temple life to be her divine maternity.[71] For him, Mary was a divinely-constructed fortress of purity, to which he cried out, 'Hail, the palace of the All-Ruler, God, who was sacredly built, undefiled, and most pure'.[72]

The idea that salvation began with Mary, as Mother of Christ not proto-Saviour, was also central to the first of Andrew of Crete's four homilies *On the Nativity of the Supremely Holy Theotokos*.[73] Recalling the Eve-Mary typology which featured prominently in patristic Mariology, Andrew invited women to rejoice that 'a woman, who once rashly brought about the origin of sin, has now ushered in the beginning of salvation!'[74] This homily, as well as Andrew's third oration on Mary's Dormition and his Canon for the Conception of St Anne, demonstrated his devotion to Mary's purity. Whilst his language was more moderate than that of Germanus, he was no less convinced of Mary's superlative purity. As Luigi Gambero has concluded: 'Andrew's witness to the Church's faith in the exceptional holiness of the Mother of the Lord is absolutely remarkable'.[75] The images, analogies and parallels he used to describe Mary's purity pushed its origin back from her birth to the very first moment of her existence. Andrew did not merely refer to Mary as 'pure and unblemished' but 'supremely' so, accentuating her holiness; the interpretation that he meant to impute the greatest possible degree of holiness to her is reinforced in the context of his rather graphic description of Joachim, sprinkling 'the withered passages of the reproductive organs [of her mother] with juices of sperm production'.[76]

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[70] Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Entrance into the Temple* I, 2; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 147.

[71] Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 147, n. 16.

[72] Germanus of Constantinople, *On the Entrance into the Temple* I, 15; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 159.

[73] Andrew of Crete, *On the Nativity* I; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, pp. 71-84.

[74] Andrew of Crete, *On the Nativity* I, 2; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 74. For the Eve-Mary parallel, see Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 100 (PG 6, 709-712); trans. by T. B. Falls, in *The Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, ed. by L. Schopp (New York: Christian Heritage, Inc., 1948), pp. 141-366 (pp. 303-305).

[75] Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, p. 392.

[76] Andrew of Crete, *On the Nativity* I, 6; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 80.

Andrew declared that 'out of unfruitfulness and sterility, like a splendid fruit from watered trees, this *wholly unblemished* Virgin blossomed forth for us'.[77] And again:

> When the Redeemer of the race, as I said, decided to show a new birth and formation [of a female] in place of the former one, just as he formerly took mud from virgin, untouched earth and fashioned the first Adam, so now, acting himself on her own flesh instead of another [piece of] earth, as we might say, he selected this *pure and supremely unblemished* virgin from the whole of nature and made in her, out of our [substance] that which is ours…[78]

Another Byzantine theologian, John of Euboea actually composed a homily for the feast of the Conception itself – *On the Conception of the Holy Theotokos* – in which he used a variety of epithets or titles to extol Mary's purity and the mystery of her divine maternity; she was 'tabernacle', 'undefiled', 'wholly unblemished', 'undefiled bridal chamber', 'all-holy', 'temple', 'cherubic throne', 'Queen', 'palace', 'royal and priestly'.[79] This use of titles was also common to the mid-eleventh century prayers, with the *prefatio* of the New Minster Missal, for example, describing Mary as 'temple of the Lord' (*templum domini*), 'sanctuary of the Holy Spirit' (*sacrarium spiritus sancti*), 'mistress of the world' (*mundi domina*), 'queen of heaven' (*celi regina*), and 'spouse of Christ' (*sponsa Christi*).[80]

John's homily also took up the apocryphal account of the angelic salutation ahead of Mary's birth, describing the annunciation to Anne, including the prophecy that Mary would be 'spoken of in the whole inhabited world'.[81] He believed that the conception of *Theotokos* marked the beginning of salvation, putting into the angel's mouth these words: 'For this is the one about whom all the prophets proclaimed in advance, eagerly awaiting salvation through her.'[82] Balancing and complementing this

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[77] Andrew of Crete, *On the Nativity* I, 6; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 80 [emphasis added].

[78] *Ibid.*, 6; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, pp. 78-79 [emphasis added].

[79] John of Euboea, *On the Conception of the Holy Theotokos*, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, pp. 184-190.

[80] *The Missal of the New Minster, Winchester (Le Havre, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 330)*, ed. by Turner, p. 190; trans. by Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 83, n. 94.

[81] John of Euboea, *On the Conception of the Holy Theotokos*, 11; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider Than Heaven*, p. 183.

[82] *Ibid.*, 11; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, p. 183.

idea that Mary's conception was the beginning of something, John also descried it as the consummation of an epoch in salvation history, the old covenant. Mary was also the 'tabernacle' formed from the root of 'Judah, Jesse, and David', and prefigured in the Old Testament. Significantly though, she was praised primarily because she was destined to bring God into the world. Like the Anglo-Saxon prayers, John of Euboea's homily focused upon Mary's fundamental role as *Theotokos*:

> "Celebrate your feasts, O Judah" (Nah 1:15): not in the old covenant, but in the new! This is the beginning of the new covenant, of the new and God-receiving ark that was formed in Anna's womb, out of the root of Judah, Jesse, and David. For the prophet says, "And I shall raise up the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I shall repair its broken parts" (cf. Amos 9:11). Behold, the tabernacle of David is raised up in the conception and birth of his daughter! For she is the one about whom first of all Jacob was prophesying when he blessed Judah, speaking thus, "Judah, your brothers have praised you" (Gen 49:8). Truly you are blessed, Joachim and Anna. For you came out of Judah and Jesse and David, as does also the one who comes out of you; and from her [will come] the Giver of the Law and Lord of prophets and Fulfiller of Law in the last times, Christ our Lord.[83]

These words capture most of the core elements of patristic and early-medieval thinking on the subject of Mary's conception which influenced the Anglo-Saxon church; that it was miraculous – the sign of which was the angelic annunciations to both of Mary's parents – and that it was the first event of salvation through Christ. Most significantly for the Anglo-Saxons, though, was the centrality of Mary's virginal maternity as the lens through which her conception was viewed. Before it was suppressed by the Normans in the late-eleventh century, the Anglo-Saxon feast was celebrated not for sake of the conception itself but, in-keeping with the Latin and Byzantine traditions, in its Theotokoin aspect. The conception was presented, paradoxically, as both constitutive of and to be understood in the light of Mary's ancient privilege, the *fundamentum* of Mariology, her divine maternity.

[83] John of Euboea, *On the Conception of the Holy Theotokos*, 11; trans. by Cunningham, *Wider than Heaven*, pp. 183-184.

The Suppression of the Feast of the Conception by c. 1090

Much ambiguity surrounds the date of the suppression of the feast of Mary's Conception but it seems to have taken place gradually; in Winchester during the episcopacy of the first Norman bishop, Walchelin (*bp*. 1070-1098), when a kalendar was produced which excluded it (British Library, Arundel 60) and, finally, in Ramsey after the death of the last Anglo-Saxon abbot in 1087.[84] Certainly, it did not appear in the post-Conquest kalendar of Christ Church, Canterbury – revised at the behest of Lanfranc following his consecration in 1070 – or in Lanfranc's *Constitutions*.[85] It would seem that the Conception was a casualty of Lanfranc's efforts to standardise English religion, which began with the mother church of the realm in Canterbury.[86] The Normans, according to F. M. Mildner, who were 'contemptuous of anything English or rather of anything that was not Norman, did their best to do away with any liturgical observance which they themselves had not yet practised'.[87] This assessment is given some credence by the testimony of Eadmer of Canterbury (*c*. 1060-1128) in respect of Lanfranc's suppression of the cults of several saints venerated by the Anglo-Saxons:

> Moreover Lanfranc, as an Englishman, was still somewhat green, and some of the customs which he found in England had not yet found acceptance with him. So he changed many of them, often with good reason, but sometimes simply by the imposition of his own authority.[88]

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[84] See Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 50.

[85] See *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. by D. Knowles and C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 50.

[86] See Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 351; F. M. Mildner, 'The Immaculate Conception in England up to the time of John Duns Scotus', *Marianum*, 1 (1939), pp. 86-99 (p. 95); Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, p. 50; Davis, 'The Origins of Devotion to Our Lady's Immaculate Conception', pp. 375-392 (p. 380); R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 432; S. J. P. van Dijk, 'The Origins of the Latin Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (II)', *The Dublin Review*, 228.466 (1954), pp. 428-442 (pp. 428-429).

[87] Mildner, 'The Immaculate Conception in England', p. 95.

[88] *Erat praeterea Lanfrancus adhuc quasi rudis Anglus; necdumque sederant animo ejus quaedam institutiones quas reppererat in Anglia. Quapropter cum plures de illis magna fretus ratione, tum quasdam mutavit sola auctoritatis suae deliberatione*. Eadmer, *Vita Sancti Anselmi*, 30; trans. by R. W. Southern, *The Life of St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, by Eadmer* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1962), pp. 50-51.

As prior of Bec, Lanfranc had built a reputation as a formidable administrator and, as the main opponent of Berengar of Tours (*c*. 999-1088), he had proven himself to be an enthusiast for establishing theological orthodoxy, in that case on the definition of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.[89] He brought the same zeal to his role as archbishop of Canterbury, and his attitude to the Conception was in-keeping with his other attempts at reform; in 1076, for example, he issued a decree forbidding clerical marriage (albeit with the proviso that parish clergy already married could remain in that estate).[90] Many Norman churchmen, especially Lanfranc it seems, had a passion for standardising religious practices, which may have been an impetus behind their efforts to suppress the Conception.

Such attempts to bring England into line with much of the rest of Europe, especially Italy (where the Normans held vast swathes of territory), could legitimately be described as attempts at the 'Romanisation' of the English church. As H. F. Davis has explained, Norman opposition to the Conception and other local feasts was due to their lack of 'Roman sanction', which became a major tenet of opposition to the Conception again in the twelfth century.[91] Furthermore, in so far as the feast was understood to have been inspired by the apocryphal *Protevangelium of James* and *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, and to have been influenced by the Byzantine tradition, the Normans may have been prejudiced against it. The east-west schism was a recent memory and – somewhat ironically given his importance for Mariology – the west had received from Jerome a contempt for what he described as the 'ravings' of the apocrypha.[92] For Mildner, 'the arguments of the Norman Bishops for rejecting the Feast were principally based on the fact that the Feast as it was then celebrated was founded on incidents narrated in the Apocryphal Gospels and therefore not to be countenanced by such men of model observance as were the Normans'.[93]

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[89] See Lanfranc of Canterbury, *De corpore et sanguine Domini adversus Berengarium Turonensem* (PL 150, 407-441); trans. by M. G. Vaillancourt (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2009).

[90] See C. N. L. Brooke, 'Gregorian Reform in Action: Clerical Marriage in England, 1050-1200', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 12.1 (1956), pp. 1-21 (p. 11).

[91] Davis, 'The Origins of Devotion to Our Lady's Conception', p. 380. For a full discussion, see chapter 2.

[92] See Jerome, *De perpetua virginitate B. Mariae*, 8 (PL 23, 192A); trans. by Fremantle, NPNF II, vol. 6, p. 339.

[93] Mildner, 'The Immaculate Conception in England', p. 96.

Beyond Canterbury, the story of the demise of the mid-eleventh century feast is even less certain. The Worcester kalendar indicates that it continued to spread after the Conquest and the tale of Elsinus of Ramsey (*d*. 1087) (also known as Elsin, Ælsi and Ælfsige) suggests that it may have persisted until *c*. 1090;[94] Elsinus, a monk of Old Minster, Winchester, was abbot of St Augustine's, Canterbury (from 1059) and Ramsey (which he held in plurality with St Augustine's, from *c*. 1066). According to legend, King William I (*r*. 1066-1087) sent Elsinus on a mission to the Danes shortly after his accession and, returning home, his ship was caught in a violent storm, whereupon he cried out to the Virgin Mary for assistance. She duly responded, sending a messenger in pontifical vestments to instruct him that he would be kept safe if he promised to observe the feast of her Conception at Ramsey every year on 8 December.[95] Though entirely real himself, of course, Elsinus was not unwilling to use tales of supernatural intervention to garner support for the causes he championed. In 1066, for example, he had claimed to have received a vision of certain victory to encourage King Harold II (*c*. 1022-1066) to march against the Scandinavian forces in the north of England;[96] apparently, he did not receive a vision of the imminent threat from William of Normandy. S. J. P. Van Dijk has offered a sceptical assessment: 'it looks as though Elsin was precisely the type who would invent another edifying and, this time, less risky vision. By doing so, he only applied a well-known and then appreciated method of backing and substantiating his enthusiasm for the new feast with supernatural approval'.[97] Whatever Elsinus' motivation, however, the fact that he adduced a miraculous occurrence in support of the Conception indicates that he at least was keen for it to be celebrated. On this evidence, it may not be unreasonable

[94] See R. W. Southern, 'The English Origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin'', *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1958), pp. 176-216 (pp. 194-200).

[95] See Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 47-50; Mildner, 'The Immaculate Conception in England', pp. 96-97; Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, p. 434.

[96] See Van Dijk, 'The Origin of the Latin Feast of the Conception' (I), p. 259.

[97] *Ibid*., p. 259. By the time Elsinus received his vision in support of the Conception there had been a change of regime in England – Harold II having been deposed by William I – but like his predecessor, the new king also set great store by the more 'folky' elements of religion, as such visions might be described; for instance, Robert Bartlett has given two examples of William's use of relics in his campaign to invade England. See R. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 298, 322.

to imagine that the feast was observed at St Augustine's, Canterbury, and Ramsey until at least the time of his death in *c*. 1087.

Conclusion

Changes wrought in the Anglo-Saxon church in the wake of the Norman Conquest, especially the imposition of a reforming archbishop of Canterbury, Lanfranc, were of major significance for the feast of Mary's Conception, which was suppressed. Before the Conquest, the English church and nation had been receptive to influences from outside western Christendom, especially Byzantium, where the feast originated. If the history of the Conception is anything to go by, however, this relatively open culture suffered a major setback as a result of the Norman invasion and the activities of the first regime which, amongst other things, sought to bring the English cult into line with the western mainstream. The Conception suffered because it was an eastern feast, unknown anywhere in the west apart from England, and grounded in the apocryphal narratives of Mary's life (especially the *Protevangelium of James*), which had been circulating amongst the Anglo-Saxons.

Contrary to the negative assessments of Anglo-Norman historians like William of Malmesbury, this account of the history of Mary's Conception has revealed that at least some Benedictine monasteries of pre-Conquest England were intellectually vibrant. This was especially true of houses like New Minster, Winchester, and Worcester, which had been important centres of monastic reform in the tenth century. In so far as those reforms had given some Benedictines the self-confidence to adopt and even promote new liturgical observances, the Conception may have been one of their beneficiaries. Its accompanying theology may also have benefitted from the resultant willingness of monks from those houses to draw inspiration from unusual sources, including the apocrypha and Byzantine homilies. Such influences have merely been signposted here and much remains to be done to clarify the lines of transmission between the intellectual centres of Anglo-Saxon England and those of the east from which they came.

The only surviving sources for pre-Conquest beliefs about Mary's Conception are a number of prayers which were composed and copied, presumably by Benedictine monks, for Mass on the day. Whilst the paucity of such evidence has made the reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon thought somewhat speculative, the exclusively liturgical character of these sources points to a synergy (also identified in the introduction to this thesis) between monasticism and Mariology in our period. In particular, it might be taken to signify the importance of the *lex orandi* of English Benedictine monasteries for the transmission and promotion of a Marian *lex credendi* in respect of the Conception. As the next chapter suggests, this link between monasticism and Mariology became, if anything, even clearer in the twelfth century. Despite the efforts of the Normans and thanks to the long institutional memory of the Benedictines, the feast of Mary's Conception would be revived in the 1120s, albeit with a new accompanying theology. It cannot be entirely coincidental that the Benedictine monks who saved the feast and whose profession amounted to a way of moral perfection, began to rethink and rearticulate its theology in terms of Mary's freedom from original sin: her Immaculate Conception.

2

Immaculately Conceived

Defining a New Doctrine after c. 1090

> If God allows the chestnut to be conceived, to grow, and to be formed amid spines without being punctured by them, could he not grant to a human body, which he prepared for himself…and from which he would come forth as the perfect man in the unity of his Person, that, though this body be conceived among the spines of sins, it would nevertheless be completely unharmed by their sharp points? He certainly could do it, and he wanted to do it. Therefore, if he wanted to do it, he did it.[1]

> The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception states that the Virgin Mary was preserved entirely free from original sin from the instant of her conception through a special prevenient grace, received in view of the merits of her Son in anticipation of the Redemption.[2]

Even though it had been suppressed by the Normans, the feast of Mary's Conception lived on in the hearts of its Benedictine devotees. In the 1120s it experienced a revival, advocated by Anselm of Bury (*d*. 1148) and defended by Eadmer of Canterbury (*c*. 1060-1128), spreading throughout England during the twelfth century. At that time, Mary's personal freedom from original sin, part of her preparation to be the Mother of God, emerged as the primary reason for the celebration, and kalendars suggest that by

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[1] *Si Deus castaneae confert ut inter spinas remota punctione concipiatur, alatur, formetur, non potuit haec dare humano quod ipse sibi parabat templo in quo corporaliter habitaret, et de quo in unitate suae personae perfectus homo fieret, ut licet inter spinas peccatorum conciperetur, ab ipsis tamen spinarum aculeis omnimode exsors redderetur? potuit plane, et voluit; si igitur voluit, fecit*. Eadmer of Canterbury, *Tractatus de conceptione sanctae Mariae*, X (PL 159, 301B-318D (305C-305D)); trans. by L. Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of the Medieval Latin Theologians* (San Francisco, NC: Ignatius Press, 2000), p. 119. Throughout this chapter, section references to Eadmer's *Tractatus de conceptione* pertain to the edition by H. Thurston and T. Slater (Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1904), but since this is generally difficult to access we have also provided the relevant *Patrologia Latina* references in parentheses.

[2] B. K. Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven: Marian Doctrine and Devotion, Image and Typology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods*, vol. 1, 'Doctrine and Devotion' (New York: New City Press, 2012), p. 330.

c. 1200 it was celebrated as far afield as Gloucester, Chester and Durham Cathedral.[3] Whilst it is unclear precisely when and where the feast was revived,[4] by the 1120s it was definitely known at Worcester, Winchcombe and Gloucester.[5] The most compelling evidence that it was actually celebrated has come from St Albans and Bury St Edmunds,[6] and considerable credit for this must go to Anselm, abbot of Bury from 1122 to 1148, who was praised by Osbert of Clare (*d*. *c*. 1158) for promoting the feast.[7] From 1109 to 1115, Anselm had been abbot of St Sabas in Rome, a monastery originally of Greek observance and which had retained some of its customs, so that during his tenure the Divine Office was celebrated using the Greek calendar, which included the Conception.[8] Anselm thought that the feast was worthy of celebration and brought it back to England with him in the 1120s; a charter from Bury records that he gave property and money to the monastery so that, amongst other things, the feasts of St Saba and the Conception would be celebrated annually. This means that Italy assumed an importance for the revival of the feast in the Anglo-Norman period which it did not have for its original establishment before the Conquest (1066).

Eadmer of Canterbury's Argument from 'fittingness'

At the same time as Anselm of Bury was promoting the feast of the Conception, Eadmer of Canterbury, disciple and biographer of Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109), composed a treatise in its defence. His *Tractatus de conceptione sanctae Mariae* did not make a substantial theological contribution to the

[3] See *English Benedictine Kalendars after A.D. 1100, vol. I., Abbotsbury-Durham*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 77, ed. by F. Wormald (London: The Boydell Press, 1939); *English Benedictine Kalendars after A.D. 1100, vol. II., Ely-St Neots*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 81, ed. by F. Wormald (London: Harrison and Sons Ltd, 1946). MSS: Oxford, Bod., Tanner MS. 169 (S.C. No. 9995), pp. 3-14 (Abbey of St Mary's and St Werburgh's, Chester); Cambridge, Jesus College MS., Q.B. 6 [M. R. James, No. 23], ff. 2-7 (Durham Cathedral Priory); Oxford, Jesus College MS. 10, ff. 1-6b (St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester).

[4] See S. J. P. van Dijk, 'The Origins of the Latin Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (II)', *The Dublin Review*, 228.466 (1954), pp. 428-442 (p. 431).

[5] See *ibid*., pp. 429-430.

[6] See *ibid*., p. 430.

[7] See Osbert, *Ep*. 7, in *The Letters of Osbert of Clare, Prior of Westminster*, ed. by E. W. Williamson (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), pp. 65-68 (p. 65).

[8] See J. S. Bruder, *The Mariology of Saint Anselm of Canterbury* (Dayton, OH: Mount St John Press, 1939), p. 49.

advancement of the immaculist cause, even though it has the distinction of being its first sustained treatment and defence in the west. In particular, it lacked restraint, occasionally allowing devotional fervour to steer its theology because, as Sarah Boss has pointed out, Eadmer's primary purpose was to defend Mary's Conception as a liturgical celebration (the revived Anglo-Saxon feast) rather than as a Marian doctrine.[9] However, the treatise has several points to commend it: as well as being the first defence of the feast, it also cleverly resurrected and deployed the so-called 'principle of convenience', also used to make the case for the Assumption,[10] to assert that Mary's freedom from original sin was possible because of the omnipotence of God. The 'principle of convenience' is the idea that if it is within God's power to do something and he wills to do it, then it will be done, and it can be summarised in three words: *potuit, voluit, [ergo] fecit*.

For Eadmer, Mary was like a chestnut, surrounded by a prickly shell but pure within; she existed in a world of sin but she was not touched by it, thanks to the power and will of God.[11] Underlying this idea – which begs the question 'why would God wish Mary to be free from original sin?' – was the principle of 'fittingness', especially prominent in the writings of Anselm; namely, that God must always act in a way that befits his divinity and the right ordering of his creation. Richard Southern has summarised the principle and alluded to its link with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception:

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[9] See S. J. Boss, *Empress and Handmaid: On Nature and Gender in the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London; New York: Cassell, 2000), p. 127; see also S. J. Boss, 'The Development of the Doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception', in S. J. Boss, ed., *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 207-235 (p. 210). Eadmer's other Marian treatise, *Liber de excellentia Mariae virginis* (PL 159, 557B-580C), exhibits the same tendency to allow devotion to carry away his theology, as Hilda Graef has pointed out: 'In his opinion…it may be even more useful to call on [Mary] than on Christ when one is in danger [see PL 159, 570A-B]… So, we have here the naïve idea that it takes Christ some time to weigh the pros and cons of a case, whereas if we turn to his mother he no longer judges but only considers her merits and grants a man's prayer at once'. H. Graef and T. A. Thompson, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2009), p. 170; cf. Eadmer of Canterbury, *Tractatus de conceptione*, 35-37 (PL 159, 316A-D), which juxtaposes God's justice and Mary's mercy.

[10] See Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 353; on the Assumption tract, Pseudo-Augustine, which uses the principle of convenience, see M. O'Carroll, *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), p. 299.

[11] For the well-known chestnut analogy, see Eadmer of Canterbury, *Tractatus de conceptione*, 10 (PL 159, 305C-306A).

> The necessity of 'fittingness' in God's activity is the second of Anselm's original theological axioms. The first, which he had discovered in the *Proslogion*, is the necessity of God's existence, in the sense that God cannot be thought of as non-existent – can indeed only be thought of as existent in the highest degree. The second, which he discovered in his *Cur Deus Homo*, is that God's acts can only, whatever the appearances to the contrary, be thought of as displaying the highest possible degree of fittingness. […] …the second of these axioms, besides providing the structure of *Cur Deus Homo*, also had a long history ahead of it, not least in stimulating some of his disciples to draw conclusions about the Immaculate Conception of Mary as an example of an action which can be deduced from its supreme 'fittingness'.[12]

Even though Anselm did not teach the Immaculate Conception – for him, only Christ was free from original sin[13] – he did establish a precedent for his disciples, including Eadmer, by invoking the principle of fittingness to explain Mary's unparalleled sanctity: 'the Son of God was born of a spotless Virgin…it was fitting that that Virgin should shine with a purity which was only exceeded by God's own, because it was to her that God the Father disposed to give his only Son' (*Quamvis ergo de mundissima virgine*

[12] R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 202; for Anselm's use of the principle of fittingness in *De incarnatione verbi*, written in response to Roscelin of Compiègne (*c.* 1050-1125), see Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, pp. 180-181. Cf. G. R. Evans, 'Anselm's life, works, and immediate influence', in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. by B. Davies and B. Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 5-31 (p. 21). Latin words for 'fittingness' or 'appropriateness' occur in *Cur deus homo* (I. 4 [*decebat*], I. 12 [*decens*, *deceat*], I. 16 [*deceat*]) and *De conceptu virginali* (18 [*decens*, *decebat*]), as well as numerous times in Anselm's letters; see G. R. Evans, *A Concordance to the Works of Anselm*, 4 vols (Millwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1984). For a comment on the principle, see J. Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1972), pp. 249-250.

[13] 'Although it can be agreed that all men existed in Adam, the son of the Virgin alone, however, existed in him in quite a different mode… Down the line of our ancestors, as far as the Virgin his Mother, the will sowed the seed and nature brought it to life, so that the Virgin herself, partly in the natural course and partly in the course of the will, took her being from Adam, like all the others.' (*Verum quamvis constet eos omnes in illo fuisse, solus tamen filius virginis valde diverso modo ab aliis in illo fuit… Nam etsi usque ad virginem matrem in parentibus et voluntas seminavit et natura germinavit, ut ipsa virgo partim naturali, partim voluntario cursu ad suum esse ab Adam perduceretur, sicut omnes alii*.) Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, XXIII (SAOp. II, p. 163, lines 20-21; p. 164, lines 5-8); trans. by C. McNab, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. by B. Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 357-389 (p. 380).

filius dei verissime conceptus sit… Nempe decens erat ut ea puritate, qua maior sub deo nequit intelligi, virgo illa is niteret, cui deus pater unicum filium).[14]

For Eadmer, it was fitting for Mary to be superlatively holy for no other reason than that she was destined to be Christ's mother. In asserting that Mary's moral condition was consequent upon and concomitant with her vocation, Eadmer appealed to the precedent in scripture provided by the examples of the prophet Jeremiah and John the Baptist. In twelfth-century England, both of these figures were believed to have been sanctified in their mothers' wombs in preparation for the important contributions they would make to the unfolding of salvation history. In Jeremiah, it is written: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I sanctified you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations' (*priusquam te formarem in utero novi te et antequam exires de vulva sanctificavi te prophetam gentibus dedi te*; Jer 1:5). In Luke's Gospel, it is said of John the Baptist to his father, Zechariah: 'even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit… With the Spirit and power of Elijah he will go before [the Lord]…to make ready a people prepared for the Lord' (*erit…Spiritu Sancto replebitur adhuc ex utero matris suae…et ipse praecedet ante illum in spiritu et virtute Heliae…parare Domino plebem perfectam*; Lk 1:15, 17). There was also a theological tradition which asserted that John the Baptist was sanctified before he was born, expressed thus by Bede (*c*. 672-735): 'there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit which filled him [John] also absolved him of all sins' (*Neque enim dubitandum est quod spiritus sanctus qui eum replevit etiam a peccatis omnibus absolvit*).[15] Eadmer noticed that for Jeremiah and John, sanctification occurred *in utero* on account of their vocations; they, like Mary, were destined for prophetic and revelatory roles. With Jeremiah and John in mind, he argued from the principle of fittingness that given Mary's superior role in salvation history, she could not have been an exception to the grace of sanctification in the womb.[16] Mary's superiority stemmed from the fact that she took the ultimate role in the advent or revelation of God, the Incarnation, becoming the 'most sweet couch'

[14] Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, XVIII (SAOp. II, p. 159, lines 16-17); trans. by McNab, *The Major Works*, p. 376.

[15] Bede, *Homilia* II, xix, 275, ed. by D. Hurst, *Bedae Venerabilis, Opera homiletica, Opera rhythmica*, CCSL CXXII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955). Latin and English texts in M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 16; see, also, p. 22.

[16] See Eadmer of Canterbury, *Tractatus de conceptione*, IX (PL 159, 305A).

(*dulcissimum reclinatorium*) of the Son.[17] For Eadmer, it was fitting that Mary should have been sanctified in her mother's womb, on account of her unique destiny:

> If Jeremiah was sanctified in his mother's womb because he was to be a prophet among the Gentiles, and if John, who was to go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, who will dare to say that the one and only mercy seat of the whole world, the most sweet couch of the Son of God Almighty, was deprived of the illumination of the grace of the Holy Spirit from the first instant of her conception?[18]

In summary, then, although Eadmer did not make a decisive contribution to the theological articulation and defence of the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception, he did take a relatively new and obscure liturgical observance, which had spread amongst some Anglo-Saxon monasteries in the previous century, and make it a matter of theological importance. Eadmer was able to do this because, as we have seen, he employed the principles of 'fittingness' and 'convenience' in its defence. These were, to echo the language of Southern about Anselm, Eadmer's two Mariological axioms. The principal strength of Eadmer's *De conceptione* was that it associated him with his venerable master by evoking Anselm's Marian writings; it may even be useful to think of Eadmer as one who enabled Anselm's Mariology to blossom.

Opposing the Conception: Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter of Celle

The initial revival and spread of the feast was not entirely smooth, as Lanfranc's objection that it was a novelty, alien to the universal Catholic tradition and peculiar to England, resurfaced. Consequently, in 1129 the archbishop of Canterbury and papal legate, William of Corbeil (*abp*. 1123-1136), summoned

[17] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Tractatus de conceptione*, IX (PL 159, 305A).

[18] *Si igitur Jeremias, quia in gentibus erat propheta futurus, in vulva est sanctificatus, et Joannes, Dominum in spiritu, et virtute Eliae praecessurus, Spiritu sancto est ex utero matris repletus, quis dicere audeat singulare totius saeculi propitiatiorium, ac Filii Dei omnipotentis dulcissimum reclinatorium, mox in suae conceptionis exordio Spiritus sancti gratiae illustratione destitutum. Ibid*., IX (PL 159, 305A-305B); trans. by Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, p. 118.

a legatine synod in London to determine whether or not the observance was legal, as well as to address other important questions of the day. By all accounts, the synod was a significant gathering, attended by King Henry I (*r*. 1100-1135) and numerous bishops and abbots, as well as a vast gathering of ordinary clergy.[19] The presence of the parochial clergy can be explained by the primary purpose of the synod, which was to enforce the church's ban on clerical marriage. On this point, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle suggests that the synod was none too successful, since with the King's permission the priests ignored their archbishop and kept their wives as before.[20] It also seems that royal favour was decisive for the fate of the feast of the Conception.

Before the synod, two powerful bishops, Roger of Salisbury (*bp*. 1102-1139) and Bernard of St David's (*bp*. 1115-*c*. 1147), were recruited by opponents of the feast to resist its legitimation. The reasons for their opposition are unclear, though Roger's biographer, E. J. Kealey, has suggested that it was for reasons of ecclesiastical politics rather than theology (or devotion) that he was resistant.[21] Their opposition was significant since they gave voice to the objection that the Conception was a novelty being celebrated without the sanction of the church. Against opponents of the stature of Roger and Bernard it was quite possible that the advocates of the feast – Bishop Gilbert of London (*bp*. 1128-1134), Anselm of Bury and Osbert of Clare – could have failed.[22] Yet, they succeeded because they had royal support, and the feast was recognised by apostolic authority.[23] The King's approval in this instance is difficult to fathom but it may have resulted from his personal devotion to the Virgin, or his friendship with Anselm of Bury. The latter had undoubtedly tried to curry royal favour, since he made

[19] See *Councils and Synods, with other documents relating to the English Church, I. AD 871-1204, part II. 1066-1204*, ed. by D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 751.

[20] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* 1129, in *Councils and Synods,* ed. by D. Whitelock, et al., p. 753.

[21] See E. J. Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury: Viceroy of England* (Berkeley, LA; London: University of California Press, 1972), p. 142.

[22] John of Worcester recorded that Bishop Gilbert was a canon of Lyons cathedral before he became bishop of London, which would begin to explain his support for the feast of the Conception since, as this chapter explains, it was against the community at Lyons that Bernard of Clairvaux directed his ire. See John of Worcester, *Chronicles*, 3 vols, ed. and trans. by P. McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 176, 177.

[23] From 'a Gloucester copy of the Worcester *Chronicon* written *c.* 1200', cited in *Councils and Synods*, ed. by D. Whitelock, et al., p. 751. See also John of Worcester; *Annales de theokesberia*, 1129, in *Annales Monastici*, ed. by H. R. Luard (London: Longman, Green, et al., 1864), p. 45.

provision for a votive Mass of the Virgin to be offered daily for Henry at Bury St Edmunds. S. J. P. Van Dijk has argued that only royal intervention would have been powerful enough to countermand the opposition of bishops Roger and Bernard.[24]

In the decade following the London synod, observance of the feast continued to spread but, despite royal and ecclesiastical sanction, the controversy surrounding it did not abate; rather, it intensified into a major theological dispute. The catalyst for this dispute was not English, however. It was a letter sent in 1139 to the canons of Lyons Cathedral in France, where the feast had also been established, by Bernard of Clairvaux (*c*. 1090-1153). Bernard objected to the feast as a novelty, just as Lanfranc had done in the eleventh century, claiming in the strongest terms that it bestowed a false honour upon the Virgin.[25] It may seem surprising that Bernard opposed the Conception given his reputation as an ardent devotee of Mary, but his Marian writings were not remarkable for their doctrinal novelty.[26] His letter to the canons of Lyons touched upon the theology of the feast of the Conception but his fundamental objection was that it was 'a rite of which the Church knows nothing, of which reason cannot prove, and for which there is no authority in tradition' (*quam ritus Ecclesiae nescit, non probat ratio, non commendat antiqua traditio*).[27] Bernard's loyalty to the Holy See was especially evident; he regarded the Pope as the sole expositor of the truth to which the ecclesiastical tradition

[24] 'Whether [Henry] followed the advice of his friend Anselm or his personal feelings of friendship, whether it was genuine devotion or opportunism, Henry's active part in the case can no longer be denied.' Van Dijk, 'The Origins of the Latin Feast of the Conception (II)', p. 435.

[25] See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep*. 174 (PL 182, 332D-336C); 'Letter 215', trans. by B. S. James, *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, new edn., 1998), pp. 289-293.

[26] Bernard was perhaps the greatest medieval champion of Mary and his letter to the canons of Lyons, like his other Marian writings, was notable for the force and elegance with which it extolled her virtues: 'Let us honour her for the purity of her body, the holiness of her life. Let us marvel at her fruitful virginity, and venerate her divine Son. Let us extol her freedom from concupiscence in conceiving, and from all pain in bearing. Let us proclaim her to be reverenced by the angels, desired by the nations, foretold by the patriarchs and prophets, chosen out of all and preferred before all. Let us magnify her as the channel of grace, the mediatrix of salvation the restorer of the ages, and as exalted above the choirs of angels to the very heights of heaven.' (*Honora sane integritatem carnis, vitae sanctitatem: mirare fecunditatem in Virgine, Prolem venerare divinam. Extolle nescientem, vel in concipiendo concupiscentiam, vel in pariendo dolorem. Praedica reverendam Angelis, desideratam gentibus, Patriarchis, Prophetisque praecognitam, electam ex omnibus, praelatam omnibus. Magnifica gratiae inventricem, mediatricem salutis, restauratricem saeculorum: exalta denique exaltatam super choros Angelorum ad coelestia regna*.) *Ibid*., 2 (PL 182, 333B-333C); trans. by James, *The Letters of St Bernard*, p. 290.

[27] *Ibid*., 1 (PL 182, 333A); trans. by James, *The Letters of St Bernard*, pp. 289-290.

attested. Whilst Eadmer had praised the simplicity of the devotees of Mary for keeping the feast, Bernard condemned the canons for adopting one of the superstitious practices of the uneducated. He was unmoved by the accounts of private visions claiming to support of the feast, arguing that they lacked foundation in reason or authority. As far as Bernard was concerned, the feast of the Conception had to be submitted to the Holy See for approval before it could be celebrated and by failing to do so, the canons of Lyons had committed a grave error:

> If you thought such a feast advisable, you should have first consulted the Holy See, and not have followed the simplicity of the uneducated. In fact I have before now observed this very error among some persons, but in order to spare the devotion of simple hearts for the Virgin, I have overlooked it. But when I find this superstition among learned men…I doubt whether I could overlook it without grave offence to you all. I have said all this in submission to the judgement of anyone wiser than myself, and especially in submission to the authority of the Roman Church, to whose decision I refer all that I have said on this or any other subject, prepared to modify anything I may have said, if it should be contrary to what she thinks.[28]

Bernard's opposition to the canons of Lyons became relevant in England because it elicited a response from a monk of St Albans, Nicholas. This has survived in a single manuscript from Reading Abbey, dating from the late-twelfth century, almost certainly from the period after Bernard's death.[29] In it, Nicholas directly countered Bernard's objections to the feast, which he described as an enrichment to the church's tradition rather than, as Bernard himself saw it, an aberration without sanction. Nicholas

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[28] *Nam si sic videbatur, consulenda erat prius apostolicae Sedis auctoritas, et non ita praecipitanter atque inconsulte paucorum sequenda simplicitas imperitorum. Et ante quidem apud aliquos errorem compereram: sed dissimulabam, parcens devotioni, quae de simplici corde et amore Virginis veniebat. Verum apud sapientes…nescio an sine gravi offensa etiam vestri omnium dissimulare potuerim. Quae autem dixi, absque praejudicio sane dicta sint sanius sapientis. Romanae praesertim Ecclesiae auctoritati atque examini totum hoc, sicut et caetera quae ejusmodi sunt, universa reservo: ipsius, si quid aliter sapio, paratus judicio emendare.* Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep*. 174, 9 (PL 182, 336B-336C); trans. by James, *The Letters of St Bernard*, p. 293.

[29] Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber magistri Nicolai de celebranda concepcione beate marie contra beatum bernardum* [hereafter, *Liber*], *MS Oxford, Bodl., Auct. D. 4. 18, ff. 99r – 114v*, ed. by C. H. Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans and Saint Bernard', *Revue Bénédictine*, 64.1-2 (1954), pp. 83-117 (this includes the Latin text of Nicholas's treatise).

explained that the Conception was not against tradition simply because it was new, since this had once been the case with all of the church's feasts:

> What, therefore, should we accept? Is it reasonable to institute new rites which are not part of ancient tradition? […] It is one thing for a rite not to be known in tradition, it is another for it to be opposed to tradition. The first is of tradition, but the second diminishes tradition.[30]

Nicholas also disagreed with Bernard about the validity of private visions as confirmation of the feast; he argued that God revealed his mysteries to whomever he chose, in private as well as in public. He made this point with even greater force in the second defence he gave, in response to one of Bernard's devotees, Peter of Celle (*c*. 1115-1183), with whom he exchanged a number of letters. Only a remnant of a lengthy correspondence between Peter and Nicholas has survived, dating from the period when Peter was abbot of Reims, from 1162 to 1181, consisting of four letters – three from Peter to Nicholas and one in reply – from between 1170 and 1181; there are no surviving letters from the earlier period, 1162 to 1170.[31] On the subject of visions, Nicholas recounted to Peter the story of a Cistercian lay brother who claimed to have received an apparition of Bernard himself, instructing him to celebrate the feast.

One of Nicholas' most forceful arguments was that Mary's conception marked the beginning of human redemption. Whilst he did not refer to the Anglo-Saxon prayers composed for the feast in the eleventh century, this point resonated with them, especially the Exeter Benedictional, which described the feast as the 'beginning of salvation' (*salutis exordium*).[32] Such correspondence between the new

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[30] *Quid igitur? Arctatur ecclesiastice dispositionis ratio, ne ultra quid novi instituat, quod antiqua traditio non commendat?* […] *Aliud est instituere quod antiquitas nescit, et aliud quod antiquitatem subvertit. In primo antiquitati additur, in secundo antiquitati derogatur*. Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 100v, ed. by Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 94, lines 42-44; p. 95, lines 2-4.

[31] See Peter of Celle, *Epp*. 169, 171-173 (PL 202, 611D-613B; 613C-622B; 622B-628A; 628A-632B). For a critical edition, in Latin and English, see *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, ed. by J. Haseldine (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001). The numbering adopted in this chapter follows Migne.

[32] Exeter Benedictional (British Library, Add. 28188, f. 161); Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 84-85. For discussion, see chapter 1 of this thesis.

and the old – Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon – undoubtedly calls into question the view that ideas about the Conception from the eleventh century, and even the memory of the feast itself, had died out.[33] For Nicholas, Mary's maternity for the sake of salvation, remained the central impetus behind the celebration of the feast, just as it had been for the Anglo-Saxons:

> The reason for the [feast of the Conception] is the grace of our salvation which was announced in it…the laying of the foundation of the temple in which the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily…the construction of the bridal chamber in which God the Father joined the Church to His Son and celebrated their nuptials. The reason for the Conception is the unfathomable mystery of our Redemption, which indeed is contained principally in the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord, but is adorned and, as it were, announced by certain preceding solemnities, such as the Annunciation and Nativity of the Lord. And these, in turn, are announced by the Conception and Nativity of her to whom the Announcement of Redemption was made, and of whom the Redeemer was born.[34]

The Problems of the Augustinian Immaculists: Eadmer and Nicholas of St Albans

The main challenge for the English immaculists of the twelfth century was to reconcile their belief in Mary's sinlessness with their Augustinian understanding of original sin. Both Eadmer of Canterbury and Nicholas of St Albans were traditional Augustinians who accepted the idea of the transmission of

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[33] F. M. Mildner, 'The Immaculate Conception in the Writings of Nicholas of St Albans', *Marianum*, 2 (1940), p. 181; see Van Dijk, 'The Origin of the Latin Feast of the Conception (II)', p. 431.

[34] *Ratio concepcionis est nunciata in ea gratia nostre salvationis. Ratio concepcionis est fundatio templi in quo plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter habitavit…in quo deus pater filio suo ecclesiam copulavit et nupcias celebravit. Ratio concepcionis est rationem excedens sacramentum nostre redemptionis, cuius virtus et summa cum sit in passione, et resurrectione, et ascensione dominica, habet precedentes quasdam sollempnitates virtutem summamque redemptiones ornantes, que dominus quasi redemptionis nucia, veluti annunciationem, nativitatemque dominicam. Quarum nuncia sunt conceptio et nativitas eius, cui annunciatio redemptionis facta est, et ex qua redemptor natus est*. Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 113v, ed. by Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 116, lines 3-14; trans. by C. Balić, 'The Mediaeval Controversy over the Immaculate Conception up to the Death of Scotus', in E. D. O'Connor, ed., *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, History and Significance* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), pp. 161-212 (p. 182). See also Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 110v, ed. by Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 111, lines 10-14.

original sin by concupiscence and carnal lust, through the sexual act itself. Both of them used Augustinian language when speaking of original sin, describing the flesh as its cause (*causam peccati*) and the death of the soul (*mors animae*) as its principal consequence.[35] The use of these phrases signified Eadmer and Nicholas' reliance upon Augustine (354-430), in whose definition of original sin their words had very close counterparts. In *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, for example, Augustine had affirmed the dignity of marriage whilst condemning 'the evil of carnal concupiscence from which man who is born therefrom contracts original sin' (*carnalis concupiscentiae malum, propter quod homo, qui per illam nascitur, trahit originale peccatum*).[36] This implied that carnal concupiscence was the vehicle for the transmission of original sin because of its fundamental role in the procreative act. Likewise, the idea of *mors animae* had occurred in several Augustinian texts, especially those reflecting upon Romans 5:12 ('death came through sin', etc). In *De natura et gratia*, for instance, Augustine had identified the death of the soul, alongside mortality of the body, as the consequence of original sin, defining it as the soul's loss of divine grace, leading human beings to make bad choices and to fall into even greater sin.[37]

Strangely, especially for Eadmer, the twelfth-century immaculists do not appear to have been influenced by Anselm's *De conceptu virginali*, which posited that original sin consisted in the corruption of rational nature. Neither *causam peccati* nor *mors animae*, nor even similar concepts, occurred in *De conceptu virginali*. For Anselm, it was the soul which, lacking original justice, tainted the whole person with original sin upon its union with a body: 'the will sowed the seed and nature brought it to life' (*voluntas seminavit et natura germinavit*).[38] Anselm's doctrine distinguished between

[35] For *causam peccati*, see Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 113v, ed. by Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 115, line 26; for *mors animae*, see Eadmer of Canterbury, *Tractatus de conceptione santae Mariae*, 17 (PL 159, 308B).

[36] Augustine of Hippo, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* I, 1 (PL 44, 413-474 (413-414)); trans. by P. Holmes and R. E. Wallis, NPNF I, vol. 5, ed. by P. Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), pp. 257-308 (p. 264). For Augustine, concupiscence was always present in sexual intercourse; in the context of marriage, which he regarded as good, it was something like a necessary evil but it 'plays the king in the foul indulgences of adultery, and fornication, and lasciviousness, and uncleanness' (*Huius plagae quidam pruritus in adulteriorum et fornicationum et quorumlibet stuprorum atque immunditiarum foeditatibus regnat*). *Ibid.* I, 13 (PL 44, 422); trans. by Holmes and Wallis, NPNF I, vol. 5, p. 269.

[37] See Augustine of Hippo, *De natura et gratia*, XXIII [25] (PL 44, 247-290 (259)); trans. by P. Holmes and R. E. Wallis, NPNF I, vol. 5, ed. by P. Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994), pp. 115-151 (p. 130).

[38] Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, XXIII (SAOp. II, p. 164, line 6). See, also: 'I understand original sin to be simply the sin which is in an infant as soon as he has a rational soul' (*Originale igitur peccatum non aliud intelligo quam quod*

the physical and moral senses of conception, rendering sexual intercourse essentially morally neutral and emphasising animation as the moment when the disease of original sin was contracted.[39] In subsequent centuries, this idea would be used to its full potential to assert that, in anticipation of redemption and on account of her divine maternity, God infused Mary's soul with grace and so preserved her from contracting original sin in her person (more below).

In the twelfth century, however, the potential of Anselm's innovation was not recognised, perhaps because the immaculists were unwilling to disavow such an important tenet of Augustinianism. Consequently, whilst they sought to defend Mary's freedom from original sin, they could not do so easily, because they could not get away from the fact that she was conceived in the normal way, in concupiscence and lust, whereby original sin was believed to be transmitted. Bernard of Clairvaux was entirely aware of this problem, too, and his letter to the canons of Lyons reveals that he perceived it to be intractable. Associating Mary's conception with the normal mode of human generation, Bernard rejected the only two means by which, as he saw it, she could have been without original sin.[40] He argued, first, that it was impossible for her to have been holy before her conception when she did not exist and, second, that there could not have been sanctity in the generative act of her parents because of the absence of the sanctifying Spirit (*Spiritu sanctificante*) from any act of lust and concupiscence. Bernard was extremely cautious about imputing the false honour of virginal maternity (i.e. conception by the Holy Spirit) to Mary's mother, because this would have detracted from her daughter's own dignity.[41] He believed Mary to have been sanctified in the womb like Jeremiah and John the Baptist – not least on account of her superiority to them[42] – but not that her holy birth, which sanctification

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est in infant, mox ut habet animam rationale). Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu originali*, XXVII (SAOp. II, p. 170, lines 6-7); trans. by McNab, *The Major Works*, p. 386.

[39] See *ibid*., IV (SAOp. II, pp. 143-145).

[40] See Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep*. 174, 7 (PL 182, 335B-336A).

[41] See *ibid*., 7 (PL 182, 335D).

[42] See *ibid*., 3-4 (PL 182, 333C-334C). See, also: 'We cannot for a moment suppose that a privilege which has been accorded to some, though very few, mortals, was denied to that Virgin through whom all mortals have entered life. Beyond all doubt the Mother of the Lord was holy before she was born' (*Quod itaque vel paucis mortalium constat fuisse collatum, fas certe non est suspicari tantae Virgini esse negatum, per quam omnis mortalitas emersit ad vitam. Fuit procul dubio et Mater Domini ante sancta, quam nata*). *Ibid*., 5 (PL 182, 334C); trans. by James, *The Letters of St Bernard*, p. 291. Bernard was actually quite tentative in asserting the extent to which sanctification by the Holy Spirit prevailed over the original sin of Jeremiah and

entailed, signified a holy conception. Bernard argued that to insist upon a holy conception as the prerequisite for a holy birth would lead to the ludicrous assertion of a regress of holiness from one generation to the next, *ad infinitum*.[43] In short, then, Bernard's letter to the canons of Lyons summarised the main obstacles facing the English immaculists of the twelfth century. Their fundamental problem was that Mary's conception was normal and therefore subject to concupiscence – the vehicle for the transmission of original sin – and, consequently, that it could not be identified with the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Peter of Celle took this last point even further than Bernard and, whilst Michael O'Carroll is right that his 'zeal to defend his master…outran [his] theological method', his formulation of the problem is worth noting.[44] Peter seems to have believed that Mary's sanctification occurred with the operation of the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation, rather than in the womb of her mother. In the following quotation, his reference to 'the divine conception' (*divinam conceptionem*) refers to the conception of Christ:

> I concede and I believe indeed that, with God acting beforehand, she never felt the raging impediments of lust even in the smallest degree; but the other impediments of human frailty which proceed from nature by natural origin or by welling up she was able to feel before the divine conception, but in no way consented to them.[45]

John the Baptist: 'certainly the Holy Spirit sanctified him [John the Baptist] when he filled him. But I would not venture to say how far this sanctification availed over original sin either for John the Baptist, or for the prophet [Jeremiah], or for anyone else who was thus prevented by grace' (*Certissime autem sanctus Spiritus quem replevit, sanctificavit. Caeterum quatenus adversus originale peccatum haec ipsa sanctificatio valuerit, sive pro isto, sive pro illo propheta, vel si quis alius simili praeventus gratia fuerit; non temere dixerim*). Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep*. 174, 4 (PL 182, 334A); trans. by James, *The Letters of St Bernard*, p. 291. Whether or not Bernard implied that this rule extended to Mary, also, is unclear; presumably, following Augustine, he would have preferred to avoid any question of sin in respect of Mary once she had been sanctified.

[43] See *ibid*., 6 (PL 182, 334D-335A).

[44] O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 268; see, also, A. W. Burridge, 'L'Immaculée Conception dans la théologie de l'Angleterre médiévale', *Revue D'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 32.3 (1936), pp. 570-597 (p. 586).

[45] *Concedo et credo siquidem, quod saeva libidinis incentiva Deo praeoperante nunquam senserit, vel ad modicum: caetera vero impedimenta humanae fragilitatis, quae naturali origine, sive scaturigine, de natura procedunt, ante divinam conceptionem sentire potuit, sed nullatenus consensit.* Peter of Celle, *Ep*. 171 (PL 202, 619A); trans. by Haseldine, *Letters of Peter of Celle*, p. 593.

One of the important questions for the immaculists, implied in these words from Peter of Celle, following Bernard, was: what function did the Holy Spirit perform in the process of Mary's sanctification? By the time that Peter was writing, Eadmer had already mentioned the Spirit in his *De conceptione*, whilst Nicholas of St Albans answered Peter directly in a letter.[46] In *De conceptione*, Eadmer had given considerable prominence to the role of the Holy Spirit in Mary's sanctification, indicating that he knew the late Anglo-Saxon prayers for the feast of the Conception. By attributing Mary's sanctification to the Spirit, those prayers created a parallel between her own (passive) conception and her (active) conception of Christ. An Anglo-Saxon himself, Eadmer was dedicated to the customs of his people, including perhaps their prayers;[47] for him, Mary had been filled with the Holy Spirit in her mother's womb, with the result that she was sanctified because 'where the Spirit is, there is liberty' (*Ubi spiritus, ibi libertas*; 2 Cor 3:17).[48] In turn, Nicholas of St Albans argued that the salutation of the Angel Gabriel, *Ave gratia plena* (Lk 1:28), signified that Mary had already been sanctified when she conceived.[49]

Nicholas of St Albans was the only English immaculist who tried to reconcile the Immaculate Conception with an Augustinian doctrine of original sin, and his involvement in the controversy marked a shift in its tone and theological sophistication. Previously, as A. W. Burridge has noted, Eadmer and Osbert had focused upon 'l'aspect extérieur de la question'; observing the status of others, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, they had asserted that Mary's privileges must be the same or greater on account of her maternal vocation.[50] By contrast, Nicholas concentrated on what Burridge has described as 'd'ordre intime' of the question; namely, the person of Mary herself and the ways in which she could

[46] The fact that the role of the Holy Spirit was considered by both the advocates and the opponents of the Immaculate Conception indicates that Luigi Gambero's observation of a 'pneumatological emphasis' in the writings of Benedictine monks in the twelfth century may be accurate. See Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, p. 146.

[47] On Eadmer's love for English tradition, see B. Ward, *Anselm of Canterbury: His Life and Legacy* (London: SPCK, 2009), pp. 8-9; R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 229-240; Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, pp. 406-410; Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, p. 117.

[48] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Tractatus de conceptione*, IX (PL 159, 305B).

[49] Nicholas of St Albans, *Ep. ad Petrum* (PL 202, 622B-628A (625D)).

[50] Burridge, 'L'Immaculée Conception', p. 590.

have been immaculately conceived.[51] His treatise took the question of whether or not it was appropriate to celebrate the feast of the Conception and turned it into a consideration of what the feast signified about Mary. As F. M. Mildner has argued:

> …when we come to consider the object of the Feast [in the *Liber*] it becomes obvious that it is not the generative act of St. Joachim and St. Anne which Nicholas venerates, but the fruit of that act, and therefore the very beginning of the partial existence of Mary in the womb of her mother.[52]

The *Liber* was an enquiry into the beginnings of Mary's holiness, in the knowledge that she was conceived in the normal way and so inherited the cause of original sin (*causam peccati*).[53] Like Augustine, Nicholas sought to avoid imputing any kind of sin to Mary, and he may have been the first English theologian to make an explicit allusion to Augustine's words: 'We must except the holy Virgin Mary, concerning whom I wish to raise no question when it touches the subject of sins, out of honour to the Lord' (*Excepta itaque sancta virgine Maria, de qua propter honorem Domini nullam prorsus cum de peccatis agitur, haberi volo quaestionem*).[54] However, Nicholas did not use Augustine's formulation of the doctrine of original sin directly, but rather the more systematic expression it received from Hugh of St Victor (*c*. 1096-1141), who defined it as 'the corruption or vice which we take by birth through ignorance in the mind, through concupiscence in the flesh' (*corruptio sive vitium quod nascendo trahimus per ignorantiam in mente, per concupiscentiam in carne*).[55] Ignorance was understood as the mind's punishment for the pride which gave rise to Adam's sin, whilst concupiscence

[51] Burridge, 'L'Immaculée Conception', p. 590. See, also, K. E. Haney, 'The Immaculate Imagery in the Winchester Psalter', *Gesta*, 20.1 (1981), pp. 111-118 (p. 113); K. E. Haney, *The Winchester Psalter: An Iconographic Study* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), p. 39.

[52] Mildner, 'The Immaculate Conception', p. 180.

[53] See Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 113r, ed. by Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 115, line 26.

[54] Augustine of Hippo, *De natura et gratia*, XXXVI [42] (PL 44, 267); trans. by Holmes and Wallis, NPNF I, vol. 5, p. 135. Cf. Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 111r, ed. by Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 111, lines 38-39.

[55] Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis Christiane fide* VII, 28 (PL 176, 299A); trans. by R. J. Deferrari, *Hugh of Saint Victor on the Sacraments of the Christian Faith* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1951), p. 134. For a brief account of Nicholas' use of Hugh, see A. Bonnar, 'Nicholas of St Albans: A Twelfth-Century Theologian of the Immaculate Conception', *The Dublin Review*, 232.475 (1958), pp. 63-66.

was defined as the effect of mortality, the punishment of the flesh. Ignorance and concupiscence, therefore, were the 'two vices, from which afterwards grew the stock of all subsequent evils' (*Duo vitia…a quibus subsequentium omnium malorum propago postmodum pullulavit*).[56]

At the heart of Nicholas' argument was a delineation of a three-stage process whereby original sin matured in human beings. In this, too, he followed Hugh, for whom the process of human generation encompassed several important moments. At conception, the foetus received the *cause* of guilt or culpability for Adam's sin; at animation, it received the *necessity* or promise of concupiscent desire; at birth, perceiving the world around it, the child became subject to *culpability* (not just its cause); finally, at the moment when it began to exercise its rational nature, the human being had the *act* of guilt, and the carnal desires of the flesh took advantage of the will's impotence and were allowed to flourish. As Mildner has demonstrated, this was essentially the Augustinian position, but the fact that Nicholas received it from Hugh is clear from the closeness with which his text followed Hugh's *De sacramentis*:[57]

> *Nicholas*: …in him from whom it is generated, it has guilt and the act of guilt; in him that is generated there is the cause of guilt, but neither guilt nor the act of guilt; in him that is animated, there is the cause of guilt and guilt, but not the act of guilt.[58]

> *Hugh*: In him from whom it is generated, it has guilt and the act of guilt. In that it is generated, it has neither guilt nor the act of guilt, but the cause. In that it is born, it has the cause of guilt and guilt, but it has not the act.[59]

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[56] Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis Christiane fide* VII, 31 (PL 176, 301B); trans. by R. J. Deferrari, *Hugh of Saint Victor on the Sacraments*, p. 136.

[57] See Mildner, 'The Immaculate Conception', p. 183.

[58] *In omnibus enim nobis caro que in nostra concepcione seminatur, in eo a quo seminatur et culpam habet et actum culpe; in eo quod seminatur causam culpe, sed nec culpam nec actum culpe; in eo vero quod animator, at causam culpe habet et culpam, sed non actum culpe.* Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 112v, ed. by C. H. Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 114, lines 17-21.

[59] *In eo a quo seminatur culpam habet et actum culpae. In eo quod seminatur nec culpam habet nec actum culpae, sed causam. In eo quod nascitur causam culpae et culpam habet, sed actum non habet*. Hugh of St Victor, *De sacramentis Christiane fide* VII, 31 (PL 176, 302A); trans. by Deferrari, *Hugh of Saint Victor on the Sacraments*, p. 137.

Nicholas also followed Hugh in distinguishing conception from animation (also called 'spiritual conception') and birth, with important consequences for his defence of the Immaculate Conception.[60] He argued that Mary's human conception had been natural but that she was free from original sin because her soul had been cleansed by the Holy Spirit; she had been sanctified in her mother's womb, not at the moment of her physical conception but when she became a whole person, at the moment when she received a soul:

> Cleanness was not present in the conception of the virgin, who was conceived in concupiscence, in which the law of the cause of sin happened to be present, but it did not spread after the infusion of her soul…[61]

Unfortunately, Nicholas' *Liber* was neither widely known nor drawn upon in subsequent centuries, but it did represent an important step made by the English Benedictines in the theological articulation of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Like Eadmer and Bernard, Nicholas could not quite liberate himself from the Augustinian account of the role of concupiscence in the nature and transmission of original sin. He could not, therefore, do other than argue for Mary's sanctification from the *causam peccati* at the moment of her animation. His treatise represented a step forward because it elevated the Conception from a solely devotional and liturgical question to a matter of theological enquiry, establishing an important precedent for future immaculists. Ultimately, though, Nicholas failed to move beyond the basic assertion of Mary's complete freedom from sin by sanctification to an explanation of how this occurred or, more fundamentally, how she was free from its cause. Indeed, his argument raised a further question: if Mary was sanctified at the same instant that she received her soul, did she also contract original sin, if just for a moment? Theologians would not try to resolve this problem until the thirteenth century, when Henry of Ghent (*c*. 1217-1293) and William of Ware (*fl*. 1290-1305) would assert,

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[60] See Balić, 'The Mediaeval Controversy over the Immaculate Conception', p. 172, n. 56.

[61] *Que mundicia nec in concepcione virgini collata est, quia forte in concupiscentia conceptio facta est, et lex peccati causaliter traducta, nec post anime infusionem dilata*. Nicholas of St Albans, *Liber*, 112v-113r, ed. by Talbot, 'Nicholas of St. Albans', p. 114, lines 40-44.

however contradictory it seems, that Mary contracted and was cleansed from original sin simultaneously.[62] Resolution was only finally achieved by John Duns Scotus (*c*. 1266-1308) who argued that Mary was preserved from sin by grace, rather than sanctified. Nicholas' failure to see beyond Augustine's doctrine of original sin meant that whilst his *Liber* was a milestone in the articulation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception it did not attract much attention and was overtaken by other, more ingenious, defences in the following centuries.

The Winchester Psalter and the Feast of the Conception in the Twelfth Century

The Winchester Psalter (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV), datable on artistic and palaeographical grounds to the mid-twelfth century (*c*. 1145-1155), includes five depictions of scenes from the apocryphal narratives of the life of the Virgin: the angelic annunciations of her conception to Joachim and Anne respectively, their meeting at the Golden Gate, her birth and her presentation in the Temple.[63] The fact that these scenes were included at all may suggest that the feasts of Mary's Conception and Presentation continued to be as important to the Winchester monks in the twelfth century as they had been before the Norman Conquest. Only devotion to the Virgin and the revival of the feasts can satisfactorily account for their inclusion; evidence that the feast of the Conception was revived includes it reappearance in the psalter's kalendar.[64] In fact, the Anglo-Saxon prayers were also evoked by the psalter's appeal to apocryphal scenes from Mary's life, to which a certain legitimacy was given because they were commemorated alongside scenes from the canonical scriptures.[65] The rationale behind the psalter's artwork may have been to depict the unfolding of salvation history, from the very

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[62] See A. B. Wolter and B. O'Neill, *John Duns Scotus: Mary's Architect* (Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 1993), pp. 58-64.

[63] See London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, ff. 4r, 8r. Full-colour facsimiles of these scenes are available online; <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_nero_c_iv_fs001r> [accessed 21 May 2014]. On the dating of the psalter, see C. R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800-1200* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 363. For discussion of the artistic features of the this 'Marian Cycle', see Haney, *The Winchester Psalter*, pp. 36-46.

[64] London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, f. 45v; the blue ink in which the name of the feast was originally recorded has faded but it can still be seen very faintly.

[65] On the Anglo-Saxon resonances of the Winchester Psalter, see Dodwell, *Pictorial Arts of the West*, p. 359.

beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to the Last Judgement, and we suggest that Mary's life acted as a bridge between the old and new epochs.[66] Her conception was used to mark the beginning of salvation through Christ.

The first apocryphal scene, the angelic annunciation to Joachim, is amongst the most curious miniatures in the entire psalter because it is separated from the rest of the Marian cycle, appearing instead alongside images of Moses and the Burning Bush (Ex 3:2-4), Moses receiving the Tablets of the Law (Ex 31:18) and two unidentified kings with Christ (appendix 1, fig. 1). There can be little doubt that the image does depict Mary's father because the angel carries a scroll on which his name is written: *Noli timere ioachim ego…angelus domini*. However, it is strange that it should have been included here, in a sequence of Old Testament scenes, since it referred to the first event of the new epoch. The only satisfactory way to understand it, given its context, is as part of a comment on power and authority, which encompassed all the images and was designed to emphasise Christ's universal lordship. The old epoch, represented by Moses, and the beginning of the new, represented by the angelic salutation to Joachim, must be understood in light of the central scene of Christ and the two kings.

It is generally assumed that the kings represent David and Solomon, and that they are *receiving* from Christ a sceptre and a book, respectively.[67] Alternatively and more controversially, Walter Cahn has suggested that they are symbolic figures representing the spheres of secular and ecclesiastical authority, and that the purpose of the image was to show that whilst all power came from Christ these two spheres were distinct. He has seen in the image: 'a demonstration of the division of authority instituted by the Lord in the partnership of Moses and Aaron, or, as projected across time, in the successive reigns of *lex* and *gratia*'.[68] Whilst this explanation is probably 'far-fetched', to use Francis Wormald's phrase, its strength is that it connects the folio to the historical context in which the psalter itself came to be; both the investiture controversy and the campaign for *libertas ecclesiae* were ongoing

[66] Haney has described the first Marian image (the annunciation of her conception to Joachim) as 'the conclusion to the illustrations of the Pentateuch'. See Haney, *The Winchester Psalter*, p. 37.

[67] See F. Wormald, *The Winchester Psalter* (London: Harvey Miller and Medcalf, 1973), p. 15; Haney, *The Winchester Psalter*, p. 37.

[68] W. Cahn, 'The Tympanum of the Portal of Saint-Anne at Notre Dame de Paris and the Iconography of the Division of the Powers in the Early Middle Ages', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 32 (1969), pp. 55-72 (p. 64).

in the twelfth century.[69] One of the weaknesses of Cahn's interpretation is that the figure representing *gratia* (i.e. ecclesiastical authority) is a king rather than a bishop but, in his defence, it might be argued that the second crowned figure represented the powerful bishop of Winchester, Henry of Blois (*bp*. 1129-1171), for whom the psalter was made and who was of the blood royal through his mother, Adela (*c*. 1067-1137), the youngest daughter of King William I (*r*. 1066-1087). Just as Henry believed in the difference between secular and ecclesiastical authority whilst also maintaining that they should be yoked together in the governance of the realm,[70] so the image of Christ and the two kings may have sought to distinguish two spheres of authority whilst equally strongly uniting them in the central figure of the King of kings. Whilst Cahn's interpretation is not entirely satisfactory, it helpfully proposes a sensible interpretation of the grouping together of these images, namely, as a gloss upon the themes of power and authority. The two kings tie the three sections together; the king on Christ's right points to Christ and to the scenes above, the king to Christ's left points to the scene below. Perhaps the two kings do indeed represent David and Solomon, as Wormald and others have assumed, but this does not mean that they could not also represent two kinds of power. Solomon, on Christ's left, presenting him with a book as a symbol of the same wisdom with which Christ was often seen as synonymous in twelfth-century homilies, and David, on Christ's right, offering him a sceptre as a sign of his lordship over the earth.[71]

This triptych is replete with symbolic or typological links to the Virgin Mary – the Burning Bush, for instance – and the sceptre which 'David' is offering to (or receiving from) Christ was especially significant.[72] In the Vulgate, the word *virga* means both 'sceptre' and 'shoot', and it appears

[69] Wormald, *Winchester Psalter*, p. 15; see, Cahn, 'The Tympanum of the Portal of Saint-Anne', p. 64.

[70] See N. Riall, *Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester: A Patron of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Winchester: Hampshire County Council, 1994), pp. 3-5.

[71] Whilst Haney did not reach this conclusion she, too, has described the kings as *figurae* of the 'transmission of divine authority' to Christ and the Virgin from their Old Testament ancestors. See Haney, *The Winchester Psalter*, p. 42. On Christ and the figure of Wisdom see, also, chapter 3 of this thesis.

[72] On Marian symbols in the Old Testament: 'The Virgin's prefigurations included the burning bush of Moses [*rubus igneus*, Ex 3:1-6], the fleece of Gideon [*vellus Gedeonis*, Jud 6:36-40], the three youths in the furnace [*tres pueri in fornace*, Dan 3], Daniel in the lions' den [*lacus leonum*, Dan 6:16-24], Jacob's ladder [*scala Iacob*, Gen 28:10-22] and the three *virgae*, the *virga Moysi* [Ex 4:1-4; 7:8-12; 14:15-31; 17:1-7], the *virga Aaron* [Num 17], and the *virga Iesse*, the last being a figurative prophecy.' A. Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 2.

over fifty times (although not at all in the Gospels). For example, in Hebrews 1:8: *ad Filium autem thronus tuus Deus in saeculum saeculi et virga aequitatis virga regni tui* ('But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous sceptre is the sceptre of your kingdom"'). In particular, it appears in Isaiah 11:1, referring to the shoot of Jesse, the royal line which included King David and Christ himself: *et egredietur virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius ascendet* ('a shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots'). Given the clear linguistic similarity of *virga* ('sceptre') and *virgo* ('virgin'), twelfth-century exegetes and theologians frequently associated the blossoming rod of Jesse with the Virgin Mary.[73] This would certainly explain why the annunciation of Mary's conception to Joachim was depicted alongside the scenes of Moses and the Burning Bush, and Christ receiving a sceptre from an unknown king, possibly David. The sceptre was both a symbol of the authority which David exercised prefiguring Christ and a symbol of the Virgin Mary. Two further points may be made to support this interpretation of the triptych. First, the sceptre in the Winchester Psalter was decorated in such a way that it appears to be flowering, like the scriptural rod of Jesse (see appendix 1, fig. 1). Second, the monks responsible for illustrating the Winchester Psalter seem to have had the genealogy of Christ in mind, for the psalter also included a celebrated medieval depiction of the tree of Jesse (see appendix 1, fig. 2), which has been compared to others of renown: 'The flowers are stylized, heavy, and large, as are those in the Jesse windows of Saint-Denis and Chartres'.[74] It may or may not be significant that the flowers on the tree in the scene of the angelic annunciation to Joachim (see appendix 1, fig. 1) are similar in style and elaborateness to those on the tree of Jesse (see appendix 1, fig. 2), and that, with the possible exception of a scene of David rescuing a sheep from a lion,[75] other trees in the Winchester Psalter are not heavily stylized.[76]

In summary, then, the Marian cycle of the Winchester Psalter suggests that by the second-half of the twelfth century, the revived feast of the Conception had received artistic significance, alongside the theological form it was also being given by Nicholas of St Albans. Apocryphal texts continued, at

[73] See Watson, *Tree of Jesse*, p. 3.

[74] London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, f. 9r.

[75] *Ibid.*, f. 7r.

[76] Cf. *Ibid.*, ff. 2r, 5r.

least at Winchester, to be an important inspiration for ideas about the Conception – as they had been in the pre-Conquest period – which came to be considered an important bridge between the epochs of the Old and New Testaments. Through their miniatures, the Winchester monks offered an artistic gloss on the feast of the Conception, which indicates its significance to them in both the liturgical life of the monastery (after all, the psalter was a liturgical book) and their understanding of salvation history.[77]

Anselmian Excursus: Reconceptualising the Transmission of Original Sin

Anselm appeared at an important juncture in the development of the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception; the feast had been suppressed by his predecessor at Canterbury, Lanfranc, but one of the most significant impetuses for its revival after his death came from his biographer, Eadmer. Yet, this discussion of his contribution to the development of the doctrine necessarily appears as an excursus to the present chapter because, as numerous scholars have noted, Anselm did not teach the doctrine himself. As Joseph Bruder has emphatically remarked: 'It is in vain that we search the authentic works of our Saint for any declaration as express even as that of his great authority, Saint Augustine, about Mary's being free from [original] sin.'[78] For Anselm, only Christ was exempt from the inherited taint, which passed from one generation to the next 'as far as the Virgin his Mother'.[79] Nevertheless, it would

[77] In the previous chapter, we argued that eighth- and ninth-century Byzantium contributed decisively to the Anglo-Saxon understanding of the Conception because its homiletic tradition took inspiration from the apocryphal life of the Virgin, the *Protevangelium of James*. It may be significant that the Winchester Psalter seems to have taken inspiration from the same place, with its so-called 'Byzantine Diptych', depicting the Assumption and the Enthronement of the Virgin (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, ff. 29r, 30r). See H. A. Klein, 'The So-Called Byzantine Diptych in the Winchester Psalter, British Library, MS Cotton Nero C. IV', *Gesta*, 37.1 (1998), pp. 26-43.

[78] Bruder, *Mariology of Saint Anselm*, p. 31; presumably he is referring here to Augustine's statement, already quoted, from *De natura et gratia*, 42. Other scholars sharing Bruder's opinion, include: Graef, *Mary*, p. 165; Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 352; Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, p. 111; M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books edn., 1983), p. 241; J. Janaro, 'Saint Anselm and the Development of the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception: Historical and Theological Perspectives', *The Saint Anselm Journal*, 3.2 (2006), pp. 48-56 (p. 48).

[79] Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, XXIII (SAOp. II, p. 164, lines 5-6). Anselm unequivocally asserted Christ's freedom from original sin: 'no reason, no truth, no thought can allow the man conceived by the Virgin alone to be tainted by the sin of the sinful mass' (*nulla ratio, nulla veritas, nullus intellectus permittit ad hominem ex sola virgine conceptum de peccato massae peccatricis*). *Ibid*., XV (SAOp. II, p. 157, lines 10-11); trans. by McNab, *The Major Works*, p. 374.

be an unfortunate oversight to exclude Anselm from this analysis altogether because, for many centuries after his death and for various reasons, his name was associated with the Immaculate Conception and at the heart of this association there was a kernel of truth.

Two cases of mistaken identity led to Anselm being regarded as an advocate of the doctrine. First, he was confused with Anselm of Bury, his nephew and a fervent immaculist and, second, until the 1930s, he was believed to have written Eadmer's *De conceptione*.[80] Given the passion with which his authentic Marian writings extolled Mary's purity, it was understandably hard to imagine him demurring from the view that she was free from original sin. There was, for example, his statement that Mary shone with a purity second only to God's for the sake of fittingness, as well as several powerful evocations of her exalted status in the economy of salvation, which Anselm regarded as the corollary of her purity.[81] He praised her as 'shining before all others with such sanctity' (*praefulgens tanta sanctitate*)[82] and 'in purity surpassing the angels' (*quae angelos vincis puritate*),[83] so that 'in your blessed holiness you are exalted above all' (*quatenus sicut tua beata sanctitas super omnia post summum omnium*).[84] These were not the words of one who questioned Mary's purity, rather they proclaimed it with unrivalled eloquence. These several factors – the association with Anselm of Bury, the misattribution of Eadmer's treatise and his own Marian devotion – even led to Anselm being used (albeit anonymously) in the Papal Bull of 1854, *Ineffabilis Deus*, by which the Immaculate Conception was officially promulgated in the Roman Catholic Church.[85] For a long time, Anselm was the most eminent theologian associated with the doctrine.

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[80] In 1328, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Mepham (*abp.* 1328-1333), appealed to the authority of 'the Venerable Anselm, our predecessor', when establishing the feast of the Conception in the twenty-three dioceses of the Province of Canterbury; Bruder suggests that Archbishop Simon confused Anselm with his nephew of the same name. See Bruder, *Mariology of Saint Anselm*, pp. 46-47. Eadmer's treatise was discovered to have been misattributed to Anselm by André Wilmart in the 1930s. See A. Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin: études d'histoire littéraire* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1932).

[81] See Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, XVIII (SAOp. II, p. 159); for Mary's exalted place in the economy of salvation, see Anselm's Marian prayers, especially *Oratio* VII (SAOp. III, pp. 18-25).

[82] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* V, lines 6-7 (SAOp. III, p. 13).

[83] *Ibid.*, line 24 (SAOp. III, p. 13).

[84] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, line 22 (SAOp. III, p. 19).

[85] See Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854 <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius09/p9ineff.htm> [accessed 6 May 2014]; cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, XVIII (SAOp. II, p. 159).

The challenge for modern readers is to re-examine the evidence and, in light of Anselm's statements about the uniqueness of Christ, to restrain any desire we may have to associate him with it directly. In so doing, we may come to a better understanding of the genuine contribution he made. We have already seen how his concept of 'fittingness' undergirded Eadmer's treatise, but his altogether more decisive contribution was his innovative theory of the transmission of original sin. Anselm modified the Augustinian understanding of the way in which original sin was transmitted to exclude concupiscence of the flesh, confining it to the rational nature. Although the significance of this was overlooked by his contemporaries and immediate successors, it proved to be foundational for the English Franciscan, John Duns Scotus, whose defence of the Immaculate Conception marked the high point in its medieval articulation and expression.

Strictly speaking, Anselm did not believe in original sin. That is, he did not believe that sin, original or personal, was an entity with its own existence, an evil counterpart to personal or original justice. Like most medieval theologians, he believed it to be the privation or absence of justice where justice ought to be.[86] He defined justice as 'rectitude of the will preserved for its own sake' (*rectitudo voluntatis propter se servata*)[87] and to explain what he meant by its absence he used the example of blindness, the absence of vision where vision ought to be (not something other than the property of vision by which it (vision) is displaced).[88] Two ideas were suggested by this analogy. First, that in order for something to be understood as absent there must have been a 'place' which it was naturally expected to inhabit; in the case of vision, that was the eye. Second, that a property like vision, whether or not it was possessed, was a property only; the presence or absence of vision did not change the essential nature of an eye. Anselm explored both of these ideas in relation to justice, which he defined as a property of the rational will, the presence or absence of which did not alter what the will was. He understood the will to be an essentially neutral power, an instrument of the soul, which could be called 'just' or 'unjust' on the basis of whether or not it possessed justice.[89] Original sin (as opposed to actual

[86] See Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, V (SAOp. II, pp. 159-160).

[87] *Ibid.*, III (SAOp. II, p. 143, line 7).

[88] See *ibid.*, V (SAOp. II, p. 146, lines 3-5).

[89] See *ibid.*, IV (SAOp. II, p. 143, lines 25-27).

or personal sin) meant the absence of justice in the rational will of every human being who partook of the common nature of Adam.

The special innovation of Anselm's definition of original sin was to reduce the significance of carnal lust or concupiscence in the process by which it was transmitted.[90] This distinguished him from Augustine, whose idea of *peccatum originali* dominated western theology up to and beyond Anselm's day.[91] Augustine's conception of original sin could be read in several different ways but in each case the flesh was considered to be guilty and to 'infect' the soul, with the *causam peccati* at the very least, upon animation. Out of pride, Adam turned away from God and original sin was the 'personal appropriation' of his corrupted nature which resulted from this. For Augustine, corruption ultimately meant the death of the soul's ability to choose the good and gave rise to the guilt of concupiscence. 'Concupiscence' was the name he gave to both the will's inability to subordinate the disordered passions of the flesh and the associated guilt experienced at the will's impotence.

Anselm's definition of original sin did not include concupiscence, nor did it define the flesh as what would later be called, by Nicholas of St Albans, the *causam culpe*, a phrase which was not used in *De conceptu virginali*. Instead, a lack of justice in the rational nature was thought to corrupt the whole person at the moment of animation; since the will rather than the flesh was the instrument used to make choices, the will not concupiscence was held responsible for failing to choose the good.[92] The closest Anselm came to making space for concupiscence was as carnal appetites, the punishment imposed upon the bodies of Adam and Eve, along with mortality, for their sin.[93] Anselm believed that rational nature was originally corrupted by the flesh but that, thereafter, it was corrupted rational nature which perpetuated the sin of Adam from generation to generation. Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams have neatly summarised Anselm on this point: 'just as the first human person made human nature sinful…human nature makes all subsequent human persons sinful'.[94]

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[90] See O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 181.

[91] See A. D. Fitzgerald and J. C. Cavadini, eds, *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Cambridge, MA: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), p. 608.

[92] See Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, V (SAOp. II, pp. 146-147).

[93] See *ibid*., II (SAOp. II, p. 141, lines 8-12).

[94] S. Visser and T. Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 245.

The key to Anselm's understanding of how original sin was transmitted was his concept of the 'nature of generation' (*naturam propagandi*), given by God to Adam 'so that men might be generated from him' (*ut de illo propagarentur homines*).[95] This meant that Adam provided the seed by which the entire human race would be begotten; the common nature to which individual souls would be added to make distinct persons. God gave Adam the nature of generation and the grace of reason and justice. For as long as Adam subjected these powers to God, humanity would have retained its justice in the place where justice ought to be, namely, the will. The consequence of Adam's sin was that humanity became unjust and subsequent generations, originally contained in Adam, became destined to inherit the flaw in human nature which he had inculcated:

> Adam declined to be subject to the will of God, so that the property [or, nature] of generation, although it remained, was not subject to his will, as it would have been had he not sinned. He lost the grace which he was in a position to keep for those begotten from him, so that everyone generated through the nature given to him are born bound by his debt.[96]

Adam lost the grace of original justice which should have been his gift to future generations but the nature of generation itself was retained. This meant that anytime a man and a woman came together in the generative act their offspring inherited the necessity of receiving a corrupt rational nature (and hence, original sin) in the future. For Anselm, there was nothing inherently unjust about sexual intercourse in the right circumstances (between married couples, for instance), in fact it was regarded as a morally neutral act which could not be described as 'just' prior to the Fall or 'unjust' afterwards.[97] Rather, the corruption of rational nature (the lack of original justice in the soul) was thought to lead to unbridled carnality – hence Adam and Eve became 'like brute beasts, subject to corruption and carnal

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[95] Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, X (SAOp. II, p. 151, lines 10-11); cf. *ibid*., X (SAOp. II, p. 151, line 9; p. 152, line 2), XI (SAOp. II, p. 153, line 6), XXIII (SAOp. II, p. 163, line 22).

[96] *Quoniam vero Adam subditus noluit esse dei voluntati, ipsa natura propagandi quamvis remaneret non fuit subdita eius voluntati, sicut esset si non peccasset, et gratiam quam de se propagandis servare poterat perdidit, atque omnes qui operante natura quam acceperat propagantur, eius astricti debito nascuntur*. Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, X (SAOp. II, p. 152, lines 18-22); trans. by McNab, *The Major Works*, p. 370.

[97] See *ibid*., III (SAOp. II, pp. 142-143).

appetites' (*qualia sunt brutorum animalium, corruptioni et carnalibus appetitibus subiacentia*)[98] – and the corruption of human procreation, with the necessity of contracting original sin in the future.

The significance of Anselm's teaching for the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was that he distinguished between the moral and physical aspects of human procreation, making it possible to assert that God could preserve one of his creatures from original sin by an infusion of grace in their soul, even if they were conceived in the normal way (i.e. in lust and concupiscence). John Duns Scotus, with his optimistic Franciscan view of the created world, recognised the opportunity afforded by this Anselmian innovation.[99] He observed that 'the reason [Mary's] flesh was infected because of semination does not hold good according to Anselm's explanation of original sin' (*enim arguitur primo de infectione carnis, propter seminationem, non arguit – secundum viam Anselmi "de peccato originali"*).[100] He then proceeded to argue that Mary was preserved from the necessity of original sin (the *causam peccati*, in Augustinian terms) by an infusion of grace, even more perfect than original justice, for the sake of her son.[101] One of Scotus' motives for attempting to justify the Immaculate Conception was to assert the perfect mediatorship of Christ – to explain which he also drew upon the Anselmian metaphor of an offence committed against a king[102] – and his argument was that the infusion of grace into her soul, which constituted Mary's Immaculate Conception, showed that Christ's redemptive act was so powerful it could preserve as well as sanctify. He wrote:

> From this example it is argued thus: no one pleases someone most perfectly and in the highest degree for an offense that someone contracts unless he could prevent that person from offending to begin with… Christ does not placate the Trinity most perfectly for the fault contracted by the children of Adam unless he does prevent someone from possessing such a fault, – and as a

[98] Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, II (SAOp. II, p. 141, lines 12-13); trans. by McNab, *The Major Works*, p. 360.

[99] For an account of Scotus' use of Anselm's theory of original sin, see Wolter and O'Neill, *Mary's Architect*, pp. 66-74; Boss, *Empress and Handmaid*, pp. 128-32; Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, pp. 367-368.

[100] John Duns Scotus, *De immaculata conceptione beatae virginis*, I. c, ed. and trans. by A. B. Wolter, *John Duns Scotus: Four Questions on Mary* (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 2000), pp. 29-62 (p. 41). Wolter provides the Latin text as well as his own translation.

[101] See *ibid*., I. c.

[102] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur deus homo* II, 16 (SAOp. II, pp. 116-122).

> consequence, there is a soul of some child of Adam that does not have such a fault [i.e. Mary], or at least it is possible that some soul does not have it.[103]

Thus, in the Mariology of John Duns Scotus, Anselm's most important contribution to the development of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception – his innovative theory of the transmission of original sin – was brought to fruition, taking inspiration from another of his ideas, that the mediatorship of Christ was absolute and perfect. However, Scotus was a friar and it was long after our period – the age of monasticism – that his contribution was made.

Conclusion

In reality, it is not possible to speak of rupture in the history of the feast of Mary's Conception between the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods, and the credit for this must go to the monasteries in which it was preserved. Whether or not the Conception was celebrated between the time of its suppression and its revival in the 1120s, it certainly survived in the institutional memory of Benedictine monasticism, meaning that it could re-emerge in a less hostile climate. The second half of the reign of Henry I was such a time; the regime was well-disposed towards monasticism, patronising new foundations and welcoming the Cistercians to England in the late 1120s, and the King himself may have had a personal devotion to the Virgin. Undoubtedly, Henry's role at the London synod which approved the celebration of the Conception in 1129 was a decisive factor, which may in turn suggest close links between some of its Benedictine champions and the Crown.

There was, however, greater discontinuity in the theology which accompanied the feast between the two periods, as the idea of Mary's Immaculate Conception began to emerge. In the hands of the

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[103] *Ex isto exemplo arguitur sic: nullus summe sive perfectissime placat aliquem pro offensa alicuius contrahenda nisi possit praevenire ne illi offendatur… Christus non perfectissime placate Trinitatem pro culpa contrahenda a filiis Adae, si non praeveniat ut alcui Trinitas non offendatur et nisi anima alicuius filii Adae non habeat culpam talem, - et per consequens aliqua anima alicuius filii Adae non habet culpam talem, vel possibile est quod non habeat culpam.* John Duns Scotus, *De immaculata conceptione beatae virginis*, I. b.; trans. by Wolter, *Four Questions on Mary*, pp. 37, 39.

monastic theologians, Eadmer of Canterbury and Nicholas of St Albans, it became a commemoration of Mary's freedom from original sin rather than the miraculous circumstances surrounding her conception, including the cessation of her mother's barrenness. The works of Eadmer and Nicholas suggest that at least some English Benedictines of the twelfth century retained the intellectual self-confidence of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, manifested in their willingness to champion a relatively obscure observance and, more significantly, to seek to undergird it with a new theology. The fact that Eadmer and Nicholas were ultimately unsuccessful does not detract from their courage as pioneers of a new theology of Mary's purity. As the next chapter on Mary's fruitful virginity further reveals, monastic interest in Mary's purity persisted throughout the twelfth century, as Benedictine and later Cistercian leaders began to look to Mary as a moral icon for themselves and their communities, whose progress along the monastic way of perfection they sought to facilitate.

3

Fruitful Virgin

Offering a Model for Monks to Emulate

> Virgin venerated throughout the world, Mother dear to the human race, Woman, marvel of the angels, Mary, most holy. By your blessed virginity you have made all integrity sacred, and by your blessed child-bearing you have brought salvation to all fruitfulness.[1]

> Christian faith, when thought out, conceptualized, and put into human language, runs into paradox not only in the doctrine of the Incarnation, but at every vital point.[2]

At the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation there is a Mariological paradox: that Mary was both a virgin throughout her life and a mother. Whilst maternity usually requires the cessation of virginity, medieval theologians believed that Mary conceived and gave birth to Christ whilst retaining her original purity. In-keeping with their patristic forebears they believed in her perpetual virginity; her virginity before, during and after the birth of Christ (*ante partum*, *in partu* and *post partum*). This chapter concentrates on three English Cistercian theologians – Ælred of Rievaulx (*c*. 1110-1167), Baldwin of Forde (*c*. 1125-1190) and John of Forde (*c*. 1150-1214) – who reflected closely on Mary's fruitful virginity in their sermons and treatises.[3] They have been brought together here because their Marian

[1] *Virgo mundo venerabilis, mater humano generi amabilis, femina angelis mirabilis, Maria sanctissima, cuius beata virginitate omnis sacratur integritas, cuius glorioso partu omnis salvatur foecunditas*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VI, lines 4-6 (SAOp. III, p. 15); trans. by B. Ward, *The Prayers and Meditation of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion* (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 110, lines 1-7.

[2] D. M. Baillie, *God was in Christ* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 110.

[3] The Marian thought of Ælred, Baldwin and John has been almost entirely neglected by scholars. For some consideration of Ælred, see A. Agius, 'St Ælred and Our Blessed Lady', *Downside Review*, 64.195 (1946), pp. 32-38; C. Dumont, 'St. Ælred and the Assumption', *The Life of the Spirit*, 8 (1953), pp. 205-210; S. Fein, 'Maternity in Ælred of Rievaulx's Letter to his Sister', in J. C. Parsons and B. Wheeler, eds, *Medieval Mothering*, New Middle Ages, 3 (New York; London: Garland, 1996), pp. 139-156; E. Freeman, 'Ælred of Rievaulx's pastoral care of religious women, with special reference to 'De institutione inclusarum'', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 46.1 (2011), pp. 13-26; S. M. Krahmer, 'Ælred of Rievaulx and the Feminine in

writings reveal an extraordinary consistency of purpose: the presentation of Mary as the embodiment of the fundamental Christian paradox of fruitful virginity and as a model virgin for their communities to emulate. The latter points to their shared focus on monastic formation – described by Amédée Hallier as the 'monastic education of souls'[4] – which was characteristic of the Cistercians, who brought both intensity and sophistication to the medieval understanding of the monastery as 'a school for the Lord's service' (*dominici schola servitii*).[5] In particular, they brought into sharper focus the meaning of the term *schola* as a place of moral instruction, where the cultivation of virtue in the 'here-and-now' was ordered towards salvation in the future.[6] As the works of Ælred, Baldwin and John reveal, this process often involved the invocation of figures from salvation history, including the Virgin Mary, for inspiration and example.

All of the texts used in this chapter originated as discourses for consecrated virgins and were meant to support their progress in the spiritual life. The sermons of Ælred were given before his community on four of the fifteen principal feast days when medieval Cistercian abbots were expected to preach to their communities – the four dedicated to the Virgin: one each from the Purification (2 February) and the Annunciation (25 March), and three each from the Assumption (15 August) and Nativity (8 September).[7] These sermons, as M. Basil Pennington has observed, are 'a distinctly

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the Marian Sermons for the Feasts of the Assumption and Purification', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 35.4 (2000), pp. 459-478; S. M. Krahmer, 'Mary as Mother and Bride in the Liturgical Sermons of Ælred of Rievaulx (First and Second Clairvaux Collections)', *American Benedictine Review*, 58.3 (2007), pp. 280-298; M. A. Mayeski, 'The Assumption as a Monastic Celebration: Ælred of Rievaulx's Homilies for the Feast', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 29.4 (1994), pp. 395-411; D. Pezzini, 'L'Assomption de la Vierge Marie dans les sermons d'Ælred de Rievaulx', *Collectanea Cisterciensia*, 72.1 (2010), pp. 4-27; A. Sulavik, 'Ælred of Rievaulx, Sermons on the feasts of Saint Mary', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 32.1 (1997), pp. 37-125.

[4] A. Hallier, *The Monastic Theology of Aelred of Rievaulx: An Experiential Theology* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1969), p. 115.

[5] *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, 'Prologus', 45.

[6] See C. Peifer, 'The Rule of St Benedict', in T. Fry, ed., *RB1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981), pp. 65-112 (p. 92).

[7] 'In those early days of the Cistercian Order, abbots were expected to speak to their monks in chapter every morning, commenting on the passage of Saint Benedict's *Rule for Monasteries* that had just been read in the chapter house in which the monks assembled immediately after the celebration of the office of Prime in church. In addition, they were required to preach to the whole community, including lay brothers, on fifteen principal days of the liturgical year as well as on the anniversary of the dedication of the monastery's church.' M. B. Pennington, 'Introduction', in T. Berkeley and M. Basil Pennington, trans., *Aelred of Rievaulx: The Liturgical Sermons, The First Clairvaux Collection, Advent-All Saints*, CF 58 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2001), pp. 9-49 (pp. 13-14). Note that whilst the Annunciation is often counted among the feasts of

monastic collection', prepared for Ælred's community and seeking to make sense of Mary's life in their monastic context.[8] For Cistercian preachers, 'the most important audiences…were always their own communities' and their primary concern was 'the monks' spiritual and theological development'.[9]

Ælred's *De institutione inclusarum*, whilst a more ambitious and systematic programme for life in solitude than any selection of his sermons, was similarly attentive to the context for which it was intended in its teaching on virginity.[10] One of Ælred's later works, *De institutione inclusarum* was composed between *c*. 1160-1162 for his biological sister, who was living as a recluse, and in large part it sought to deepen her understanding of and commitment to virginity in the context of a dialectic between the thing itself and the dangers, as he saw it, of her chosen way of life. Such dangers included the temptation to gossip, inattentiveness in prayer, and materialism; but most of all, sexual desire and contact with men. One third of Ælred's text was dedicated to safeguarding virginity and it was in this context that he first referred to Mary, commending her to his sister as an icon of perfect virginity in the hope that, keeping Mary's example ever in her mind's eye, the recluse would be defended against seduction and carnal temptation.

Spiritual instruction was also the purpose of the seventh spiritual tractate of Baldwin of Forde, *In annuntiatione sancte Marie*, which touched upon Mary's virginity.[11] It is not always clear for whom Baldwin's works were intended – his career as bishop of Worcester (from 1180) and archbishop of Canterbury (from 1185, until his death) widened his potential audience – but David Bell has explained

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Christ today, in the medieval kalendars it was listed as a Marian feast (for example, 'Scé Marie Annunciatio' in London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, f. 41r).

[8] See *Ælredi Rievallensis: Sermones I-XLVI, Collectio Claraevallensis, Prima et Secunda*, ed. by G. Raciti, CCCM II A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989); sermons I-XXVIII, trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58. Two subsequent collections are also available: *Ælredi Rievallensis: Sermones XLVII-LXXXIV, Collectio Dunelmensis, Sermo a Matthaeo Rievallensi Servatus, Sermones Lincolnienses*, ed. by G. Raciti, CCCM II B (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001); *Ælredi Rievallensis: Sermones LXXXV-CLXXXII, Collectio Radingensis*, ed. by G. Raciti, CCCM II C (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012).

[9] E. Jamroziak, *The Cistercian Order in Medieval Europe, 1090-1500* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 224, 225.

[10] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, in *Aelredi Rievallensis: Opera Omnia, 1. Opera Ascetica*, ed. by A. Hoste and C. H. Talbot, CCCM I (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), pp. 635-682; trans. by M. P. Macpherson, in *Aelred of Rievaulx: Treatises & Pastoral Prayer*, ed. by M. Basil Pennington, CF 2 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1971), pp. 41-102.

[11] See Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII (*Sermo* XIII), in *Balduini de Forda Opera: Sermones, De commendatio fidei*, ed. by D. N. Bell, CCCM XCIX (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), pp. 191-207; trans. by D. N. Bell, *Baldwin of Ford: Spiritual Tractates, Volume One, Tractates I-VIII*, CF 38 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1986), pp. 191-213.

that almost all of his spiritual tractates, including the seventh, 'clearly derive from a monastic milieu'.[12] This claim is borne out by their style which reflects the monastic sermons of Ælred, which Pennington has described as having 'a certain simplicity about them much in accord with the monastic way of life… [The] Latin is simple enough, a popular sort of Latin. There is little artifice, yet the sermons have a richness and nobility. There is a power and a charm to them.'[13]

Thirdly, this chapter analyses the most Mariologically significant discourse in John of Forde's corpus of one hundred and twenty sermons on the Song of Songs (the *Cantica Canticorum*; hereafter the Canticle), *Sermo* LXX.[14] Whilst John's sermons as a whole are the subject of the next chapter, this particular text warrants comparison with the works of Ælred and Baldwin because it, too, was originally preached to a monastic community, was written in an accessible style – the Latin is 'well constructed without being fussy or obscure'[15] – and had a pastoral purpose. John himself has been described as 'a master of the spiritual life'[16] and his seventieth sermon offered a portrait of the Virgin Mary which was especially attentive to the relationship between the cultivation of virtue and salvation.

In different ways, all of these monastic texts sought to make sense of the paradox of Mary's fruitful virginity and to draw lessons from it for their authors' communities. In the twentieth century, theologian Donald Baillie argued that Christians had to be comfortable with paradox as a self-imposed limit on what could be known and said about God.[17] He claimed that, having exhausted human language, theologians could only come to know God by encountering him (and his mysteries) in an 'I-and-Thou' relationship. Rather than subjectifying God, this meant living with paradoxes in a 'direct

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[12] D. N. Bell, 'Introduction', in Bell, trans., *Baldwin of Ford: Spiritual Tractates*, CF 38, pp. 9-36 (p. 20). Tractates I, II and XII date from Baldwin's time at Canterbury. See Bell, 'Introduction', p. 20.

[13] Pennington, 'Introduction', p. 21.

[14] See John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, in *Ioannis de Forda: Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX, Sermones LXX-CXX*, ed. by E. Mikkers and H. Costello, CCCM XVIII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), pp. 489-494; trans. by W. M. Beckett, *John of Ford: Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, vol. 5, CF 45 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1983), pp. 96-106.

[15] H. Costello, 'Introduction', in W. M. Beckett, trans., *John of Ford: Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, vol. 1, CF 29 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), pp. 1-59 (p. 12).

[16] Costello, 'Introduction', p. 41.

[17] According to Baillie, the resolution of theological paradoxes could only be found in the being of God himself: 'the higher truth which reconciles them cannot be fully expressed in words, though it is experienced and lived in the 'I-and-Thou' relationship of faith towards God.' Baillie, *God was in Christ*, p. 109.

faith-relationship',[18] the purpose of which was to achieve what another theologian, Sergius Bulgakov, called the 'actualization' of the mystery in one's own religious experience.[19] Of course, there was no direct relationship between the modern theologians Baillie and Bulgakov, and Ælred, Baldwin or John, but this is a useful way of understanding their approaches to Mary's virginity. None of them sought to *define* the mystery but, rather, they *celebrated* and *lived with* it in the world of their monastic experience. This was not the subjective experience of individual monks but of Cistercian monastic life in general, since it was this context, and all that it entailed, which shaped their reflections.

One particular way in which Ælred, Baldwin and John related Mary's virginity to the experience of their monastic communities was by describing it as the consequence of a vow or elective consecration. John described this as Mary's 'treaty with virginity' (*foedus cum integritate*).[20] Mary was regarded as a model for their communities because she, too, had chosen virginity, which she offered as a gift to God, and she was also a sign or promise for them on account of the fruitfulness which she had received in return. Ælred, Baldwin and John drew three conclusions about Mary's fruitful virginity which have provided three threads running throughout this chapter: first, that the virginal integrity of Mary's flesh was necessary to ensure the moral purity of Christ in his human nature; second, that the paradigmatic virginal integrity of Mary could be set before other consecrated virgins as an example to emulate; third, that Mary's outward beauty signified a still greater interior purity (just as the form and species of the sacraments were understood to signify an interior reality (*res*) which was hidden from view).

[18] Baillie, *God was in Christ*, p. 109.

[19] Bulgakov preferred to speak of antinomy rather than paradox, which he defined thus: 'An antinomy simultaneously admits the truth of two contradictory, logically incompatible, but ontologically equally necessary assertions. An antinomy testifies to the existence of a mystery beyond which the human reason cannot penetrate. The mystery nevertheless is actualized and lived in religious experience. All fundamental dogmatic definitions are of this nature.' S. Bulgakov, *The Wisdom of God: A Brief Summary of Sophiology* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1937), p. 116, quoted in Baillie, *God was in Christ*, pp. 108-109.

[20] John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 9, line 210 (CCCM XVIII, p. 494); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 106.

Cistercian Sources: Ambrose of Milan and Anselm of Canterbury

Ælred, Baldwin and John worked within a patristic and medieval theological tradition, and their works on Mary's virginity bore many of the hallmarks of their predecessors. From surviving manuscripts and the catalogues of medieval libraries it has been possible to glean something of the extent of patristic and medieval literature on virginity to which they may have had access. Unfortunately, the holdings of the monastic library at Forde are largely unknown, although Bell has suggested that it 'once possessed a substantial library, rich in patristic and medieval theological writings'.[21] By contrast, however, Rievaulx is known to have possessed a number of influential works on virginity, including the virginity of Mary: the *De virginibus* and *De virginitate* of Ambrose of Milan (*c*. 337-397), the *De sancta virginitate* of Augustine of Hippo (354-430), and *In Lucae evangelium expositione* by Bede (*c*. 672-735).[22]

Ælred and Baldwin, in particular, seem to have been indebted to Ambrose, although it should not be surprising that they found his writing appealing since he shared their pastoral purpose. Like their own works, the three books of Ambrose's *De virginibus* originated as separate sermons, delivered to an audience comprised mostly of consecrated virgins.[23] Hence, the formal treatise which those sermons became at the behest of Ambrose's sister, Marcellina (*c*. 327-397), had many of the characteristics of an oratorical work. It was structured like an ancient panegyric or hortatory discourse, for example, beginning by praising virginity and recommending it as a form of life (*exhortatio*, *laudatio*), before offering models for virgins to emulate, including the Virgin Mary herself (*exempla*), followed by

[21] D. N. Bell, ed., *The Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertines, and Premonstratensians*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, 3 (London: British Library, 1992), p. 27.

[22] See D. N. Bell, *An Index of Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries in Great Britain*, CS 130 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1992), p. 25, no. 17 (Ambrose of Milan, *De virginibus* [PL 16, 187-232B]); p. 26, no. 18 (Ambrose of Milan, *De virginitate* [PL 16, 265-302B]); p. 35, no. 44 (Augustine of Hippo, *De sancta virginitate* [PL 40, 395-428]); p. 42, no. 11 (Bede, *In Lucae evangelium expositio* [In *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II. Opera Exegetica, 3*, CCSL CXX, ed. by D. Hurst (Turnhout: Brepols, 1960), pp. 1-425]). There is no sign of either Hilary of Poitiers' (*c*. 300-368) influential commentary on Matthew's Gospel or Jerome's (*c*. 347-420) famous treatise on Mary's perpetual virginity against Helvidius.

[23] See C. W. Neumann, *The Virgin Mary in the Works of Saint Ambrose* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1962), p. 35, n. 4, 5.

specific advice (*praecepta*, *disciplina*).[24] The first of two ways in which the *De virginibus* may have inspired the sermons and tracts of Ælred and Baldwin is that it took Mary's outward, physical virginity as a sign of her interior, spiritual purity. According to Ambrose, Mary conscientiously regulated her own behaviour so that it would be a testament to her interior purity; he took her outward appearance and behaviour to be a sign of her perfect moral character. As with Ælred and Baldwin later, he believed that perfect morality required the perfect synergy of body and soul, which he understood as the subjection of the flesh to an upright will:

> There was nothing gloomy in her eyes, nothing forward in her words, nothing unseemly in her acts…that the very appearance of her outward being might be the image of her soul… For a well-ordered house ought to be recognised on the very threshold, and should show at the very first entrance that no darkness is hidden within, as our soul hindered by no restraints of the body may shine abroad like a lamp placed within.[25]

Ambrose's text also claimed that virgins would be rewarded for their virginity with the mediation of Mary; that she would embrace them after death and personally present them to Christ with a fulsome commendation: 'She has been faithful to her espousal, to my Son; she has kept her bridal couch with spotless modesty' (*Haec thorum filii mei, haec thalamos nuptiales immaculato servavit pudore*).[26] In the passage from which these words are taken, Ambrose made a link between virtue and its reward; locating virginity in a soteriological context and presenting it as a sacrifice which, if willingly and diligently undertaken during one's earthly life, would lead to everlasting joy. Ambrose's text also presented Mary, and her intercession in particular, as the necessary intermediate step between a life of

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[24] See Neumann, *The Virgin Mary*, p. 36. For the principal references to Mary in Ambrose's, *De virginibus*, see II, 2. 6, 15 (PL 16, 208C-209A, 210D-211A).

[25] *Nihil torvum in oculis, nihil in verbis procax, nihil in actu inverecundum…ut ipsa corporis species simulacrum fuerit mentis... Bona quippe domus in ipso vestibulo debet agnosci, ac primo praetendat ingressu nihil intus latere tenebrarum; ut mens nostra nullis repagulis corporalibus impedita, tamquam lucernae lux intus posita foris luceat. Ibid*. II, 2. 7 (PL 16, 209B); trans. by H. de Romestin, E. de Romestin and H. T. F. Duckworth, NPNF II, vol. 10, ed. by P. Schaff and H. Wace (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., repr. 1976), pp. 363-387 (pp. 374-375).

[26] *Ibid.* II, 2. 16 (PL 16, 211A); trans. by De Romestin, et al., NPNF II, vol. 10, p. 376.

virginity and salvation, which was a point taken up – and expressed with unrivalled eloquence – by Ælred and Baldwin's eleventh-century predecessor, Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109).

The *preservation* of virginity was of particular significance within Anselm's vision of the spiritual life and its loss by a consecrated religious was understood to be a grave moral evil. His second meditation (*Deploratio virginitatis male amissae*), for example, expressed what has been described as 'an overwhelming sense of the grievousness of his sin' in its contemplation of virginity lost as a result of fornication.[27] Whether or not this meditation was autobiographical, as these words from Richard Southern could be taken to imply, or simply contrived to inspire self-examination and contrition in others, it certainly illustrates the seriousness with which Anselm regarded the loss of virginity. It was, for him, a two-fold calamity; on the one hand, it meant the loss of physical integrity whilst, on the other, it signified the corruption of the soul. The latter was the most damaging effect because it widened the gulf between the sinful creature and God:

> O virginity, now not my delight but my loss, not my joy but my despair, whither have you gone? […] For, O my soul, you are unfaithful to God, false to God, an adulterer from Christ; it is of your own free will that you are miserably cast down from the highest virginity into the lowest pit of fornication. You were once the spouse of the king of heaven and with alacrity you have made yourself the whore of the tormenter of hell. Cast off from God, you are cast forth to the devil.[28]

Like Ælred in the twelfth century, Anselm regarded virginity as something special – a 'prize' (*praemium*)[29] – which had to be safeguarded and preserved, especially in consecrated virgins by whom

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[27] R. W Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 105. See Anselm of Canterbury, *Meditatio* II *(Deploratio virginitatis male amissae)* (SAOp. III, pp. 80-83); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 225-229.

[28] *O virginitas, iam non dilecta mea, sed perdita mea; iam non iucunda mea, sed desperata mea: quo devenisti* […] *Tu namque, anima mea perfida deo, periura dei, adultera Christi, libenter de sublimitate virginitatis miserabiliter es dimersa in baratrum fornicationis. Tu illa olim desponsata regi caelorum, ardenter facta es scortum tortoris tartarorum. Heu abiecta a deo, proiecta diabolo; immo abiciens deum, amplectens diabolum!* Anselm of Canterbury, *Meditatio* II*,* lines 20-21, 29-33 (SAOp. III, pp. 80, 81); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 225, 226, lines 22-23, 34-40.

[29] Anselm of Canterbury, *Meditatio* II, line 111 (SAOp. III, p. 83). Cf. Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 15, lines 477-478 (CCCM I, p. 650).

it had been pledged to Christ. Thus, for example, he admonished the Anglo-Saxon princess, Gunhilda (*d. c.* 1097), very severely when she abandoned the religious life to marry.[30] Like a number of Anglo-Saxon aristocratic women, Gunhilda, the daughter of King Harold II (*r.* 1066), had taken refuge in a convent (Wilton in Wiltshire) at the time of the Norman Conquest and, whilst not taking vows herself, she had worn the habit of the community, which Anselm took as a sign of her 'holy intention' (*sancti propositi*) to become a nun.[31] He was scandalised, therefore, when Gunhilda left the convent and declared her intention to marry the Anglo-Norman lord, Alan Rufus (*d. c.* 1093) and, upon his death, his brother Alan Niger (*d. c.* 1098).

The first of two letters which Anselm wrote to Gunhilda, exhorting her to return to Wilton, is significant because it characterised both her error in leaving the convent and the nature of her hypothetical return in terms of virginity. First, he assumed that her love affair with Alan Rufus had cost Gunhilda her virginity; second, he explained that since her original innocence could not be restored, she would have to be purged of her sin by penitence and brought to a new state of purity in order regain the love of her heavenly spouse.[32] Anselm warned Gunhilda that the consequence of abandoning the religious life – of which he presented her sexual continence as a metaphor – was the forfeiture of eternal life. Like his second meditation, Anselm's letters to Gunhilda spoke of the precariousness of human salvation and his fear that the loss of virginity also meant the loss of heaven.[33] Both the responsibility and the penalty for the loss of virginity lay with the virgin, according to Anselm, because, as the previous quotation from his meditation implied, it was an act of voluntary abandonment; the disordered act of a disordered will.[34] Anticipating Ælred's advice to his sister in *De institutione inclusarum*, that

[30] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Epp.* CLXVIII, CLXIX (SAOp. IV, pp. 43-50); trans. by W. Fröhlich, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 2, CS 97 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1993), pp. 64-74.

[31] Anselm of Canterbury, *Ep.* CLXVIII, lines 48-49 (SAOp. IV, p. 45). Cf. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, pp. 262-264.

[32] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Ep.* CLVIII, lines 57-62 (SAOp. IV, p. 45).

[33] Cf. 'He did not care whether or not Gunhilda had ever made her profession: she had worn the habit; she had seemed to understand what Anselm had said about the religious life. To turn back now from the monastic life, however it had been approached, was to turn back to a world of uncertainty and to face a future in which only damnation was assured. Ever step away from the cloister was a step further from salvation – bad enough in any case, worst of all when it meant a turning from the spiritual embrace of Christ to an impure love.' Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, p. 264.

[34] Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, IV (SAOp. II, pp. 143-145).

she was encompassed on all sides by threats to her virginity, Anselm explained to Gunhilda that she was involved in a cosmic battle, she was a prize to be won in the struggle between good and evil: 'My sister, you have been ensnared. By this snare Christ is drawing your soul from one side, but from the other the devil' (*Soror mea, illaqueata es. Hoc laqueo Christus trahit animam tuam ex una parte, diabolus econtra ex altera*).[35]

Anselm's few references to Mary's fruitful virginity are significant because they occur in several key places in his corpus: first, and rather incidentally, in his explanation of the nature of the Incarnation in *Cur deus homo*; second, and more fundamentally, in his consideration of the necessity of Mary's intercession for salvation in his prayers. In neither case did Anselm articulate or defend the idea that Mary was a fruitful virgin anew – by his time, it was an uncontroversial proposition which he was able to accept without justification[36] – but, rather, he referred to it in relation to two of his central theological preoccupations: the idea of fittingness as a controlling principle or axiom and the precariousness of salvation.[37] First, in *Cur deus homo*, Anselm argued that it was fitting for God to assume his human nature from a virgin woman in order to demonstrate his power over all forms of human generation; he had created man out of nothing (Adam) and woman from man (Eve), but he had never created man from woman.[38] Second, in his Marian prayers, Anselm laid before his audience a soteriological vision in which Mary's intercession was closely associated with her fruitful virginity. In the face of sin, an almost insurmountable obstacle to eternal blessedness, the guilty soul could appeal to Mary in whose intercession it could have confidence because she enjoyed divine favour, signified by her miraculous combination of virginity and childbearing. Thus, he proclaimed:

[35] Anselm of Canterbury, *Ep.* CLXIX, lines 83-84 (SAOp. IV, p. 50); trans. by Fröhlich, CS 97, p. 73.

[36] See J. S. Bruder, *The Mariology of Saint Anselm of Canterbury* (Dayton, OH: Mount St. John Press, 1939), pp. 23-24.

[37] See Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, pp. 180-181, 201-202. On fittingness see, also, chapter 2 of this thesis.

[38] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur deus homo* II, 8 (SAOp. II, pp. 102-104). For comment, see Bruder, *Mariology of Saint Anselm*, p. 19.

> O human virgin of you was born a human God, to save human sinners, and see, before both son and mother is a human sinner, penitent and confessing, groaning and praying.[39]

The significance of this aspect of Anselm's Mariology for subsequent generations of monastic theologians, including Ælred and Baldwin, lay in what it implied about the nature of Mary's cooperation with God in the accomplishment of his plan for human redemption. Whilst Joseph Bruder and Dániel Deme have argued that Anselm's Mary was a passive player in the work of redemption, it may in fact be more accurate to regard her as the divine *co-operatrix* par excellence.[40] Although Anselm did not use the term *co-operatrix* himself, his theology – expressed in *Cur deus homo* and his Marian prayers – could be taken to imply a greater degree of volition and personal freedom on Mary's part in her relationship with God than has hitherto been acknowledged. Not only is this an eminently plausible interpretation of Anselm, but it also ties in with the understanding of his successors that Mary's virginal state was freely chosen; that it was a direct consequence of her own act of voluntary or elective consecration.

The case for an active, rather than passive, Mary in Anselm's theology rests upon the assertion that as the New Eve – whose act of obedience at the Annunciation (her *fiat*; Lk 1:38) recapitulated her forebear's disobedience in Eden – Mary was a causal agent in redemption. Although its argument was not worked out in direct reference to Mary, Anselm's *De concordia* showed how active and voluntary participation – or cooperation – between a human being and the Divine need not come at the expense of God's providential foreknowledge. He explained how, since God acted in his own 'eternal present' (*aeterno praesenti*) and human beings acted in their own historical present – in other words, God and human beings occupied different temporal planes – divine foreknowledge and human freedom could both be present in an event without contradiction.[41] Accepting this as a hermeneutical lens through

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[39] *Ecce enim, o virgo homo, de qua natus est deus homo, ut salvaretur peccator homo: ecce coram bono filio tuo et coram bona matre eius paenitet et confitetur, gemit et orat peccator homo*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VI, lines 32-34 (SAOp. III, p. 16); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 111, lines 56-59.

[40] See Bruder, *Mariology of Saint Anselm*, pp. 21-22; Dániel Deme, *The Christology of Anselm of Canterbury* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 167.

[41] See Anselm of Canterbury, *De concordia* I, 5 (SAOp. II, p. 254, line 9).

which to interpret the nature of Mary's participation in redemption gives greater potential than is usually recognised to passages such as the following from *Cur deus homo*, which draws together the themes of fittingness, Mary's fruitful virginity, and her causal agency:

> Include this, too, in your picture: on the supposition that it was a virgin woman who has been the cause of all the evil besetting the human race, it is all the more appropriate that the woman who is to be the cause of all good should be a virgin. Another thing to include in your picture is this. One may presume that [Eve] was created from someone who was a virgin: on this supposition, it is extremely fitting that the man who is to be created from a woman without a man, should be brought forth by a virgin.[42]

A Perfection Nigh to Barrenness: The Patterns of Mary's Virginity

Both Ælred of Rievaulx and Baldwin of Forde presented phenomena from the natural world and from scripture (including individual people) as allusions to the Virgin Mary. Their purpose in doing so was to emphasise some aspect of her moral superiority (often her virginity) and to provide a moral exemplar for their respective communities. Perhaps the most endearing image from nature that Ælred applied to Mary was that of the honey bee which, echoing Aristotle, he thought of as 'an extremely pure animal' (*castissimum animal*).[43] Whilst Ælred did not mention Mary by name when speaking of the honey bee, his allusion was clear. Earlier in the same sermon (number twenty-two, for the feast of Mary's Nativity), he had developed an image of the world as a vast ocean separating human beings from God

[42] *Pinge et hoc: Si virgo erat quae causa fuit humano generi totius mali, multo magis decet, ut virgo sit quae causa erit totius boni. Hoc quoque pinge: Si mulier quam fecit deus de viro sine femina, facta est de virgine, convenit valde ut vir quoque, qui fiet de femina sine viro, fiat de virgine*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur deus homo* II, 8 (SAOp. II, p. 104, lines 21-25); trans. by J. Fairweather, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. by B. Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 260-356 (pp. 323-324).

[43] Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XXII, 24, line 217 (CCCM II A, p. 182); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 314. Cf. Aristotle, *On the History of Animals* V, 21; VIII (IX), 38, ed. and trans. by A. Peck and D. Balme, 3 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), vol. 2, p. 187; vol. 3, p. 327. The allegory of the bee was also used by Anthony of Padua (*c.* 1195-1231); see L. Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of the Medieval Latin Theologians* (San Francisco, NC: Ignatius Press, 2005), pp. 203-205.

and proclaimed: 'Unless we cross this sea we shall never be able to come to him who says: *Cross over to me* [Si 24:19]' (*Nisi istud mare transierimus, nullo modo poterimus venire ad illum qui ait: Transite ad me*).[44] This invitation to 'cross over to me' (*transite ad me*) meant to be united with Christ whom he also called 'Wisdom': 'Let us crave Wisdom, let us cross over to Wisdom' (*concupiscamus Sapientiam et transeamus ad Sapientiam*).[45] For Ælred, Mary was the preeminent seeker of Christ/Wisdom, whose favour was clearly shown in return by his willingness to cross over to her, to become her child: 'She so perfectly crossed over to Christ in her heart that Christ also crossed over to her and remained with her even in her body' (*quae ita perfecte transivit ad Christum corde ut Christus etiam ad illum transiret et maneret in illa etiam corpore*).[46] It was in this way that Ælred alluded to Mary in his description of the honey bee, saying: 'the bee signifies the [pure] and sober mind, the sort which Wisdom gladly indwells' (*apis significat castam et sobriam mentem, qualem Sapientia libenter inhabitat*).[47]

The purpose of this illustration was not only to praise the Virgin but to exhort his monastic community to emulate her. It was important, therefore, that Ælred did not use Mary's name in his description of the bee – instead saying simply that it represented a pure soul – since only then would it have been possible for any member of his male religious community to assume its anonymous identity, and just in case they doubted that it was worth the effort to do so, he admonished them: 'although crossing over to Wisdom [Christ] may seem quite laborious, the fruit [it yields] is great. You should not let fear of hard work outweigh the attractiveness of fruit' (*esti labriosus videatur transitus usque ad Sapientiam, magnus est tamen fructus. Non debet vos magis labor terrere quam fructus mulcere*).[48] Using the bee to make a charming commendation of the monastic practice of *lectio divina*, Ælred explained to his monks that careful meditation on scripture was the means by which the pure soul could come to know Christ/Wisdom:

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[44] Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XXII, 3, lines 24-26 (CCCM II A, p. 176); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 307.

[45] *Ibid.*, 15, lines 148-149 (CCCM II A, p. 180); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 311.

[46] *Ibid.*, 14, lines 133-135 (CCCM II A, p. 179); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 311.

[47] *Ibid.*, 24, lines 218-220 (CCCM II A, p. 182); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 314.

[48] *Ibid.*, 25, lines 230-232 (CCCM II A, p. 182); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 315.

> The pure soul accordingly – like the bee – wings her way through the field of the Scriptures by assiduous meditation. There, from the sayings and examples of the saints, she gathers spiritual flowers and from these produces in her heart a wondrous delight and a great sweetness, one of heavenly delicacy.[49]

In the Middle Ages, such allegorical interpretation of scripture was often prioritised – as, indeed, it had been in the patristic era – leading to the articulation of both Christological and Mariological typologies. Ælred, in particular, read the Old Testament typologically and, consequently, understood Mary to have been prefigured by many of its people and images. In respect of her virginity, for example, Mary was favourably compared to Rachel (Gen 29; Jer 31:15) and to the closed gate of Ezekiel (Ez 44:1-2).[50] The first of these typologies may be regarded as a counterpart to the idea that Mary was the 'new' or 'second' Eve.[51] Not only did it bring Mary together with an important Old Testament female, it was also contingent upon a corresponding Christological typology, which was seen as having priority. As is well-known, the Eve-Mary typology was a response to the presentation of Christ as the 'new' or 'second' Adam by Paul in his letters to the Christian communities in Rome and Corinth (Rm 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45). Likewise, a Rachel-Mary typology was developed by Ælred in response to his interpretation of Rachel's son, Joseph, as a precursor to Christ. In his ninth sermon, for the feast of the Annunciation, employing the poetical and imaginative style which became synonymous with Cistercian

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[49] *Haec igitur casta anima quasi apis volat per agrum Scripturarum sedula meditatione. Ibi ex dictis et exemplis sanctorum quosdam spiritales flores colligit, ex quibus fit in corde eius mira delectatio et magna supernae suavitatis dulcedo…* Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XXII, 24, lines 220-223 (CCCM II A, p. 182); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 314.

[50] Ælred applied the image of the closed gate of Ezekiel to Mary in *Sermo* XIX: 'He [Christ] entered with the gate shut and with the gate shut he exited, as the holy Ezekiel had foretold: He brought me round to the gate that faced eastward and it was shut [Ez 44:1, cf. 47:2]… It was closed and sealed with the seal of [purity] which was not broken but rather made more solid and firmer by the entrance of the Lord. For he who gives the gift of virginity did not take virginity away by his presence but rather confirmed it' (*Clausa porta intravit, clausa porta exivit, sicut prophetavit sanctus Ezechiel: Et eduxit me, inquit, ad portam quae respiciebat ad orienten et erat clausa… Clausa erat et signata signaculo castitatis, quae per ingressum Domini non fracta, sed potius magis solidata et firmata est. Quia ille, cuius muneris est virginitatis, per praesentiam suam non abstulit virginitatem sed magis confirmavit*). Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XIX, 16, 17, lines 132-135, 142-146 (CCCM II A, p. 150); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 268.

[51] See, for example, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 100 (PG 6, 709-712); trans. by T. B. Falls, in *The Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, ed. by L. Schopp (New York: Christian Heritage, Inc., 1948), pp. 141-366 (pp. 303-305).

exegesis following Bernard of Clairvaux (*c.* 1090-1153), Ælred drew a number of scriptural texts into his exegesis of Genesis 30-37 to associate Joseph with Christ.[52] In particular, he likened Joseph's multi-coloured and elaborately woven tunic to Christ's flesh which, he claimed, likewise reached 'all the way down to his ankles' (*quia pertingebat ei usque ad talos*), completely concealing his divinity.[53]

Having made the connection between Joseph and Christ, Ælred associated Rachel and Mary on the level of their shared experience of maternity; Rachel as the mother of Joseph and Mary as the mother of Jesus. He even ascribed the definition of the name 'Rachel' – 'sheep' (*ovis*) – to the Virgin, suggesting that Mary could appropriately be called 'sheep' because she became the mother of the Lamb of God, upon whose fleece 'came down heavenly rain' (*caelestis pluvia descendit*; the descent of the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation was the subject of his sermon).[54] Following *Pseudo-Jerome* (actually Paschasius Radbertus' (*c.* 785-865), *De assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis*), Ælred claimed that fleece was something that pertained to the body but did not know anything of bodily passion; rather, it retained whatever gifts might be poured out upon it like moisture from heaven:

> A fleece can retain the moisture which comes from above but it cannot feel the moisture of carnal pleasure. So too the virginity of blessed Mary obtained the dew which came from heaven but could feel no carnal pleasure.[55]

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[52] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 9 (CCCM II A, p. 72).

[53] *Ibid.*, 8, line 82 (CCCM II A, p. 72); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 158. Also: 'Now, his father made Joseph a many-coloured tunic. This is the cloud of which we spoke a short time ago, the most holy flesh of our Saviour. It is then a cloud because he used it to temper his divinity for us; a tunic because he appeared in this world, as it were, clothed with flesh… Superbly indeed is that tunic said to be many-coloured, for our Lord Jesus Christ was adorned with the complete variety of the virtues, even in his human nature.' (*Fecit autem pater suus Ioseph tunicmam polymitam. Haec est illa nubes de qua paulo ante locuti sumus, sanctissima caro nostri Salvatoris. Sed ideo nubes est, quia per illam nobis claritatem suae divinitatis temperavit; tunica ideo, quia quasi vestitus carne in hoc mundo apparavit… Pulcherrime quoque illa tunica dicitur polymita, quia Dominus noster Iesus Christus omnium virtutum varietate etiam secundum carnem decoratus fuit.*) Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 29, 31, lines 268-272, 281-284 (CCCM II A, p. 77); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, pp. 165, 166.

[54] *Ibid.*, 12, line 122 (CCCM II A, p. 73); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 159. See *ibid.*, 12-13 (CCCM II A, p. 73).

[55] *Vellus potest illum humorem qui de sursum venit recipere, sed non potest humorem de carnis voluptate sentire. Sic virginitas beatae Mariae illum rorem qui de caelo venit excepit, sed nullam carnis voluptatem sentire potiut*. *Ibid*., 13, lines 126-129 (CCCM II A, p. 73); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, pp. 159-160. Cf. Paschasius Radbertus, *De assumptione*

Ælred's central justification for this typology was that both Rachel's sterility and Mary's virginity were forms of physical barrenness – 'The Joseph of old was born of a barren mother; our Joseph of a virgin' (*Nascitur ille Ioseph de sterili, noster de virgine*)[56] – but his primary purpose was to demonstrate how Mary outshone her predecessor. Ælred's purpose in exploring the link between Rachel and Mary was, ultimately, to assert that Mary was the greater of the two because of her vocation. Thus, he praised Mary on the basis that she *chose* to be a virgin and, so, to experience in her body the barrenness that Rachel experienced only involuntarily. For Ælred – in a message intended for his monks – this act of self-denial on Mary's part led to the final, paradoxical reality of her being chosen to be the Mother of God: 'she, because she chose virginal barrenness, has merited virginal fecundity and given birth to the Son of God' (*illa, quia elegit virginalem sterilitatem, virginalem meruit fecunditatem et Dei Filium generavit*).[57]

Baldwin of Forde also believed that Mary freely elected to be a virgin and to remain in a virginal state. Since his compositions were also intended for a monastic audience, Baldwin's purpose in concentrating on Mary's elective virginity may have been similar to Ælred's; namely, to dignify the monastic life. Unlike Ælred, however, Baldwin did not make any typological links between Mary and the women of the Old Testament on the basis of virginity/barrenness. Indeed, he bemoaned the absence of such precedents and even explained how Mary's decision to be a virgin could be seen as eccentric:

> No command of the Law, therefore, preceded this resolution of the Virgin; nor, as some would think, did any advice from the Law or example from the Law – although when I speak of an example, I am thinking of women rather than men… How, then, could the Virgin really think that her virginity would be pleasing to God when [virginity itself] is as much the subject of a curse as it is nigh to barrenness?[58]

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sanctae Mariae virginis V, 28, lines 230-231 (CCCM LVI C, p. 121). See *Paschasii Radberti: De partu virginis; De assumptione sanctae Mariae*, ed. by E. A. Matter and A. Ripberger, CCCM LVI C (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), pp. 109-162.

[56] Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 10, line 99 (CCCM II A, p. 72); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 158.

[57] *Ibid.*, 11, lines 115-117 (CCCM II A, p. 73); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 159.

[58] *Huius itaque Virginis propositum, nullum precessit legis preceptum; nullum, ut quibusdam videtur, de lege consilium, nullum sub lege exemplum. Quod de exemplo dixi, de mulieribus accipiendum magis quam de viris… Unde autem nostre Virgini, ut vel credere posset virginitatem Deo placituram, que tam obnoxia esset maledictioni, quam proxima sterilitati?*

In his explanation of Mary's peculiar lifestyle choice, however, Baldwin returned to the fundamental paradox, her virginal maternity. As far as he was concerned, Mary knew that her virginity, contrary to the Law and the experience of her forebears, *would* be pleasing to God because she was destined to fulfil the words of Isaiah: 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall give his name Emmanuel' (*ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuhel*; Is 7:14). Like Ælred, Baldwin explained how Mary was rewarded for her steadfast virginity with the blessing of fertility and even, affirming the traditional patristic belief, a painless birth: she 'conceived without sin [and] gave birth without pain' (*Hec autem sine peccato concepit, sine dolore peperit*).[59] Baldwin's overriding purpose is clear towards the end of his discourse, when its scope widens beyond the virginity of Mary, to encompass all those – presumably, he was thinking of monks – 'who preserve with the integrity of the flesh the [purity] of their mind' (*cum integritate carnis servant castitatem mentis*).[60] Note how his words here transition neatly from physical to spiritual purity; Baldwin was concerned to prioritise spiritual goods and to demonstrate how physical realities pointed to them, and he regarded physical virginity as incomplete in-and-of-itself without purity of the mind.[61]

John of Forde's seventieth sermon combined elements of Ælred and Baldwin's approaches to Mary's virginity. Like Ælred, he interpreted scripture allegorically and so, for example, took Sg 7:2, 'Your belly is like a heap of wheat, encompassed with lilies' (*venter tuus sicut acervus tritici vallatus liliis*), to be referring to Mary's fruitful albeit virginal womb. According to John, Mary received in her womb (her belly) a single grain of wheat from heaven, which in turn grew into the multitude of the

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Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 35, 37, lines 315-318, 333-335 (CCCM XCIX, pp. 202, 203); trans. by Bell, CF 38, pp. 204, 205. This passage bears some similarity to one from Ælred's rule of life for a recluse, *De institutione inclusarum*: 'This [celibacy] is a free sacrifice, a spontaneous offering: it is not made obligatory by any law, there is no compulsion, no commandment imposes it' (*Voluntarium hoc sacrificium est, oblatio spontanea, ad quam non lex impellit, non necessitas cogit, non urget praeceptum*). Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 14, lines 446-447 (CCCM I, p. 650); trans. by Macpherson, CF 2, p. 62. Cf. 'Before her, absolutely no one 'knew the price of it' [Job 28:13], and so there were few who valued it, fewer still who sought for it, fewest of all who found it. In general, virginity had less of praise than of insult and curse.' (*Prorsus ante ipsam nesciebat homo pretium eius, unde et rarus erat qui reputaret illam, rarior qui quaereret, rarissimus qui inveniret. Denique non tantum laudi non erat, sed opprobrio quoque et maledicto*.) John of Forde, *Sermo* LIX, 2, lines 44-47 (CCCM XVII, p. 417); trans. by Beckett, CF 44, p. 172.

[59] Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 38, lines 354-355 (CCCM XCIX, p. 203); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 206.

[60] *Ibid.*, 41, lines 388-389 (CCCM XCIX, p. 204); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 207.

[61] See *ibid.*, 41 (CCCM XCIX, pp. 204-205).

faithful; the seed of the church was planted in her womb when she conceived its head. This he used as the basis for a commendation of virginity – such as the virginity of monks – and, following Baldwin, the pre-eminence of spiritual conception:

> …the fruitfulness of God's mother must not be judged solely be the actual conception of the Son of man. According to the belief of the Catholic faith, this glorious mother conceived God first in her [mind] rather than in her flesh, and this conception was far more fruitful.[62]

In particular, John understood the Canticle to be referring to the virtues – which he called 'lilies' – which surrounded and protected Mary's womb before she became the Mother of Christ. Her womb was, metaphorically speaking, encircled and protected by virginity. In turn, he offered Mary to his monks as an example to emulate, encouraging them to be drawn to the whiteness and scent of her virginity so that they too could adopt 'the same disposition of holiness and sweetness' (*eundem sanctitatis ac suavitatis affectum*).[63] The remarkable thing about John's discourse on virginity in *Sermo* LXX, however, is the breadth it ascribed to virginity; John did not wish for his advice to be confined to the monastery and so applied it also to the states of 'holy matrimony' (*sancti matrimonii*), 'widowed continence' (*continentia vidualis*) and 'penitential [purity]' (*castitati poenitentiali*).[64] 'All these lilies', he argued, 'converge into a single encircling crown' (*Et haec quidem omni…in unum conveniunt coronae circulum*) around the Virgin Mary; in other words, all kinds of purity participated in the virginity of Mary and brought her glory.[65]

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[62] *…fecunditas in matre Domini non sola filii homines generatione aestimanda sit, cum iuxta fidei catholicae pietatem genetrix gloriosa Deum prius multoque mirabilius longeque fecundius mente quam carne conceperit*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 6, lines 142-145 (CCCM XVIII, p. 492); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 103.

[63] *Ibid*., 7, line 175 (CCCM XVIII, p. 493); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 104.

[64] See *ibid*., 7, lines 175-185 (CCCM XVIII, p. 493); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, pp. 104-105.

[65] *Ibid*., 8, lines 186, 187 (CCCM XVIII, p. 493); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 105.

United to Her Son: Mary's Virginity and the Purity of Christ

Both Ælred and Baldwin emphasised the necessity of Mary's virginity for the Incarnation, as the basis upon which she merited and was chosen to be the Mother of God, and the principal causal factor underlying Christ's unblemished humanity. Ælred made this argument, like his explanation of Mary's virginity, by appealing to an Old Testament typology, presenting King David as a precursor to Christ and his virginal companion, Abishag, as a type of Mary (1 Kings 1:1-4). The biblical account began with David in his dotage, cold and lonely, whereupon Abishag was brought to him, to be his companion and to keep him warm; she was 'exceedingly beautiful, and she slept with the king, and served him, but the king did not know her' (*erat autem puella pulchra nimis dormiebatque cum rege et ministrabat ei rex vero non cognovit eam*; 1 Kings 1:4). Ælred offered an allegorical reading of this text, in which the cold felt by King David was taken as a sign of the sinfulness of the world before the Incarnation. In heaven, Christ felt the cold of the world and no attempt by the Jews to warm him up by their solemn religious ceremonies made any difference to him, 'because the warmth of true love was not in their hearts' (*quia in illorum cordibus veri amoris calor non erat*).[66] Characteristically, the phenomenon of human sensory experience to which Ælred appealed here – namely, the cold (surely a familiar feature of life in a monastery like Rievaulx in the north of England) – was imbued with spiritual significance. Just as David took comfort in Abishag for the warmth of her bodily embrace, so Christ found comfort in Mary on account of her virtue. Furthermore, just as in his Rachel-Mary typology, so here, the Virgin was elevated above her Old Testament counterpart because her status depended upon her moral condition rather than her physical beauty:

> This virgin – purer than all other virgins, holier than all women, stronger than all men, fairer than the sun, more intense than fire – our David [Christ] provided for himself. He knew her, indeed it was for himself that he prepared her like this, and yet he chose to seek her out through his servants.

[66] Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XX, 19, lines 173-174 (CCCM II A, p. 159); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 281.

> […] She alone it was in whose bosom the true David could rest quite intimately. Her embrace would quite gently warm him.[67]

Both Ælred and Baldwin believed that, on some level, Mary knew that she was destined to be the virgin referred to by the prophet Isaiah (see Is 7:14). For Baldwin, this foreknowledge explained her confidence that her virginity would be pleasing to God; even though Mary chose to be a virgin against the wisdom of the Law and the prevailing social attitudes of her time, she had a God-given knowledge that she would not be childless.[68] Far from conceit, this insight was a divine gift. For Baldwin, Mary was so utterly certain that this would come to pass that she 'fell in love with virginity' (*virginitatem adamavit*), offering it to God 'in an odour of sweetness' (*in odorem suavissimum*).[69] In making this assertion, Baldwin was presenting Mary as a prophetic figure, imbued with learning and the gift of prophetic knowledge. He did not regard her as a rustic, naïve young maiden who received an unexpected angelic visitation but, rather, as a personal agent in the unfolding of God's plan for human redemption. This points to Baldwin's high view of Mary's role in the Incarnation and salvation, which marks him out as a twelfth-century thinker, for it was at that time that the Virgin Mary was coming to seen as an especially active player in the economy of salvation. For Baldwin, Mary had not only been delivered from the indictment of Eve (and womankind in general) by grace, but she had also *merited* to be the Mother of God because she was a virgin. Echoing Anselm, he asserted:

> From this indictment [original sin] the Virgin herself stands free, and by her merit she has delivered others. It was she who brought forth the Saviour of the world who destroyed death and turned away the condemnation due to us, and it is to her, therefore, after God, that we owe everything…[70]

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[67] *Hanc virginem omnibus virginibus puriorem, omnibus feminis sanctiorem, omnibus viris fortiorem, sole formosiorem, igne ferventiorem, David noster sibi ipsi providit, cognovit, immo ipse eam sibi talem paravit, sed tamen per servos suos eam quaerere voluit.* […] *Ipsa sola inventa est in cuius sinu verus David familiarius requiesceret, cuius amplexu suavis calefieret*. Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XX, 20, 21, lines 180-184, 191-192 (CCCM II A, pp. 159, 160); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 282.

[68] See Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 34-38 (CCCM XCIX, pp. 202-204).

[69] *Ibid.*, 37, lines 348, 349 (CCCM XCIX, p. 203); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 206.

[70] *A qua quidem criminatione et hec Virgo libera extitit, et suo merito ceteras absolvit. Que quoniam salvatorem mundi edidit, qui mortem destruxit, et debitam nobis dampnationem avertit, totum ei post Deum debemus… Ibid.*, 44, lines 415-418 (CCCM

Ælred likewise thought that Mary had been familiar with Isaiah's prophecy, but he went further than Baldwin to assert that she had actually longed to be the mother of Emmanuel and to speculate about the moral-psychological conflict this desire had created within her.[71] Ælred's Mary was ambitious for herself since, from a pure motive – devotion to God – she dared to aspire to be his virgin mother. In a colourful and daring effort to delve into Mary's psychology at the moment when this desire surfaced, Ælred described a young woman in a state of moral and emotional turmoil. His portrait was of a human Mary, not a serene and distant Lady of the heavens.[72] In the following passage, Ælred described Mary

XCIX, p. 205); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 208. Cf. 'A thing to be wondered at – at what a height do I behold the place of Mary! Nothing equals Mary, nothing but God is greater than Mary.' (*Mira res, in quam sublimi contemplor Mariam locatam! Nihil aequale Mariae, nihil nisi deus maius Maria*.) Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, lines 93-94 (SAOp. III, p. 21); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 120. Cf. also: 'Indeed it was fitting that that Virgin should shine with a purity which was only exceeded by God's own, because it was to her that God the Father disposed to give his only Son, whom he loved in his heart as equal to himself.' (*Nempe decens erat ut ea puritate, qua maior sub deo nequit intelligi, virgo illa is niteret, cui deus pater unicum filium, quem de corde suo aequalem sibi genitum tamquam se ipsum diligebat*.) Anselm of Canterbury, *De conceptu virginali*, 18 (SAOp. II, p. 159); trans. by C. McNab, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, pp. 357-389 (p. 376). Unlike Anselm, however, Baldwin embraced the Immaculate Conception, claiming that Mary was *exempta* and *immunis* from the *communis maledictionis*. See Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 42 (CCCM XCIX, p. 205). For a brief comment, see Bell, 'Introduction', p. 27.

[71] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 20 (CCCM II A, p. 75).

[72] This perspective on Mary has been described by Eamon Duffy, following Hilda Graef, as symptomatic of a shift from objectivity to subjectivity in medieval Mariology; a shift signified by greater consideration of Mary as an individual. Duffy has defended this shift against the accusation that it sentimentalised Marian devotion in the west and, ultimately, restricted human participation in the mysteries of the faith to the range and limitations of the emotions. Quoting Simon Tugwell, Duffy has formulated the problem thus: 'From this perspective, it appears that late medieval piety tended to trap the believer in mere human emotion, substituting a haze of essentially natural feeling for the supernatural reality of faith, thereby reducing God 'to the dimensions of essentially unchanged human affection'.' However, he has explained how it was in fact spiritually edifying for medieval Christians to regard Mary as a human mother, with real emotions like their own, because it enabled them, through a connection with her experience, to come to terms with their connection to the son she bore; in other words, to experience the humanity and reciprocal love of Christ. Duffy has even sought to argue that Mary's 'distinctiveness and uniqueness' in medieval theology served to emphasise this reality by throwing it into relief as a subject for consideration and elaboration, although this is certainly the least well-developed facet of his argument. See E. Duffy, 'Mater Dolorosa, Mater Misericordiae (Aquinas Lecture 1988)', *New Blackfriars*, 69.816 (1988), pp. 210-227 (pp. 211, 219-221); S. Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection: An Exploration of Christian Spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), p. 165. Pursuing an alternative (albeit complementary) line of interpretation, Rachel Fulton has suggested that the humanity of Mary served not only to immerse medieval Christians more deeply into the mystery of the Incarnation but to model the best possible human response to that mystery: 'it was [Mary's] pain that provided the model for compassionate response to Christ's pain, her pain that taught Christians what it was like to have seen Christ die on the Cross'. R. Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 199.

at the most important juncture in her young life and it is a powerful evocation of the inner turmoil she experienced when confronted with her own unfolding vocation:

> I think that when she read that it was to come to pass that a certain virgin would give birth to the Son of God, secretly and with some fear she longed that she might be that virgin. But at the same time she considered herself utterly unworthy of being granted such a privilege. Charity conflicted with fear, devotion with humility. At one moment she almost despaired through overwhelming fear; at the next, through the overwhelming desire she drew from it, she could not but hope. First, devotion moved her to presume it, but then her great humility moved her to hesitate. It was then, when she was in this [moment of] hesitation, this wavering, this longing, that the angel came into her and said: Hail, full of grace [Lk 1:28].[73]

The writings of Ælred and Baldwin also attest to their orthodox faith in the truth of Christ's Incarnation and, consequently, the reality of Mary's divine maternity; they believed that the Second Person of the Trinity received true flesh from a truly human mother. Characteristically, there was a preliminary physical sense to their explanations of the process of the Incarnation, which was followed by a deeper moral sense. This was captured by Baldwin: '[Mary] provided from herself the substance of the flesh [of Christ], and in taking flesh from her, he remained undefiled' (*Ipsa enim de se substantiam carnis ministravit; nec est pollutus ex ea carnem assumens*).[74] As these words reveal, Baldwin understood – and Ælred shared his view – that Mary's 'substance' was both physically and morally constitutive of the human nature of her son. Hence, it was vital for them both to emphasise her purity, lest they be accused of imputing anything impure whatsoever to Christ's human nature.

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[73] *Puto enim quia, quando legit quod futurum erat quod quaedam Virgo debebat generare Filium Dei, occulte et cum quodam timore optabat ut ipsa posset esse, sed iterum putabat quod omnino indigna esset cui tam magnum munus concederetur. Caritas rixabatur cum timore, devotio cum humilitate. Paene iam desperabat prae nimio timore, sed iterum, prae nimio desiderio quod inde habebat, non potuit nisi sperare. Iterum devotio fecit eam praesumere, sed iterum magna eius humilitas faciebat eam haesitare. Cum ergo esset in hac haesitatione, in hac fluctuatione, in hoc desiderio, ingressus angelus ad eam ait: Ave, gratia plena*. Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 19-20, lines 182-192 (CCCM II A, p. 75); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 162.

[74] Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 46, lines 442-443 (CCCM XCIX, p. 206); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 210.

We have already observed how Ælred described the process whereby Christ took his mother's flesh as the putting on of a particular type of clothing; in *Sermo* IX he described Christ's flesh as a 'tunic', which he compared to the multi-coloured tunic of Joseph. This was not, however, the only place in that sermon where Ælred described the flesh of Christ as a mode of concealment. He also asserted that, out of mercy, Christ concealed the brightness of his divinity with a 'cloud' (*nubem*), by which he meant the flesh of the Virgin.[75] Since it was the moral dimension of the Incarnation that Ælred wished to emphasise here, he described the cloud as 'lightweight' (*levis*) because it was free from any stain of sin.[76] That Ælred meant to affirm Mary's purity by this metaphor, as well as the reality of the Incarnation, is evident towards the end, in his declaration that Mary 'can well be called a cloud in that she was filled with the rain of spiritual grace' (*Ipsa recte potest appellari nubes, quia illa pluuia spiritualis gratiae plena fuit*).[77]

The highpoint of Ælred's thinking about the synergy between Mary's virginity and Christ's Incarnation occurred in his contemplation of the Crucifixion. Whilst he distinguished Mary's virginity from Rachel's barrenness on the basis that Mary's condition was freely chosen, he used the principle of choice to bring Mary and Christ together. More even than a synergy between Mary's virginity and Christ's Passion, he saw an 'utterly beautiful congruence between Son and Mother' (*pulcherrimam quandam convenientiam inter filium et matrem*);[78] Mary *chose* to be a virgin and Christ *chose* to go to the Cross. They both made these sacrifices voluntarily for the sake of human redemption and it was in the soteriological value of their respective acts that their significance truly lay. So, Ælred said:

> The son did not shun the curse of the cross; the mother did not shun the curse of barrenness. Yet he, by the cross, redeemed us from the law's curse, having for our sake become accursed; and she,

[75] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 7 (CCCM II A, p. 72).

[76] *Ibid.*, 7, line 77 (CCCM II A, p. 72).

[77] *Ibid.*, 34, lines 311-312 (CCCM II A, p. 78); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 167.

[78] *Ibid.*, 11, lines 111-112 (CCCM II A, p. 73); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 159.

> because she chose virginal barrenness, has merited virginal fecundity and given birth to the Son of God.[79]

Ælred's emphasis on the elective nature of Mary's virginity, to which this passage attests, provided a blueprint for his understanding of the monastic life as one of elective virginity. He prefaced the passage just quoted with the phrase, 'She [Mary] gave little heed to that malediction of the Jews: Cursed in Israel is the barren' (*Nec multum illi ‹curae› fuit de illa maledictione Iudaeorum: Maledicta sterilis in Israel*). Berkeley and Pennington have claimed that the origin of these words is unknown, however it is possible that they were a deliberate allusion to an apocryphal text, such as the *Protevangelium of James* and, so, to the circumstances surrounding Mary's generation.[80] They certainly reflected the words of Anne's servant, Judith – 'Why should I curse you, seeing that the Lord has shut your womb' (Prot. 2) – and Anne's own despairing cry: 'I have become a curse in the presence of the sons of Israel' (Prot. 3). This would mean that Mary chose the condition which gave her own mother such heartache and which Anne, like a number of Old Testament women, prayed to have resolved. It would also suggest that, for Ælred at least, the generation of Mary marked a new epoch in salvation history, one in which priority would be given to what he called 'spiritual fecundity' (*fecunditas spiritalis*), meaning denial of the flesh, in pursuit of spiritual and moral growth.[81] Not only would this reflect the interpretation given in the previous chapter to those folios of the Winchester Psalter from the mid-twelfth century which illustrated these moments, it would also begin to explain how Ælred felt especially able to expound a Marian justification for the monastic life, which he conceived as a life of voluntary purity (sexual continence) undertaken for the sake of moral perfection.[82]

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[79] *Non vitavit filius maledictum crucis, non vitavit mater maledictum sterilitatis. Ille autem per crucem nos de maledictio legis, factus pro nobis maledictum, redemit; et illa, quia elegit virginalem sterilitatem, virginalem meruit fecunditatem et Dei Filium generavit*. Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 11, lines 114-117 (CCCM II A, p. 73); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 159.

[80] *Ibid.*, 11, lines 109-110 (CCCM II A, 73); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 159. See Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 159.

[81] *Ibid.*, 10, line 101 (CCCM II A, p. 72).

[82] See London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, ff. 4r, 8r.

Holy Estate and Ground of Glory: A Model for Consecrated Virgins

Ælred's *De institutione inclusarum*, composed at the behest of his sister, is generally understood to have been a *regula* for the reclusive life (a precursor to *Ancren Riwle*) but it is primarily concerned with spiritual instruction rather than practical minutiae.[83] As David Knowles has pointed out, it mostly 'consists of teaching on the virtues and a meditation on the love of God, as called forth by the recollection of past and present benefits and future hopes'.[84] For Ælred, the contemplation of past events (especially events from scripture) could make them present and even lead to a mystical encounter between the meditator and the story's protagonists.[85] Henrietta Leyser has described this approach as re-living, re-capturing and appropriating the past, and she has explained how it entailed an imaginative identification with the physical dimensions of biblical narratives.[86] So, for example:

> Ælred urges his sister, a recluse, to share imaginatively in every aspect of Christ's life, from the moment of the annunciation through to the crucifixion. She must stand with the Virgin and John at the foot of the cross. She must kiss Christ's wounds… She must help to carry the body to the tomb, stay with Mary Magdalen and with her witness the Resurrection.[87]

Nowhere was Ælred's meditative approach to the past more vividly expressed than in a passage in *De institutione inclusarum* about the Crucifixion, which brought together the figures of Mary and John, the beloved disciple, on the basis of their shared virginity. Describing Mary as the 'Virgin Mother' (*Virgo Mater*) and John as the 'Virgin Disciple' (*virgo discipulus*), Ælred evoked the scene of the Crucifixion, with these two figures standing either side of the cross, in perfect symmetry, to emphasise 'the

[83] See D. Knowles, 'Introduction', in *Ælred of Rievaulx: Treatises & Pastoral Prayer*, ed. by Pennington, CF 2, pp. ix-xiii (p. xii).

[84] *Ibid.*, p. xii.

[85] For a full discussion, see chapter 6 of this thesis.

[86] See H. Leyser, '*c.* 1080-1215: texts', in S. Fanous and V. Gillespie, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 49-67 (p. 54).

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

excellence of virginity' (*virginitatis excellentiam*) in both sexes.[88] Ælred claimed that virginity was 'consecrated' (*consecravit*) in these two figures, by which he meant that it was sanctified for a new Christian epoch of the world, in which it would no longer be a shameful condition but a holy estate.[89] One of the purposes of this brief but potent meditation was to show his sister that virginity was pleasing to Christ and so, presumably, to encourage her to be faithful to her own vows.[90] More fundamentally still, it was intended to increase his sister's love for God and ultimately to enable her to ascend to unity with him.[91] The union of Mary and John at the foot of the cross illustrated, as Susan Fein has argued, 'a spiritual good greater than natural marriage or parenthood, that is, an intimate merging of two parallel individuals of opposite gender in spiritual union with God's oneness'.[92]

Despite the potential of virginity to bring about such union with God, however, Ælred did not regard it as inevitable. Like Anselm, he thought that the virgin was engaged in a cosmic struggle – borne along by grace but frequently assailed by the devil – and that virginity and the spiritual union it was meant to precipitate were always in peril. Thus, describing virginity to his sister as a 'priceless treasure' (*pretiosissimum virginitatis thesaurum*), he gave her strict instructions about how to maintain it in spite of temptations.[93] His purpose in doing so was soteriological. Just as in *Sermo* IX he described how Christ was drawn to Mary by the 'scent of her virginity' (*odorem virginitatis eius*), which he took to signify the 'beauty of her soul' (*pulchritudinem animae eius*), so in *De institutione inclusarum* he suggested that Christ was continuing to choose women to be his brides on account of the irresistible aroma of their virginity: 'the spikenard of your virginity breathes out its fragrance even in heaven [Sg 1:11] and leads the king to desire your beauty, him who is the Lord your God [Ps 44:12]' (*Itaque nardus*

[88] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 26, lines 753-764 (CCCM I, pp. 658-659).

[89] See *ibid*., 26, line 757 (CCCM I, p. 659).

[90] See Freeman, 'Ælred of Rievaulx's pastoral care of religious women', p. 17.

[91] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 26, lines 765-772 (CCCM I, p. 659).

[92] Fein, 'Maternity in Ælred', p. 149. Ælred suggested that the 'evil' act of procreation undertaken by his parents to give birth to himself and his sister was counterbalanced by the spiritual good of their asceticism: 'The acts of Ælred's parents reach fruition, then, in the realization of human spirituality at its fullest – male chaste and female virgin formed in the same womb returning to their Creator in an act of wholeness, a spiritual rebirthing taking place through cloister and cell'. Fein, 'Maternity in Ælred', p. 149.

[93] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 15, lines 477-511 (CCCM I, pp. 650-651).

virginitatis tuae etiam in caelestibus dans odorem suum, facit ut concupiscat rex decorem tuum et ipse est Dominus Deus tuus).[94] Following this, he explained that these women would be rewarded or punished eternally according to their ability or failure to remain pure. The cosmic struggle in which they were engaged was necessary to prove that they were worthy of receiving an eternal crown:

> He [Christ] it is who has already chosen you as his bride, but he will not crown you until you have been tested… Virginity is the gold, the cell is the crucible, the devil is the assayer, temptation is the fire. The virgin's flesh is the earthenware vessel in which the gold is put to be tested. If it is broken by the intensity of the heat the gold is spilt and no craftsmen can put the vessel together again.[95]

In *De institutione inclusarum*, Ælred alternated between the subjects of female virginity – that of his sister, in particular – and the virginity of men as well as women. He did so, for example, when speaking of Mary as a model for virgins to imitate: 'Let her [the recluse] contemplate the most blessed Mary as with the timbrel of virginity she leads the dance of the virgins and entones that sweet song which none may sing but the virgins of *both sexes*' (*Contempletur beatissimam Mariam cum virginitatis tympano choros virginum praecedentem et praecinentem dulce illud canticum, quod nemo potest canere nisi utriusque sexus virgines*).[96] Even though Ælred was writing *for* his sister, a woman, these words suggest

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[94] Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 14, lines 463-465 (CCCM I, p. 650); trans. by Macpherson, CF 2, p. 63. Cf. Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 15, lines 145-146 (CCCM II A, p. 74). Cf., also, John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 7, lines 153-185 (CCCM XVIII, pp. 492-493).

[95] *Ipse te iam elegit in sponsam, sed non coronabit nisi probatam… Virginitas aurum est, cella fornax, conflator diabolus, ignis tentatio. Caro virginis, vas luteum est, in quo aurum reconditur, ut probetur. Quod si igne vehementiori crepuerit, aurum effunditur, nec vas ulteris a quolibet artifice reparatur*. Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 14, lines 471-476 (CCCM I, p. 650); trans. by Macpherson, CF 2, p. 63.

[96] *Ibid.*, 15, lines 482-485 (CCCM I, p. 651) [emphasis added]; trans. by Macpherson, CF 2, p. 64. On this use of 'timbrel', cf. 'Then too Mary, taking her timbrel, shall stir up the choirs of virgins, singing to the Lord because they have passed through the sea of this world without suffering from the waves of this world.' (*Tunc etiam Maria tympanum sumens, choros virginales excitabit cantantes Domino quod per mare saeculi sine saecularibus fluctibus transierunt*.) Ambrose of Milan, *De virginibus* II, 2. 17 (PL 16, 211A-211B); trans. by H. De Romestin, E. De Romestin and H. T. F. Duckworth, NPNF II, vol. 10, ed. by P. Schaff and H. Wace (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, repr. 1997), pp. 363-387.

that he was writing *from* his experience as a monk in a community of men, by which his teaching was shaped and in which it was primarily transmitted.

There has been some debate about the sense in which Ælred understood Mary to have been a model for consecrated virgins to imitate, and the purpose he ascribed to mimesis; it may have been to lead to monastic perfection and a share in the same heavenly beatitude as Mary herself or, alternatively, to win her intercession in the hope that, through her, heavenly glory might be attained.[97] In fact, Ælred understood Mary to have been the model 'strong woman' (*mulierem fortem*; as opposed to the weakness of the first woman in the Garden of Eden), who was to be imitated by souls intent upon growing in perfection.[98] Ælred evoked events from the life of the Virgin for the spiritual instruction of those who, like his sister, were striving to preserve their virginity in the world. Although he implied that the reward for steadfastness in this life would be eternal glorification, Shawn Krahmer has observed: 'Where he speaks most clearly of our imitation of Mary, it is her earthly life and not her heavenly reward that is the focus.'[99] Ælred understood Mary's earthly life to have exemplified what he described in *Sermo* XXI as 'the soul who leaves the world, who tramples on the desires of the flesh [Gal 5:16], who spurns the glories of the world' (*illa anima quae relinquit saeculum, quae carnis desideria calcat, quae mundi gloriam spernit*).[100] Somewhat paradoxically, Ælred exhorted his sister and his monastic community to imitate Mary's flight *from* the world – to the extent that they were able[101] – so that they could live *in*

[97] Compare Mayeski, 'The Assumption as a Monastic Celebration', pp. 395-411, and Krahmer, 'Mary as Mother and Bride', pp. 280-298. Following Amédée Hallier, Krahmer has argued that, for Ælred, the Virgin Mary enjoyed a higher level of beatitude than all others. See Krahmer, 'Mary as Mother and Bride', p. 282. In a passage reminiscent of Bernard's aqueduct analogy describing Mary as a conduit of grace, Baldwin presented her as the Mediatrix of grace: 'For [Mary] was full of grace, in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, for the reason that through her the grace of God might abound in us' (*Ad hoc enim gratia plena extitit, sicut mensura bona, et conferta, et coagitata, et supereffluens, ut per ipsam gratia Dei abundet in nobis*). Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 7, lines 60-62 (CCCM XCIX, pp. 194-195); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 193. Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo in nativitate B. V. Mariae (De aquaeductu)* (PL 183, 437-448B (440A-440B)); trans. by Anon., *St Bernard's Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Devon: Augustine Publishing Co., 1984), pp. 79-103 (pp. 82-83).

[98] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XXI, 4-6 (CCCM II A, pp. 165-166).

[99] Krahmer, 'Mary as Mother and Bride', p. 282.

[100] Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XXI, 5, lines 37-38 (CCCM II A, p 166); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 290.

[101] See Krahmer, 'Mary as Mother and Bride', pp. 295-296.

the world successfully, without succumbing to the temptations of the flesh. This idea was particularly vividly expressed in the following instruction to his community:

> This strength shone forth exceptionally in the ever blessed Mary, Mother of God, who without any previous example despised the delights of this world, abhorred the lewdness of the flesh and – something no one before her had done – chose the purity of virginity. He who foresaw before the world was made [Eph 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20] that she would become his mother, found this strong woman. This strength, brothers, imitate; this purity, emulate![102]

Delightful to Behold: Virgin in Accidents and Substance

In their advocacy of the contemplation of Mary's virginity, Ælred and Baldwin highlighted the intrinsic relationship between the body and the soul. Although their purpose was the spiritual edification of their respective communities, they understood the moral life to demand the perfect synergy of flesh and spirit. Hence, Baldwin wrote:

> The praise of true beauty belongs to the mind rather than the body. Yet in a certain way it belongs to the body as well, for it often happens that what a [pure] heart conceives inwardly is manifested outwardly and becomingly through the agency of the body.[103]

As these words indicate, they understood physical phenomena, including the body, to be signs of higher, spiritual goods; they were like sacramental signs pointing beyond themselves to something greater.

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[102] *Haec fortitudo praecipue relucebat in beatissima Dei genetrice Maria, quae sine exemplo alterius mundi illecebras contempsit, carnis illuviem horruit et, quod nulla altera ante eam fecit, virginitas puritatem elegit. Hanc mulierem fortem ipse invenit qui eam sibi matrem ante mundi constitutionem providit. Hanc fortitudinem, fratres, imitamini, hanc puritatem aemulamini*. Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XXI, 6, lines 43-49 (CCCM II A, p. 166); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, pp. 290-291.

[103] *Laus vere pulchritudinis magis mentis est quam corporis, et tamen aliquo modo corporis. Sepe enim quod casto cordis consilio intus concipitur, foris per ministerium corporis decenter administratur*. Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 9, lines 78-81 (CCCM XCIX, p. 195); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 194.

Hence, for example, in his Rachel-Mary typology, Ælred did not apply his description of Rachel as having 'a beautiful face and a charming appearance' (*pulchra facie et venusto aspectu*; see Gen 29:17) to Mary's outward appearance but, rather, to her 'inner beauty' (*interiorem pulchritudinem*).[104] Baldwin explored the link between interior and exterior beauty, implied here by Ælred, at some length and, following Augustine, he asserted:

> The grace of beauty shines out in an attractive face, and…an attractive face is regularly formed, with a good colour and a cheerful expression. The regularity of the features, their proportion, uniformity, composition, and the way in which the corresponding parts are arranged and matched, plays no small part in beauty.[105]

Baldwin's description here of the signs of physical beauty – regularity, proportion, uniformity, etcetera – evokes the very shape and character of monastic life. The beauty of monasticism, life in the presence of God, lay in the unchanging authority of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* and the regular pattern of the Divine Office. It should not be surprising, therefore, that as a monk Baldwin equated beauty with regularity and uniformity.[106] With Ælred, he believed there to be a perfect synergy between outward appearance and the balance of virtues in the soul of the Virgin, and they both understood her physical virginity to be a sign of her interior purity.[107] It is often very difficult to distinguish between virginity and purity (*castitas*) in their works but for Baldwin at least, such purity was constitutive of virginity.

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[104] Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* IX, 14, lines 135-136, 138-139 (CCCM II A, pp. 73-74).

[105] *Gratia decoris in bona facie prelucet. Bona autem facies, iuxta diffinitionem beati Augustini, est pariliter dimensa, luculente colorata, hilariter affecta. Parilitas autem dimensionis secundum equalitatem, similitudinem, compositionem, et modificatam et commensuratam congruentiam partium, non minima pars pulcritudinis est*. Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 8, lines 67-72 (CCCM XCIX, p. 195); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 194; cf. Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei* XXII, 19. 2 (PL 41, 13-804 (781)).

[106] Indeed, this discourse implies several injunctions which can be read as Baldwin's advice for a community striving to live in harmony: judge your own and other's actions by the same standards, be humble before both men and God, do not gossip, and have faith in God in times of hardship as well as prosperity. To neglect to do any of these things, he taught, would be to succumb to the sin of pride which 'loves imbalance and irregularity in our conduct' (*que inequalitatem et dissimilitudinem in moribus semper diligit*). See Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 10, lines 92-93 (CCCM XCIX, p. 195); trans. by Bell, CF 38, pp. 194-195.

[107] See *ibid*., 11 (CCCM XCIX, p. 196).

He asserted that perfect virginity was 'the inviolate integrity of all one's senses' (*in omnibus sensibus illibata integritas*) and that this derived from the presence, in each and every sense, of purity and modesty.[108] For example, the eyes could be described as 'pure' if the sense of sight – of which they were the physical sign – was blameless.[109]

Even though Baldwin's true focus was not the sensory organs themselves, he referred to the purity of the eyes because spiritual purity, in so far as it pertained to sight, needed a physical location. This points to Baldwin's essentially optimistic view of human nature; the flesh was not repugnant, worthy only of rejection, provided that its appetites and capacities could be subjected to the control of an upright spirit. Thus, even lust, the enemy of virginity, could be overcome by the spiritual integrity of the senses, the sign of which was that virgins would blush at shameful things and preserve themselves unstained.[110] In the person of Mary, Baldwin saw an example of perfect spiritual and physical purity; her senses and the organs of her senses were inviolate. Consequently, he asserted, she was 'wholly virgin, wholly undefiled, wholly unstained' (*tota virgo…tota impolluta, tota immaculata*).[111] In a similar way, Ælred believed that spiritual purity was constitutive of physical virginity and he regarded Mary as having possessed such purity perfectly. In making this assertion he strongly affirmed her perpetual virginity:

> Holy Mary had this wall within herself more perfectly than anyone else. For she is the holy and untouched virgin. Her virginity, like the stoutest of walls, could never be penetrated by any projectile or by any other instrument – that is, by any temptation of the devil. She was a virgin before giving birth, a virgin in giving birth, and a virgin after giving birth.[112]

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[108] Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 19, lines 172-173 (CCCM XCIX, p. 198); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 198.

[109] See *ibid*., 17-18 (CCCM XCIX, pp. 197-198).

[110] See *ibid*., 19 (CCCM XCIX, p. 198).

[111] *Ibid*., 19, lines 168-169 (CCCM XCIX, p. 198); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 198.

[112] *Istum murum habuit in se sancta Maria plus perfecte quam aliquis alius. Ipsa enim est Virgo sancta et intacta, cuius virginitas quasi firmissimus murus numquam potuit per aliquod petrarium vel per aliud instrumentum, id est temptationem diaboli, penetrari. Virgo erat ante partum, virgo in partu, virgo post partum*. Ælred of Rievaulx, *Sermo* XIX, 11, lines 88-93 (CCCM II A, p. 149); trans. by Berkeley and Pennington, CF 58, p. 266.

Conclusion

The arrival of the Cistercians to England in the 1120s heralded a rich and fruitful period in English monastic theology, and nowhere was this more apparent than in the transformational impact of Ælred of Rievaulx and Baldwin of Forde upon monastic thinking about the central Mariological paradox of the fruitful virginity. Fundamentally, their writings evince the pastoral and spiritual emphasis which ran throughout the monastic Mariology of the period, as this study shows. This meant that rather than attempting to 'make sense' of this paradox – or mystery – in purely intellectual terms, they saw it through the lens of their monastic profession. Mary who, for Ælred and Baldwin, had taken a vow of virginity herself thus offered a blueprint for a consecrated life. More fundamentally still – and true to the sacramental preoccupations of their age – Mary showed to the monks that interior purity of the spirit was superior to physical purity, which was also its outward sign.[113] In addition, although their writings did not focus on the *nature* of the afterlife, they clearly thought that consecrated virgins were engaged in a cosmic struggle. Following Anselm, the Cistercian theologians threatened that the loss of virginity by a consecrated person could also mean the loss of eternal life, and so they gave their reflections on the paradox of fruitful virginity the same soteriological significance which was characteristic of monastic life as a whole. Monasticism was seen as a soul-saving discipline in a world where salvation was thought to be far from inevitable.

[113] On this period as a 'sacramental age' see, also, chapter 5 of this thesis.

4

Humble Bride

Reading the Song of Songs in light of the Virgin

> Everything, then, in this marriage song, is directed principally to Mary, the principal bride of Jesus. This remains true, whatever form the words take, whether from the lips of the spouse to the bride or, in her turn, of the bride to the spouse, or from something she may say when training the maidens, or from their wonder and questioning, as these daughters of Jerusalem ponder over her words.[1]

> That evangelical and legendary *narratio* frames and directs the expression of emotion, setting Mary before the reader as an exemplary figure who actualizes the prophecy contained in the Song in her own life and teaches us to do the same.[2]

The twelfth century was a pivotal period in the development of exegesis of the Song of Songs (the *Cantica Canticorum*; hereafter the Canticle), which cannot properly be understood without reference to two figures who contributed to the intellectual culture of English monasticism: the mysterious Honorius Augustodunensis (*d. c.* 1140) and the Cistercian abbot John of Forde (*c.* 1150-1214).[3] At

[1] *Itaque quae in hoc epithalamii carmine alternatim variantur sive ex ore sponsi ad sponsam sive sponsae ad sponsum, sive ex informatione sponsae adolescentulas instituentis sive ex admiratione et percunctatione filiarum Ierusalem ex ore sponsae pendentium, universa, inquam, haec principali huic sponsae Iesu principaliter militant.* John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 1, lines 24-30, in *Ioannis de Forda: Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX, Sermones LXX-CXX*, ed. by E. Mikkers and H. Costello, CCCM XVIII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), pp. 489-494 (p. 489); trans. by W. M. Beckett, *John of Ford: Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, vol. 5, CF 45 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1983), pp. 96-106 (p. 97). This is a particularly difficult passage to translate into English; Beckett has included Mary's name, which is not in the text, for the sake of clarity because John explicitly stated that the sermon was composed in praise of her. Cf. *Sermo* LXXIII, 1 (CCCM XVIII, pp. 506-507).

[2] A. W. Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 61.

[3] For the significance of the twelfth century in general, see E. A. Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), pp. 155, 158.

first glance these two figures do not invite comparison and indeed the catalogue of things that distinguish them from one another is more compelling than that which unites them. Honorius was an 'outsider', in several senses of the word, whilst John was a consummate and successful 'insider'. Honorius was probably German, originating in either Regensburg or Augsburg,[4] and a monk of the Irish tradition, if he was a monk at all.[5] Certainly he penned a controversial defence of monastic preaching (*Quod monachis liceat predicare*) but there is only limited evidence that he took vows himself.[6] Indeed, in his own *De luminaribus ecclesiae*, Honorius described himself as *presbyter et scholasticus* rather than *monachus* or *claustralis*.[7] By contrast, John was definitely a monk – a Cistercian from *c*. 1170 – and English, and he made something of a second career as a member of 'the Establishment';[8] he was papal judge-delegate and, from 1204-1207, 'confessor and almoner' to King John (*r*. 1199-1216).[9]

The two figures also fared differently in the intellectual life of the twelfth century and in the treatment they received from posterity. In intellectual terms, John was a more marginal figure than Honorius, whose paradoxical profile has been neatly captured by Richard Southern: 'Honorius is not

[4] See A. Carr, 'Introduction', in *The Seal of Blessed Mary by Honorius Augustodunensis*, trans. by A. Carr (Toronto, Ontario: Peregrina Publishing Co., 1991), pp. 9-10. Carr has rejected the received wisdom that Honorius originated in France, at Autun, offering the alternative hypotheses that the epithet with which his name is often paired, 'Augustodunensis', refers to either Regensburg or Augsburg. First, if 'Augusto-' is taken to refer to an emperor and 'dunensis' to the Latin *dunum* ('mound'), then it may point to Regensburg for its long association with empire, including Marcus Aurelius (*c*. 121-180). Alternatively, it may be 'simply a corruption of…"of Augsburg"'. Carr, 'Introduction', p. 10; cf. R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 215-216. For a discussion of Honorius' biography, see also R. Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary in the Middle Ages, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 251-252.

[5] Richard Southern has suggested that Honorius may have been 'among the last of an ancient and honourable line of wanderers, the wandering scholar-monks of Ireland'. Southern, *Anselm and His Biographer*, p. 215. For a biography, see V. I. J. Flint, 'Honorius Augustodunensis (*d. c.* 1140)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/53485> [accessed 27 June 2015].

[6] Honorius Augustodunensis, *Quod monachis liceat predicare*, in *Honorius Augustodunensis*, ed. by J. A. Endres (Kempten; München: J. Kösel, 1906), pp. 147-150.

[7] Honorius, *De luminaribus ecclesiae sive de scriptoribus ecclesiasticis libelli quatuor* (PL 172, 197-234C (232B)). See also Carr, 'Introduction', p. 6.

[8] See C. Holdsworth, 'Forde, John of (*c*. 1150-1214)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/53109> [accessed 27 June 2015].

[9] See A. D., 'John of Ford: Commentary on the Latter Part of the Song of Songs', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses*, 21.2 (1970), pp. 105-110 (p. 106).

only one of the most obscure, but also one of the most influential writers of the first half of the twelfth century.'[10] He is known to have produced thirty-two works, many of which received a wide circulation, including in the Cistercian monasteries of England.[11] By contrast, as an author John has been described as 'long-winded' and lacking originality, even 'passé', and his works are said to have 'elicited no interest from his contemporaries'.[12] His collection of sermons on the Canticle, for instance, is known to have been held by just three medieval libraries in England (Forde, Beaulieu in Hampshire and Balliol College, Oxford).[13] This is a striking contrast to the fate of the sermons of Gilbert of Hoyland (*d. c.* 1172), his fellow interpreter of the Canticle following Bernard of Clairvaux (*c.* 1090-1153), which have been traced to nine libraries.[14]

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[10] Southern, *Anselm and His Biographer*, p. 213; cf. Carr, 'Introduction', p. 12.

[11] David Bell has traced Honorius' works to the English Cistercian houses of Dore (Herefordshire), Kirkstall (Yorkshire), Byland (Yorkshire), Heynings (Lincolnshire; a convent), Sawley (Lancashire), Rievaulx (Yorkshire) and perhaps also Flaxley (Gloucestershire). See D. N. Bell, *An Index of Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries in Great Britain* (Kalamzoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1992), pp. 73-74. The text under consideration in this chapter, Honorius' *Sigillum beatae mariae ubi exponuntur cantica canticorum* (PL 172, 495-518D), has not been linked to the Cistercians but was certainly held by the Benedictines at Reading and York, the Augustinian Canons at Leicester, and the libraries of Cambridge University and Peterhouse College, Cambridge. See R. Sharpe, J. P. Carley, R. M. Thomson and A. G. Watson, eds, *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 1996), pp. 438, 718; T. Webber and A. G. Watson, eds, *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 1998), pp. 242, 287; P. D. Clarke and R. Lovatt, eds, *The University and College Libraries of Cambridge* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 2002), pp. 83, 455. On the popularity of Honorius' works as a whole, see Carr, 'Introduction', p. 12.

[12] H. Costello, 'John of Ford and the Quest for Wisdom', *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses*, 23.2 (1972), pp. 141-159 (p. 141); A. D., 'John of Ford', pp. 108, 110. See also Holdsworth, 'Forde, John of (*c.* 1150-1214)'.

[13] See *Ioannis de Forda: Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX*, 2 vols, ed. by E. Mikkers and H. Costello, CCCM XVII, XVIII (Turnout: Brepols, 1970); trans. by W. M. Beckett, *John of Ford: Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, 7 vols, CF 29, 39, 43-47 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977-1984).

[14] See D. N. Bell, *An Index of Cistercian Authors and Works in Medieval Library Catalogues in Great Britain* (Kalamzoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1994), pp. 176, 180. See also D. N. Bell, ed., *The Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertine and Premonstratensians* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 1992), pp. 3, 28. Neither John's sermons nor Honorius' *Sigillum* have been traced to houses of friars or medieval libraries in Scotland; perhaps this indicates that neither truly stood the test of time nor captured the imaginations of those living outside of England. See K. W. Humphreys, ed., *The Friars' Libraries* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 1990); J. Higgitt, ed., *Scottish Libraries* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 2006). For Gilbert's sermon collection, see *Gilleberti de Hoilandia, abbatis ordinis Cisterciensis, sermones in Canticum Salomonis* (PL 184, 11-252C); trans. by L. C. Braceland, *Gilbert of Hoyland: Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 3 vols, CF 14, 20, 26 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1978-1979).

Despite these significant differences, however, Honorius and John warrant comparison as important early contributors to the development of monastic exegesis of the Canticle in which the Bride is seen as a scriptural type of the Virgin Mary. The justification for including Honorius in this study is that for two reasons he, like Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109), may be counted as an honorary Englishman. First, because he resided in England for some years – at the Benedictine monastery of St Augustine's, Canterbury, where he was a student of Anselm – before departing for the continent in the first decade of the twelfth century (between 1102 and 1110).[15] Second, because his treatise on the Canticle, *Sigillum beatae Mariae ubi exponuntur cantica canticorum* (hereafter, the *Sigillum*) – the first work to interpret the whole biblical text as a prefigurement of the life and soteriological importance of the Virgin – was composed during his time in England.[16] In so far as Honorius' *Sigillum* antedated Marian commentaries on the Canticle by Rupert of Deutz (*c*. 1075-1130) and Alain of Lille (*c*. 1128-1202) – of whom, more below – and John of Forde's commentary was the first by a Cistercian to develop a Marian typology, we suggest that they should both be recognised as important pioneers of an emergent exegetical genre.

Furthermore, whilst it is true that Honorius has received some attention in studies of the Canticle – such as those of Ann Astell and Ann Matter – his *Sigillum* still demands to be analysed in its English context and, specifically, for what it had to say about the monastic life.[17] In respect of the latter, it has much in common with John of Forde's sermons – hitherto almost entirely neglected by scholars – on account of their shared interest in monasticism as a lifelong search for holiness through

[15] See Carr, 'Introduction', p. 11.

[16] See Honorius, *Sigillum beatae mariae ubi exponuntur cantica canticorum* (PL 172, 495-518D). The *Sigillum* should not be confused with his mature and more popular commentary on the Canticle, which offered a more traditional interpretation of the Bride as a type of the church. Part of the significance of the *Sigillum*, with the Marian writings of Eadmer of Canterbury (*c*. 1060-1126), is that it would seem to indicate a greater theological interest in the Virgin on Anselm's part than scholars have previously acknowledged on the basis of the few of his works which refer to her. See G. E. M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and his Theological Inheritance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 144-152 (p. 144). The desire of Gasper and others to avoid ascribing too great a degree of Mariological interest to Anselm is understandable as a reaction to the spurious attribution to him of dozens of Marian texts unveiled by André Wilmart, but perhaps it is overcautious in light of the evidence from his circle, including Honorius and Eadmer. See A. Wilmart, *Auteurs Spirituels et Textes Dévots du Moyen Age Latin: Études d'histoire littéraire* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1932), pp. 147-161; J. S. Bruder, *The Mariology of Saint Anselm of Canterbury* (Dayton, OH: Mount St. John Press, 1939), p. iv.

[17] See Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, pp. 44, 46; Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved*, pp. 155-159.

the cultivation of virtue, especially humility, of which both regarded the Virgin to have been a model. Indeed, the subject of humility itself has only recently begun to attract scholarly attention and much more may be learned from monastic authors like Honorius and John.[18] This chapter analyses how each of them defined humility, how they considered Mary to have exemplified it, and how they believed it to relate to the preeminent theological virtue of charity. Concerning John's teaching on humility, in particular, we conclude that his sermon collection is 'certainly of greater merit, both literary and spiritual, than the efforts of his predecessors and deserves a better fate than the oblivion which was its lot'.[19] For these and other reasons, whilst academic interest in medieval approaches to and interpretation of the Canticle remains strong (especially in relation to key figures like Bernard), Honorius and John deserve their contributions to be recognised and considered more closely.[20]

The Development of Marian Exegesis of the Canticle

As Marian expositions of the Canticle, the commentary of Honorius and the sermons of John were unusual but not unique; two other Marian commentators were also writing in the twelfth century, Rupert of Deutz and Alain of Lille. Indeed, the tradition of Marian exegesis to which they contributed was itself unusual, a niche interest in the venerable and highly-developed tradition of exegetical engagement with the Song of Songs in the west as a whole. This tradition originated with Origen (*d. c.* 254) who interpreted the Bride of the Canticle as a type of the individual soul. It suited Origen's

[18] See, for example, S. B. Dawes, 'Humility: Whence this Strange Notion?', *Expository Times*, 103.3 (1991), pp. 72-75; N. Richards, *Humility* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1992); M. Casey, *Truthful Living: Saint Benedict's Teaching On Humility* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2001); J. D. Chittister, *Twelve Steps to Inner Freedom: Humility Revisited* (Erie, PA: Benetvision, 2003); J. P. Dickson and B. S. Rosner, 'Humility as a Social Virtue in the Hebrew Bible?', *Vetus Testamentum*, 54.4 (2004), pp. 459-479; T. Frame, 'Humility: The Despised Virtue?', *Quadrant*, 51.4 (2007), pp. 36-42; A. Louf, *The Way of Humility*, MW 11 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2007); J. Foulcher, *Reclaiming Humility: Four Studies in the Monastic Tradition* (Athens, OH: Cistercian Publications, 2015).

[19] A. D., 'John of Ford', p. 108. Geoffrey of Auxerre was chosen after Gilbert, and before John, to continue the commentary on the Canticle begun by Bernard but 'he does not stand in the line of continuators properly speaking, since he began his commentary from the beginning'. A. D. 'John of Ford', p. 107. See also, C. J. Holdsworth, 'John of Ford and English Cistercian Writing 1167-1214', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 11 (1961), pp. 117-136 (p. 122).

[20] Recent scholarship includes L. C. Engh, *Gendered Identities in Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs: Performing the Bride* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014); for an up-to-date reading list, see Engh's bibliography.

mystical purpose to see in the Bride's search for and eventual union with her Beloved an allegory for the Christian soul's journey of ascent to union with God-in-Christ. As Ann Astell has explained, recourse to this allegory was for Origen the only acceptable and safe way to interpret the Canticle, for he feared that a reading of the text *ad litteram* could lead to carnality. What, for instance, might such a reading make of Sg 1:1 – 'Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth' (*Osculetur me osculo oris sui*) – or of the Bride's first person account of how she laid herself open to the Beloved: 'I have taken off my garment how should I put it on again? I have washed my feet how should I soil them? My Beloved put forth his hand through the hole and my belly trembled at his touch. I rose to open to my Beloved… I opened the bolt of the door to my love' (Sg 5:3-6)?[21]

Seeking to avoid an iniquitous interpretation, Origen emphasised the Canticle's spiritual significance as a blueprint for the correct ordering of desire to union with God rather than carnal satisfaction. In fact, as Astell has put it, Origen taught that, 'Through heroic suppression, the corporeal drives that constitute, in part, the soul's burdensome punishment actually become its *remedium*, enabling its ascent back to the realm of pure spirit.'[22] Unsurprisingly, perhaps, this approach of superimposing a spiritual interpretation upon the literal meaning of the Canticle became especially popular with ascetics – monks and promoters of virginity – and remained so until the Middle Ages. It is notable, however, that the medieval exegetes, unlike Origen, tended not to characterise the soul's union with God in purely intellectual terms (as enlightenment) but rather, as in the commentary of William of St Thierry (*c.* 1085-1148), as 'loving, personal surrender'.[23]

Prior to the twelfth century, only Ambrose of Milan (*c.* 337-397) proposed anything resembling a Marian interpretation of the Canticle and his contribution must be read with the important caveat in mind that, unlike Origen's medieval successors, his primary purpose was not to

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[21] *…expoliavi me tunica mea quomodo induar illa lavi pedes meos quomodo inquinabo illos | dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen et venter meus intremuit ad tactum eius | surrexi ut aperirem dilecto meo manus meae stillaverunt murra digiti mei pleni murra probatissima | pessulum ostii aperui dilecto meo at ille declinaverat atque transierat anima mea liquefacta est ut locutus est quaesivi et non inveni illum vocavi et non respondit mihi*. Sg 5:3-6.

[22] Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, p. 3.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 8. See William of St Thierry, *Expositio altera super cantica canticorum* (PL 180, 473-545). For a critical edition, see J.-M. Déchanet, ed., *Exposé sur le Cantique des Cantiques* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007); trans. by C. Hart, *William of St Thierry, Exposition on the Song of Songs*, CF 6 (Spencer, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1970).

extol the virtues and privileges of the Virgin Mary for her sake but rather to use her as an example of virginity for others.[24] Ambrose's contribution to Marian exegesis was to present the Canticle as an instructive moral text, the lessons of which could – and should – be applied by those seeking to live a virtuous life and to grow in perfection. As we shall see, this moral dimension was also at the heart of the works of Honorius and, especially, John of Forde.

The third aspect of the church's dealing with the Canticle – alongside exploring its spiritual and moral dimensions – which exerted a powerful influence upon Honorius and John, was its use in the liturgy. This does not strictly concern the church's interpretation of the Canticle – although the *lex orandi* of the liturgy would have implied a *lex credendi* – but, rather, the vital impetus for offering a commentary on the text at all. As Ann Matter has observed (and Rachel Fulton has reiterated), the use of texts from the Canticle in the corporate life of the church at prayer meant that those who undertook to provide an exegetical perspective almost inevitably came to their task with its verses 'ringing in their ears'.[25] This was certainly the case for Honorius, whose *Sigillum* opens with the explanation that it was composed at the behest of some of his students who wished to know why excerpts from the Canticle were read during the liturgy on the feast of Mary's Assumption (15 August).[26]

However, the liturgy not only provided the *context* in which medieval authors encountered the Canticle, it also provided the *mode*, one that was especially suitable for this biblical text. The dialogical style of the liturgy – especially the antiphonal character of the Divine Office – lent itself to the recitation of a text like the Canticle which is essentially a dialogue between several *dramatis personae*: the Bride, her Beloved and the Daughters of Jerusalem. This important aspect of medieval experience of the Canticle and its absence from the experience of most people today has been emphasised by Matter: 'the antiphonal nature of the liturgy, where biblical verses respond to one

[24] On Mary's virginity see, also, chapter 3 of this thesis.

[25] Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved*, p. 158; see also Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, p. 290.

[26] See Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, 'Discipuli ad magistrum' (PL 172, 495D). On the liturgical impetus for the Marian commentary, see M. B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 151, n. 33. Even though Pranger's subject was Rupert of Deutz, his observation remains true for Honorius. Pranger was building on J. H. Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 291-293.

another, creates an atmosphere of aural awareness of the Song of Songs which is lost to modern readers'.[27] According to Matter, the vital role played by the liturgy is especially evident in Marian texts from the early-twelfth century, including Honorius' *Sigillum*, but gradually fades as the century progresses.[28] Regrettably, this could be taken to imply that by the time John of Forde dedicated parts of his collection of sermons to Mary he was somehow removed from the inspiration of the liturgy in the pursuit of 'pure' commentary, but such a deduction must be avoided. Whilst it is certainly true that John of Forde was writing in the 'commentary genre',[29] he was still a monk whose life was regulated by the church's calendar and the rhythm of monastic prayer and, vitally, whose work originated as sermons delivered to his community on important feast days.[30] Thus, even though the dialogical shape of the Canticle, mediated through the antiphonal liturgy, is less evident in John's sermons than it is in the *Sigillum*, some synergy between them must be permitted.[31]

This chapter began with the assertion that the twelfth century was a pivotal period in the development of exegesis of the Canticle. This is shown by the way in which the authors of that period, building upon an antecedent tradition, came to the biblical text with a new priority. The value of the Canticle for our twelfth-century exegetes lay as much in what it revealed about the Virgin Mary – her virtue and mystical marriage to God-in-Christ – as it did in what she exemplified for others (its moral aspect). Whilst the traditional emphases remained important, the explicitly Marian emphasis, fuelled by the increasing intensity of devotion to her amongst the monks, became more pronounced.[32] Matter has described this succinctly as a transition from Marian use to Mariological interpretation, and whilst we hesitate to make as sharp a distinction as she has done between the early- and late-

[27] Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved*, p. 158.

[28] See *ibid*., pp. 158-159, 168.

[29] *Ibid*., pp. 158-159.

[30] See H. Costello, 'Introduction', in *John of Ford, Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, trans. by W. M. Beckett, vol. 1, CF 29 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977), pp. 1-59 (p. 10).

[31] Whilst it was probably not Matter's intention to imply such an interpretation, it may be the danger of taking the historical trajectory she posits too far. See Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved*, p. 168.

[32] Hence Rachel Fulton has explicitly proposed that the Marian prayers of Anselm of Canterbury, generally regarded as marking a new era of increased intensity in devotion to the Virgin, were an important impetus behind the composition of the *Sigillum* by his student, Honorius. See Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, pp. 244-247.

twelfth century, this seems to be a helpful way of articulating the transformation which occurred during the lifetimes of Honorius and John.

An important reason not to distinguish too sharply between the twelfth-century exegetes is that they all accepted the same fundamental principle. For Alain of Lille and John of Forde in the second-half of the century, no less than Honorius Augustodunensis and Rupert of Deutz in the first, the Canticle found its fundamental meaning as a revelation about the Virgin Mary. Following Rupert of Deutz, Astell has described this as the ground or *fundamentum* of all other levels of meaning.[33] To the medieval exegetes, the Canticle made most sense as a revelatory poem about or in praise of Mary:

> *Honorius Augustodunensis*: The glorious Virgin Mary represents the type of the Church… Therefore, all that is written of the Church [in the Canticle] is suitably ascribed to her as well.[34]

> *Rupert of Deutz*: Therefore, O lady, Mary, Mother of God, immaculate mother of the eternal Word of God and of the man, Jesus Christ, armed not with my merits but with yours, with this same man (the Word of God), I desire to wrestle and to draw out a work on the Song of Songs, which it is not unfitting to call 'On the Incarnation of the Lord', to the praise and glory of the same Lord, and also to the praise and honour of your blessedness.[35]

> *Alain of Lille*: Thus, although the song of love, that is, the wedding hymn of Solomon, rather specially and spiritually refers to the church, nevertheless, it relates most specially and spiritually to the Virgin, as we will explain (insofar as we can) by divine command.[36]

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[33] See Astell, *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, p. 44; cf. Rupert of Deutz, *In cantica canticorum*, 'Prologus' (PL 168, 837). See *Ruperti, abbatis tuitiensis, in cantica canticorum de incarnatione Domini commentariorum* (PL 168, 837-961).

[34] *Gloriosa virgo Maria typum Ecclesiae gerit… Ideo cuncta quae de Ecclesia scribuntur, de ipsa etiam satis congrue leguntur*. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, 'Cantica Canticorum' (PL 172, 499D); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 53.

[35] *Igitur, o domina Dei genitrix Maria, et incorrupta mater Verbi aeterni Dei et hominis Jesu Christi, non meis, sed tuis armatus meritis cum isto viro, scilicet cum Verbo Dei, cupio luctari, ut de Canticis canticorum opus extorqueam quod non dedeceat vocari de Incarnatione Domini, ad laudem et gloriam ejusdem Domini, ad laudem et honorem tuae beatitudinis*. Rupert of Deutz, *In cantica canticorum*, 'Prologus' (PL 168, 837-961 (839)).

[36] *Unde cum canticum amoris, scilicet epithalamium Salomonis, specialiter et spiritualiter ad Ecclesiam referatur, tamen specialissime et spiritualissime ad gloriosam Virginem reducitur quod divino nutu (prout poterimus) explicabimus*. Alain of Lille, *Elucidatio in cantica* (PL 210, 51A-110B (53B)); trans. by Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved*, p. 166.

John of Forde: Everything, then, in this marriage song, is directed principally to Mary, the principal bride of Jesus.[37]

Textual Ambiguity and Spiritual Ascent

The challenge of providing a close, critical reading of the Marian elements in John's exegesis is especially acute because he did not always explicitly refer to the Virgin in passages which could nevertheless be taken to evoke her. This may have been partly because, as Hilary Costello has explained, he was primarily concerned with the allegorical and moral senses of his text, and the historical or literal meaning was 'little more than a pretext for an allegorical interpretation'.[38] This was especially true of its Marian elements, where his allegory could be so extended – so rich and complex – that allusions to the Virgin were sometimes used even when her name was not. Sometimes his allusions to her feel so strong that it is both surprising and frustrating that the link is not made explicit. However, the obscurity of John's text may also stem from its pastoral purpose and, if so, it is one of the hallmarks of its genius. Since the Bride's humility and love were supposed to be emulated, most especially by male religious, it was helpful that they were not presented as the sole preserve of the great and powerful Virgin. Thus, whilst John explicitly stated that Mary was 'the principal bride of Jesus' (*sponsae Iesu principaliter*) – namely, that everything said about the Bride in the Canticle could be applied to her – he also anonymised the Bride so that all of his hearers could imagine themselves into the character and seek to emulate her.[39] This feature of John's text may be illustrated with just two examples of the anonymous Bride being described in ways strongly redolent of Mary and different aspects of her maternal calling, namely the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38) and her soteriological power.

First, in *Sermo* I, John referred to the advent of the Bride's spiritual love affair with the Bridegroom as a conception, using language which could also have been used of Mary's conception

[37] *Itaque quae in hoc epithalamii…haec principali huic sponsae Iesu principaliter militant*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 1, lines 24-25, 29-30 (CCCM XVIII, p. 489); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 97.

[38] Costello, 'Introduction', pp. 16-17.

[39] John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 1, line 29 (CCCM XVIII, p. 489); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 97.

of Christ at the Annunciation. Just as she conceived by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High (Lk 1:35), so the Bride conceived a certain kind of love (*caritas*), which 'works upon her with great power' (*vehementer eam afficit*), 'as a pledge, that her spouse has graciously taken the initiative and endowed her more richly than other mortals' (*pignus, quo a sponso suo dignanter praeventa est et prae ceteris mortalibus locupletata*).[40] Thus, John asserted, 'first love conceives…what it will afterwards bring to birth with painful labour' (*[caritas] primum concipit, quod deinde parturiat et pariat cum dolore*).[41] Second, John described the Bride's solicitude for the salvation of the daughters of Jerusalem in words which evoked Mary's universal motherhood and its soteriological consequences:

> She truly pours forth on them the maternal solicitude with which she herself overflows. […] Of course, she wants all men to be saved, but above all she desires that those for whom she is duty-bound to make provision should be as she herself is.[42]

The subject of the passage from which these words are taken is mediation with the Beloved, which John likened to sending an embassy. He illustrated the Bride's request to the Daughters of Jerusalem in Sg 5:8 – to tell the beloved that she languished with love for him – by likening it to two scriptural events: the message sent to Jesus by Mary and Martha announcing the sickness of Lazarus (Jn 11:3) and the Virgin's own intervention during the marriage at Cana on behalf of the wedding party, 'they have no wine' (*vinum non habent*; Jn 2:3). Both of these were significant episodes in the ministry of Jesus. Cana was his first public miracle and Lazarus' final illness and death, which gave him great pain (Jn 11:33), caused him to reveal his power over life itself by raising his friend from the tomb (Jn

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[40] John of Forde, *Sermo* I, 1, lines 10-12 (CCCM XVII, p. 39); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 77.

[41] *Ibid*., 1, lines 14-15 (CCCM XVII, p. 39); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 77. Note, however, that John believed Mary to have been exempted from painful childbirth – the fate of women handed down from God in Genesis 3:16 (cf. Rev 12:2) – and to have given birth without any loss of her virginity. See John of Forde, *Sermo* III, 5 (CCCM XVII, pp. 53-54); LXX, 5 (CCCM XVIII, p. 491).

[42] *Materna quippe sollicitudine transfundit in eas, quo vehementer exuberat ipsa. […] Vult quippe omnes homines salvos fieri sed eos praecipue, quibus in hac parte habet providere, esse sicut semetipsam*. John of Forde, *Sermo* I, 5, lines 172-173, 176-177 (CCCM XVII, p. 43); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 85.

11:43-44). The reference to Cana is particularly significant because it would have ensured that John's audience had the Virgin at the forefront of its mind as he then delivered his instruction on the theme of maternal solicitude. However, it is notable that John himself did not refer to her again. Even a reference to the Bride's 'fullness' towards the end of the discourse, which strongly evokes Mary's own fullness of grace (Lk 1:28), is left unattributed; the link between the Bride and the Virgin was implicit rather than explicit, yet she was palpably present, not least on account of her apparently inexplicable absence.

Such allusions as these, and the proposal to interpret them as veiled references to the Virgin Mary, begs two central questions. First, is such an interpretation actually legitimate? Given the fact that most of these texts might also be taken as references to the church, the traditional focus of typological exegesis of the Canticle, would not an ecclesiological interpretation be more appropriate and convincing than a Mariological one? Second, what is to be made of the anonymity of the Mother-Bride in John's text? What did John gain by downplaying the particular identification of the Bride with the Virgin?

In response to the first of these questions, it should be noted that in medieval exegesis of the Canticle, Mary and the church were not mutually exclusive interpretations of the Bride; they were often combined. Indeed, for John, the Bride prefigured many things in addition to Mary and the church, including the new Jerusalem and even himself as an abbot with maternal care for his monks.[43] Nevertheless, a principally Mariological interpretation of those parts of John's commentary to which we have referred – in which maternal and soteriological significance was ascribed to the Bride – is warranted because John himself declared that Mary was chief amongst the brides of Christ.[44]

The ambiguity of John's sermons in places might perplex the reader and even lead to the perception that his understanding of the Bride was confused or his commentary an unhappy melting pot of overlapping allegories. Such an interpretation would not, however, be fair to John at all. Rather, it expressed the tension between different, equally legitimate, interpretations of the Canticle.

[43] On his own maternal role as abbot, see John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 7 (CCCM XVII, pp. 218-219).

[44] See John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 1, 2, lines 24-25, 29-30, 31 (CCCM XVIII, p. 489); cf. *Sermo* LXXIII, 1 (CCCM XVIII, pp. 506-507).

It could be said that Mary was literally the Bride but the Bride was not literally Mary, only figuratively, and in the same sense she was also the church, Jerusalem, the abbot, etc. Herein lay both the complexity and the richness of John's contribution to exegesis of the Canticle. His sermons were inclusive of, but not restricted to, traditional categories – the Bride as the church or the individual soul – and they held their multiple interpretations together. In this, John's achievement surpassed that of his immediate predecessor Gilbert of Hoyland, and arguably Bernard of Clairvaux too, both of whom worked within more conventional parameters.

This brings us to the second question: why did John anonymise the Mother-Bride such that it is difficult to know whether or not he intended the reader to understand his text as referring to Mary? The answer to this lies in the pastoral and spiritual purpose of his work. More than pure exegesis, it provided a manual of mystical Cistercian spirituality, designed to encourage his monks to grow in perfection and ultimately to union with God in love. By anonymising the Bride, John ensured that all of his monks could imaginatively assume her persona and, in accordance with his advice in *Sermo* IV on the cultivation of modesty, 'vie with the mother of the Lord and our queen in this gift of grace' (*a matre Domini regina nostra huius quoque charismatis gratiam sedulo aemulamini*).[45]

In *Sermo* I, John articulated a schema for mystical ascent in the context of a discourse on the Bride's search for her Beloved, inspired by Sg 5:8: 'I adjure you, o daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I languish with love' (*adiuro vos filiae Hierusalem si inveneritis dilectum meum ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo*). In-keeping with other spiritual texts on this theme, John described the Bride searching for her Beloved, Christ, with painful desire and 'violent groaning' (*violentis gemitibus*).[46] His ambition was not for his monks to *learn* more but to *become* better – to grow in perfection and obtain salvation – and his teaching was ordered to this end. Hence, as we explain later in this chapter, his commentary placed great emphasis on the cultivation of the virtues, especially charity and humility.

[45] John's phrase *sedulo aemulamini* might be more accurately translated as 'carefully imitate' rather than 'vie', which could imply competition. John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5, lines 163-164 (CCCM XVII, p. 58); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 119.

[46] John of Forde, *Sermo* I, 1, line 29 (CCCM XVII, p. 39).

The Virgin, the Church and Salvation in the Sigillum *of Honorius Augustodunensis*

Like John of Forde, Honorius Augustodunensis used his Marian commentary to promote the virtuous life, especially the virtue of humility. Honorius did not, however, have recourse to the same device which John employed, of anonymising the Bride, to serve the pastoral purpose of his work. Unlike John, Honorius set out to teach a single lesson very explicitly, namely, that everything in the Canticle which would ordinarily have been applied to the church could also be applied to Mary because she was a 'type' (*typum*) of the church. Invoking a traditional argument which originated with Ephrem the Syrian (*c.* 306-373) and was taught most clearly by Ambrose of Milan, Honorius likened Mary to the church on the basis that she was both a virgin and a mother.[47] He wrote that just as the church 'daily brings forth sons of God through baptism' (*quotidie filii Deo in baptismate generantur*),[48] so Mary gave birth to Christ, 'the living waters' (*aquarum viventium*),[49] by whom the faithful were truly baptised. He also taught that just as the church was pure because she was free from heresy,[50] so Mary was inviolate because 'even after giving birth, she was a virgin' (*virgo post partum clausa permanendo*).[51] However, for Honorius, the relationship between Mary and the church extended beyond this familiar typology to a more subtle and complex interdependence, namely, that the church needed Mary to shed light upon its own nature and mission, but Mary also needed the church to promote her cult and to propagate her doctrines. This complementarity was clearly expressed in chapter 4 of the *Sigillum*, in which Honorius declared:

[47] Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, 'Cantica Canticorum' (PL 172, 499D). Cf. Ephrem, *Hymns on the Crucifixion*, 4, 17 (CSCO 249, p. 43); *Bene desponsata, sed virgo; quia est Ecclesiae typus, quae est immaculata, sed nupta…* Ambrose of Milan, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* II, 7 (PL 15, 1527D-1850D (PL 15, 1555B)).

[48] Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, 'Cantica Canticorum' (PL 172, 499D).

[49] *Ibid.*, IV (PL 172, 508A); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 68.

[50] *Ibid.*, 'Cantica Canticorum' (PL 172, 499D); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 53.

[51] *Ibid.*, 'Cantica Canticorum' (PL 172, 499D); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 53.

> [Mary] is the only one held up as an example for her mother, namely the living Church, the chosen one for her that bore her. The daughters of Sion, that is, of the Church, saw her with the eyes of the heart, and declared her most blessed…[52]

This passage indicates that whilst Mary offered a pattern – or blueprint – for the church, she also depended upon it for the perpetual witness to her blessedness throughout the world and, in her own words, through 'all generations' (Lk 1:48). In expounding this point, Honorius made a specific link between Mary and the apostolicity of the church; according to him, it was the apostles who first 'made known to the people her glories and the miracles of her son' (*magnalia et filii sui miracula populo demonstraverunt*).[53] The genius of this juxtaposition – of presenting the apostles as the earliest and chief advocates of Mary – was that it connected the Virgin and her feasts, especially the Assumption which gave rise to the *Sigillum*, with the earliest days of the church. It gave the weight of venerable antiquity to the case that Honorius was making for Mary's place in the church, namely, that she was always there and that all of scripture – from the prophets to the apostles, and including the Canticle – spoke of her preeminent place in the mystery of Christ her son. Furthermore, in so far as Mary was envisaged as a type of the apostolicity of the church, she represented the fundamental apostolic character by which it was distinguished and claimed a direct link to Christ. The very apostolic principle, moreover, which was enabling an increasingly powerful papacy to assert itself by association with Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, during Honorius' own lifetime.[54]

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[52] *Haec est una imitabilis matri suae, scilicet praesenti Ecclesiae; electa genitrici suae, scilicet angelorum frequentiae. Viderunt eam oculis cordis filiae Sion, id est Ecclesiae; et beatissimam praedicaverunt…* Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, VI (PL 172, 512A); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, pp. 75-76.

[53] *Ibid.*, IV (PL 172, 505D); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 64.

[54] 'The expansion and realisation of the papal claim to lead the whole church as its superior were based on the old notions of the Roman church as the guarantee of the true faith and of Peter as the prince of the apostles. […] A pope like Gregory VII could call himself the vicar of St Peter, *qui nunc in carne vivit* (who is now alive in the flesh). When Gregory claimed in the *Dictatus Papae* that the Roman pontifex was sanctified by the merits of St Peter this was probably meant to be taken quite literally. This sanctity was the expression of a miraculous closeness to the prince of the apostles, but it too gave the activities of the pope within the universal church an exclusive character. […] Gregory did not identify himself completely with St Peter, but he did identify his commands with those of the prince of the apostles or even of God, his verdict with that of the Holy Ghost, the obedience due to him with that owed to St Peter.' G. Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 306-307. See, also, K.

On balance, however, Honorius was consistent with his successors, including John, who gave precedence to Mary over the church, understanding her to be the 'principal' bride of Christ. To begin with, he claimed that she surpassed the church in purity and sweetness and, more fundamentally still, that whilst the church preached about her it was Mary herself who taught and inspired the church in the first place.[55] Not only was she foreseen by the prophets but she herself received and disclosed 'the secrets of God' (*secreta Dei*) so that 'her speech' (*eloquium ejus*) became 'their preaching' (*praedicatio illorum*).[56] Alongside the apostles, then, she 'precedes the Church as its leader' (*praevia dux est Ecclesiae*)[57] because just as they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, so she was filled with and conceived by the Holy Spirit at the Annunciation.

The fundamental reason for Mary's pre-eminence over the church in the *Sigillum* – of which her edification by the Holy Spirit was a sign – was the sublime manner of her election by Christ himself from all ages. She received the Holy Spirit and its gifts as the gratuitous offering of her son.[58] The *Sigillum* is unequivocally Christocentric; Mary was chosen by Christ and she owed everything to him, including the salvation of which Honorius was explicit that she was in need.[59] Christ was also the means by which the faithful 'behold the glory of the Mother of God' (*id est Christus, quo gloriam Dei genitricis aspiciant*).[60] As a result of her election, a profound complementarity was established between Mary and Christ, which Honorius illustrated not by a reference to them as the New Adam and the New Eve – a traditional illustration since Justin Martyr (*c*. 100-165) – but by describing them

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Madigan, *Medieval Christianity: A New History* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 136-139; I. S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073-1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 296.

[55] See Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, II (PL 172, 502B); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 57.

[56] See *ibid*., IV (PL 172, 506B); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, pp. 64-65.

[57] See *ibid*., IV (PL 172, 506A); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 64.

[58] See *ibid*., VI (PL 172, 511C); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 75.

[59] *Ibid*., II (PL 172, 503B-503C); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 60. Honorius' exact words were *id est in vulneribus meis quae pertuli pro tua ereptione* ('that is in my wounds which I endured for your deliverance'). The term *ereptionis* occurred three times in Gilbert of Hoyland's commentary on the Canticle, which compared the Israelites' deliverance from Pharaoh (Ex 14-15:20) to deliverance from the world. See Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* IV, 4 (PL 184, 28B-28C).

[60] Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, IV (PL 172, 506D); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 66.

as the king and queen of heaven.[61] Mary's celestial queenship is a recurring theme in the *Sigillum*, no doubt inspired by the feast for which it was composed: her Assumption into heavenly glory alongside her son. For Honorius, the Assumption provided an example *par excellence* of what Christ predicted of himself: 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself' (*et ego si exaltatus fuero a terra omnia traham ad me ipsum*; Jn 12:32, cf. Is 11:10). Christ, king and bridegroom, having ascended to heaven called upon his chosen bride and queen to come to him:

> My beloved, that is her son speaks to me: Arise from mortal life, make haste toward the immortal life, my love, that is, my intimate one, beautiful in [purity], and come into the joys of heaven. For now on account of me the winter of your distress has passed, the rain of your tribulations is over, all sorrow is entirely gone… Arise from the misery of temporal life, you who in humility are my love, and in your [purity] are my beautiful one, and come into your eternal rewards, my dove, that is, you who innocently trust in the clefts of the rock, that is, in my wounds which I have endured for your salvation…[62]

This passage tied the entire story of Mary's place in the economy of salvation together, from her election, her life of unfailing virtue and her suffering at the foot of the Cross, to its culmination in her heavenly reward. It also pointed to the soteriological context into which Honorius' understanding of the church's relationship to Mary was to be placed. The *Sigillum* stressed the soteriological power of the Virgin – her own beatification providing a glimpse of the reward awaiting all faithful Christians – which it gave as the most important reason for her significance over the church, namely, that the church depended upon Mary for the salvation of its members both by the imitation of her example and by the power of her intercession. Indeed, Mary's soteriological power was inherently bound up with

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[61] See Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, VII (PL 172, 514A); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 79. Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, 100 (PG 6, 709-712); trans. by T. B. Falls, in *The Writings of Saint Justin Martyr*, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, ed. by L. Schopp (New York: Christian Heritage, Inc., 1948), pp. 141-366 (pp. 303-305).

[62] *Dilectus, videlicet filius meus loquitur mihi: Surge de mortali vita, propera ad immortalia, amica, id est secretalis mea, formosa in castitate, et veni ad coeli gaudia; jam enim hiems angustiae tuae erga me transiit, imber tribulationum tuarum abiit, omnis dolor penitus recessit. […] Surge de temporali miseria, amica mea, in humilitate; speciosa mea, in castitate; et veni ad aeterna praemia, columba mea, id est simpliciter confidentes in foraminibus petrae, id est in vulneribus meis quae pertuli pro tua ereptione*. Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, II (PL 172, 503A-503C); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, pp. 59-60.

her role as moral exemplar. In chapter 8, for instance, Honorius had Christ declare: 'If she be a door, that is, let me make her a door for others by her example, that through her they may enter unto life' (*Si ostium est, hoc est faciam eam aliis exemplo ostium, ut per eam ad vitam ingrediantur*).[63] However, by far the most important expression of this belief – which also constituted the chief pastoral purpose of the *Sigillum* – occurred in the Virgin's own 'imitate me' discourse in chapter 5, which begins: 'If you wish my prayers not to be in vain, in these things you should imitate me' (*Si vultis preces meas non cassari, in his debetis me imitari*).[64]

Humility: The Power of the Virgin

In the works of both Honorius and, especially, John of Forde *humilitas* had a special prominence both as a preeminent virtue, alongside charity, and as the prerequisite for spiritual ascent to loving union with Christ, the goal towards which all of their teaching was ordered.[65] In this chapter, it is especially apposite to consider their teaching on humility because it exposes the complex allegorical relationship between the Bride and the Virgin Mary in their exegesis, not to mention the relationship between the Bride and the church or the individual soul. For both of them, the Virgin was the principal but not exclusive recipient of praises directed towards the Bride. This was particularly clear in John's seventy-third sermon, in which he considered the proper attribution of Sg 7:4, 'Your neck is like an ivory tower' (*collum tuum sicut turris eburnea*), taking the neck to be a symbol (*figurari*) of humility, since: 'we are accustomed to bow it when we are coming forward submissively, when we are bending

[63] Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, VIII (PL 172, 516B); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 84. Cf. 511B (Carr, *The Seal*, p. 74); 516D (Carr, *The Seal*, p. 85).

[64] *Ibid.*, V (PL 172, 509A); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, pp. 70-71 (p. 70).

[65] This was especially true of John. Bernard McGinn has described humility as 'the foundational virtue' in Cistercian understandings of the process of returning to God ('the interior journey to meet God in the depths of the soul') and conversion. See B. McGinn, 'The Spiritual Teaching of the Early Cistercians', in M. B. Bruun, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 218-232 (p. 226).

in devout adoration, or when we are humbly obeying' (*summisse incedentes devoteque adorantes atque humiliter oboedientes, inclinari consuevimus*).[66]

Sermo LXXIII opens with a lengthy panegyric extolling Mary's virtues and her privileged position in respect of the Incarnation. John praised her modesty and fruitfulness, devotion and tenderness, her unrivalled charity and – having the spiritual edification of his auditors in mind – the intensity with which she contemplated Christ, describing her as 'serene in the gaze of her contemplation' (*ut in visu contemplationis serenitas*).[67] The climax of his discourse, however, was his praise of her humility – her crowning virtue – to which he took Sg 7:4 to be referring most perfectly. In an earlier sermon, John taught that in humility 'all the virtues find their completion' (*quia haec virtutum omnium clausula*)[68] and here, in *Sermo* LXXIII, he offered a gloss on that earlier teaching with the Virgin herself as exemplar. He seems to have regarded humility as the key to the proper ordering of all the other virtues; the means of preventing the virtuous person from succumbing to vainglory from satisfaction with their own holiness. Thus, he claimed that God enriched the soul of the Virgin so that she 'should in the end transcend her own self by over-surpassing humility' (*semetipsam tandem supereminenti humilitate transcendat*)[69] and 'so that she could not be touched by the slightest sensation of pride' (*ne qua vel tenui titillatione superbiae possit aduri*);[70] consequently, she was freely able to consecrate herself entirely to God.[71]

The theme of humility in general – and Mary's humility, in particular – was less prominent in Honorius' *Sigillum* than it was in John's sermons. For the latter, humility was a Christological virtue, with a close and complex relationship to charity, but neither of these themes occupied Honorius.

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[66] John of Forde, *Sermo* LXXIII, 3, lines 51-53 (CCCM XVIII, p. 508); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 132. The *Exordium Parvum* likened monastic life to the bowing of 'proud necks' (*superba colla*) under the yoke of Christ in the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*. See *Exordium Parvum* XVII, 12, ed. by C. Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux: Latin Text in dual edition with English Translation and Notes* (Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses, 1999), pp. 417-440 (p. 438).

[67] See John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 2 (CCCM XVIII, p. 507).

[68] John of Forde, *Sermo* XXXVI, 1, lines 15-16 (CCCM XVII, p. 273); trans. by Beckett, CF 43, p. 84; cf. *Sermo* CX, 1 (CCCM XVIII, p. 742).

[69] John of Forde, *Sermo* LXXIII, 2, lines 45-46 (CCCM XVIII, p. 507); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 132.

[70] John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5, line 152 (CCCM XVII, p. 58); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 118.

[71] Christ, too, rejected pride by the manner of his coming to earth according to John, signified not least by the poverty of his parents. See John of Forde, *Sermo* IX, 1-4 (CCCM XVII, pp. 88-91).

Even though the *Sigillum* itself was a Christocentric text – especially in so far as it accounted for Mary's prominence in terms of her election by Christ – it did not present him as the archetype of humility. Although he was described as the originator of virtue in general and the one to whom those seeking to grow in virtue had to cleave themselves – as locks of hair to a head – his own humility was not mentioned.[72] Nor was it spoken of by the Virgin in her own lengthy discourse praising her son, beginning: 'My beloved son is white, that is, born of a Virgin' (*Dilectus filius meus candidus, id est natus per virginem*).[73] Nevertheless, the *Sigillum* was notable in one respect: for what it made of the relationship between humility and purity (*castitas*). These two virtues were also yoked together by John of Forde but his work did not dwell on their relationship.[74] Honorius, by contrast, was much more concerned with purity than charity, regarding the former – and sexual purity, in general – as virtually synonymous with humility. Thus, for example, he described Mary's two breasts allegorically as *humilitas et castitas*, and praised them both as the source of 'the milk of sanctity' (*lac sanctimoniae*),[75] by which he meant her own good example which was itself a nourishing spiritual food.[76]

For John, unlike Honorius, Christ offered the pattern of perfect humility in which his sermons invited others to participate. It would be mistaken – in spite of John's evident love for her[77] – to regard the Virgin herself as the archetype of humility in his exegesis of the Canticle. Whilst she manifested the virtue most perfectly, it is clear from *Sermo* LXXIII and elsewhere that John regarded the humility of Christ to be paradigmatic. Thus, in *Sermo* IV he wrote that whilst 'humility is the power of the virgin, high above all others…in a special way it should be called the power of the Most High, because in the beginning it drew him down from the heights to the depths, and after he had

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[72] See Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, V (PL 172, 510A-510B); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 72.

[73] *Ibid*., V (PL 172, 510A); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 72. See Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, V (PL 172, 510A-511A); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, pp. 72-74.

[74] 'admiration of her most noble virginity is added to wonder at her exceptional humility' (*…miraculo humilitatis eximiae admiratio praeclarissimae virginitatis adiungitur*). John of Forde, *Sermo* LXXIII, 2 (CCCM XVIII, p. 507); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 131.

[75] Honorius Augustodunensis, *Sigillum*, IV (PL 172, 507B); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 67.

[76] See *ibid*., IV (PL 172, 507B-507C); trans. by Carr, *The Seal*, p. 67.

[77] See, for example, John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 3 (CCCM XVIII, p. 490); LXXIII, 1 (CCCM XVIII, pp. 506-507).

emptied himself, drew him up once more to the right hand of his Father'.[78] This was the crux of John's theology of humility: it was a Christological virtue in which others participated. So what did John mean by this; what was his rationale for such an open and participative understanding of humility? The answer to this question can only be obtained if John's text is read primarily as a guide to the spiritual life in the context of Cistercian monasticism. Our previous chapter, on virginity, identified mimesis as a central element of Cistercian spiritual experience; monks were expected to emulate Mary in her virginity, both physical and spiritual. In the Cistercian context, such mimesis meant more than mimicry, however. Rather, it meant actual participation in the heavenly or spiritual reality in question, and it depended upon desire and perseverance; it was truly an *opus dei*.[79]

John's very first sermon was an initiation into this aspect of his spiritual instruction. Not only did he describe how the Bride searched for her Beloved having first received a tantalising taste of his love – 'Kisses once enjoyed are eagerly sought again' (*Delibata semel oscula denuo anxie requiruntur*)[80] – but he also explained how she was disappointed that even after much searching and in spite of her desire, the Bridegroom continued to hide himself from her. According to John, this latter experience, which might be described as a kind of spiritual darkness, was designed to test the fidelity of the Bride and to give her time to grow in love. Moreover, the Bride remained in this spiritual condition until she conformed herself completely to the image of Christ and, in particular, until she personified the virtue of humility. Until, finally, 'she comes down from the teacher's chair to the humble position of a pupil that she may ask about her beloved; perhaps in this place Jesus may regard the lowliness of his handmaid' (*postremo de cathedra magisterii ad discipulatus humilitatem de dilecto suo interrogatura deponitur, si forte de hoc loco respiciat Iesus humilitatem ancillae*

[78] *Humilitas sane altae altorum virtus est, quia et altos maxima decet et altos praecipue facit sed specialiter virtus debet dici Altissimi, quae eum et primitus a summis inclinavit ad infima, et exinanitum denuo in dextera Patris collocavit*. John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5 (CCCM XVII, p. 58); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 118. On the humility of Christ, see also *Sermo* IX, 1 (CCCM XVII, pp. 88-89); XVII, 5 (CCCM XVII, p. 151); 36 (CCCM XVII, pp. 273-277); LXXIII, 3 (CCCM XVIII, p. 508).

[79] See Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, p. 163.

[80] John of Forde, *Sermo* I, 1 (CCCM XVII, p. 39); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 78.

suae).[81] This entire discourse was an allegory for the spiritual life, characterised by desire and longing, arduous labour in the cultivation of virtue and, finally, ascent to spiritual union with Christ, the soul's Beloved. This latter experience, John described with particular intensity:

> Now he refrains no longer from raising up the soul of his beloved, exhausted and languid with excessive fatigue. He fulfils the desire of all who fear him [Ps 145:19] – how much more of those who love him, and love him so much! […] He steals into her arms, there to be clasped all the more closely, enjoyed all the more sweetly, held all the more strongly, because the search was so long, the pursuit so difficult, the finding so long delayed.[82]

In this passage, John extended the promise of fulfilment and union with Christ beyond the Bride alone, to include all who loved him and demonstrated their love by conforming themselves to him. Mimesis was a vital part of this process and it can be used to explain the way in which the individual monk was expected to relate to the humility of Christ and the Virgin Mary. First, as we have identified already, the humility of Christ was paradigmatic and all, including the Virgin, were expected to emulate it.[83] Second, the Virgin imitated and partook of the humility of Christ most perfectly.[84] Third, the Virgin herself thus became a beacon for individual souls, drawing them onwards and inspiring them by her own humility, as well as challenging them always to do better. Two quotations from John's sermons encapsulate these distinct aspects of his understanding of the Virgin's humility in the context of his schema for spiritual growth:

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[81] John of Forde, *Sermo* I, 3, lines 103-106 (CCCM XVII, p. 41); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 82; whilst John did not refer to the Virgin in this passage, she was clearly evoked by his reference to her Magnificat (Lk 1:48).

[82] *Iam vero fatigatae et prae nimia | languidae fatigatione dilectae suae animam ulterius tollere non sustinet: voluntatem enim timentium se faciet* [Ps 144:19]*, quanto magis amantium et taliter amantium.* […] *Adest igitur dilectae suae votis et amplexibus eius desideratus illabitur, tanto iam arctius astringendus, fruendus, dulcius et firmius tenendus, quo diutius est requisitus, quo difficilius investigatus, quo denique tardius inventus*. *Ibid*., 3, lines 106-109, 110-113 (CCCM XVII, p. 41); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 82.

[83] See John of Forde, *Sermo* IX, 7 (CCCM XVII, p. 93); here John was referring to the *obedience* of Christ when he instructed his brethren to 'listen and marvel and imitate as far as you can' (*audi et admirare et quantum oportet imitare*), but it was in such obedience to the will of the Father that Christ's humility consisted (see *Sermo* IX, 5 (CCCM XVII, p. 92).

[84] See John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5 (CF 29, pp. 117-119).

> Humility covered her continually with the veil of holy modesty, so that she could not be touched by the slightest sensation of pride. And not only she, but those virgins whom she attracts by the scent of her holy virginity and leads to the king, they too cultivate in their gardens the same slips of the rose. […] So, o consecrated virgins, take great care to vie with the mother of the Lord and our queen in this gift of grace.[85]

> Follow the example of the most blessed of mothers and the humblest of virgins, and lay up a treasure for yourself with fresh stores of humility. In all that you do, keep her ever before you. Prepare in your heart new ways of rising on high with the Lord's mother… […] Take pains to be submissive even to those less important than yourself; be quick to be the first in rendering a service; be wholly intent upon giving thanks. Do these things generously, though you are ever mindful of your unimportance. Exult with joy, yet let your praise be reverent and grave. Give thanks indeed, but let there resound in them this word of lowliness: 'A little child is born to us' [Is 9:6].[86]

These quotations, especially the second with its specific precepts, point to the centrality of humility in John's vision of the monastic life, something which is confirmed by other parts of his work on the Canticle.[87] Unsurprisingly, such an emphasis was not John's alone but characteristic of the tradition to which he belonged. The roots of John's understanding of humility can be traced back to at least three antecedents to his work with which he was probably familiar: the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, according to which he lived out his monastic profession, Bernard of Clairvaux's *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*, and Gilbert of Hoyland's commentary on the Canticle, which John's own

[85] *…ne qua vel tenui titillatione superbiae possit aduri, sacri pudoris velamine usquequaque contexit. Nec ipsa solum sed et illae quas odore sacrae virginitatis suae traxit et adduxit regi virgines post se, similia in hortis suis rosarum plantaria excolunt. […] Ergo, o sacrae virgines, a matre Domini regina nostra huius quoque charismatis gratiam sedulo aemulamini*. John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5, lines 152-155, 162-164 (CCCM XVII, p. 58); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, pp. 118-119.

[86] *Exemplo denique beatissimae matrum et ancillarum humillimae thesauriza tibi novos humilitatis thesauros et in omnibus viis tuis cogita illam. Dispone tibi novas cum matre Domini in corde tuo ascensions…* […] *Da operam etiam minori-|bus subici, contende praevenire obsequiis, gratiarum actionibus totus insiste. In quibus ita esto profusus ut modestus esse memineris. Exulta laetabundus et laudans cum tremore tamen atque sobrietate, et in gratiarum actione sonet vox illa modestiae: Paruulus natus est nobis* [Is 9:6]. John of Forde, *Sermo* XIX, 7, lines 203-206, 210-215 (CCCM XVII, pp. 169-170); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, pp. 69-70.

[87] See, for example, John of Forde, *Sermo* LI, 10 (CCCM XVII, p. 365).

work brought to completion.[88] Through his exegesis, including its Mariological elements, John not only reiterated the tradition represented by these works but contributed to it.

The foundational programmatic statement on humility in western monasticism can be found in the seventh chapter of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, entitled *De humilitate*, in which Benedict of Nursia (*c*. 480-547) expounded a paradoxical vision of progress in the spiritual life, which he likened to the task climbing of a ladder. Whilst at the top of the ladder lay 'exaltation in heaven' (*exaltationem illam caelestem*)[89] this could only be obtained by disavowing any kind of exaltation on earth through the cultivation of a perfect habit of humility. For Benedict, the summit of the spiritual life on earth was to 'observe without effort, as though naturally…good habit and delight in virtue' (*observabat absque ullo labore velut naturaliter…et dilectatione virtutum*).[90] To this end, he enumerated twelve steps of humility – the horizontal rungs of the ladder – which may be summarised as follows.

Steps one and two concerned the monk's intellectual disposition; his attitude of mind. He had to be animated by the knowledge of God's commandments, his constant scrutiny of human sin, and a dreadful fear of his punishments ('death is stationed near the gateway of pleasure'; *mors secus introitum delectationis posita est*);[91] he had also to seek in all things to subordinate his will to that of God.[92] Steps three to five focused on the relationship between the monk and his superior, who represented God in his daily life; this had to do with imitating Christ in his own obedience to the Father.[93] Obedience – with regular confession – to the abbot was the mechanism for overcoming pride and the monk was required to joyfully follow his instructions at all times, even 'under difficult, unfavourable, or even unjust conditions' (*duris et contrariis rebus vel etiam quibuslibet irrogatis iniuriis*).[94] The sixth and seventh steps turned from the monk's engagement with exterior causes –

[88] Quotations from the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* are taken from *RB1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. by T. Fry (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981).

[89] *Regula Sancti Benedicti* VII, 5.

[90] *Ibid.* VII, 68-69.

[91] *Ibid.* VII, 24; cf. VII, 10-30 (step one).

[92] See *ibid*. VII, 31-33 (step two).

[93] See *ibid*. VII, 34.

[94] *Ibid.* VII, 35; cf. VII, 34-48 (steps three to five).

God and the abbot – to his interior disposition; the cultivation of a sense of personal lowliness. The monk had to be convinced of his lowliness and inferiority, 'saying with the Prophet: I am truly a worm, not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people [Ps 22:7]' (*dicens cum propheta: Ego autem sum vermis et non homo, opprobrium hominum et abiectio plebis* [Ps 21:7]).[95] The final steps (eight to twelve) concerned the manner in which this new interior disposition was manifested in the monk's behaviour; accepting the parameters imposed by the *Regula* and his superiors, he was to aim for sobriety and modesty in all things. He was not to laugh, remaining silent unless he was asked to speak, which he was to do only quietly, modestly and briefly. Furthermore, 'in the oratory, the monastery or the garden, on a journey or in the field…his head must be bowed and his eyes cast down' (*in oratorio, in monasterio, in horto, in via, in agro…inclinato sit semper capite, defixis in terram aspectibus*).[96] These twelve steps were the means by which, according to the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, the monk cultivated in himself the perfect love of God and became a beacon of holy virtue; 'All this the Lord will by the Holy Spirit graciously manifest in his workman now cleansed of vices and sins' (*Quae Dominus iam in operarium suum mundum a vitiis et peccatis Spiritu Sancto dignabitur demonstrare*).[97]

Benedict's seventh chapter has been described as 'the heart and center of the Rule, the essence of Benedictine ascesis, the Benedictine way to perfect love',[98] and it was certainly influential amongst the Cistercians, inspiring in particular Bernard of Clairvaux's enumeration of his twelve steps of pride – the antithesis of humility – in *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*.[99] Bernard's treatise is valuable as a commentary on the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, elucidating its teaching *via negativa*, through a detailed consideration of the way of spiritual descent through sin, as opposed to

[95] *Regula Sancti Benedicti* VII, 52; cf. VII, 49-54 (steps six and seven). Such self-abnegation or abasement was characteristic of much spiritual writing in this period, notably the prayers and meditations of Anselm of Canterbury who may have taken inspiration from this chapter of Benedict's *Regula*.

[96] *Ibid.* VII, 63; cf. 7:55-66 (steps eight to twelve). Cf. John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5 (CCCM XVII, pp. 58-59).

[97] *Regula Sancti Benedicti* VII, 70.

[98] M. B. Pennington, 'Introduction', in *Bernard of Clairvaux, Treatises II: The Steps of Humility and Pride; On Loving God*, trans. by M. A. Conway and R. Walton, CF 13 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1973), pp. 1-24 (p. 12).

[99] See Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*, in *Sancti Bernardi Opera: III. Tractatus et Opuscula*, ed. by J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963), pp. 1-59; trans. by M. A. Conway, 'The Steps of Humility and Pride', in *Bernard of Clairvaux, Treatises II*, CF 13, pp. 25-82.

ascent through humility.[100] Bernard explained this difference of emphasis between himself and his master with reference to his own experience of the monastic life:

> I could not very well describe the way up because I am more used to falling down than to climbing. St Benedict describes the steps of humility to you because he had them in his heart; I can only tell you what I know myself, the downward path.[101]

Whether or not Bernard's decision to focus on pride was indeed grounded in his own sense of unworthiness – this was also a rhetorical device – it was undoubtedly pedagogically useful and contributed to the value of his work as a complement to Benedict's teaching, rather than a simple restatement.[102] Its essence was that progress in the spiritual life demanded, first and foremost, the cultivation of a sense of personal sin and the rectitude of God's punishments. Thus, Bernard identified the first step of pride as *curiositas* ('curiosity'), a spiritual disease, the symptoms of which included (*contra* Benedict's twelfth step of humility) eyes wandering and ears cocked to the observation of others' behaviour, rather than one's own.[103] Such *curiositas*, he argued, might even be held responsible for the Fall, which began with Eve's willingness to look upon the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:6). In this sense, Bernard was perhaps associating humility with the theological virtue of temperance since its antithesis, pride, consisted at least in part in a lack of self-control, the enemy of temperance.[104] According to Bernard's schema, the bad monk was the one who, like Eve, was

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[100] Bernard's treatise has also been described as a commentary on the seventh chapter of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* by Gilson; see E. Gilson, *The Mystical Theology of St Bernard*, CS 120 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), pp. 29-30.

[101] *Non putavi congruum me describere ascensiones, qui plus descendere, quam ascendere novi. Proponat tibi beatus Benedictus gradus humilitatis, quos ipse prius in corde suo disposuit: ego quid proponam non habeo, nisi ordinem meae descensionis*. Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus* XXII, 57 (SBOp. III, pp. 58-59); trans. by Conway, CF 13, p. 82.

[102] See Pennington, 'Introduction', p. 11.

[103] See Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus* X, 28 (SBOp. III, p. 38).

[104] See A. Devine, *A Manual of Ascetical Theology* (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1902). 'There are eight virtues which are enumerated among the potential parts of temperance, viz.: Continence, mildness, clemency, modesty, humility, attention to one's self (*studiostas*), affability (*entrapelia*), and simplicity.' Benedict XIV, *Heroic Virtue* (1850), quoted by Devine, *Ascetical Theology*, p. 193. Cf. Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XXXVI, 7 (PL 184, 192C); he defined temperance as 'self-control and justice' (*continentiam et justitiam*), the former of which was also an important aspect of humility in Benedict and Bernard's writings.

distracted from the task of restraining his own appetites by the enticing, corrupting reason (*Blanditiis rationem*) of the serpent (i.e. the Devil).[105] Like Benedict, Bernard regarded the steps of humility as the means to ascend to the truth and love of Christ through constant vigilance, and the acquisition of self-knowledge, scrutiny and judgement; Bernard McGinn has summarised his entire approach to humility in the phrase 'know thyself' (*cognosce teipsum*).[106]

One of the major contributions of *De gradibus* was to reveal, as Etienne Gilson has said, 'the profound link' between charity and humility or rather, to be precise, between charity and the concepts of self-knowledge and self-judgement (the essence of humility).[107] Bernard taught that since charity could be described as 'the will common to man and God'[108] and humility created the conditions for the human will to accept divine judgement in respect of sin, then humility could itself be described as part of charity; or, rather, charity could be said to be experienced through humility. Gilson has articulated this more eloquently:

> Rectification of a nature in revolt, the Cistercian asceticism is therefore also the proof that the man goes half way to meet the punishment that he knows he deserves. So doing, he unites not only his judgment with God's judgment, but also his will with God's will; and that is why, if we take it in its essence, humility is already charity.[109]

Although Honorius was silent on this subject, John of Forde likewise reflected on this relationship between charity and humility, including in those parts of his sermons which referred to the Virgin Mary. Once again, though, John cannot be considered in isolation and some thought must be given to his antecedent in the continuation of Bernard's series of sermons on the Canticle, Gilbert of Hoyland. Even though, unlike John, Gilbert did not interpret the Bride of the Canticle as a type of the Virgin –

[105] Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus* X, 30 (SBOp. III, p. 40).

[106] See McGinn, 'The Spiritual Teaching of the Early Cistercians', p. 226. See Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus* I, 2 (SBOp. III, p. 17).

[107] See Gilson, *Mystical Theology of St Bernard*, p. 72.

[108] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[109] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

though he did make several references to her[110] – his sermons represented a significant development in Cistercian understanding of humility between Bernard and John, and so warrant consideration.

It was in Gilbert's sermons, for example, that Benedict and Bernard's understanding of humility as the necessary precondition for living a virtuous life was developed into the idea, already mentioned in relation to John, that humility was the means by which the other virtues were properly ordered; that is, ordered towards spiritual ends rather than vainglory. Gilbert understood that the possession of other moral attributes (purity, for instance) could lead to self-satisfaction and pride, unless the spiritual life was governed by humility which, in his words, 'has not learned to make much of great merits' (*quod ea de magnis meritis nil magnum sentire noverit*).[111] This was precisely the view which underpinned John of Forde's understanding of the humility of Christ and the Virgin as the virtue which preserved them from pride.[112]

Gilbert's sermons may also have shaped John's understanding of the role of humility in the monastic life. In *Sermo* LI, John of Forde articulated his vision of the monastic life in the following terms, 'I proclaim, brothers, that our profession is humility' (*Dico autem, professio nostra, fratres, humilitas est*),[113] but it was Gilbert who had already made this link explicit, presenting a vision of humility with a clear communitarian character and orientation. Just as Benedict referred to the monastery as a 'school for the Lord's service' (*dominici schola servitii*),[114] so Gilbert called it a 'school of humility' (*humilitatis scholam*);[115] and just as Benedict understood training in the monastic life to necessitate the support of a community,[116] so Gilbert saw the need for a community to instil and nurture humility in individual monks.

This important aspect of Gilbert's thought was manifested most clearly in *Sermo* XLVI, in his consideration of the words of the Bride to the Daughters of Jerusalem in Sg 5:8, 'I adjure you,

[110] For consideration, see chapter 5 of this thesis.

[111] Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XV, 7 (PL 184, 78C); trans. by Braceland, CF 14, p. 185.

[112] See John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5 (CCCM XVII, pp. 58-59); IX, 1-4 (CCCM XVII, pp. 88-91).

[113] John of Forde, *Sermo* LI, 10, lines 259-260 (CCCM XVII, p. 365); cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ep.* 132, 1 (SBOp. VII, pp. 328-9).

[114] *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, 'Prologus', 45.

[115] Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XX, 7 (PL 184, 107A).

[116] See Fry, ed., *RB1980*, pp. 92-93.

Daughters of Jerusalem, if you find the Beloved, that you tell him I languish with love'. In his gloss on this text, Gilbert interpreted the Bride's words as evidence of her humility on account of what he regarded as her willingness to petition the Daughters of Jerusalem for the help of their prayers. He said: 'Fretful desires cannot be content with their own merits; therefore they beg help from the prayers of others. Perfect humility always relies on the merits of others' (*Anxia vota suis nesciunt esse contenta meritis: ideo alienae precis mendicant suffragia. Perfecta humilitas de meritis semper alienis praesumit*).[117] Few others have emphasised the importance of community support for those undertaking the monastic journey towards perfection as strongly as Gilbert did here in *Sermo* XLVI.[118] After Gilbert, John's contribution to this integral association of humility and community was to present community life as a levelling influence and thereby to postulate an analogous link between the monastic community and humility itself. For John, both humility and the community safeguarded the virtuous against the sin of pride by providing a benchmark against which moral behaviour could be measured and judged, encouraging anonymity and cultivating a sense of spiritual lowliness. Accordingly, he praised the Bride in these terms: 'she is careful to conform humbly to the rest of the flock, not wanting to stand out as exceptional but to unite with the flock as one like the rest of them' (*Porro gregi ceterorum se humiliter conformare sollicita est, ut non quasi egregia praeemineat sed quasi una de grege ceteris cohaereat*).[119]

Before leaving the subject of humility, let us return briefly to the question of its relationship with the virtue of charity in the exegesis of John and his immediate predecessor, Gilbert. There are two reasons why such a consideration is pertinent to the subject of this chapter – reading the Song of Songs in light of the Virgin. First, because it may provide some insight into John's Mariology. As we have indicated by the quotation at the beginning of the chapter, John of Forde believed that

[117] Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XLVI, 1 (PL 184, 242A); trans. by Braceland, CF 26, p. 551.

[118] Benedict emphasised the need for hermits and anchorites to be trained in the monastery before going 'from the battle line in the ranks of their brothers to the single combat of the desert' (*et bene exstructi fraterna ex acie ad singularem pugnam eremi*). See *Regula Sancti Benedicti* I, 1-5. Gilbert himself exercised fraternal care for one Brother William, to whom he wrote: 'I would rather sacrifice our familiarity than imperil the humility still tender and growing within you' (*perdere familiaritatem, quam teneram et crescentem adhuc in te humilitatem periclitari*). See Gilbert of Hoyland, *Ep.* III, 4 (PL 184, 295C-295D); trans. by L. C. Braceland, in *Gilbert of Hoyland: Treatises, Epistles and Sermons, with a Letter of Roger of Byland, The Milk of Babes*, CF 34 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1981), pp. 99-106 (p. 102).

[119] John of Forde, *Sermo* LI, 4, lines 129-131 (CCCM XVII, p. 362); trans. by Beckett, CF 44, p. 62.

everything in the Canticle was directed towards Mary, the principal bride of Christ.[120] As such, it is reasonable to treat any virtue, quality or characteristic which John ascribed to the Bride as an insight into his Mariology, whether or not he ascribed the same virtue, quality or characteristic to Mary explicitly. Second, because it may help to resolve an apparently contradictory element in John's thought; the problem of whether humility or charity was regarded as being preeminent over the other.

In *Sermo* XCVII, in a passage which evoked the image of Mary as Queen of Heaven (although it did not refer to her directly), John described charity itself as a queen, reigning at the right hand of Jesus, and as a leader in battle, whose presence signified the certainty of victory.[121] John was saying to his monastic audience that a heavenly crown would be the reward for those who fought the earthly battle of their monastic life in humble submission to charity. The significance of this was that it elevated charity to a state of pre-eminence amongst the virtues including, presumably, humility. By contrast, however, there were several occasions when John seemed to give priority to humility. In *Sermo* CX, for example, in consideration of Sg 8:7 – 'If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would despise it as nothing' (*si dederit homo omnem substantiam domus suae pro dilectione quasi nihil despicient eum*) – he said:

> Up to the present, the spouse has preached with eloquence and force about the virtue of charity. Now he concludes by saying the height of these virtues is subsumed under the law of poverty and humility.[122]

At first reading, passages such as this seem to imply that John's understanding of the relationship between humility and charity was inconsistent or even confused. There are two possible responses to this accusation. The first is to accept it and to concede that as a monastic theologian whose purpose was to provide spiritual instruction for his community, John was simply not concerned about

[120] See John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 1 (CCCM XVIII, p. 489); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 97; cf. 73:1 (CF 45, p. 130).

[121] See John of Forde, *Sermo* XCVII, 10 (CCCM XVIII, p. 661); cf. LXXVII, 9 (CCCM XVIII, p. 540).

[122] *De virtutibus caritatis eloquenter hactenus et fortiter concio-|natus est sponsus, nunc virtutum ipsarum summam sub paupertatis et humilitatis lege concludit dicens*. John of Forde, *Sermo* CX, 1, lines 15-17 (CCCM XVIII, p. 742); trans. by Beckett, CF 47, pp. 116-117. Cf. John of Forde, *Sermo* XXXVI, 1, lines 15-16 (CCCM XVII, p. 273).

articulating a systematic doctrine, as a scholastic theologian of the next century might have done. On the other hand, the accusation could be rejected altogether and the argument made that John did have an understanding of the relationship between humility and charity, and that the manner of its expression in his sermons only testified to the complex nature of that relationship. In accord with the latter, we suggest that John understood charity and humility to be essential to one another – the cultivation of charity for the flourishing of humility, and vice versa – and to be of equal significance. This meant that John surpassed his predecessor, Gilbert of Hoyland, for whom charity was clearly preeminent in a hierarchy of the virtues, which put humility in second place. For Gilbert, humility was the means by which all the others virtues were refined – ground down into a fine powder, 'the powder of the perfumer' (*pulvere pigmentario*) mentioned in Sg 3:6 – but charity was the context for and the means by which that powder was set ablaze, causing it to produce something even greater than itself, namely, the smoke of heavenly glory.[123]

John certainly did not abandon the idea that charity somehow enriched humility. In *Sermo* III, for example, in a comparison between white snow (humility) and white wool (charity), he asserted the superiority of the latter. Not only did the wool correspond to the snow in its colouration, he explained, but it also added warmth. In a passage evoking progress in the spiritual life by a reference to confession – considered by Benedict to be an essential resource for the cultivation of humility – John said: 'What was white because of the tears of penitence becomes warm as well because of the covering of charity' (*quod fuit per lacrimas poenitentiae candidum, per caritatis amictum efficiatur et calidum*).[124] Nevertheless, John's contribution was to counterbalance this emphasis on charity with an understanding of humility as its enabling virtue. In *Sermo* LXXXII, for instance, he asserted that the Christian martyrs conformed themselves to the charity of Christ by their sufferings – analogous to those mortifications undertaken by the monks – but that they were only able to do so by humility, which he called the 'depth' of their charity, meaning its foundation:

[123] See Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XV, 6-9 (PL 184, 77D-80C).

[124] John of Forde, *Sermo* III, 4, lines 189-191 (CCCM XVII, p. 52); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 106.

> They fix the anchor of their hope firmly in the abyss of divine goodness, and this humility is the 'depth' of their charity, just as we might call it the unshakeable basis of their stature and the immovable root of their palm tree.[125]

The courage and beauty of John's exegesis of the Canticle is shown in the fact that it held such concepts as charity and humility in tension. On account of a similar courage he chose not to refer explicitly to the Virgin every time his text or his own thoughts evoked her, and even though he believed that everything in the text applied principally to her. John's idea of humility – which the Virgin exemplified for him – was subtle and complex, not simple. Neither charity nor humility was given pre-eminence over the other because John understood that in the spiritual life each was required to undergird and support the other. The story of Jesus was paradigmatic for this approach, at the beginning and end of whose life – the Nativity and the Passion – both humility and charity were manifested.[126] One of the clearest statements of their mutuality in John's theology occurs in *Sermo* LXXVII, where he described them in relation to the idea of 'discretion':

> Certainly charity is sovereign. She is rightly called the queen of the virtues, and so she is. All the same, though, charity herself does not escape the control of discretion [*discretionis*], and she humbly submits herself to it to be regulated and kept in check. In fact, this is very reason why charity trusts that her kingdom will last forever, that it is ordered by the very just laws laid down by the ripe wisdom of discretion.[127]

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[125] *...in divinae bonitatis abyssum firmam spei suae defigentium ancoram, profundum fuit caritatis ipsorum velut staturae quaedam firmissima basis et palmae radix immobilis*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXXXII, 7, lines 170-173 (CCCM XVIII, p. 567); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 250.

[126] See, for example, John of Forde, *Sermo* IX (CCCM XVII, pp. 88-94); LXXXIII, 7-8 (CCCM XVIII, pp. 572-573). For an eloquent statement of the humility of the Crucified Christ, see Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XX, 5 (PL 184, 105A-105C).

[127] *Nimirum et si imperiosa est caritas, virtutumque regina merito dicatur et sit, discretionis tamen et ipsa non | evadit arbitrium, seque illi regendam humiliter tradit ac moderandam. Hinc etenim et regnum suum caritas confidit esse perpetuum, quia de discretionis maturitate iustissimis est legibus ordinatum*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXXVII, 9, lines 226-231 (CCCM XVIII, p. 540); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, pp. 194-195.

Conclusion

Even in their exegesis of scripture, the English monastic theologians retained their characteristic focus on morality and, specifically, upon the virtues. For monastic leaders, like the Cistercian John of Forde, this served the pastoral purpose of guiding and supporting monks in their progress along the monastic way of perfection through the cultivation of the virtues. Just as, in chapter 1, the prayers composed for the feast of Mary's Conception were the principal means of communicating its underlying theology, so in this discussion an important connection has been made between the monastic *lex orandi* and the Marian *lex credendi*: the inspiration behind the *Sigillum* of Honorius Augustodunensis was the celebration of the feast of Mary's Assumption and the liturgy was probably the context in which John of Forde shared his exegesis of the Canticle in the form of sermons composed for his community. In turn, these works were amongst the first to interpret the Canticle as a poem about Mary, emphasising, as they did so, the iconic character of her humility. The synergy between the monastic way of life as it was understood in our period and the monastic theologians' vision of Mary is especially apparent here; just as humility was at the heart of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, which the monks followed, so was humility given a central place in their vision of Mary's perfect moral character.

As in chapters 1 and 2, especially, the evidence of this chapter reveals a confident and pioneering intellectual culture in at least some of the English monasteries. It is sufficiently notable that they were willing to build upon traditional exegesis of Canticle, which prioritised an interpretation of the Bride as a type of the Church or the individual soul, and to promote a Mariological interpretation. It is even more significant, however, that they allowed their monastic profession and responsibilities – or, at least, their support for monasticism in Honorius' case – to shape that interpretation. Not only did they prioritise the central monastic virtue of humility, they also articulated what may be described as a *participative* Mariology, calling – as Ælred of Rievaulx and Baldwin of Forde did, too[128] – for monks to emulate Mary's virtues in their own lives. As subsequent

[128] See chapter 3 of this thesis.

chapters show, this emphasis on the need for individuals to appropriate Marian characteristics themselves intensified throughout the period. They were called to be spiritual mothers to Christ and, ultimately, to share with Mary the pain of the Crucifixion.[129]

[129] See chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis.

5

Mother of God Incarnate

Rearticulating Mary's Ancient Privilege

> She must knock at the very gate of tenderness, the best mother of all, the mother of Jesus, so that she may graciously let her share in this great and tender title of mother.[1]

> Medieval women were classified according to their sexual status: men might be thought of collectively as knights, merchants, crusaders; women were virgins, wives or widows. They were also, of course, mothers. A professed reason for showing respect to women was indeed that everyone – Christ included – had come into the world through a woman.[2]

At all levels of medieval society, maternal fruitfulness – or its absence – determined perceptions of a woman's worthiness; it has been called 'the most powerful constant' in the history of medieval women.[3] Queens had to produce heirs to secure their dynasties, just as peasant women required offspring to work the land and feed their families. It is unsurprising, therefore, that throughout the Middle Ages the Virgin Mary was thought to be the worthiest of women, since her fecundity extended to the Incarnation of God himself, the Second Person of the Trinity. All Marian feasts were celebrated on account of Mary's *conceptio Christi*,[4] and both in private devotion and in the public celebration of the liturgy, medieval Christians encountered her as the perfection of maternity, at once both familiar and transcendent.

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[1] *Pulset denique ianuam ipsam pietatis, matrem omnium optimam, matrem Iesu, quatenus et se magni huius ac pii nominis communione dignetur*. John of Forde, *Sermo* CXI, 10, lines 220-223, in *Ioannis de Forda: Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX, Sermones LXX-CXX*, ed. by E. Mikkers and H. Costello, CCCM XVIII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), pp. 750-755 (p. 755); trans. by W. M. Beckett, *John of Ford: Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, vol. 7, CF 47 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), pp. 131-141 (p. 141).

[2] H. Leyser, *Medieval Women: A Social History of Women in England, 450-1500* (London: Phoenix, 2002), p. 93.

[3] E. Ennen and E. F. N. Jephcott, *The Medieval Woman* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 267.

[4] M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 82-89. See, also, chapter 1 of this thesis.

This chapter explores the question of how Mary's divine maternity was understood not by medieval women, many of whom shared her experience, but within Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries, by celibate men; in particular, Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109), Ælred of Rievaulx (*c*. 1110-1167), Gilbert of Hoyland (*d*. *c*. 1172) and John of Forde (*c*. 1150-1214), whose treatises, sermons and prayers were attentive to Mary's maternity because it lay at the heart of her place and actions in the New Testament, including the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke (Mt 1:1-2:23; Lk 1:1-2:52), Christ's first miracle at the Marriage at Cana (Jn 2:1-11) and the Crucifixion (Jn 19:25-27).[5] However, their works were more than glosses on these biblical narratives; they were attempts to affirm Mary's maternity in its Christological aspect and to consider its consequences for their communities. Their concerns were chiefly pastoral rather than, say, dynastic. Whilst in the Carolingian world, contemplation of Mary's maternity had focused upon her royal status as Queen of Heaven, so as to legitimise succession through the maternal line, in the monastic theology of eleventh and twelfth-century England, Mary's maternity was interpreted through the prism of spiritual experience and in order to foster spiritual growth.[6]

The Christological dimension of the mystery of the divine maternity was grounded in the historical event of the Incarnation of the Word of God in the Nativity of Christ. This was a unique and unrepeatable occurrence which received its classic theological expression in the first five centuries of the church with the dogmatic proclamation that Mary was *Theotokos*, 'God-bearer', following the Council of Ephesus (431AD). From that time forward – long before the eleventh century, therefore –

[5] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Orationes* V-VII (SAOp. III, pp. 13-25); trans. by B. Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with the Proslogion* (London: Penguin, 1973), pp. 107-126. Ælred of Rievaulx, *De Iesu puero duodenni* and *De institutione inclusarum*, in *Ælredi Rievallensis: Opera Omnia, 1. Opera Ascetica*, ed. by A. Hoste and C. H. Talbot, CCCM I (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), pp. 245-278, 635-682; trans. by T. Berkeley and M. P. Macpherson, *Ælred of Rievaulx: Treatises & Pastoral Prayer*, CF 2 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1971), pp. 1-39, 41-102. *Gilleberti de Hoilandia, Sermones in Canticum Salomonis* (PL 184, 11-252C); trans. by L. C. Braceland, *Gilbert of Hoyland: Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 3 vols, CF 14, 20, 26 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1978-1979). *Ioannis de Forda: Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX*, 2 vols, ed. by E. Mikkers and H. Costello, CCCM XVII, XVIII (Turnout: Brepols, 1970); trans. by W. M. Beckett, *John of Ford: Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, 7 vols, CF 29, 39, 43-47 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977-1984).

[6] For the Carolingian approach, see C. Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother: Royal Genealogy and Marian Devotion in the Ninth-Century West', in C. Leyser and L. Smith, eds, *Motherhood, Religion and Society in Medieval Europe, 400-1400: Essays Presented to Henrietta Leyser* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 21-39.

this became indisputable theological orthodoxy, with particular potency as a symbol of sound Christological thinking, since it was primarily intended to safeguard the doctrine that the Second Person of the Trinity had truly become incarnate.[7] It was thus tantamount to a rejection of the heresies that the man Jesus had been adopted by or had assumed divinity during the course of his life ('Adoptionism') and that his two natures (divine and human) were not indivisibly united in his person ('Nestorianism'). This link between the divine maternity and orthodoxy was evident from the earliest days after the Council of Ephesus when the chief opponent of the anathematised Nestorian party, Cyril of Alexandria (*c*. 376-444), preached a sermon in which he applied a litany of great titles to Mary: 'Theotokos, venerable jewel of the whole earth, never-extinguished lamp, crown of virginity, sceptre of orthodoxy, never-destroyed sanctuary, vessel of the Incomprehensible, Mother and Virgin'.[8] With these words, the Patriarch of Alexandria tied together all the central aspects of the mystery of Mary's divine maternity as they would later be received by posterity.

For the English monks of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, most of whom did not read or have access to Greek texts, Cyril's words may have been received through Latin translations.[9] Evidence of any unmediated acquaintance with his teaching, however, has not been established; not even in the case of Anselm, whose Greek patristic antecedents have been painstakingly researched. Without direct reference to Cyril, Giles Gasper has suggested that the unequivocally 'Theotokoin' flavour of Anselm's Mariology may point to an indebtedness to the eastern Fathers, who 'express intense veneration and

[7] For discussion, see R. M. Price, 'The *Theotokos* and the Council of Ephesus', in C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Burns and Oates, 2008), pp. 89-103; S. J. Boss, 'The Title Theotokos', in S. J. Boss, ed., *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 50-55; R. Price, 'Theotokos: The Title and its Significance in Doctrine and Devotion', in Boss, ed., *Mary*, pp. 56-73.

[8] Cyril, *Hom. Div*., 4 (PG 77, 992A-996C); trans. by H. Graef and T. A. Thompson, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2009), p. 87.

[9] There is no evidence that Cyril's homily was available in the English Cistercian monasteries but a Latin translation was held at the Benedictine monastery of Bury St Edmund's in the twelfth century. See R. Sharpe, J. P. Carley, R. M. Thomson and A. G. Watson, *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues* (London: The British Library in Association with the British Academy, 1996), B13.256 (p. 87). On western monks' limited access to Greek texts, see G. R. Evans, 'The Meaning of Monastic Culture: Anselm and his Contemporaries', in J. G. Clark, ed., *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2007), pp. 75-86 (p. 75).

devotion towards Mary, but primarily emphasise her bearing of Christ'.[10] In particular, whilst Anselm did not use the Greek term, *Theotokos* – unlike his contemporary and inspiration, John of Fécamp (*d. c.* 1079) – his Marian prayers (especially the third) placed clear emphasis upon Mary's role as the God-bearer.[11] For example, he proclaimed: 'God who made all things made himself of Mary' (*Deus omnia creavit, et Maria deum generavit*).[12] This is just one example of phrases used by Anselm, which Gasper has taken to be roughly equivalent to *Theotokos* and the Latin *Deiparens*.[13]

The problem with Gasper's argument, however, is that it depends upon an interpretation of Anselm which is unnecessarily laboured in order to accommodate the hypothesis of a Greek inspiration. For example, he has overstated Anselm's use of Latin equivalents of *Theotokos*, such as *genetrix dei*, which does not occur at all in its standard form in any of Anselm's prayers, and he has had to work hard to find other phrases, like *parens es salutis et salvatorem* ('parent of salvation and of the saved'), to interpret as references to a Theotokoin Mariology.[14] More fundamentally still, by focusing on the east the argument comes at the expense of the attribution of such an approach to the Latin Fathers, including Ambrose (*c.* 337-397) and Augustine (354-430), whose references to Mary, Gasper has characterised as ecclesial (concerned, primarily, with Mary as a type of the church) rather than Theotokoin.[15] Not only is this a reductive interpretation of the Latin tradition, it does a disservice to Anselm's early-medieval predecessors, especially Bede (*c.* 672-735) and Alcuin of York (*c.* 735-804), who were vital for the transmission of the teaching of Ephesus.

On the contrary, it seems entirely conceivable that Anselm and his Cistercian successors learned their Theotokoin orthodoxy from Augustine, in whose sermons Mary's exalted status was

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[10] G. E. M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and his Theological Inheritance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 145. For the term 'Theotokoin', see Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury*, p. 151.

[11] See John of Fécamp (pseudo-Alcuin), *Confessio fidei* III, 8 (PL 101, 1027-1098D (1059B)); Gasper, *Theological Inheritance*, p. 151.

[12] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, lines 98-99 (SAOp. III, p. 22); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 120, line 185.

[13] See Gasper, *Theological Inheritance*, p. 151.

[14] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, lines 125-126 (SAOp. III, p. 23); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 122, line 239. See Gasper, *Theological Inheritance*, p. 151.

[15] See *ibid*., p. 145.

unequivocally affirmed. In one of his compositions for Christmas, for example, Augustine anticipated the Council of Ephesus, which took place the year after his death, by confirming that Mary gave birth to God whilst remaining a virgin.[16] They may also have known the Latin *Tome* of Pope Leo the Great (*d. c.* 461) and its reception by their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, in which it was affirmed that Mary gave birth to Christ in his divine and human natures, in one person, without there being any confusion between them:

> For though the Holy Spirit imparted fertility to the Virgin, yet a real body was received from her body. […] Without detriment therefore to the properties of either nature and substance which then came together in one person, majesty took on humility, strength weakness, eternity mortality: and for the paying off of the debt belonging to our condition inviolable nature was united with passible nature, so that, as suited the needs of our case, one and the same Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, could both die with the one and not die with the other.[17]

Amongst the Anglo-Saxons, Bede was especially significant for the transmission of this teaching; his commentary on the Gospel of Luke actually used the Greek term *Θεοτόκος*, which he also translated into Latin as *dei genitrix*.[18] Bede's account of the divine maternity is especially noteworthy for its

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[16] See Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* CLXXXVI (*In natali Domini*, III), 1 (PL 38, 999-1000 (999)); trans. by L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), p. 220.

[17] *Salva igitur proprietate utriusque naturae et substantiae, et in unam coeunte personam, suscepta est a majestate humilitas, a virtute infirmitas, ab aeternitate mortalitas: et ad resolvendum conditionis nostrae debitum, natura inviolabilis naturae est unita passibili: ut, quod nostris remediis congruebat, unus atque idem mediator Dei et hominum, homo Jesus Christus, et mori posset ex uno, et mori non posset ex altero...* […] *Salva igitur proprietate utriusque naturae et substantiae, et in unam coeunte personam, suscepta est a majestate humilitas, a virtute infirmitas, ab aeternitate mortalitas: et ad resolvendum conditionis nostrae debitum, natura inviolabilis naturae est unita passibili: ut, quod nostris remediis congruebat, unus atque idem mediator Dei et hominum, homo Jesus Christus, et mori posset ex uno, et mori non posset ex altero*. Leo I, the Great, *Ep.* XXVIII, 2-3 (PL 54, 755-782A (763A-763B)); trans. by C. L. Feltoe, NPNF II, vol. 12 (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1895), pp. 38-43 (pp. 39, 40).

[18] Bede, *In Lucae evangelium expositio* I, 1, 35, ed. by D. Hurst, *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II. Opera Exegetica, 3*, CCSL CXX (Turnhout: Brepols, 1960), pp. 1-425 (p. 34, line 597). Copies of Bede's works circulated widely in both Benedictine and Cistercian houses; his commentary on Luke was held by the Benedictines at Burton-on-Trent (Staffordshire), Bury St Edmund's (Suffolk), Glastonbury (Somerset), Reading (Berkshire), Whitby (Yorkshire) and York, and by the Cistercians at Louth Park (Lincolnshire) and Rievaulx (Yorkshire). See Sharpe, et al., *The Shorter Catalogues*, B11.20 (p. 37), B13.209 (p.

combination of an unequivocal commitment to the Incarnation of God with a clear distinction between Christ's divine and human natures. Bede was careful not to allow his exaltation of the Virgin to translate into the idea that she was in any way responsible for the procreation or generation of his divinity. Hence, in his explanation of her intervention on behalf of the bridal party at the Marriage at Cana (Jn 2:1-11), Bede interpreted Christ's response, in which Mary was referred to by the anonymising title 'woman' (*mulier*), as the son's attempt to separate his own divine power from his mother's generation of him: 'between the divinity, which I have always had from the Father, and your flesh, which I have received, there is no communion' (*Cui diuinitati quam ex patre semper habui cum tua carne ex qua carnem suscepi commune non est*).[19] Following Leo, Bede was clear that although Christ possessed his divine and human natures in their fullness, there was no intermingling or confusion between them. For this reason, he did not impute Christ's miracle at Cana – a divine act – to his human mother in any way, not even vicariously by attributing it to the flesh which he had received from her.[20] Bede was followed by Alcuin, whose 'sensitivity to the meaning of the incarnation' in his *De fide sanctae et individuae trinitatis*, Douglas Dales has claimed, resulted in 'a deeper devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as *Theotokos* or 'God-bearer'.[21] In his *De fide* Alcuin affirmed that Mary, 'preserving the integrity of her body, brought Christ forth as both God and man' (*Quem beata virgo Maria, salva integritate sui corporis, Deum edidit et hominem*).[22]

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82), B39.101 (p. 179), B71.89 (p. 433), B109.6a (p. 634), B120.269 (p. 711); D. N. Bell, *An Index of Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries in Great Britain*, CS 130 (Kalamazoo, MN: Cistercian Publications, 1992), p. 42.

[19] Bede, *Homelia* I, xiv, ed. by D. Hurst, *Bedae Venerabilis, Opera homiletica, Opera rhythmica*, CCSL CXXII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), pp. 95-104 (p. 97, lines 83-85).

[20] Alcuin of York's first commentary on the Gospel of John made the same point: 'But when Christ, just before he works a miracle, says: 'O woman, what have you to do with me?', he means that the principle of his divinity, by virtue of which he would work the miracle, is not something that he took from Mary in the world of time. To the contrary, eternal divinity is something he always had from his Father.' (*…sed in eo quod, miraculum facturus, ait: 'Quid mihi et tibi est, mulier?' significat se divinitatis, qua miraculum erat patrandum, non principium temporaliter accepisse de matre, sed aeternitatem semper habuisse de Patre*.) Alcuin of York, *Commentaria in S. Joannis evangelium* (PL 100, 733-1008B (766D-767A)); trans. by L. Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of the Medieval Latin Theologians* (San Francisco, NC: Ignatius Press, 2000), p. 62.

[21] D. Dales, *A Mind Intent on God: The Prayers and Spiritual Writings of Alcuin: An Anthology* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), p. xviii.

[22] Alcuin of York, *De fide sanctae et individuae trinitatis* III, 14 (PL 101, 9-64A (46C)). For a commentary, see Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages*, pp. 61-62. For evidence that Alcuin's works, including the *De fide*, enjoyed a wide circulation, see

The second aspect of the mystery of the divine maternity which preoccupied our monastic authors was its spiritual significance for themselves and their communities. In particular, the idea that by her motherhood of Christ, Mary became the universal mother of all Christians. Underlying this proposition was the idea that since Mary was the mother of Christ and he had headship over all Christians ('And he is the head of the body, the church'; *ipse est caput corporis ecclesiae*; Col 1:18), she should be called the mother of all. Through his headship and her maternity, all Christians were believed to share in his sonship and even to be able to call him 'brother'. This idea was expressed with particular force by Anselm, whose deeply personal and introspective prayers reflected upon the idea of Mary's adoption of spiritual sons and her maternal intercession for the forgiveness of their sins.

Building upon the devotional works of John of Fécamp and Maurilius of Rouen (*c*. 1000-1067), Anselm's prayers marked a watershed in Latin devotional literature on account of their extraordinary quality and they are widely regarded as the finest expression of the genre of private devotional literature from the eleventh century.[23] His beautiful and powerful prose forces the reader to plumb the depths and soar to the heights of their emotions through meditating on their own faults in light of the greatness of God, Christ and the saints. Such individualistic piety complemented the corporate spirituality of the monastery, expressed every day in the monks' recitation of the Divine Office, and tended towards the accomplishment of the second use of the oratory defined by Benedict of Nursia (*c*. 480-547): 'if at other times someone chooses to pray privately, he may simply go in [to the oratory] and pray, not in a loud voice, but with tears and heartfelt devotion' (*si aliter vult sibi forte secretius orare, simpliciter intret et oret, non in clamosa voce, sed in lacrimis et intentione cordis*).[24] Anselm developed Benedict's teaching by adding a second depth of interiority; he did not just instruct his followers to go into the

Sharpe, et al., *The Shorter Catalogues*, B1.5 (p. 3), B39.169c (p. 188), B77.59j (p. 484), B85.4-5 (p. 545). This demonstrates that the *De fide* was held at Abbotsbury (Dorset), Glastonbury (Somerset), Rochester (Kent) and St Alban's (Hertfordshire). There does not appear to be any evidence that there were also copies in the Cistercian monasteries, however. See Bell, *Authors and Works in Cistercian Libraries*, p. 22.

[23] For a full discussion, see chapter 6 of this thesis.

[24] *Regula Sancti Benedicti* LII, 4; trans., *RB1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and England with Notes*, ed. by T. Fry (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1981).

oratory to pray but to retreat into the even greater privacy of their own souls, where they could truly be alone with God.[25]

Following Anselm, whilst his ideas remained compelling, there was a reassertion of the conventional paradigm of corporatism amongst the Cistercians. The sermons touching Mary's maternity composed by abbots Ælred, Gilbert and John did not have individuals in mind but their communities, and their teaching was ordered towards the objective of spiritual growth in the monastery.[26] Building upon Anselm, they claimed that Mary's *spiritual* maternity of Christ was foundational for her *physical* maternity which, in turn, enabled them to present her as an example for their monks to emulate.

This idea of Mary's spiritual maternity rested upon two propositions. First, that she received Christ in her heart long before he became incarnate in her womb and that this proto-conception manifested itself in the virtuous life by which she merited to become his mother. Second, that since her virginal conception occurred without any interruption of her virginal state (she was a virgin *ante partum*, *in partu* and *post partum*) it was more appropriate to describe it as a spiritual event, whereby she conceived by giving her consent to the angel Gabriel (her *fiat*; see Lk 1:38). This has sometimes been called her aural conception – her conception through the ear – which has been most famously described in poetry by the Syrian theologians Ephrem (*c*. 306-373) and Jacob of Serug (*c*. 451-521). With recourse to the familiar trope of Mary as the New Eve, Ephrem asserted that her conception of the cause of life (Christ) in the womb of her ear resolved Eve's original assent to the message of the serpent, which led to the Fall (Gen 3): 'For as from the womb, the small one, of that ear death entered and spread.

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[25] Anselm expressed this teaching at the beginning of his *Proslogion*: 'Come now, little man, turn aside for a while from your daily employment, escape for a moment from the tumult of your thoughts. Put aside your weighty cares, let your burdensome distractions wait, free yourself awhile for God and rest awhile in him. Enter the inner chamber of your soul, shut out everything except God and that which can help you in seeking him, and when you have shut the door, seek him.' (*Eia nunc, homuncio, fuge paululum occupationes tuas, absconde te modicum a tumultuosis cogitationibus tuis. Abice nunc onerosas curas, et postpone laboriosas distensiones tuas. Vaca aliquantulum deo, et requiesce aliquantulum in eo. Intra in cubiculum mentis tuae, exclude omnia praeter deum et quae te iuvent ad quaerendum eum, et clauso ostio quaere eum.*) Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion* I, lines 4-9 (SAOp. I, p. 97); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 239.

[26] Some of Gilbert's sermons may have been composed for and delivered to nuns rather than monks. See C. Holdsworth, 'Holland, Gilbert of (*d.* 1172)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/10676> [accessed 10 Nov 2015].

So through the ear, the new one, of Mary, life has entered and spread.'[27] Similarly, Jacob of Serug wrote:

> See how Eve's ear inclines and hearkens to the voice of the deceiver when he hisses deceit to her. But come and see the Watcher [Gabriel] instilling salvation into Mary's ear and removing the insinuation of the serpent from her and consoling her. […] By the door which death entered, by it entered life and loosened the great bond which the evil one had bound there.[28]

It is not clear if the twelfth-century Cistercians were aware of the second of these two propositions but they certainly knew and exploited the first; that Mary conceived in her heart before her womb. In the heroic virtue which they attributed to Mary on account of this proto-conception, they saw an archetype of good behaviour (conformity to the divine will) to present to their communities as an example to emulate. This may be further evidence of their indebtedness to Bede, whose homily on the feast of the Visitation promised heavenly bliss to those who, with Marian faith and love of purity, first conceived Christ in their hearts (*qui eius fidem ac dilectionem casto in corde concipiunt*).[29] Like Bede, Ælred, Gilbert and John invited their communities to become participators in Mary's spiritual maternity in such a way that they could also claim to be 'mothers' of Christ. As we shall see, this was only possible because of the breadth of their understanding and application of the idea of maternity itself which they were willing to apply creatively, beyond the limitations imposed by gender, to anyone who exercised a maternal role. These Cistercians – as well as Anselm before them – understood all maternity, including Mary's, to be a participation in a blueprint provided by Christ himself.[30]

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[27] Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymn* XLIX, 7, in Graef and Thompson, *Mary*, p. 46.

[28] Jacob of Serug, *Homily Concerning the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, Mary*, lines 627-628; trans. by M. Hansbury, *Jacob of Serug on the Mother of God* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998), pp. 17-42 (pp. 30-31).

[29] Bede, *Homelia* I, iv, ed. by Hurst, CCSL CXXII, pp. 21-31 (p. 27, lines 222-223).

[30] Conrad Leyser has suggested that this may have been to compensate for their disinheritance as second, third or fourth sons due to a narrowing of the definition of family and the assertion of primogeniture. See Leyser, 'From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother', p. 23.

Mary's Physical Maternity: The Incarnation of the God-Man

Anselm's three prayers to the Virgin – widely regarded as an expression of his spiritual method *par excellence*[31] – were preoccupied with the forgiveness of sins and salvation, and it was in relation to these pervasive themes that Mary's physical maternity was evaluated. Unsurprisingly, Anselm affirmed the key tenet of the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation, that Mary conceived in her womb and gave birth to the God-Man, who received his human nature from her:

> God gave his own Son, who alone from his heart was born equal to him, loved as he loves himself, to Mary, and of Mary was then born a Son not another but the same one, that naturally one might be the Son of God and of Mary.[32]

For Anselm, Mary's maternity also heralded the salvation and recreation of the world – it was revelatory – and it was for this reason that she deserved to be venerated: 'O Lady…to be venerated for a holiness beyond all reckoning – you showed to the world its Lord and its God whom it had not known' (*domina…venerabilis inaestimabili sanctitate, tu ostendisti mundo dominum suum et deum suum quem nesciebat*).[33] However, the boldest and most compelling tenet of Anselm's understanding of Mary's maternity was his suggestion that she enjoyed a synergetic relationship with God in the accomplishment of the Incarnation and, consequently, human redemption. Anselm gave no impression that her maternity was coerced but, rather, claimed that in spite of her creaturely status she enjoyed the unparalleled dignity of a co-creative partnership with God. Whilst he – like Bede – was always careful to subordinate Mary to God, he was nevertheless committed himself to the highest degree of cooperation between them:[34]

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[31] See R. W. Southern, 'Foreword', in Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 9-15 (p. 12).

[32] *Deus filium suum, quem solum de corde suo aequalem sibi genitum tamquam se ipsum diligebat, ipsum dedit Mariae, et ex Maria fecit sibi filium, non alium, sed eundem ipsum, ut naturaliter esset unus idemque communis filius dei et Mariae*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, lines 94-97 (SAOp. III, pp. 21-22); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 120, lines 179-183. See also, Anselm of Canterbury, *De incarnatione verbi*, 11 (SAOp. II, pp. 28-30).

[33] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, lines 54-56 (SAOp. III, p. 20); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 118, lines 99-102.

[34] See, also, chapter 3 of this thesis.

> Nothing equals Mary, nothing but God is greater than Mary. […] All nature is created by God and God is born of Mary. God created all things, and Mary gave birth to God. God who made all things made himself of Mary, and thus he refashioned everything he had made. He who was able to make all things out of nothing refused to remake it by force, but first became the Son of Mary. So God is the Father of all created things, and Mary is the mother of all re-created things.[35]

These words echoed Anselm's description of God in his *Proslogion* as a being 'than which nothing greater can be thought' (*quo maius nequit cogitari*), which was the basis for his argument for the necessity of God's existence; his so-called ontological argument.[36] In summary, in the *Proslogion* Anselm asserted that God must exist in order to satisfy this definition of the greatness of his being because the possibility of his not existing would denigrate him. Similarly, in describing Mary as a being than whom no greater could be conceived apart from God, Anselm did not just elevate her but hinted at the necessity of her place in the order of salvation alongside God as his closest *co-operatrix*.

Like his predecessors, Anselm affirmed that Mary was *Theotokos* – although he did not use the term – whilst also extrapolating from this a bold soteriological vision in which Mary was God's partner as well as his mother. In the latter, perhaps he followed Peter Damian (*c*. 1007-1072) who emphasised Mary's role in the accomplishment of human redemption. In his own *Sermo* XLVI, for example, Damian had declared that Mary was the necessary bridging point between God and humankind in the Incarnation and salvation: 'Just as the son of God deigned to descend to us through you, so also must we come to him through you' (*Sicut per te dei filius dignatus est nostra descendere, ita et nos per te ad eius valeamus consortium pervenire*).[37] In England, Anselm was himself echoed by his disciple and biographer, Eadmer, whose *De excellentia virginis mariae* included a restatement of the above excerpt from his master's third Marian prayer:

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[35] *Nihil aequale Mariae, nihil nisi deus maius Maria.* [...] *Omnis natura a deo est creata, et deus ex Maria est natus. Deus omnia creavit, et Maria deum generavit. Deus qui omnia fecit: ipse se ex Maria fecit, et sic omnia quae fecerat refecit. Qui potuit omnia de nihilo facere: noluit ea violata, nisi prius fieret Mariae filius, reficere. Deus igitur est pater rerum creatarum, et Maria mater rerum recreatarum*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, lines 93-94, 97-102 (SAOp. III, pp. 21, 22); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 120, 121, lines 177-178, 184-192.

[36] Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion* II (SAOp. I, pp. 101-102).

[37] Peter Damian, *Sermo* XLVI (PL 144, 748B-761C (761B)).

> Just as God, who made all things by his power, is Father and Lord of all things, so Blessed Mary, who repaired all things by her merits, is Mother and Mistress of all. For God is Lord of all because he established each thing in its own nature by his command, while Mary is Mistress of all things because she re-established them in their original inborn dignity by the grace she merited. And just as God generated from his own substance his Son, through whom he gave all things their origin, so Mary gave birth from her own flesh to him who restored all things to the beauty of the first creation.[38]

For Gilbert of Hoyland and John of Forde, too, the Incarnation was the central theological body around which their ideas about Mary's maternity orbited. In the parts of their reflections on the Song of Songs (the *Cantica Canticorum*; hereafter the Canticle) touching upon the divine maternity, therefore, they both expounded the reality of the Incarnation, using the language of the Canticle as their poetic starting point. Just as Anselm's prayers were lyrical, inspired by the words and cadences of the Psalter, so Gilbert's and John's sermons benefitted from the many images (*figurae*) of the Canticle, which enabled them to delve into the mystery of the divine maternity.

Mary was especially prominent in John's sermons, whilst Gilbert's tighter focus on the coinherence of the divine and human natures of Christ meant that his references to her, with one notable exception, were more incidental. This can be seen in *Sermo* XL, for example, when he reflected upon Sg 5:1, which includes the phrase: 'I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk' (*comedi favum cum melle meo bibi vinum meum cum lacte meo*). Gilbert took the honeycomb and the honey mentioned here to be metaphors for the flesh and divinity of Christ, and used them to illustrate his description of the entire life of Christ, from his kenotic 'self-emptying' to his final exaltation. In three little phrases, which refer to the various ways in which the honey of Christ's divinity related to the honeycomb of his humanity, Gilbert unfolded the whole Christological mystery:

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[38] *Sicut ergo Deus sua potentia parando cuncta Pater est et Dominus omnium, ita beata Maria suis meritis cuncta reparando mater est et domina rerum; Deus enim est Dominus omnium, singula in sua natura propria jussione constituendo; et Maria est domina rerum, singula congenitae dignitati per illam quam meruit gratiam restituendo. Et quemadmodum Deus ex sua substantia genuit eum per quem cunctis originem dedit, ita Maria de sua carne peperit illum qui in decorem primae creationis omnium cuncta restituit*. Eadmer of Canterbury, *De excellentia virginis mariae*, XI (PL 159, 557B-580C (578A-578B)).

beforehand, Christ existed in his divinity alone ('honey alone, without the honeycomb'; *mel solum erat, et sine favo*);[39] as a result of the process which occurred in the Virgin's womb, his divinity was veiled in flesh ('the honey existed in the honeycomb'; *mel in favo*);[40] finally, following the Resurrection and Ascension, his flesh was hidden by/subsumed within his divinity ('the honeycomb exists in the honey'; *favus in melle*).[41]

There is much to be enjoyed and admired in this image of Gilbert's: the way in which familiar objects from the natural world, honeycomb and honey, were used to communicate a profound doctrinal reality; the way in which this metaphor, in spite of the familiarity of honeycomb and honey, did not domesticate the mystery of the Incarnation; and also, how theology and mystical contemplation were held together: 'Somehow the honeycomb of his flesh is concealed in the honey of the Godhead, while our reverence for his revealed majesty completely absorbs our wonder and our faith' (*Quodammodo carnis favus deitatis in melle reconditur, dum admirationem nostram et fidem ad se traxit ex integro manifestatae reverentia majestatis*).[42] However, it is clear that Gilbert's focus in this discourse was Christological rather than Mariological, as a result of which Mary herself featured only incidentally and only for the single reason that Christ was conceived by her.[43]

Gilbert made a much clearer reference to Mary in his discourse on the Incarnation in *Sermo* XLVII, in which he considered the implications of the repeated question in Sg 5:9: 'What is your beloved like, born of one beloved, O loveliest of women? What is your beloved like, born of one beloved, that you thus adjure us?' (*Qualis est dilectus tuus, ex dilecto, o pulcherrima mulierum? Qualis est dilectus tuus, ex dilecto, quia sic adiurasti nos?*). Gilbert proposed recasting the first question, using *ex dilecta* instead of *ex dilecto*, so that it would imply generation from a woman and so that it could be taken as a reference to Christ's generation from his Mother as well as his Father.[44] As in *Sermo* XL, Gilbert's main interest here was the two natures of Christ but whereas before Mary featured only

[39] Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XL, 8 (PL 184, 212D).

[40] *Ibid.*, 8 (PL 184, 212D).

[41] *Ibid.*, 8 (PL 184, 212D).

[42] *Ibid.*, 8 (PL 184, 213A); trans. by Braceland, CF 26, p. 486.

[43] See *ibid.*, 8 (PL 184, 212D).

[44] See, Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XLVII, 4 (PL 184, 247C).

incidentally, here he actually manipulated the biblical text in order to include her more fully. For Gilbert, like Anselm, the uniqueness and beauty of the Incarnation lay in the 'combination' and the synergy of the human and divine natures; a process with Mary at its heart:

> For in each birth [Christ] is wonderful and exceedingly desirable but much more wonderful from his combination of births. Of his two natures, he holds one in common with his Father, the other with his Mother. The combination is proper to himself.[45]

As the final words from this quotation indicate, for Gilbert it was a fundamental truth that whilst Christ shared perfectly the natures of both his Father and Mother – namely, divinity and humanity – the combination of the two natures pertained to himself alone. Christ alone enjoyed the paradoxical reality of being both fully two and fully one. Like Anselm, however, Gilbert subordinated Mary, arguing that there was a disparity between the ways in which Christ shared his divine and human natures with his Father and his Mother, respectively, since as a creature Mary continued to depend on her son even though she gave birth to him: 'All that the Beloved has, he has from his Beloved Father, but not all from his beloved Mother; rather indeed all that she has she has from him' (*Totum habet quod habet dilectus ex dilecto, sed non totum a dilecta; magis autem totum habet, quod habet ipsa, ab ipso*).[46] In other words, even though Christ was born from Mary, she was called 'beloved' on his account, rather than he on hers.

Like Gilbert, John of Forde's purpose in relating the Canticle to the mystery of the Incarnation was primarily Christological but he was much more concerned than his predecessor with Mary herself and, in particular, her co-operation with God from the very first moment of her life, when the divine plan for human redemption began to unfold. In this way, John demonstrated his debt to Anselm, one of the few theologians he mentioned by name apart from Bernard of Clairvaux (*c*. 1090-1153).[47] That

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[45] *In utraque enim mirabilis est et concupiscibilis nimis, sed ex conjunctione mirabilior multo. Naturarum duarum alterutram, aut cum Patre habet, aut cum Matre communem. Conjunctio ista propria est ipsi*. Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermo* XLVII, 4 (PL 184, 247C-247D); trans. by Braceland, CF 26, pp. 562-563.

[46] *Ibid.*, 5 (PL 184, 248C); trans. by Braceland, CF 26, p. 564.

[47] See John of Forde, *Sermo* VIII, 4, line 127 (CCCM XVII, p. 82).

John was just as deeply committed as Gilbert to understanding the mystery of Christ cannot be doubted, and he reflected upon it with even more passion and insight. Christ was the heart and soul of John's sermons, both allegorically (as the Bridegroom) and theologically (using the Canticle as the starting point for penetrating discourses).[48] In *Sermo* VII, for example, John's response to the question put to the Bride by the daughters of Jerusalem, 'What is your beloved more than another beloved?' (*qualis est dilectus tuus ex dilecto*; Sg 5:9), took the form of a discourse on the eternal generation of the Word. In language which has a distinctly Marian flavour, John described how the Bride, her breasts flowing with wine and milk, answered this question by referring to the fierce love which bound God the Father and Christ together. For the Bride, and by implication John, the Bridegroom was unique because of his link with the Father, such that they 'are not only coeternal and coequal with each other, but they have also one and the same essence, in every way undifferentiated' (*non tantum coaeterni sibi sint et coaequales sed ipsam quoque essentiam suam unam eandemque habeant atque omnimodis indiscretam*).[49]

This is another example of a passage from one of John's sermons which could be described as Marian even though it referred to Mary only obliquely.[50] On many occasions, John referred to Mary directly and there was little ambiguity in his meaning that the text understood allegorically pertained to the person, character, virtue and mission of the Mother of God. At other times, though, as in this example from *Sermo* VII, John used language about the Bride which could be taken to refer to Mary without actually using her name. On another occasion, in *Sermo* IV, his description of the Bride clearly resonated with traditional beliefs about the Virgin but he made an effort to distinguish between them, so that the Bride could also be taken as a figure of the individual soul, which could in turn look to Mary for inspiration: 'the bride should remember…that Jesus as a baby was wrapped in coarse swaddling bands by his humble mother' (*meminerit sponsa…quia Iesus paruulus a matre humili pannis vilibus sit involutus*).[51] This would not have been possible if John had opted for an exclusively Marian

[48] Such Christocentricity on the part of Gilbert and John may have been due, in part, to the influence of Bernard of Clairvaux for whom, according to Jean Leclercq, 'At the center of everything [was] the mystery of Christ'. J. Leclercq, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian Spirit*, CS 16 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976), p. 130.

[49] John of Forde, *Sermo* VII, 2, lines 112-114 (CCCM XVII, p. 75); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 152.

[50] See, also, chapter 4 of this thesis.

[51] John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 2, lines 71-73 (CCCM XVII, p. 56); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 114.

interpretation. Thus, in *Sermo* IV, for example, whilst John described Mary as 'chief of virgins' (*primiceriae virginum*), this distinction was given to the anonymous Bride who was also said to have enjoyed an intimate relationship with Holy Trinity and Christ: 'him on whom the angels long to gaze she experiences as her own peculiar happiness' (*in quem concupiscunt angeli prospicere, ad proprias usurpat delicias*).[52] Christ, in particular, she was supposed to have known in the intimacy of her being: 'All this can happen secretly, all can be done in hiddenness in the bedchamber, as befits the joys of lovers' (*Poterant haec clam fieri, poterant haec intra cubiculum sicut decet amantium gaudia furtivo celebrari secreto*).[53]

Several of John's direct references to Mary referred to her preparation to be the Mother of God, from which three fundamental points may be extracted: that Mary decided, even vowed, to remain a virgin throughout her life,[54] as a result of which she received a constant supply of divine grace, until she was completely sanctified sometime prior to her conception of Christ. John's account of the process of Mary's spiritual growth, including her sanctification, seems to have been influenced directly by Anselm and Bernard. His description of Mary as a woman of grace, for instance, is strongly reminiscent of the phrase 'grace upon grace', which Anselm used in *De concordia* to explain what happens when an obedient will cooperates with divine grace in order to regain and preserve righteousness: 'if by its free choice the will maintains what it has received and so merits either an increase of justice received or power by way of a good will or some kind of reward, all these are fruits of the first grace and are *gratia pro gratia*'.[55] In *Sermo* LXX, then, John described Mary as a woman full of grace, whose every virtue was multiplied on account of her divine vocation:

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[52] John of Forde, *Sermo* IV, 5, lines 139-140 (CCCM XVII, p. 58). *Ibid*., 1, lines 47-48 (CCCM XVII, p. 56); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 113.

[53] *Ibid*., 1, lines 55-57 (CCCM XVII, p. 56); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 113.

[54] See, also, chapter 3 of this thesis.

[55] *Si autem voluntas, per liberum arbitrium servando quod accepit, meretur aut augmentum acceptae iustitiae, aut etiam potestatem pro bona voluntate, aut praemium aliquod: haec omnia fructus sunt primae gratiae, et gratia pro gratia*. Anselm of Canterbury, *De concordia* III, 3 (SAOp. II, pp. 266-267); trans. by T. Bermingham, 'De Concordia: The Compatibility of God's Foreknowledge, Predestination and Grace, with Human Freedom', in B. Davies and G. R. Evans, eds, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 435-474 (p. 455).

> Every single one of the gifts of God's mother, whether interior or exterior, are signs of salvation. Grace was added to grace, glory was heaped on glory, and as her crowning virtue grew, nothing went to waste, not even the least touch of humility.[56]

As these words indicate, John's sermons, like Anselm's Marian prayers, elevated Mary to a height which was unsurpassable, except by God himself. He wrote: 'just as this most blessed of mothers kept her virginity intact despite the glory of her fruitfulness, so did her humility remain intact and indestructible, though she had reached the heights of perfection'.[57] Unlike Anselm, though, John was ever mindful of the monastic context in which he lived and worked – and his confreres for whom he preached – and so he explained his high view of Mary using a paradox; namely, that she was exalted because she was humble. He also followed patristic and medieval theological tradition by teaching that Mary's obedience – a core monastic virtue alongside humility – and ultimately her conception of Christ itself, represented a recapitulation of the disobedience of Eve.[58] Whereas Eve's disobedience made her

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[56] *Salva sunt omnia carismatum omnium sive intus sive foris in Dei genetrice signacula. Accedit gratia gratiae, gloria superapponitur gloriae, nec de cumulo excrescente virtutum saltem quid ei modicum humilitatis perit*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 5, lines 93-97 (CCCM XVIII, p. 491); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 100. On the power of grace, according to John, see also: 'In a word, nobody is holy, nobody is or can be just or good if he has not found grace in [the eyes of Christ]. Those eyes are full of grace, or, better put, they are themselves the fullness of grace, because a look from them suffices for every inpouring or confirming of grace in the sons of grace.' (*Denique nemo sanctus, nemo iustus aut bonus est vel esse potest, nisi qui invenit gratiam in oculis istis. Pleni siquidem sunt gratiarum, quin potius ipsi sunt plenitudo gratiarum, quod in omnes filios gratiae ad omnem gratiae sive infusionem sive confirmationem sit respectus illorum*.) John of Forde, *Sermo* XIX, 1 (CCCM XVII, p. 165); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, pp. 60-61.

[57] *…quia beatissimae matrum sicut integra perseveravit in fecunditatis honore virginitas, sicut in summo virtutum culmine inviolabilis ei mansit humilitatis integritas*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 5, lines 103-105 (CCCM XVIII, p. 491); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 101. See, also: 'How very greatly the privilege of motherhood added to her virginal purity, and then, the great weight of infinite glory, that came from the Son of God's taking flesh within her, increased this twofold glory beyond all measure.' (*Quanto magis cum virgineo pudori matris accessit honor, germinamque hanc gloriam pondus illud gloriae infinitae de Unigeniti incarnatione supra omnem modum cumulavit*.) John of Forde, *Sermo* LXXV, 3, lines 47-50 (CCCM XVIII, p. 521); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 157.

[58] Cf. 'For it was appropriate that, just as death entered the human race through a man's disobedience, so life should be restored through a man's obedience; and that, just as the sin which was the cause of our damnation originated from a woman, similarly the originator of our justification and salvation should be born of a woman.' (*Oportebat namque ut, sicut per hominis inoboedientiam mors in humanum genus intraverat, ita per hominis oboedientiam vita restitueretur. Et quemadmodum peccatum quod fuit causa nostrae damnationis, initium habuit a femina, sic nostrae iustitiae et salutis auctor nasceretur de femina*.) Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur deus homo* I, 3 (SAOp. II, p. 51); trans. by J. Fairweather, 'Why God Became Man', in

a causal agent in the Fall of humankind and the advent of original sin, Mary's obedience and the grace it merited ensured that her son, who would redeem the world, would be free from that curse:

> We believe that in her, through the overshadowing power of the most High, human nature flowered again to spotless innocence. I am not saying that in her the heat of bodily concupiscence was tamed and lulled to rest, I am saying that to her very depths it was killed and buried, so that the glory of virginal honour, which she herself received as a free gift, she transmitted by heredity to her offspring.[59]

Here we have encountered one of the most ambitious elements of John's Mariology, namely, the idea that Mary's purity was somehow constitutive of the purity of Christ. For John, Mary cooperated with the Holy Spirit in order to produce the perfect 'fusion' of divinity and pure humanity in the person of Christ:

> How pure and radiant was that flesh, brought forth by the virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit! The glory of his holiness was inherited from his mother as well as from the Holy Spirit, and so it was inviolable [in] itself besides giving health to the whole stock. In the past, a foolish woman, Eve, poured out the leaven of concupiscence into the mass of human nature, and by that very act made this leaven an hereditary and inescapable necessity. So likewise, through some new and miraculously unchanged law, the wisest of virgins poured straight into her son, as his natural inheritance, the leaven of innocence and sanctity by the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit.[60]

Davies and Evans, eds, *The Major Works*, pp. 260-356 (pp. 268-269). For a consideration of humility, see chapter 4 of this thesis.

[59] *...quanto magis illa in qua virtute obumbrante altissimi humanam credimus ad integram innocentiam refloruisse naturam, adeo sane ut totus carnalis concupiscentiae fomes, non dico edomitus in ea et consopositus, sed emortuus sit penitus atque sepultus, gloriam virginei honoris, quam accepit ipsa gratuitam, proli suae tradidit hereditariam.* John of Forde, *Sermo* VIII, 4, lines 109-115 (CCCM XVII, p. 82); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 166.

[60] *Qualis itaque et quam candida caro illa de virgine edita, de Spiritu Sancto concepta, quae quoniam hereditariam habuit tam de matre quam Spiritu Sancto gloriam sanctitatis, idcirco habuit et inviolabilem sibi et omni generi suo medicinalem. Sane sicut insipiens quondam mulier fermentum concupiscentiae in massam generis transfudit humani ipsumque fermentum eo ipso, quo hereditarium inseparabile ac necessarium fecit, ita profecto virgo prudentissima e regione fermentum innocentiae ac sanctimoniae consilio ac virtute Spiritus Sancti quadam nova prorsus et miraculose immutata lege naturae hereditarium*

Whilst John tended to emphasise the pre-eminence of the spiritual dimension of the conception, his attempts to illustrate the spiritual mysteries and to explain how they were accomplished, were very physical. *Sermo* XXV (a reflection on the first part Sg 5:14, 'His hands are turned and as of gold, full of hyacinths'; *manus illius tornatiles aureae plenae hyacinthis*) is especially notable in this regard. Not only did he liken Christ's generation in Mary's womb to imprisonment,[61] in a striking physical metaphor, John described the whole of Christ's life as an act of physical labour and his Incarnation in the womb of the Virgin as a work of skilled craftsmanship. The two natures of Christ, he said, were like two beams of wood 'very far removed from each other' (*ab invicem valde remota*), which 'the unimaginable love of God bound marvellously into a unity' (*quas mirabiliter colligavit ineffabilis caritas Dei*).[62] He even described Christ as a craftsman who made himself in the soul and womb of the Virgin Mary, his workshop:

> You have made yourself hands in order to save me, made them with skilful artistry, with speed, too, yet with toilsome [labour]. First of all, like a wise designer, you raised a workshop for this craft of yours, the soul of your virgin mother, and her holy womb. A sublime workshop, vast enough for so great a craft and able to contain so immense a craftsman! But it would be truer to say that she herself, like the valiant woman, put out her hand to mighty things, wisely working along with the Wisdom of God in the work of our salvation.[63]

Nor did John shrink from consideration of the pains endured by Mary in the exercise of her maternal vocation but, believing that the synergetic relationship between Mary and God (variously the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) continued beyond the virginal conception, he also taught that Mary was given the

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transfudit in Filium. John of Forde, *Sermo* VIII, 4, lines 79-89 (CCCM XVII, pp. 81-82); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, pp. 164-165.

[61] See John of Forde, *Sermo* XXV, 7, lines 161-163 (CCCM XVII, p. 212).

[62] *Ibid.*, 6, lines 108, 110-111 (CCCM XVII, p. 211); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 151.

[63] *Fecisti tibi manus ad salvandum me ipsasque artificio ingenioso quidem et expedito, laborioso tamen. Et primum ut sapiens architectus extruxisti tibi officinam fabricae huius animam et uterum virginis matris. Grandis officina, quae et tantae sit ampla fabricae tamque immensum capere potuerit artificem. Quinimmo et ipsa velut mulier fortis extendit ad fortia manum suam, sapientiae Dei in opere nostrae salutis sapienter cooperans*. *Ibid*., 5, lines 86-93 (CCCM XVII, p. 210); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 150.

strength to deal with the challenges she faced. So, for instance, during Jesus' infancy, when he showed the weaknesses of a human child, which might have distracted Mary from her contemplation of him, the Holy Spirit was said to have kept her in a state of serene and uninterrupted rapture. Thus, not only did John present Mary as a proto-contemplative but he also gave an active part to the Holy Spirit who, he claimed, did not abandon Mary after she gave birth but continued to provide for her needs and to support her maternity:

> Who can tell the story of how, while she contemplated with her constant dovelike look the Sun of justice, enveloped in her flesh, the sevenfold Spirit irradiated her with his overshadowing, and overshadowed her with his radiance? At one time he gave her the form of wisdom and knowledge, at another he strengthened her with counsel and fortitude: now he enlightened her with knowledge and tender love, now he sealed her with the seal of holy fear, bestowed from heaven.[64]

The Idea of Jesus as Mother and Mary's Spiritual Maternity

The sermons of John of Forde suggest that for medieval monks the maternity of Mary had two distinct but interrelated aspects: the physical and the spiritual. In its physical aspect, Mary gave birth to and suckled the Incarnate Word of God; she was a real mother. However, this extraordinary physical occurrence was subordinated to its spiritual dimension, which it was also taken to signify: the spiritual conception and nativity of Christ in Mary's heart, which she merited by a life of holy virtue and which, in turn, became a source of nourishment for her offspring: 'For a little time she nourished you from her bodily breast, but she always feeds you from the interior sweetness of her spirit. I say it again: you and she satisfy me to the very limits of desire' (*teque aliquanto tempore carnali quidem ubere aluit, semper*

[64] *...quis referat quomodo illi columbino aspectui solem iustitiae sua carne circumamictum sedulo contemplanti, spiritus septiformis et obumbrans irradiaret et obumbraret irradians, nunc ad sapientiam eam et intellectum informans, nunc consilio et fortitudine roborans, nunc scientia et pietate illustrans, nunc timoris sacri signaculo | coelitus ei donato consignans?* John of Forde, *Sermo* LXXV, 3, lines 59-65 (CCCM XVIII, p. 521); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 158. John's inclusion of the Holy Spirit set him apart from Anselm, in whose Marian prayers the Third Person of the Trinity was not mentioned at all.

autem spiritus sui interna dulcedine pascit. Tu, inquam, cum illa ad omnem desiderii finem sufficis mihi).[65]

For the Christian community, Mary's spiritual conception of the head of the church signified her maternal care for all the faithful. Thus, for example, her breast-feeding of Christ was interpreted by John, in its spiritual aspect, as the nourishment of the whole church. In *Sermo* XCIII (concerning Sg 8:1, 'Who shall give thee to me for my brother, sucking the breasts of my mother, that I may find thee without, and kiss thee, and now no man may despise me?'),[66] John wrote that Mary also fed Jesus' siblings from 'her milky breast' (*immulget ubera*).[67] The purpose of this was to emphasise her universal motherhood, of which he wrote: 'This is a very great thing, more than enough for all creatures, angelic and human, to possess you and this tiny little brother of ours, sucking the breasts of our mother for the salvation of all his brothers' (*Annon ampla nimis possessio coelestique et humanae creaturae sufficientissima, tu et hic frater noster minimus, sugens ubera matris nostrae in omnium fratrum suorum salutem*).[68] The universal motherhood of Mary was an important component of John's Mariology, which he was at pains to emphasise:

> Let me repeat it: the mother of Jesus is not only the mother of our glorious head, Jesus Christ, mediator between God and man, but she is also the mother of all who love Jesus, of the whole of Jesus' sacred body.[69]

Crucially, however, John also taught that by emulating Mary individual Christians could themselves share in her maternity of Christ. In *Sermo* VII, he explained how anyone who conceived Christ

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[65] John of Forde, *Sermo* XCIII, 9, lines 186-189 (CCCM XVIII, p. 633); trans. by Beckett, CF 46, p. 132.

[66] *...quis mihi det te fratrem meum sugentem ubera matris meae ut inveniam te foris et deosculer et iam me nemo despiciat*. Sg 8:1.

[67] John of Forde, *Sermo* XCIII, 8, lines 155-156 (CCCM XVIII, p. 632). See, also, John of Forde, *Sermo* XCIV, 1 (CCCM XVIII, p. 635).

[68] *Ibid.*, 8, lines 159-162 (CCCM XVIII, p. 633); trans. by Beckett, CF 46, pp. 130-131.

[69] *Mater, inquam, Iesu mater est non solum gloriosi | capitis nostri mediatoris Dei et hominum Christi Iesu, sed omnium quoque diligentium Iesum, totius sacri corporis Iesu*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 5, lines 112-115 (CCCM XVII, p. 491); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 101.

spiritually could be described as his mother: 'whoever is a bride of the Lord, whoever is a mother of Jesus, groans in sympathy with anyone groaning, and gives birth with her [the Bride], and stands by her in her delivery' (*quaecumque sponsa Domini est, quaecumque mater Iesu congemiscet utique et comparturit et parienti assistit*).[70] Indeed, John wrote that 'the name of 'mother' or 'bride' may be applied quite justly to anyone who is moved by motherly affection to bring forth and train sons for God, anyone who has entered completely into the pure love of the Word' (*Matris denique sive sponsae vocabulo non immerito censebitur quisquis generandis et educandis Deo filiis materno movetur affectu, et castissimum Verbi amorem induens*).[71] Hence, he also applied the title 'mother' to the church, which brings forth children through Baptism and, in-keeping with other Cistercians writing on maternity, to himself as the abbot of a monastic community.[72] Fundamentally, though, for John and others it was Christ himself who had first provided the exemplar or archetype of spiritual maternity, including that of the Virgin:

> I feel not so much that the honour of mother has been granted me, as that I have had laid upon me the task of carrying you around as a nurse! […] How I yearn, with maternal affection, to direct you to the heart of your true mother, who is Christ.[73]

Until recently, it was assumed that the idea of, and devotion to, Jesus as Mother originated with fourteenth-century female mystics, such as Julian of Norwich (*c*. 1342-1416), but in reality it can be

[70] John of Forde, *Sermo* VII, 2, lines 77-79 (CCCM XVII, p. 74); trans. by Beckett, CF 29, p. 151.

[71] John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 5, lines 93-95 (CCCM XVII, p. 217); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 164.

[72] See C. W. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 146-159. Although Bynum did not include John of Forde amongst the Cistercian authors she studied, her conclusion applies equally well to him as it does to Bernard or Ælred: 'All twelfth-century Cistercian writers use maternal imagery to add something to authority figures qua rulers or fathers, and the something added is always nurturing, affectivity, accessibility. […] These authors appear to have supplemented their image of God with maternal metaphors because they needed to supplement their image of authority with that for which the maternal stood: emotion and nurture.' Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 154.

[73] *Et si vultis scire nutricis et gerulae mihi potius sentio impositum onus quam matris delatum honorem.* […] *…quam materna vos affectione cupiam verae matris vestrae, quae Christus est, assignare visceribus*. John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 7, lines 178-180, 187-189 (CCCM XVII, p. 219); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, pp. 168-169.

traced back to Anselm.[74] Indeed, Caroline Walker Bynum has linked it directly with the transformation of western spirituality which occurred in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, characterised by a shift in theological emphasis away from atonement and judgement, towards creation, Incarnation and recognition of the *imago dei* in human beings.[75] Maternal imagery in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, she has suggested, 'is part of a new sense of God, which stresses his creative power, his love, and his presence in the physical body of Christ and in the flesh and blood of the eucharist'.[76]

Anselm's *Prayer to St Paul* contemplated the maternity of Christ at some length, alongside the maternal role of the apostle himself. He explained that the purpose of spiritual maternity was the awakening and restoration to righteousness of the soul which clung to its spiritual mother and confessed its faults. Hence, three times in the section of his prayer contemplating the maternity of Christ and Paul, Anselm cried out for recognition on account of his confession, in the hope of justification:

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[74] See Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 110-113. Bynum made her argument with reference to six authors, from whom she has provided extensive quotations: William of St-Thierry (*c*. 1085-1148), Guerric of Igny (*d*. 1157) and Adam of Perseigne (*c*. 1145-1221), as well as Anselm of Canterbury, Bernard of Clairvaux and Ælred of Rievaulx (see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, pp. 113-125). See also, A. Cabassut, 'Une devotion médiévale peu connue: la devotion à 'Jésus Notre Mère'', *Mélanges Mercel Viller, Revue d'ascétique et de mystique*, 25 (1949), pp. 234-245.

[75] See Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 130. For an account of the transformation of western spirituality, see B. McGinn, 'Western Christianity', in B. McGinn, J. Meyendorff and J. Leclercq, eds, *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (London: SCM Press, 1989), pp. 312-330 (pp. 323-328).

[76] Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, p. 135. This theological shift found expression in spiritual praxis, in devotion to Christ as the loving pelican, for example. Immortalised in the hymn, *Adoro te devote*, by Thomas Aquinas (*c*. 1225-1274), this particular devotion likened Jesus to a pelican feeding its chicks from its own flesh and blood. Not only did it provide a powerful illustration for the emergent theology of the Eucharist, focusing upon Christ's corporeal presence, but it also lent itself to the idea of Jesus as mother by alluding to the physiological notion that when mothers breastfed their offspring they were supplying their own blood, processed and emitted from their breasts. See *ibid*., p. 132. The development of a clear theology of the true, corporeal presence of Christ in the Eucharist began in the ninth century, in a dispute between Paschasius Radbertus (*c*. 785-865) and Ratramnus of Corbie (*d*. *c*. 870). See *Pascasius Radbertus, De corpore et sanguine Domini*, ed. by B. Paulus, CCCM XVI (Turnout: Brepols, 1969); *Ratramni Corbeiensis monachi, De corpore et sanguine Domini* (PL 121, 125-170C). However, it culminated in an eleventh-century clash between Lanfranc of Bec (*c*. 1010-1089) and Guitmund of Aversa (*d*. *c*. 1090), and Berengar of Tours (*c*. 999-1088) who did not believe that corporeality was necessarily implied by a theology of real presence. See *Lanfranci Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, De corpore et sanguine Domini adversus Berengarium Turonensem* (PL 150, 407-441); *Guitmundi Archiepiscopi Aversani, De corporis et sanguinis Christi veritate in eucharistia* (PL 149, 1427-1494D).

> Mother, know again your dead son, both by the sign of your cross and the voice of his confession. Warm your chicken, give life to your dead man, justify your sinner.[77]

Anselm's *Prayer to St Paul* drew out several characteristics of maternity: that it is fruitful (i.e. generative) and nurturing, and that it entails intercession by the mother for her children. His physically evocative descriptive of the apostle as a mother 'in labour for her sons' (*filios suos iterum parturire*) and a nurse 'caressing' (*fovens*) them was also replete with spiritual significance.[78] Paul's children were not those to whom he gave birth physically but those he initiated into the Christian faith by gentle, motherly instruction. For Anselm, the apostolic and maternal vocations were closely linked; he described all of the apostles as 'our mothers' (*nobis matres*) and Paul as the 'greatest mother' (*magis nostra mater*) on account of the degree to which he laboured to bring human beings to Christ.[79] Importantly, though, it was not Paul himself but Christ, the ultimate mother with whom the apostle cooperated, who brought souls back to life. The maternity of Christ was prior and superior to Paul's, although there was a deep and powerful synergy between them on a soteriological level, in which the apostle as mother was invoked to mediate between the sinful soul and its redeemer:

> O mother, you who again gave birth to your sons, offer your dead son again, to be raised up by him who by his death gives life to his servants. O mother, offer your son to him who by his death, which was not owing, called back his condemned ones from the death that was their due; that he may call back to him the life he has lost… Pray to him for your son, who is his servant; pray to him for his servant, who is your son.[80]

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[77] *Agnosce, mater, filium tuum mortuum vel per signum crucis tuae et per vocem confessionis tuae. Refove pullum tuum, resuscita mortuum tuum, iustifica peccatorem tuum*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* X, lines 233-235 (SAOp. III, p. 41); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 156, lines 477-480. For Anselm's references to his confession of faith, see *Oratio* X, lines 186-187, 188, 234 (SAOp. III, pp. 39-40, 41).

[78] *Ibid.*, lines 177-179 (SAOp. III, p. 39); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 152, lines 358-361.

[79] *Ibid.*, lines 183-184 (SAOp. III, p. 39); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 152, line 372.

[80] *Offer, mater, tu quae iterum parturis filios tuos, offer mortuum filium tuum iterum resuscitandum illi, qui morte sua resuscitavit servos suos. Offer, mater, illi qui morte sua indebita revocavit reos suos a morte debita, offer illi filium tuum, ut revocet ei vitam perditam.* […] *Ora eum pro filio tuo, quia servus eius est. Ora eum pro servo suo, quia filius tuus est*. *Ibid.*, lines 189-192, 195-196 (SAOp. III, p. 40); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 153, lines 380-387, 395-396.

Much less well-known than Anselm's prayer is John of Forde's seventeenth sermon on the Canticle, which also presented Jesus as a nursing mother. Such has been John's relative obscurity that he was not included in Bynum's survey. Like Anselm, however, his purpose was to emphasise the power of Christ to effect moral restoration by his grace, which he was said to pour out like milk from a mother's breasts. In some ways, John's sermon is more complex than Anselm's *Prayer to St Paul*, since he applied the metaphor of maternity to the Holy Spirit as well as to Christ.[81] John's language is also less precise than that of Anselm, revealing a predilection for the evocative and mystical, which occasionally led him to conflate his concepts (the spirit of Christ with the Holy Spirit, for example).[82] Nor is it always clear to whom John meant to apply the words of his enigmatic scriptural text ('His eyes are doves beside springs of water, bathed in milk, at rest near full flowing streams'; *oculi eius sicut columbae super rivulos aquarum quae lacte sunt lotae et resident iuxta fluenta plenissima*; Sg 5:12); at different times he meant the Holy Spirit, the apostles, monks, or indeed any believer seeking to make progress in the spiritual life.

However, it would be a mistake to interpret these features of John's exegesis as signs of confusion. Rather, taken together they evince a strong conviction about the interrelatedness of the whole of creation. First, human beings were called to be partakers in the very life of Christ by receiving and being transformed by his spirit, as exemplified by the apostles. So, for example, evoking God's breathing life into Adam in the creation narrative of Genesis, John said: 'when Jesus breathes on them, they draw in the spirit of piety for the remission of sins, drawing it from his own spirit' (*Porro insufflante Iesu spiritum quoque pietatis hauserunt ad remittenda peccata, de spiritu nimirum illus*).[83] In turn, those who were transformed were given a share not just in the life but also in the mission of Christ to re-create the world. In the sense that this was a regenerative mission, in which all believers were called to co-create with God, it could be described as maternal. Thus, John went a step further

[81] See, for example: 'The dove [i.e. the Holy Spirit] hovers over the waters by brooding over his gifts, and with the tenderness and care of a mother creating and cherishing them in those who are his children by grace.' (*Fertur ipsa super aquas incubando donationibus suis, et materna pietate atque sollicitudine parturiendo ac fouendo eas in filiis gratiae suae*.) John of Forde, *Sermo* XVII, 4, lines 87-89 (CCCM XVII, p. 150); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 34.

[82] See, for example, *ibid*., 3-4 (CCCM XVII, pp. 150-151).

[83] *Ibid*., 3, lines 61-62 (CCCM XVII, p. 150); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, pp. 32-33.

than Anselm, according to whom Paul had cooperated in the restoration of the individual soul, by positing the cooperation of all believers with Christ in building the new Jerusalem.[84] In an especially beautiful passage, John directly associated the mission of the apostles with that of the church of his own time:

> So the doves [i.e. the apostles] hovered over the waters by being able to share them, by being watchful to preserve them and by persevering in spreading them abroad. Of their power there is no question, for he has made them princes over all the earth, and your friends are exceedingly honoured, O God, their rule is firmly established. […] Evident, too, is the effect of their perseverance and labour. Today, the generation of the saints, their descendants, is as numerous as the stars of heaven, and from the very smallest of seeds, the pastures of the wilderness flourish, even to this day, and the hills are girded with joy. Everywhere, the valleys of the earth are rich with corn. So now, by copious inpouring, a few tiny brooks have become rivers; indeed, a mighty deluge has made the rivers to overflow, and they have flooded out into all that was barren and dry.[85]

John's contemplation of Jesus as Mother focused especially on the image of his lactating breasts, which were to be understood metaphorically as his goodness and loving kindness, whereby grace (spiritual milk) was outpoured.[86] That Jesus had to become a mother in the first place, John claimed, demonstrated the spiritual immaturity of humanity; he had to feed human souls with a mother's milk because solid food would have been too much for them.[87] In a tender evocation of maternal love, John

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[84] See John of Forde, *Sermo* XVII, 9 (CCCM XVII, pp. 154-155).

[85] *Ferebantur ergo super aquas potestate dispensandi ac conservandi sollicitudine atque instantia propagandi. Nam de potestate palam est quia constituit eos principes super omnem terram, et quia nimis honorificati sunt amici tui, Deus, nimis confortatus est principatus eorum.* […] *Denique et fructus instantiae atque laboris ipsorum in evidenti est, nam generatio sancta, nepotes eorum, multiplicata est hodie | sicut stellae coeli et de granis paucissimus pinguescunt usque hodie speciosa deserti et exultatione colles accinguntur, et ubique terrarum valles abundant frumento. Itaque paucissimi rivuli iam copiosa derivatione rivi facti sunt, quin et rivi ipsi larga inundatione inebriati omne desertum et omnem aridam impleverunt*. *Ibid*., 4, lines 99-103, 106-114 (CCCM XVII, pp. 150-151); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, pp. 34-35.

[86] See *ibid*., 7 (CCCM XVII, pp. 152-153).

[87] See: 'And since he could speak to them only as men of flesh not spirit, he was willing to suit himself to their childishness and to assign to them in due time not a measure of corn but a sip of milk, nourishing them thus with his goodness and instructing

described how Jesus 'milks his breasts vigorously for the benefit of those whom he has undertaken to nurse as a special work of his favour. Like the tenderest nurse, he carries them in his arms and rests them on his breasts' (*Quid quod fortiter premit ubera sua Iesus his, quos speciali dilectionis privilegio nutriendos susceperat; et quasi nutrix dulcissima portabat in ulnis suis et suspendebat ad ubera sua*).[88]

In summary, medieval engagement with the idea of spiritual maternity was multidimensional, rich and complex. As John of Forde's sermons have revealed, the privilege and responsibility of bringing believers to new life in Christ and encouraging them on their spiritual journey belonged to the individual Cistercian abbot as well as to the church at large. Both John and Anselm clearly believed that the idea of spiritual maternity resonated in a special way with the apostolic vocation and, fundamentally, that all the ecclesial, abbatial and apostolic manifestations of spiritual maternity were provided with an exemplar in the maternity of Christ himself. In other words, the characteristics of spiritual maternity found a perfect pattern in Christ, in whom its physical signs – a swollen belly, lactating breasts, and so on – were raised up to a spiritual plane. Thus, for Ælred of Rievaulx, the infant Jesus could be imagined both 'crying in his mother's arms, hanging at her breasts' (*si in brachiis vagientem, si pendentem ad ubera*) and breast-feeding from the Cross: 'his outspread arms will invite you to embrace him, his naked breasts will feed you with the milk of sweetness to console you' (*expansis brachiis ad suos te invitet amplexus, in quibus delecteris, nudatis uberibus lac tibi suavitatis infundat quo consoleris*).[89]

Like all other types of maternity, that of Mary was also understood as a participation in this pattern provided by her son. However, it was the most perfect kind of participation, elevated above all others on account of the superlative dignity of the one she conceived. The fact that Mary conceived and bore the God-Man, rather than an exclusively human child, meant that her physical maternity was

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them in the learning of his kindness.' (*Neque enim poterat eis loqui tamquam spiritualibus sed tamquam carnalibus, ideoque tamquam paruulis congruere volens dispensavit eis in tempore non tritici mensuram sed modulum lactis et in benignitate sua eos nutriens et in humanitatis doctrina erudiens*.) John of Forde, *Sermo* XVII, 7, lines 181-186 (CCCM XVII, p. 153); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 38.

[88] *Ibid.*, 6, lines 144-147 (CCCM XVII, p. 152); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 36.

[89] Ælred of Rievaulx, *De Iesu puero duodenni*, 25, lines 216-217 (CCCM I, p. 272); trans. by Berkeley, CF 2, p. 33. Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 26, lines 750-752 (CCCM I, p. 658); trans. by Macpherson, CF 2, p. 73.

of a greater degree of merit than that of any other human mother. However, John of Forde's most important insight concerning the divine maternity did not pertain to its physical aspect; it was that Mary first and pre-eminently conceived in her heart. He taught that whilst the union of Christ and his mother continued eternally, it was a physical union only for a short time; it was much more significantly a spiritual one. Mary's spiritual conception was the prism through which her divine maternity in its physical aspect was viewed and understood. Hence, he declared:

> …the fruitfulness of God's mother must not be judged solely by the actual conception of the Son of man. According to the belief of the Catholic faith, this glorious mother conceived God first in her heart rather than in her flesh, and this conception was far more fruitful…[90]

Conclusion

Building upon Anselm of Canterbury, the monastic theologians of the divine maternity in the twelfth century emphasised the synergy between God and Mary in the accomplishment of human redemption. In-keeping with wider spiritual trends, they presented Mary as God's *willing* handmaiden, whose personal role was profoundly significant. Just as they believed that Mary chose to remain a virgin throughout her life, so they thought that she genuinely chose to become God's mother and, moreover, that her choice was free from divine coercion.[91] They also seem to have believed that whilst Mary's assent to carry the incarnate Word of God in her womb (the basis of her physical maternity) was accomplished in a moment, her more enduring, even higher, consent to conceive Christ in her heart (her spiritual maternity) took place over many years of faithful endurance. In an increasingly sacramental age – when, for instance, the relationship between the elements of the Eucharist and what they signified was just being clarified – Mary's physical maternity came to signify the interior reality of her spiritual

[90] *Quamquam fecunditas in matre Domini non sola filii hominis generatione aestimanda sit, cum iuxta fidei catholicae pietatem genetrix gloriosa Deum prius multoque mirabilius longeque fecundius mente quam carne conceperit*. John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 6, lines 142-145 (CCCM XVIII, p. 492); trans. by Beckett, CF 45, p. 103.

[91] For a consideration of Mary's vow of virginity, see chapter 3 of this thesis.

conception. This was important, in turn, because it allowed the English monks to further develop their participatory Mariology.

Following Bede and guided by their pastoral purpose to help others to make progress in the spiritual life, monastic leaders like Ælred of Rievaulx and John of Forde called all of those for whom they wrote to aspire to be mothers of Christ not, of course, by conceiving him in their bodies but by conceiving him in their hearts. Ultimately, this was about inviting their followers to come to know Christ in the intimacy of their souls by sharing in the perfect relationship which existed between him and his mother. This open and participatory emphasis remained at the heart of the Mariology of English monastic theologians throughout this period and, as the next chapter reveals, received its most profound expression in relation to the Crucifixion and the call for individual contemplatives to share not just in Mary's motherhood but in her martyrdom, too.

6

Mater Dolorosa

Contemplating Mary at the Foot of the Cross

> ...draw near to the Cross with the Virgin Mother and the virgin disciple, and look at close quarters upon that face in all its pallor. What then? Will your eyes be dry as you see your loving Lady in tears? Will you not weep as her soul is pierced by the sword of sorrow?[1]

> She shared Christ's pain not in body (she herself suffered no physical wounds) but in spirit, not only because he was her Son but also because in her love she could feel what he felt, his feelings being her feelings, his anguish being hers: 'My beloved is mine and I am his' (Sg 2:16).[2]

For most scholars of monastic spirituality, *c*. 1050-*c*. 1200 was the age of Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109), characterised by the emergence of an individualistic, private and affective approach to prayer; a new era, which broke with the corporate, liturgical and controlled piety of the Anglo-Saxon Benedictines.[3] By contrast, for those seeking to nuance this analysis, it was a period in which the earlier

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[1] *...cum Matre virgine et discipulo virgine accede ad crucem, et perfusum pallore vultum cominus intuere. Quid ergo? Tu sine lacrymis amantissimae dominae tuae lacrymas videbis? Tu siccis manes oculis, et eius animam pertransit gladius doloris?* Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 31, lines 1179-1183, in *Ælredi Rievallensis: Opera Omnia, 1. Opera Ascetica*, ed. by A. Hoste and C. H. Talbot, CCCM I (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), pp. 635-682 (p. 671); trans. by M. P. Macpherson, *Ælred of Rievaulx: Treatises & Pastoral Prayer*, CF 2 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1971), pp. 41-102 (p. 90).

[2] R. Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 200.

[3] Southern called Anselm the 'founder' of this new spiritual mentalité; see *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 209-244 (p. 217). Cf. S. J. Shoemaker, 'Mary at the Cross, East and West: Maternal Compassion and Affective Piety in the Earliest *Life of the Virgin* and the High Middle Ages', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 62.2 (2011), pp. 570-606. Southern has been accused of depicting Anglo-Saxon piety as 'monolithically Benedictine, static, and devoid of personality'. S. DeGregorio, 'Affective Spirituality: Theory and Practice in Bede and Alfred the Great', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 22 (2005), pp. 129-139 (p. 136). For an account which links Anselm's prayers and meditations to Augustine but does not refer to his immediate predecessors, see T. H. Bestul, 'Antecedents: The Anselmian and Cistercian

tradition, exemplified by figures like Bede (*c*. 672-735), received new expression in richer and more intense language.[4] Neither of these perspectives is entirely adequate, however, as a description of what occurred at this time in the cult of the Virgin Mary and, specifically, in the depiction of her as *Mater Dolorosa*. The former does not sufficiently account for the persistence of monastic corporatism, nor the significance of the Anglo-Saxon antecedents to the affective devotional method which Anselm promoted. The latter does not give enough credence to the transformative impact of Anselm, whose writings were indeed unprecedented for the intensity of their language which, coupled with his characteristic theological precision, brought about an irreversible shift in the Latin spiritual tradition.[5] In fact, it is artificial to separate out the development of English spirituality into antithetical or competing epochs, when the reality is that changes occurred incrementally.[6]

This chapter argues that the English monastic texts produced in this period which contemplated the suffering of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross reveal that the eleventh and twelfth centuries were marked by both continuity and innovation. English Benedictine and Cistercian monks did not relinquish the devotional forms of previous centuries but nor were they restricted by them. Rather, the venerable

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Contributions', in W. F. Pollard and R. Boenig, eds, *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England* (Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 1-20 (pp. 4-10); cf. T. H. Bestul, 'St Augustine and the *Orationes sive Meditationes* of St. Anselm', *Anselm Studies*, 2 (1988), pp. 597-606.

[4] See DeGregorio, 'Affective Spirituality', pp. 129-139; DeGregorio, 'The Venerable Bede on Prayer and Contemplation', *Traditio*, 54 (1999), pp. 1-39; DeGregorio, 'Bede, the Monk, as Exegete: Evidence from the Commentary on Ezra-Nehemiah', *Revue Bénédictine*, 115 (2005), pp. 343-369; T. A. Carroll, *The Venerable Bede: His Spiritual Teachings*, The Catholic University of America, Studies in Medieval History, 9 (Washington, DC: Ann Arbor, 1965).

[5] Anselm alone cannot be credited with this transformation; the prayers of John of Fécamp (*d. c*. 1079) were also popular and influential. See T. H. Bestul, *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 36-38; B. Ward, 'Introduction', in her own *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm* (London: Penguin, 1973), pp. 47-50. For antecedents to Anselm more generally, see C. M. Heckman, '*Imitatio* in Early Medieval Spirituality: *The Dream of the Rood*, Anselm, and Militant Christology', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 22 (2005), pp. 141-153. On Anselm's combination of emotional intensity and theological precision, see R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 99-106.

[6] As well as *c*. 1050, scholars have also tended to draw a line at *c*. 1200, the end of our period, which they regard as a moment of rupture from an epoch dominated by Latin and the monasteries, marked by the flourishing of lay and vernacular piety. See J. M. Nuth, *God's Lovers in an Age of Anxiety: The Medieval English Mystics* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2001), p. 23; R. M. Wilson, 'Three Middle English Mystics', *Essays and Studies*, 9 (1956), pp. 87-112 (p. 89). For evidence of the significance of certain lay people to the piety of earlier centuries, see Gregorio, 'Affective Spirituality', pp. 132-136 (on Alfred the Great); A. J. Frantzen, 'Spirituality and Devotion in the Anglo-Saxon Penitentials', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 22 (2005), pp. 117-128.

tradition of monasticism, with its practices of reciting the psalter, meditative reading (*lectio divina*), and the cultivation of virtue, gave the eleventh- and twelfth-century monks firm foundations upon which to build. Such synergy between the old and the new in texts concerning the *Mater Dolorosa* is especially evident in passages about the place and the power of love, *caritas*. Not only did they promote the cultivation of the virtue of charity, as their monastic forebears had done, but they also regarded it as the means by which individual contemplatives could enter into communion with the Virgin and her experience of the Crucifixion.

The meditations of authors such as Anselm and Ælred of Rievaulx (*c*. 1110-1167) laid the foundations for the mysticism of later centuries, since they intended to enable union with God and moral transformation through a communion of charity (*caritatis communionem*) with moments from the lives of Christ and his saints, especially Mary. Amongst these 'moments', which were the focal points of affective contemplation, the Crucifixion was certainly the most popular. During the Middle Ages interest in the human suffering of the God-Man grew exponentially and the Crucifixion, the most acute moment of physical and emotional pain in his life, became especially prominent.[7] The cult of the *Mater Dolorosa* may be described as the correlative devotion of this interest in the Passion, and its development received a special impetus from the writings of the English monks.[8] Anselm and later a

[7] See Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, p. 222; Bestul, *Texts of the Passion*, pp. 1, 34-62.

[8] A sign of the importance of Mary's place on Calvary in English monasticism in this period is that it seems to have been one of the most common ways in which she was represented in illuminated manuscripts. Modern catalogues show that in surviving monastic manuscripts, produced between the late-tenth and early-thirteenth centuries, the *Mater Dolorosa* featured eighteen times. For comparison, Mary featured thirteen times as one of the three Marys at the sepulchre, ten times amongst the apostles at the Ascension, and eight times at the Nativity. Half of the manuscripts showing Mary at the foot of the Cross were psalters: London, British Library MS Harley 2904, fol. 3v (Winchester, last-quarter of the tenth century); Cambridge, University Library MS Ff. I. 23, fol. 88v (Winchcombe, Gloucestershire, c. 1030-50); Rome, Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica MS Reg. lat. 12, fol. 35 (Christ Church, Canterbury, second-quarter of the eleventh century); London, British Library MS Arundel 60, f. 12v (New Minster, Winchester, c. 1060, add. 1080); London, Victoria and Albert Museum A MS 661r (Canterbury, c. 1140); London, British Library MS Cotton, Nero C. IV, fol. 22 (Cathedral Priory of St Swithun, Winchester, c. 1150); Oxford, British Library MS Douce 293 (S.C. 21867), f. 13 (northern England, third-quarter of the twelfth century); Copenhagen, Royal Library MS Thott 143 2°, f. 14v (northern England, c. 1170); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Gough Liturg. 2 (S.C. 18343), f. 28 (northern England, late-twelfth century). Three of the manuscripts were books of the Gospels: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS 869, f. 9v (Christ Church, Canterbury, c. 990-1000); New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MSS 709, f. 1v (uncertain provenance, second-quarter of the eleventh century); Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 120, f. 3v (Bury St Edmunds, c. 1130 and c. 1140). Other depictions occur in two missals/sacramentaries: Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale MS Y. 6 (274), f. 71v (uncertain provenance, c. 1020) and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 422, pp. 27-586 (p. 53) (Winchester, c. 1061); a

number of Cistercians, under the influence of Amadeus of Lausanne (*c*. 1110-1159), were amongst the first Latin writers to promote contemplation of the Marian dimension of the Crucifixion.[9] In so doing, they laid the foundations for the spirituality of later centuries, with its hallmark of fervent, sometimes overwrought, contemplation of Mary's participation in Christ's suffering and death, namely her 'co-Passion' and spiritual martyrdom.[10]

Remembering and Participating: 'Affectivity' in English Spirituality

Affective spirituality both laid the foundations for and became a specific facet of the spiritual phenomenon known as mysticism. For medieval writers, the pinnacle of mystical experience was union with God, and the purpose of affective contemplation was to inculcate the deep, spiritual self-awareness and the desire for moral transformation which were the prerequisites of mystical ascent.[11] This entailed

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pontifical: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 943, f. 4v (Christ Church, Canterbury, 975x1000); a collection of Anglo-Saxon homilies: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 421, pp. 1, 2 (p. 1; frontispiece) (unknown provenance, second-quarter of the eleventh century); and two others: Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 157, p. 77b (Worcester Cathedral Priory, c. 1130-40) and London, British Library MS Cotton, Titus D. XXVI & D. XXVII, f. 65v (New Minster, Winchester c. 1023-35). Many of these representations of the *Mater Dolorosa* have unusual and remarkable features, but one Anglo-Saxon Gospel book (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MSS 709, f. 1v) is regarded as especially significant for the way in which it anticipated later developments: 'It is one of the most moving renderings of [the Crucifixion] in English illumination, equalling the dramatic power the Crucifixion of Harley 2904… On the left, the Virgin with book in hand lovingly raises the edge of her headcloth to wipe the wound in Christ's side, the impulsiveness of her tender gesture, unparalleled in this context, anticipating the highly emotional portrayals of the Crucifixion in the following centuries.' E. Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900-1066*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander, 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1976), pp. 108-109. See also C. M. Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts, 1066-1190*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander, 3 (London: Harvey Miller, 1975). For analysis of medieval artistic representations of the *Mater Dolorosa* more generally, see A. Neff, 'The Pain of *Compassio*: Mary's Labor at the Foot of the Cross', *Art Bulletin*, 80.2 (1998), pp. 254-273.

[9] See Bestul, *Texts of the Passion*, pp. 36-40. Cf. Amadeus of Lausanne, *Homilia* V (PL 188, 1325D-1331A); trans. by G. Perigo, *Eight Homilies on the Praises of Blessed Mary*, CF 18 B (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1979).

[10] For the argument that some later devotion to the *Mater Dolorosa* which took the form of dialogues between Mary and the Crucified Christ (the so-called *Planctus beatae Mariae*) was 'overwrought', see Bestul, *Texts of the Passion*, p. 53.

[11] B. P. McGuire has described mysticism as 'an affective search for union, the merging of the individual with the foundation of its being, the source of all being'. See B. P. McGuire, '*c*. 1080-1215: culture and history', in S. Fanous and V. Gillespie, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 29-47 (p. 30). For further consideration of the meaning of mysticism, vis-à-vis union with God, see C. Davis, 'Words beyond meaning in the language of ascent and the ascent of language in medieval mystical texts', *Journal of the Australasian*

two things: first, spiritual remembering ('calling-to-mind') and imaginative participation in the lives of those who, like Mary, were vital actors in the drama of human redemption; second, reflexive engagement with their thoughts and feelings, leading to compunction or remorse, moral amendment and transformation.

Anselm's prayers, in particular, reveal a creative interplay between memory and the imagination; the memory of salvation history preserved in scripture and his own reconstructions of the specific scenes it described. In the centuries following Anselm, this proved to be a revolutionary combination, which enabled monastic leaders like the Cistercian abbot Stephen of Sawley (*d*. 1252), writing for novices in the thirteenth century, to speak of the sanctification of personal memory by the replacement of old recollections of past misdeeds with new memories of events from the Bible.[12] Although Anselm did not go as far as Stephen – nor did he posit, like Ælred, that Gospel events could be 're-lived, re-captured and appropriated'[13] in the present – he laid the foundations for such developments because he encouraged the method of imaginatively entering into biblical scenes, including the Crucifixion, by identifying with the feelings of the main characters.

Alongside memory and imagination, Richard Southern has defined the other core element of affective spirituality as 'ardent and effusive self-disclosure'.[14] By this he meant deep and heartfelt introspection inspired and stimulated by the contemplation of an event or experience from the life of Christ or one of the saints. Such experiences were the 'texts' upon which a spiritual *lectio divina* was focused; they were read, as it were, with the eyes of the soul.[15] The use of such 'texts' may also be

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Universities Modern Language Association, 106 (2006), pp. 11-24 (p. 12). For the purpose of mystical texts as 'the transformation of consciousness', see S. T. Katz, 'Introduction', in S. T. Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 6 (cf. p. 13), cited in Davies, 'Words beyond meaning', p. 11 (cf. p. 14).

[12] See Stephen of Sawley, *Speculum novitii*, ed. by E. Mikkers, 'Un *Speculum novitii* inédit d'Étienne de Salley', *Collectanea O.C.R.*, 8 (1946), pp. 17-68; trans. by J. F. O'Sullivan, *Stephen of Sawley: Treatises*, CF 36 (Kalamzoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), pp. 85-122. See also M. Cassidy-Welch, 'Confessing to Remembrance: Stephen of Sawley's *Speculum Novitii* and Cistercian Uses of Memory', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 35.1 (2000), pp. 13-27; M. J. Mills, 'Stephen of Sawley's Meditations on Our Lady's Joys and the Medieval History of the Rosary', *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, 50.4 (2015), pp. 423-439 (pp. 430-431).

[13] Henrietta Leyser, '*c.* 1080-1215: texts', in Fanous and Gillespie, *Medieval English Mysticism*, pp. 49-67 (p. 54).

[14] Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, p. 217.

[15] See DeGregorio, who has argued that 'Bede saw in Christ's crucified body the ultimate "text" upon which [affective devotion] should be focused'. DeGregorio, 'Affective Spirituality', p. 132.

explained with reference to signification as the vital function of language, especially theological language, where it is impossible for fallen human beings to fully apprehend divine realities.[16] Scriptural events, including Mary's presence on Calvary and her experience of the Cross, were comprehensible worldly signs which focused minds and hearts on the mystery of human salvation.[17] The *Mater Dolorosa* was an icon whose grief revealed to medieval contemplatives the great sacrifice of the Incarnate God. In his *Prayer to Christ*, for example, Anselm took the opportunity of contemplating Mary's grief to emphasise the truth of the Incarnation and the traumatic nature of Christ's voluntary propitiatory sacrifice:

> My most merciful Lady, what can I say about the fountains that flowed from your most pure eyes when you saw your Son before you, bound, beaten and hurt? What do I know of the flood that drenched your matchless face, when you beheld your Son, your Lord, and your God, stretched on the cross without guilt, when the flesh of your flesh was cruelly butchered by wicked men?[18]

The act of weeping and tears themselves, to which this passage refers, were amongst the physical signs associated with Mary's pain in affective literature.[19] Mary's emotional response to the Crucifixion was

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[16] For critical analysis of the function of language as providing the *signum* of higher realities (*res significata*), see Davis, 'Words beyond meaning', pp. 11-12.

[17] Although it is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting that this practice was continued well into the thirteenth century by Ælred and Baldwin's Cistercian successors. For example, Stephen of Sawley, who used Mary's bosom and breasts to signify her divine maternity and, moreover, the maternal offering she was prepared to make to Christ for human sinners. See Stephen of Sawley, *Meditationes de gaudiis gloriosae et beatae virginis Mariae*, lines 628-630. These line numbers refer to the Latin text of Stephen's treatise in André Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin: études d'histoire littéraire* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1932), pp. 339-358; trans. by O'Sullivan, CF 36, p. 36, line 57.

[18] *Domina mea misericordissima, quos fontes dicam erupisse de pudicissimis oculis, cum attenderes unicum filium tuum innocentem coram te ligari, flagellari, mactari? Quos fluctus credam perfudisse piissimum vultum, cum suspiceres eundem filium et deum et dominum tuum in cruce sine culpa extendi et carnem de carne tua ab impiis crudeliter dissecari?* Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* II, lines 48-52 (SAOp. III, p. 8); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 96, lines 92-102.

[19] See various contributions to E. Gertsman, ed., *Crying in the Middle Ages* (New York; London: Routledge, 2012). See also P. Nagy, 'Religious Weeping as Ritual in the Medieval West', *Social Analysis*, 48.2 (2004), pp. 119-137. Weeping is also an important theme in Anselm's *Prayer to St Mary Magdalen*; see Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* XVI (SAOp. III, pp. 64-67); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 201-206. Penitential weeping had been taken as a sign of 'true reform' since the time of Gregory the Great (*c*. 540-604); see G. E. Demacopoulos, *Gregory the Great: Ascetic, Pastor, and First Man of Rome* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), p. 75.

not described in scripture – which accounts for its absence from the exegesis of early writers like Ambrose of Milan (*c*. 337-397) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430) – but it was frequently reimagined by medieval authors.[20] Her experience and its intensity were evoked differently by different authors but their common purpose in doing so was to stimulate an emotional response in contemplatives. So Ælred, in *De institutione inclusarum*, invited his sister to 'draw near the Cross with the Virgin Mother' (*cum Matre virgine…accede ad crucem*) and asked her: 'What then? Will your eyes be dry as you see your most loving Lady in tears? Will not you weep as her soul is pierced by the sword of sorrow?' (*Quid ergo? Tu sine lacrymis amantissimae dominae tuae lacrymas videbis? Tu siccis manes oculis, et eius animam pertransit gladius doloris?*).[21] In this passage, Mary's tears signify more than her own pain; they also refer to the anticipated emotional response of the contemplative to her meditation.[22] As well as signs, the scriptural moments which were the foci of affective contemplation were also mirrors which reflected the spiritual condition of contemplatives back upon themselves and so inspired acute self-examination.

In Anselm's *Prayer to Christ* this introspection resulted in heartfelt desolation at his own absence from Calvary. The 'lukewarmness' (*teporem*) of his love for Christ, which he decried, was thrown into relief by the depth of the trauma experienced by Christ and his Mother in the suffering they voluntarily undertook for his redemption.[23] This effect was further intensified by the degree to which they were exalted and therefore considered to be entirely undeserving of such torments; Anselm illustrated the status of Christ by referring to him as the 'Lord of Angels' (*dominum angelorum*), whilst

[20] Augustine acknowledged that Mary may have grieved but did not draw any specific conclusions from this; see Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, 104, 13 (PL 37, 1033-1968 (1397)). Ambrose, the most influential patristic voice on this subject, claimed that Mary accepted Christ's fate stoically; see Ambrose, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*, X, 132 (PL 15, 1527D-1850D (1837C)); trans. by M. O'Carroll, *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), p. 305. Cf. Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, p. 206.

[21] Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 31, lines 1179-1180, 1181-1183 (CCCM I, p. 671); trans. by Macpherson, CF 2, p. 90.

[22] Rachel Fulton has made a similar observation about Mary's tears in Anselm's *Prayer to Christ*: 'Mary's weeping becomes the model for the contemplative's own experience of grief: she recognizes both the divinity and the innocence of her Son, crucified before her very eyes; and she experiences the rejection of her Lord as he hands her over to his servant. Her loss, as imagined by Anselm, is absolute and irrevocable, as is the gift that she made, like the Father, of her Son.' Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, pp. 191-192.

[23] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* II, line 21 (SAOp. III, p. 7).

he also extolled Mary's gentleness and purity.[24] Five times, Anselm rebuked his soul for its failure to partake of their pain, and on the fifth occasion he referred directly to the *Mater Dolorosa*: 'Why did you not share the sufferings of the most pure virgin, his worthy mother and your gentle lady?' (*Cur non es compassa castissimae virgini, dignissimae matri eius, benignissimae dominae tuae?*).[25] There arose from this a threefold lament, emphasising how Mary's trauma surpassed his own understanding: 'what can I say' (*quos…dicam*), 'What do I know' (*Quos…credam*), 'How can I judge' (*Quibus…aestimabo*).[26] The purpose of such an evocative immersion into the emotions of biblical figures was to stir up spiritual anxiety and contrition, and these phrases speak of such anxiety caused by the absence of understanding in the face of the mystery of redemption.[27]

At the heart of Anselm's affective approach to prayer was the idea that the soul of the contemplative meditated upon a biblical scene not as through a window on to eternity but rather as into a mirror, which inspired self-examination and produced a deep sense of personal inadequacy and self-abasement. Benedicta Ward has defined this process as 'seeing steadily and truly the real situation of man before his Creator, the sinner before his Redeemer', which in turn gives rise to two kinds of compunction, 'a piercing sorrow and dread' and 'longing desire for God'.[28] Both these kinds of compunction are present in Anselm's *Prayer to Christ* but only the first can be found in his meditation on the *Mater Dolorosa*. It is as though Anselm did not wish to alleviate the trauma of the Cross; Mary herself was defined by it since she was not mentioned again in the prayer, and the contemplative would

[24] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* II, line 38 (SAOp. III, p. 7). Anselm describes Mary, using a variety of superlatives, as 'most pure virgin' (*castissimae virgini*), 'worthy mother' (*dignissimae matri*), 'gentle lady' (*benignissimae dominae*); her eyes he calls 'most pure' (*pudicissimis*) and her face 'matchless' (*piissimum*). See Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* II, lines 46-50 (SAOp. III, p. 8); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 95-96, lines 89-102.

[25] *Ibid.*, lines 46-47 (SAOp. III, p. 8); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 95, lines 89-91.

[26] *Ibid.*, lines 48, 50, 52-53 (SAOp. III, p. 8); trans. Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 96, lines 93, 97, 103.

[27] On anxiety as the 'new note' introduced by Anselm into western spirituality, see Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, p. 106; cf. Leyser, *c*. 1080-1215: texts', pp. 52-53.

[28] Ward, 'Introduction', p. 54. It is unclear whether Ward meant the situation of all men (i.e. humankind) before God or the particular man (i.e. Anselm), but given that this period witnessed the emergence of a greater sense of individual identity in devotional culture, it may be most accurate to emphasise the latter. See Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, pp. 216-218; cf. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, p. 100.

be oppressed by it. Only later, when he described Christ being taken down from the Cross, did the atmosphere become less bleak.[29]

The personal and introspective character of Anselm's prayers was not entirely new to western spirituality and yet, as we explained at the beginning of this chapter, in scholarship an artificial distinction is occasionally made between a pre-Anselmian anonymising corporatism in monastic devotional culture on the one hand and a post-Anselmian individualistic approach on the other. Until recently, it was received wisdom that Anselm's prayers and meditations marked a break with the past since they were not written with a corporate and liturgical context in mind, but rather a private sphere, in which the emotions were given a greater part and the boundaries of theology and its expression were pushed. Southern was the principal architect of this thesis, to which he regarded the introspective character of Anselm's prayers as integral.[30] He argued that both externally, especially in so far as the prayers circulated under Anselm's own name,[31] and internally, in respect of their contents, there was an 'absence of anonymity', which he described as 'an important innovation'.[32]

Whilst Southern was correct to see in Anselm's prayers and meditations the shoots of a new spring in English spirituality, his argument should not be overstated. To begin with, Anselm's devotional works were not 'un-Benedictine' or in any way inimical to the piety promoted by the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*. Rather it could, and should, be argued that they rebalanced monastic spirituality in

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[29] 'Would that I with happy Joseph might have taken down my Lord from the Cross… Would that with the blessed band of women I might have trembled at the vision of angels and heard the news of the Lord's resurrection… Would that I might have heard from the angel's mouth, 'Fear not, Jesus who was crucified, whom you are seeking, is not here; he has risen.'' (*Utinam cum felice Ioseph dominum meum de cruce deposuissem… Utinam cum beatis mulieribus chorusca visione angelorum essem territus et audissem nuntium dominicae resurrectionis… Utinam, inquam, audissem ex ore angeli: nolite timere vos, Iesum quaeritis crucifixum, surrexit, non est hic!*) See Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* II, lines 56-62 (SAOp. III, p. 8); trans. by Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 96, lines 109-123.

[30] 'The environment of prayer has shifted decisively from the church to the chamber, and from communal effort to severe and lonely introspection: we have not only withdrawn from corporate worship into the privacy of the chamber; we have withdrawn into the secrecy of the soul.' Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, p. 102.

[31] The issue of authorial anonymity is complex and it might be argued that Southern did not give sufficient consideration to the operative norms within Anglo-Saxon literary culture prior to dismissing it. For a discussion of some of the complexities, see M. Swan, 'Authorship and Anonymity', in P. Pulsiano and E. M. Treharne, eds, *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), pp. 71-83.

[32] Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, p. 100.

favour of Benedict's teaching that, between services of the Divine Office, monks should pray alone 'with tears and heartfelt devotion' (*in lacrimis et intentione cordis*).[33] By bringing to the fore this element of the Benedictine experience Anselm was in fact perpetuating his own tradition up to and including its expression in Anglo-Saxon England. Bede, for instance, in his commentary on the Song of Songs, had referred to being 'inflamed with God's love until there is an effusion of tears' (*usque ad lacrymarum fusionem inflammari*).[34] Bede is seldom recognised as a spiritual author and yet, as Scott DeGregorio has persuasively argued, his writings deserve more attention as devotional works than they have hitherto received, not least because they exhibit many 'features central to the so-called "affective" tradition of eleventh- and twelfth-century spirituality'.[35] It is against this backdrop that the subsequent progress inspired by Anselm and continued by the Cistercians, especially Ælred, should be judged. The value of Southern's thesis is that it articulates the nature of this progress with a clarity, force and eloquence which remains unsurpassed in historical scholarship.

It should also be noted, in Southern's defence, that a generous reading of his work would suggest that he may have given greater credence to Anselm's Benedictine inheritance than his critics have admitted, despite the fact that he certainly understated the significance of key Anglo-Saxon figures like Bede.[36] Southern's critics have failed to balance his description of the monastic life as 'static' (promising 'no excitements of mind or body'), in which 'the individual was lost in the crowd and stripped of those eccentricities which we call his personality', with his view that this *theory* of the monastic life was probably never realised; no matter how desirable it may have been 'no monk was ever entirely sunk in this routine'.[37] At the heart of Southern's thesis is not a denial of Anselm's Benedictinism but rather an assertion that the degree to which Anselm promoted a piety focused upon

[33] *Regula Sancti Benedicti* LII, 4. For the provenance of this teaching, see Cyprian of Carthage, *De Dominica oratione*, 4-5; John Cassian, *Institutes*, II. 5, 10, 12; *Conferences*, I. 7. See Ward, 'Introduction', p. 54.

[34] Bede, *In cantica canticorum* IV, v, 17; ed. by D. Hurst, *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II. Opera Exegetica, 2B*, CCSL CXIX B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1983), pp. 165-375 (p. 298, lines 1042-1043). See DeGregorio, 'Affective Spirituality', p. 131.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

[36] See Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, p. 217.

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 213, 217.

the individual rather than the community was unprecedented.[38] This entailed, first, a retreat from the world, not just into the monastery but into 'the inner chamber of the soul' (*in cubiculum mentis tuae*).[39] Then, in spiritual secrecy the contemplative could seek God and meditate upon the lives of Christ and his saints. Hence, in Anselm's prayers, including his *Prayer to Christ* with its contemplation of the *Mater Dolorosa*, the individual soul stood alone before the one to whom it was praying, stripped of worldly presumption and aware of its own sinfulness.

One significant impact of Anselm's approach was to make this mode of contemplation accessible beyond the monastery. His prayers were more than simply 'intimate effusions',[40] offering a series of windows on to Anselm's own relationships with God and his saints. Rather, they were 'intimate scripts',[41] the performance of which was meant to give voice to the silent prayers of others' hearts. They were, as Sarah McNamer has argued, psalmic texts which echoed the Divine Office and thereby made monastic prayer forms more widely available. Southern has recognised that Anselm's prayers offered 'a complete programme of spiritual life in solitude, in the company of a few chosen disciples, and in contact with like-minded men and women, lay and clerk, throughout Europe'.[42] However, it is possible to go even further than Southern and argue that the Anselmian approach, as well as being appropriate for the laity, was actually consequent upon the influence of particular lay people.[43] Anselm articulated his devotional method most clearly of all in his correspondence with two women, Adelaide (*c*. 1055-1115), a daughter of King William I (*r*. 1066-1087), and Matilda of Tuscany (*c*. 1046-1115), to whom he also sent a collection of his prayers.[44] For Ælred, too, there can be no doubt

[38] See Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, p. 217. DeGregorio has admitted of the limitations of Bede's affective spirituality; see DeGregorio, *Affective Spirituality*, pp. 131, 132

[39] Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, 1 (SAOp. I, p. 97); cf. Mt 6:6.

[40] S. McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p. 17.

[41] *Ibid*., p. 17.

[42] Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, p. 217.

[43] Alfred the Great (*c*. 849-899) provides an Anglo-Saxon antecedent to the involvement of lay people in the production of devotional texts in later centuries. See DeGregorio, *Affective Spirituality*, pp. 133-135.

[44] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Epp*. 10 (to Adelaide), 325 (to Matilda) (SAOp. III, pp. 113-144; V, pp. 256-257); trans. by W. Fröhlich, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, 3 vols, CS 96, 97, 142 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990-1994). See Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, pp. 111-112.

that a woman, his sister, inspired (as well as received) his reflections on the *Mater Dolorosa*. These facts, amongst others, are leading scholars to argue more frequently and vociferously for the recognition of the role of women as important players in the development of medieval piety.[45] Certainly, appreciation of the development of English spirituality in this period would be impoverished without the acknowledgement that medieval women were integral to the changes which took place. Alongside the monastic writers, they contributed to the rise to prominence of affectivity, with its two elements (remembering and imagining, and introspection), which amounted to a paradigm shift in western spirituality, clearly seen in the bourgeoning cult of the *Mater Dolorosa*.

Mary's Co-Passion and Mediation: Theological Background to Mater Dolorosa

Devotion to Mary's suffering at the foot of the Cross was not a purely experiential matter, one step removed from theology. On the contrary, it was borne out of changes in theologians' interest in Mary and their willingness to fill the gaps left by the absence of scriptural detail on this subject with their own remarkable constructions. In scripture, only John's Gospel recorded that Mary was present on Calvary (Jn 19:26-27) and then only that she was entrusted by Christ into the care of the Beloved Disciple, whom she in turn received as a son (Jn 19:26, 27). With this sole exception, John did not distinguish at all between Mary and the other women who accompanied her – Mary Magdalen and Mary of Cleopas (Jn 19:25) – and nor did he record that she uttered a single word. The consequence of this, to which we have already alluded, was that for a long time, until the ninth century in fact, western theologians showed very little interest in the *Mater Dolorosa*.

By *c*. 1050, however, old constraints held less sway and theologians, including several English Benedictine and Cistercian monks, took advantage of this new found freedom to explore in earnest two aspects of the Marian dimension of the Crucifixion. They suggested that Mary experienced the pain of Christ's redemptive death in the form of a 'co-Passion', and they concluded from this (as well as her willingness to receive the Beloved Disciple as a son) that Mary was a special kind of intermediary

[45] See, for example, McNamer, *Affective Meditation*, p. 7; Bestul, 'Antecedents', p. 10.

between Christ and the world. In time, both of these developments gave rise to new Marian titles: *Co-Redemptrix* and *Mediatrix*. At this point, it is important to reflect that these ideas did not emerge in the west out of nowhere but that they were already partially developed in Byzantine theology, parts of which were transmitted to the west – including England – in the form of Latin translations of Greek texts and artistic inspiration.[46] In what follows, we attempt to draw out some of the Byzantine foundations for the ideas of Mary's co-Passion and mediation as they developed later in the west and, especially, as they were articulated in the writings of our English monks.

Mary's co-Passion is the idea of her traumatic personal and spiritual participation in the redemptive death of the Christ upon the Cross, and it became a foundational tenet of the belief that she co-redeemed fallen humanity (Mary *Co-Redemptrix*).[47] In the later Middle Ages, Mary's suffering at the foot of the Cross was often related to the prophecy of Simeon, 'And thy own soul a sword shall pierce' (Lk 2:35), and as the idea of the co-Passion developed, these two events – Simeon's prophetic utterance and the Crucifixion – became integrally related to one another. In the west, though, this development was by no means inevitable and only a rudimentary groundwork had been laid before 1050.

Apart from a description by Augustine's contemporary, Paulinus of Nola (*c*. 354-430), of Mary suffering a martyrdom of love at the foot of the Cross, there were few attempts in the west to reflect

[46] Calls for greater recognition of the significance of Byzantium for theological developments in the west, include: Shoemaker, 'Mary at the Cross', pp. 570, 589-606; S. Sticca, *The Planctus Mariae in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages*, trans. by J. R. Berrigan (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 32. Cf. Fulton, who recognises the challenges of clarifying the lines of transmission between Byzantium and the west; Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, pp. 3-4, 216-218. For the Byzantine influence on representations of the *Mater Dolorosa* in western art, see Neff, 'Pain of *Compassio*', p. 254. For a consideration of the impact of Greek ideas in England see, also, chapter 1 of this thesis.

[47] 'Schuler…has rightly cautioned against a tendency to impose a concept of coredeemer on medieval and Renaissance paintings. The doctrine was complex and controversial; few medieval theologians called Mary outright *coredemptrix*, reserving the title of redemptor for Christ alone. Many, however, saw Mary's obedience to God's will as necessary and beneficial to God's plan of salvation. In her obedience to God's will and…in her maternal love of mankind, she is a helpmate, protector, and intercessor.' Neff, 'Pain of *Compassio*', p. 271, n. 16, referring to C. M. Schuler, *The Sword of Compassion: Images of the Sorrowing Virgin in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1989), pp. 310-328. See also Neff, 'Pain of *Compassio*', p. 255. Like Neff, we too are referring to a doctrine in its infancy and it would be a mistake to overstate its maturity at this time.

theologically upon her experience of the Crucifixion.[48] Augustine, for instance, had little to say aside from explaining that the Beloved Disciple, John, received Mary into his home at the request of Christ ('behold your mother'; *ecce mater tua*; Jn 19:27) as an expression of respect for parents.[49] On the only occasion when Augustine did refer to Mary's suffering, in his commentary on Psalm 104:18 ('They humbled his feet in fetters: the iron pierced his soul'; *adflixerunt in conpede pedes eius in ferrum venit anima eius*), it was simply to acknowledge that she grieved; he did not draw any conclusions from his observation.[50]

Such reluctance to explore the theme of Mary's co-Passion stemmed from an emphasis on the sole mediatorship of Christ since it was feared that any participation of Christ's mother in the accomplishment of the salvific purpose of the Crucifixion would have detracted from his own action and accomplishment. Such a consequence, however unintended, would certainly have contradicted the approach usually taken in the Mariology of the early church, which was to safeguard rather than share the privileges of Christ. Hence, for example, the decision following the Council of Ephesus (431AD) to declare Mary *Theotokos* ('God-bearer') was not a move to elevate her but rather to secure his divinity.[51] Certainly, as Brian Reynolds has argued, 'the fact that [Augustine] attributed no importance to Mary's presence on Calvary, was a major factor in discouraging further consideration of her role in the redemption in the patristic west. In fact, no theologian took up the question for several centuries.'[52]

Devastatingly for the idea of the co-Passion, Augustine's influence cast a pall over theology and exegesis of John 19 until the ninth century; Alcuin of York (*c*. 735-804), for example, interpreted Christ's words to his mother and John from the Cross as little more than moral instruction.[53] Fulton has surely been correct to say that given the extraordinary potential of this narrative such an interpretation was '[a] pale lesson, indeed, if a socially commendable one'.[54] The consequence of all of this was that

[48] See Paulinus of Nola, *Ep*. L, 17 (PL 61, 408B-417A (415B-C)).

[49] See Augustine of Hippo, *In Ioannis evangelium, tractatus CXVIII* (PL 35, 1947-1950 (1950)).

[50] See Augustine of Hippo, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, 104, 13 (PL 37, 1033-1968 (1397)).

[51] See, also, chapter 5 of this thesis.

[52] B. K. Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven: Marian Doctrine and Devotion, Image and Typology in the Patristic and Medieval Periods*, vol. 1, 'Doctrine and Devotion' (New York: New City Press, 2012), p. 266.

[53] See Alcuin of York, *Commentaria in S. Joannis evangelium* (PL 100, 733-1008B (984A-C)).

[54] Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, p. 209.

the main emphasis in reflections upon Mary's experience of the Crucifixion before the eleventh century was her stoic acceptance of Christ's fate. In this, the most dominant patristic influence was Ambrose, who wrote in a homily on Luke's Gospel:

> Jesus did not need a helper for the redemption of all, he who said, 'I am become as a man without help, free among the dead'. So he welcomed the love of a mother, but sought no help of man.[55]

In marked contrast to the west, however, Byzantine theologians attributed a much greater degree of participation in the Crucifixion to Mary. Eastern theologians did not immediately give redemptive significance to her role but, from the time of Origen (*c*. 182-254), the Crucifixion was spoken of as the fulfilment of Simeon's prophecy.[56] Rather than portraying Mary as a stoic observer, they described her as a grief-stricken mother who took comfort in her contemplation of the image of Christ in his beloved disciple. Ephrem the Syrian (*c*. 306-373), for instance, wrote in a hymn on the Nativity: 'The disciple became an eloquent effigy of he who had remained silent and without words when he was being tried. […] Mutually admiring each other, with their gaze they saw you, O Lord, in themselves.'[57] The most striking element of these early eastern reflections was the possibility that Simeon's words found fulfilment in Mary's *un*certainty; the idea that her trauma deprived her of hope and caused her to doubt. Cyril of Alexandria (*c*. 376-444) – a great champion of Mary's maternal dignity – was especially critical of Mary's reaction on Calvary in his commentary on John.[58] Fundamentally, Cyril epitomised the eastern patristic approach to the Crucifixion, however, because he also attributed an emotional response to Mary:

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[55] *Sed Jesus non egebat adjutore ad omnium redemptionem, qui dixit: Factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio, inter mortuos liber. Suscepit quidem matris affectum, sed non quaesivit hominis auxilium*. Ambrose, *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*, X, 132 (PL 15, 1527D-1850D (1837C)); trans. by O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 305. Cf. Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, p. 206.

[56] See Origen, *In Lucam*, 17, 6-7 (PG 13, 1845).

[57] Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Nativity*, 25, 2-9; trans. by Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 250.

[58] For a consideration of Cyril as a champion of the Virgin, see chapter 5 of this thesis.

> …you need not doubt that she admitted into her mind thoughts of the following kind: 'I gave birth to the one who is mocked on the tree. Perhaps in saying that he was the true Son of almighty God he was mistaken.'[59]

Following Cyril, the idea that Mary responded emotionally to the Crucifixion became more dominant, reaching a pivotal point with Romanos the Melodist (*d. c.* 560) in the sixth century, the pioneer of the genre of Marian laments (so-called *Planctus Mariae* in the later Latin west).[60] These often took the form of dialogues between Mary and Christ, and their purpose was to bring the reader into the trauma of the Crucifixion, so as to meditate upon the perfect example of Mary. For Romanos, unlike Cyril, Mary was brave and faithful despite her fear, anguish and lack of understanding.[61] Notably, too, she asked to be with Christ during his final hours, not explicitly to participate in his redemptive act, but at least to identity with his suffering by a martyrdom of her own: 'I am overcome, my child, overcome by love, and truly I cannot bear it, that I am to be in my room while you are on the cross, I within my house, you within the tomb. Therefore let me go with you, for it heals me to look upon you'.[62]

The precise way in which these ideas developed in the east between the sixth and tenth centuries is disputed, not least because the attribution of an important source – a *Life of the Virgin* – to Maximus the Confessor (*c.* 580-662) has recently been called into question by Philip Booth.[63] The author of the *Life* wrote that 'the blessed Mother was immersed in suffering and suffered with him, according to the

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[59] For the full passage, see Cyril, *Commentary on John*, 12 (PG 74, 661B-664A); trans. by R. Price, 'The *Theotokos* and the Council of Ephesus', in C. Maunder, ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Burns and Oates, 2008), pp. 89-103 (pp. 96-97). For comment, see R. Price, 'Theotokos: The Title and its Significance in Doctrine and Devotion', in S. J. Boss, ed., *Mary: The Complete Resource* (London: Continuum, 2009), pp. 56-73 (pp. 64-65); Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, pp. 252-253.

[60] See Shoemaker, 'Mary at the Cross', pp. 577-578.

[61] See Romanos the Melodist, *Mary at the Cross*, in C. A. Trypanis, ed. and trans., *The Penguin Book of Greek Verse* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1971), pp. 405-414. Note that this dialogue is not set on Calvary but in advance of the Passion; see Shoemaker, 'Mary at the Cross', p. 578. Cf. Romanos the Melodist, *On the Presentation*, 13, in Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, p. 332.

[62] Romanos the Melodist, *Mary at the Cross*, in Trypanis, ed. and trans., *Penguin Book of Greek Verse*, p. 412.

[63] See *The Life of the Virgin by Maximus the Confessor*, ed. and trans. by S. J. Shoemaker (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2012); cf. P. Booth, 'On the Life of the Virgin attributed to Maximus the Confessor', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 66.1 (2015), pp. 149-203.

order of nature, above all because of the love she had for him'.[64] If Booth's proposal is correct, however, that this *Life* was in fact composed in the (late-) tenth century, then the development of the idea of Mary's co-Passion in the east from Romanos to John the Geometer (*d. c*. 990) needs to be mapped anew.[65] Nevertheless, by the tenth century, the idea that Mary suffered at her son's Crucifixion was well established in the east. John the Geometer, who has been described as the 'most important exponent of Byzantine Mariology in the tenth century',[66] was 'the first commentator to draw out the theological implications of attributing a more active dynamic to Mary's maternal suffering'.[67] In his own *Life of Mary*, John offered thanks to Christ:

> …that you have not only given yourself as a ransom for us, but, after yourself, have given also your mother as a ransom at every moment, so that you indeed have died for us once, but she died a million times in her will, cauterized in her heart just as for you, so also for those whom she, just like the Father, has given her own Son and knew him to be delivered unto death.[68]

These words show that by the tenth century, eastern theologians had advanced considerably in their understanding of Mary's suffering at the foot of the Cross, to a belief in her co-Passion. Ironically, however, they did not continue to dominate its history since, after many centuries of neglect, further developments occurred in the medieval west.[69] In the ninth century, Paschasius Radbertus (*c*. 785-865) laid the groundwork for later progress by speculating in *Cogitis me* (a work he passed off as by Jerome, *c*. 347-420) that Mary: 'was more than a martyr…because she suffered with her soul, and certainly her love was by a long measure stronger than her own death, because the Virgin made Christ's death her own' (*...plus quam martyr fuit. Nimirum quod ejus dilectio amplius fortis, quam mors fuit, quia mortem*

[64] *The Life of the Virgin*, 73, in Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 257.

[65] For an account of the development of the idea of Mary's co-Passion in the east between the sixth and tenth centuries, see Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, pp. 257-263. Since Reynolds was writing before Philip Booth published his article questioning the provenance of the *Life of the Virgin* he accepted that it originated with Maximus the Confessor (pp. 257-259).

[66] Graef and Thompson, *Mary*, p. 154.

[67] Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, pp. 262-263.

[68] John the Geometer, *Life of Mary*, 60, in Graef and Thompson, *Mary*, pp. 154-155.

[69] See Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 262.

Christi suam fecit).[70] For Paschasius, Mary identified with the Passion of Christ not merely as a natural reflection of their mother-son intimacy but as a partaker in the same salvific work.

With Paschasius, Mary nearly became *Co-Redemptrix* but it was not until the eleventh century, when Anselm composed his prayers, that the idea flourished. Whilst eleventh-century reflections were not as extravagant as those of later periods, they nevertheless affirmed the cooperation of Christ and his mother in the work of redemption. Gottschalk of Limburg (*d*. 1098), for example, suggested in a sermon on the Virgin: 'The more dishonour he endured the greater the wounds inflicted on your heart too. With him you drank the chalice of the Passion'.[71] Michael O'Carroll has described Gottschalk as one of several eleventh-century theologians who 'ushers in the age of St. Anselm'[72] and, certainly, he can be credited with bringing together the two extraordinary beliefs about Mary which are the subject of this discussion, the idea of the co-Passion and the doctrine of *Mediatrix*, which would underpin the illustrious Bec monk's Marian prayers.[73]

The understanding of Mary as *Mediatrix* has been described as the 'correlative doctrine' of the portrayal of her as the *Mater Dolorosa* in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, since it emerged and was clarified in 'creative tension' with the subjective experience of her faithful and traumatic experience at the foot of the Cross by medieval Christians.[74] In short, the *Mater Dolorosa*, standing between the Crucifixion, the event of human redemption, and the human community (represented by the Beloved Disciple), became a symbol of Mary's overall place in the economy of salvation: between her Son and the world. The doctrine of *Mediatrix* entails that Mary necessarily occupies the ground between the

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[70] Paschasius Radbertus, *Cogitis me*, 14 (PL 30, 122C-142D (138B)). See C. Lambot, 'L'Homélie du Pseudo-Jérôme sur l'Assomption et l'Évangile de la Nativité de Marie d'après une lettre inédit d'Hincmar', *Revue Bénédictine*, 46 (1934), pp. 265-282.

[71] Gottschalk (or Godescalcus) of Limburg, *Sermon on the BVM*, in Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 270.

[72] O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 158.

[73] See O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 159; cf. Graef and Thompson, *Mary*, pp. 162-164. On the doctrine of *Mediatrix*, Gottschalk declared, prefiguring Bernard of Clairvaux: 'The manifold fullness of grace, which we have all received, was wholly poured on you and through you by many streams transmitted'. Gottschalk, in O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 159; cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermo in nativitate B. V. Mariae (De aquaeductu)* (PL 183, 437-448B); trans. by Anon., *St Bernard's Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Devon: Augustine Publishing Co., 1984), pp. 79-103.

[74] J. Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 125; cf. p. 136.

believer and their salvation, Christ. As his mother, she assented to his Incarnation so that he could redeem fallen humanity and as his queen she reigns at his right-hand in heaven, dispensing divine grace and interceding for those who pray to her.

The title *Mediatrix* first appeared in the west in the second half of the eighth century, in a sermon for the Assumption attributed to Paul the Deacon (*d. c.* 799).[75] However, its foundational claim, that Mary occupied a central place in the outworking of God's salvific purpose, as the one without whom it would not have been possible, has a more ancient and venerable lineage. It can be traced back to the Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr (*c.* 100-165) and Irenaeus of Lyons (*d. c.* 202), who understood Mary as the New Eve, in whose obedient acceptance of the divine maternity at the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38) the disobedience of the 'Mother of all the Living' (*mater esset cunctorum viventium*; Gen 3:20) was recapitulated. 'The knot of Eve's disobedience,' wrote Irenaeus, 'was untied by Mary's obedience. What Eve bound through her unbelief, Mary loosed by her faith.'[76] Of course, in the order of salvation Mary's activity was categorically subordinate to and subsumed within the redemptive action of Christ, just as the offence of Eve was less than the original sin of Adam.[77] Yet, from this early stage in the second century AD, she was recognised as having been vital to the unfolding of human redemption as a causal agent of the Incarnation, in obedient cooperation with God. As Jerome wrote with unequivocal directness: 'Death through Eve: life through Mary' (*Mors per Evam: vita per Mariam*).[78]

Aside from this statement, though, there was limited theological reflection on Mary as the bearer of life amongst the western patristic theologians and nowhere, it seems, was there perceived to be a synergy (or correlation) between this and an understanding of her as *Mediatrix*. Indeed, Augustine,

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[75] See Paul the Deacon, *Homilia XIV, In Assumptione*, in Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, pp. 194-195.

[76] Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, III, 22. 4 (PG 7, 960); trans. by L. Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco, NC: Ignatius Press, 1999), p. 54. For Gambero, writing towards the end of the twentieth century, the influence of Irenaeus on later formulations of the doctrine of *Mediatrix* was clear: 'Present-day doctrine about Mary's collaboration in the redemption of man and the mediation of divine grace has its distant but discernible roots in the teaching of the great bishop of Lyons.' Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, p. 56.

[77] See Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, p. 48.

[78] Jerome, *Ep.* XXII, 21 (PL 22, 394-425 (408)). Cf. 'By sharing Christ's suffering and death, Mary takes part in Christ's salvation of mankind. As Christ is the new Adam, she is the new Eve, helping to repair the fall of man.' Neff, 'The Pain of *Compassio*', p. 255.

in his treatment of the Eve-Mary typology, did not even distinguish clearly between Mary herself and other New Testament women, especially Mary Magdalen, whom he also regarded as having recapitulated Eve's sin by announcing the Resurrection:[79] 'Because humanity fell through the female sex, humanity was restored through the female sex; because a virgin gave birth to Christ and a woman announced his resurrection.'[80] As these words suggest, for the western Fathers Mary's salvific role was linked solely to her divine maternity, not her place at the foot of the Cross. Nor were they led from the idea of Mary as a key figure in salvation history as the New Eve to the view that she offered a special kind of mediation. Consequently, the idea of Mary's twofold mediation – of Christ himself and his grace – did not feature prominently in early western theology.

This was in marked contrast to the east, where the idea developed rapidly and was expressed in increasingly extravagant terms. Early uses of the Greek term equivalent to *Mediatrix*, *μεσιτευουσα* ('mesiteuousa'),[81] occurred in a homily on the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12; cf. Lk 6:20-22) by Gregory of Nyssa (*c*. 335-394)[82] and a homily on the Annunciation by Basil of Seleucia (*d*. *c*. 460),[83] whilst Proclus of Constantinople (*d*. *c*. 446) described Mary as 'the only bridge between God and men'.[84] Romanos the Melodist, in particular, offered a powerful evocation of Mary's intercessory power in his first Christmas hymn and his famous meditation on the Crucifixion, in which she was presented conversing with her dying son who asked her to intercede for humanity's first parents: 'You know what I say – therefore do not weep, mother; rather cry out: 'Take pity on Adam, and show compassion to Eve, my son, my God.''[85]

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[79] See Mt 28:1-10; Lk 24:1-10; cf. Mk 16:1-10; Jn 20:1-18.

[80] *Quia per sexum femineum cecidit homo, per sexum femineum reparatus est homo, quia virgo Christum pepererat, femina resurrexisse nuntiabat*. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* CCXXXII, 2 (PL 38, 1107-1112 (1108)); cf. Augustine of Hippo, *Sermo* XLV, 5 (PL 38, 262-270 (266)).

[81] See O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 240.

[82] Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Beatitudes* I (PG 44, 1204D). This early reference may not have been noticed before.

[83] See Basil of Seleucia, *In SS. Deiparae Ann*. (PG 85, 444A-B).

[84] Proclus of Constantinople, *Homily in Praise of Holy Mary* (PG 65, 680C-692B). See E. Schwartz, ed., *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, issu Societatis scientiarum Argentoratensis* (Berol & Co.: 1914-); for a partial English translation, see Graef and Thompson, *Mary*, p. 80.

[85] Romanos the Melodist, *Mary at the Cross*, in Trypanis, ed. and trans., *The Penguin Book of Greek Verse*, p. 409. See Romanos the Melodist, *On the Nativity* 2, in P. Maas and C. A. Trypanis, eds, *Sancti Romani melodi: cantica genuina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 9-16 (pp. 10-11).

The most important eastern thinker on the subject was Germanus of Constantinople (*c*. 634-733), who has been described as 'the doctor of Mary's universal mediation'[86] and whose language, Reynolds has argued, 'anticipates the fervent devotion of western Mariology in the later Middle Ages'.[87] Whilst the east continued to develop its understanding of Mary's mediation after Germanus – rising to its greatest rhetorical heights with Theophanes of Nicaea in the fourteenth century – it was his corpus of homilies which circulated in the west and may have influenced the development of a western doctrine of *Mediatrix* which began to be articulated between the ninth and eleventh centuries.[88] To offer just one illustration, in his first homily on the Dormition, Germanus addressed Mary thus:

> No one is filled with the knowledge of God except through you, all-holy One; no one is saved but through you, Mother of God; no one is free of danger but through you, Virgin Mother; no one is redeemed but through you, Mother of God; no one ever received mercy gratuitously except through you, who have received God. […] That is why your Christian people, rightly recognizing its own situation, confidently puts into your hands the office of imploring God on its behalf.[89]

In this homily, there is both the sense of a distance separating Mary and human sinners, which was characteristic of eastern theology (influenced, perhaps, by an Imperial framework in which the empress was set apart) but would later be challenged in the west,[90] and a clear affirmation of her mediation. In respect of the latter, Germanus' words could not have been further from the cautious and strictly circumscribed theology of the patristic and early-medieval west.

The west only began to catch-up with the east in the ninth century, when the most common statements on Mary's mediation were to be found in prayers. These, in contrast to the rhetoric of eastern homilies, were characterised by self-abasement, tenderness and a new perception of the closeness of

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[86] O'Carroll, *Theotokos*, p. 240.

[87] Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 175.

[88] On the transmission of Germanus' homilies to the west, see Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 177. Details are lacking; there is still work to be done in tracing the precise route(s) from east to west.

[89] Germanus of Constantinople, *First Homily on the Dormition*, 8; trans. by B. J. Daley, *On the Dormition of Mary: Early Patristic Homilies* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's, 1998), pp. 160-161.

[90] See Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 186.

Mary to the human community. In the Anglo-Saxon *Book of Cerne*, for example, Mary was referred to as the world's mediator with the unusual title *interpellatrix* (literally 'the woman who interrupts')[91] and in a famous Carolingian prayer, also from the ninth century but preserved in eleventh-century Winchester, she was addressed in these words:

> …I beseech you, most merciful lady, by whom the whole world has been saved, intercede for me, polluted and altogether befouled by sin, who deserve nothing but eternal punishments for my iniquities, that by your merits, most splendid Virgin, I may obtain an everlasting kingdom.[92]

The significance of these prayers is that they marked a turning point in the history of western understandings of Mary's mediation; the importance of the Crucifixion as a paradigm against which the doctrine would be worked out was not yet apparent but the kernel of the idea had found its way into the west, where it would subsequently flourish in theology as well as liturgy. The writings of Fulbert of Chartres (*c*. 960-1028) were a high point in the theological outworking of the principle of Mary's universal mediation before 1050. For him, as his sermon for her Nativity shows, Mary was the unshakable and constant Mother of Mercy, the hope of salvation for sinners and an example to be contemplated:

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[91] H. Barré, *Prières Anciennes de l'occident à la Mère du Saveur: des origines à saint Anselme* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1963), p. 67; for comment, see Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, pp. 195-196. Cf. A. B. Kuypers, ed., *The Prayer Book of Aedeluald the Bishop, Commonly Called the Book of Cerne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902). The term *interpellatrix* also occurred in a sermon probably inaccurately attributed to Fulgentius of Ruspe (*c*. 462-527) and a prayer spuriously attributed to Anselm. See Fulgentii Episcopi, *Sermo* XXI (PL 65, 887A-889A (887B)); Anselmi Cantuariensis, *Oratio* CLVII (PL 219, 510).

[92] *...obsecro te, misericordissima, per quam totus salvatus est mundus, intercede pro me spurcissimo et cunctis iniquitatibus foedo, ut qui ex meis iniquitatibus nihil aliud dignus sum quam aeternum subire supplicium, tuis, virgo splendidissima, salvatus meritis per[h]enne consequar regnum. Amen*. *Singularis Meriti*, in Barré, *Prières Anciennes*, pp. 75-76; cf. Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 196. On the preservation and dissemination of the *Singularis Meriti*, see *Ælfwine's Prayerbook (London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii)*, Henry Bradshaw Society, vol. 108, ed. by B. Günzel (London: For the Henry Bradshaw Society by the Boydell Press, 1993); M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 110-111, 114, 120.

> All those who adore Christ, rowing through the waves of this world, need to turn their gaze to this star of the sea, that is, to Mary, who is very close to God, celestial pole of universe, directing the course of their lives by contemplating her example. Whoever behaves in this way will not be buffeted by the winds of vainglory, will not be smashed on the rocks of adversity, nor will they be swallowed up by the turbulent whirlwind of pleasures, but will happily reach the port of eternal calm.[93]

This laid the groundwork for the full flowering of the doctrine of *Mediatrix* in the course of subsequent centuries. Indeed, by the time Anselm sent his three Marian prayers to Gundulf in 1072[94] a consensus was already building around the doctrine of Mediatrix as it was summarised in a simple phrase by Peter Damian (*c*. 1007-1072): 'As the Son of God has deigned to descend to us through you, so we also must come to him through you' (*quatenus sicut per te Dei Filius dignatus est ad nostra descendere, ita et nos per te ad ejus valeamus consortium pervenire*).[95] This was the position of western theology by the mid-eleventh century and the backdrop to the reflections of the English monks who themselves affirmed the doctrine of *Mediatrix* and brought it closer to the cult of the *Mater Dolorosa*. Whilst Anselm did not explicitly teach that Mary was either *Mediatrix* or *Co-Redemptrix*, he had a high view of both her intercession and her participation in the redemptive act of Christ. Both of these were predicated upon her status as the woman of mercy, the female counterpart and handmaiden of the New Adam in the order of salvation. Christ was *misericordissime* and Mary was *misericordissima*.[96] In this way, Anselm both remained faithful to the patristic tradition of exegesis which viewed Eve as a type of Mary and

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[93] *Simili modo, fratres, oportet universos Christicolas, inter fluctus hujus saeculi remigantes, attendere maris stellam hanc, id est Mariam, quae supremo rerum cardini Deo proxima est, et respectu exempli ejus cursum vitae dirigere. Quod qui fecerit non jactabitur vanae gloriae vento, nec frangetur scopulis adversorum, nec absorbebitur scyllaea voragine voluptatum, sed prospere veniet ad portum quietis aeternae*. Fulbert of Chartres, *Sermo* IV, *De nativitate beatissimae Mariae virginis* (PL 141, 320B-324B (322A-B)); trans. by Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, pp. 202-203.

[94] See R. W. Southern, 'Foreword', in Ward, *Prayers and Meditations*, pp. 9-15 (p. 12).

[95] Peter Damian, *Sermo* XLVI (PL 144, 748B-761C (761B-C)).

[96] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* II, lines 21, 48 (SAOp. III, pp. 7, 8). For analysis of the concepts of *Mater Dolorosa* and *Mater Misericordiae*, and their relationship, see E. Duffy, 'Mater Dolorosa, Mater Misericordiae', Aquinas Lecture 1988, *New Blackfriars*, 69.816 (1988), pp. 210-227.

also developed this approach, seeing her as the mediator of divine mercy just as Eve was a bringer of divine judgement.[97]

In Anselm's theology, mercy was a powerful and challenging concept. Whilst not an emotion itself it bore a remarkable likeness to the emotions because it implied relationship; just as one felt love or hatred for another (or indeed the self), so one gave or received mercy. Anselm found this especially problematic for his doctrine of the impassibility of God, recognising that it was impossible to reconcile the kinds of sympathetic feelings which are the basis of a merciful response with the idea of an absolutely transcendent divine being. In order to circumvent this obstacle, he proposed that mercy should be viewed from two angles, the divine and the human: whilst human beings experience God as mercy, he argued, God himself does not 'experience any feeling of compassion for misery' (*nulla miserias compassione afficeris*).[98] In light of such a clear statement of the detachment of God from human woe, it is perhaps easier for the modern mind to comprehend the appeal to an accessible and tender figure, Mary, to whom a penitent sinner might have recourse.[99] In the person of the *Mater Dolorosa* – whom Anselm called 'reconciler of the world' (*mundi reconciliatrix*) and 'my most merciful Lady' (*Domina mea misericordissima*) – the mercy of God became tangible.[100]

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[97] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo* II, 8 (SAOp. II, pp. 102-104).

[98] Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*, 8 (SAOp. I, p. 106); trans. by M. J. Charlesworth, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. by B. Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 82-104 (p. 91).

[99] Eamon Duffy regards this interpretation as something of a misreading of the intention underlying medieval texts which call Mary 'Mother of Mercy', resulting from the imposition of what he describes as our 'post-Enlightenment notions of meaning and truth'. Duffy's thesis is an admirable attempt to reclaim medieval Mariology from the accusation that it rested upon a 'defective Christology' and he uses Anselm cleverly to support his judgement that '[Mary] is not the bridge we must cross before we can draw near to [Christ], but the bridge by which he has already chosen once and for all to draw near to us. Her symbolic function in the cult both of Mater Dolorosa and Mater Misericordiae is to stand as assurance that God indeed has become of one kind with us, and is kindly disposed towards us.' We suggest, however, that Duffy's argument itself involves the imposition of a contemporary preference to emphasise the benevolence of God, leaving it open to accusation of anachronism. Surely the answer lies in seeing Mary, as the medieval theologians saw her, as a channel through which the mercy of God flowed with particular abundance; it was God's mercy that she dispensed, and certainly not at the expense of Christ himself being merciful as well as just. See Duffy, 'Mater Dolorosa', pp. 210-215.

[100] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VI, line 55 (SAOp. III, p. 17); *Oratio* II, line 48 (SAOp. III, p. 8). Cf. Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, p. 204.

A Communion of Charity: Mary's Spiritual Martyrdom

The writings of our English monks testify to developments in both the theology and the spirituality of the cult of *Mater Dolorosa*. Unfortunately, scholars have tended to dichotomise the theological and the devotional elements of the western church's historical understanding of Mary's place at the foot of the Cross. Reynolds, for instance, has suggested that, on the one hand, there were sermons and commentaries which were the mode in which theological speculation occurred, whilst, on the other hand, there were versified lamentations (known as *Planctus Mariae*) which were primarily 'intended to encourage empathetic meditation on the Passion…little concerned with theological considerations'.[101] However, this assessment is found wanting in light of the writings of the eleventh- and twelfth-century English monks, which do not fit comfortably into one or other of Reynolds' categories. Whilst as sermons and formal theological treatises they conform to his first category, they also belong to the genre of devotional literature because they were composed in and intended for a monastic context in which theology and devotion were held together in the tradition of affective contemplation. For example, whilst Ælred of Rievaulx's *De institutione inclusarum* described Mary in theological terms as the 'reconciliation of sinners' (*peccatorum reconciliatio*),[102] it also invited his sister to 'weep as her soul is pierced by the sword of sorrow' (*Tu siccis mane oculis, et eius animam pertransit gladius doloris?*).[103] This combination of theology and spirituality was characteristic of the monks' works and, most powerfully of all, their examination of the place and power of love (*caritas*) in Mary's experience of the Crucifixion.

For the English Cistercians, the Virgin Mary was an icon of charity. 'Amid all the ranks of the saints', wrote John of Forde (*c*. 1150-1214), 'the first place for humility, purity and tender love is held by the blessed virgin, the mother of Jesus, and in the same way, she shines out gloriously, above all God's lovers, for the greatness of her charity' (*Beata virgo mater Iesu sicut inter omnia sanctorum*

[101] Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 268.

[102] Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 26, line 762 (CCCM I, p. 659). Cf. Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* 6, line 55 (SAOp. III, p. 17)

[103] *Ibid.*, 31, lines 1182-1183 (CCCM I, p. 671); trans. by Macpherson, CF 2, p. 90.

agmina humilitatis, pudicitiae et pietatis obtinet principatum, ita et in caritatis eminentia cunctis Deum diligentibus gloriosa praefulget).[104] This was also held to be the case, in a special way, for the *Mater Dolorosa*. According to John, the Crucifixion was a great act of charity and the physical position of each of the biblical protagonists in relation to the Cross (the Virgin, John, Mary Magdalen, Mary of Cleopas) was determined by the degree to which they merited to share in the mystery.[105] Not only did John distinguish Mary from the others as sharing in the charity of Christ in a unique way, but he also regarded her – in the tradition of Hrabanus Maurus (*c*. 780-856)[106] – as having been consoled where she stood throughout the experience by divine charity: 'the sword had already pierced through her soul, but to prevent it from striking too violently and freely, she had for a while to control the fierce attack of its fury by gazing steadily at the everlasting love of God' (*Sane ne gladius qui iam in illa hora pertransierat animam eius liberius in eam atque immoderatius grassaretur, necesse utique habebat tanti aestus intemperiem aeternae caritatis Dei contemplatione aliquantisper moderari*).[107]

For present purposes, charity may be understood as the enabling virtue of affective prayer. The very act of experiencing a biblical scene, such as the Crucifixion, with or through its protagonists required a 'communion of charity' (*caritatis communionem*) with them. This unusual phrase comes from a letter of Anselm to a little-known but virtuous Norman noblewoman, Frodelina, in which he requested her friendship even though they had never met, so that they might grow in virtue together by mutual inspiration.[108] At one level, Anselm's entreaty to Frodelina conformed to the 'traditional pattern' of Christian friendship, which may be described as 'the union of the souls of good men in the

[104] John of Forde, *Sermo* LXX, 1, lines 9-12, in *Ioannis de Forda: Super Extremam Partem Cantici Canticorum Sermones CXX, Sermones LXX-CXX*, ed. by E. Mikkers and H. Costello, CCCM XVIII (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), pp. 489-494 (p. 489); trans. by W. M. Beckett, *John of Ford: Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, vol. 5, CF 45 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1984), pp. 96-106 (p. 96).

[105] See John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 5 (CCCM XVII, p. 217).

[106] See Hrabanus Maurus, *Opusculum de passione Domini*, 6 (PL 112, 1425-1430D (1428B-C)), in Reynolds, *Gateway to Heaven*, p. 267. Cf. Fulton, *Judgment to Passion*, pp. 209-214.

[107] John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 6, lines 132-135 (CCCM XVII, p. 218); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 166.

[108] See Fröhlich, *Letters of Saint Anselm*, vol. 1, p. 152, n. 1.

pursuit of virtue'.[109] For Anselm, such friendship was predicated upon mutual love for Christ and the desire for eternal life; it was both Christocentric and soteriological:

> I rejoice in Christ over our desire, which he knows to be born out of love for him; for he listened to us without our knowledge and joined us by like vows and the selfsame love without our knowing. […] May he himself make us so mindful of one another in his love, you of me and I of you, that it may please him and advance us towards eternal life. Amen.[110]

Anselm had heard of Frodelina, and that she desired his friendship, through their mutual acquaintance, 'Dom Hugh, the hermit of Caen'.[111] In his letter, Anselm both praised Frodelina as an icon of holiness and downplayed his own virtue in the same spirit of self-abnegation which characterised his prayers (and the affective mode in general).[112] In light of what he perceived to be his own lack of virtue, Anselm asked to share in Frodelina's by a 'communion of charity', a spiritual communion based on their mutual affection:

> Ever since I became aware of the odour of your good reputation which has spread far and wide like a sweet perfume, I have longed to make myself known to you at some favourable opportunity, that I might deserve through this acquaintanceship to gain your friendship. But since I see myself totally lacking in merit perhaps I might somehow share yours by a communion of charity (*caritatis communionem*).[113]

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[109] R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought, 1059-c. 1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 71; cf. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, p. 140.

[110] *...gaudeo Christum desideria nostra, quae novit ex sua nasci dilectione, nobis ignorantibus exaudisse, atque nos etiam nescientes paribus votis similique dilectione iunxisse.* […] *Ipse sic invicem me vestri et vos mei memores in suo amore faciat, ut et illi placeat et nobis ad vitam prosit aeternam. Amen*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Ep.* XLV, lines 15-17, 37-38 (SAOp. III, pp. 158, 159); trans. by Fröhlich, CS 96, pp. 151, 152.

[111] *Ibid.*, line 13 (SAOp. III, pp. 158-159); cf. *Ep.* CXII, addressed to Hugh (SAOp. III, pp. 244-246).

[112] See, for example, *ibid*., lines 9, 21-22 (SAOp. III, p. 158).

[113] *Postquam odorem vestrae bonae famae, quae longe lateque suaviter redolens circumvolat, persensi, semper desideravi ad vestram notitiam aliqua commoda occasione pervenire, ut per notitiam mererer aliquatenus ad amicitiam pertingere. Ut qui bonis meis meritis me video valde indigere, vestris me possem aliquantulum per caritatis communionem miscere*. Anselm of Canterbury, *Ep.* XLV, lines 6-10 (SAOp. III, p. 158).

Here the idea of a 'communion of charity' means the union of souls in a bond of love, in which one may grow by sharing in the merits of the other. The roots of this may be found in Anselm's *Monologion* and his idea of the mutual indwelling of the three Persons of the Trinity in a relationship of love.[114] Anselm might also be said to have nuanced the traditional understanding of friendship articulated by John Cassian (*c*. 360-435) in his sixteenth *Conference*, the influence of which upon subsequent ideas of Christian friendship is widely recognised.[115] For Cassian, true friendship required for its foundation a 'similarity of virtue'[116] or a 'double perfection and goodness'[117] in the friends and, in order for it to bear fruit, an equally strong commitment to their joint endeavour. Cassian had warned of friendships which began with 'burning love for Christ'[118] but foundered because the friends 'did not with one and the same zeal maintain the purpose on which they had entered'.[119]

In the embryonic friendship between Anselm and Frodelina, witnessed by *ep*. XLV, there can be no doubt about the presence of Cassian's second criterion for success: mutual commitment. However, Anselm's protestations of his own sinfulness (or lack of virtue) implied such a disparity between himself and Frodelina that it would seem to render Cassian's first criterion impossible. It was not acceptable, wrote Cassian, for one friend to have to make up for the weakness of the other, especially since, on the whole, the weak will blame someone else for their infirmity.[120] Given the sinfulness of human beings, however, Anselm's letter was more humane and more realistic than Cassian's high ideal and, of course, his appeal to the strong Frodelina to nourish his own weak soul had a counterpart in his prayers to the Virgin Mary, where the note of self-abasement in *ep*. XLV is multiplied and amplified many times. Here, as well as in his letter to Frodelina, a communion of charity was necessary to bridge

[114] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Monologion*, 59 (SAOp. I, p. 70); cf. 49-60 (SAOp. I, pp. 64-71).

[115] See L. Carmichael, *Friendship: Interpreting Christian Love* (London; NY: T. & T. Clark, 2004), pp. 51-55; cf. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, pp. 139-141.

[116] John Cassian, *Conferences* XVI, 3; trans. by E. C. S. Gibson, NPNF II, vol. 11, ed. by P. Schaff and H. Wace (Oxford: James Parker and Co., 1894), pp. 450-460 (p. 451)

[117] *Ibid*., 3; trans. by Gibson, NPNF II, vol. 11, p. 451.

[118] *Ibid*., 3; trans. by Gibson, NPNF II, vol. 11, p. 451.

[119] *Ibid*., 3; trans. by Gibson, NPNF II, vol. 11, p. 451.

[120] See *ibid*., 3.

the gap between Anselm's own perceived inability to live up to the requirement for friendship of a similarity of virtue.

The Cistercian abbot, Baldwin of Forde (*c.* 1125-1190), one of Anselm's successors as archbishop of Canterbury, regarded Mary's participation in the Crucifixion as something of a communion of charity with her son. Whilst subordinate to Christ, she was nevertheless drawn into the pain and mystery of his Passion by the bond of love that united them. He took up this theme in his sixth spiritual tractate in consideration of Hebrews 4:12: 'For the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit' (*vivus est enim Dei sermo et efficax et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti et pertingens usque ad divisionem animae ac spiritus*).[121] Fundamentally, he asserted that whilst the soul itself is unique to each person, it can also join itself to another person – 'someone it knows it should love for the sake of God' (*diligit quem propter Deum diligendum cognoscit*)[122] – by charity, with the result that it becomes divided; it lives 'not only in its own body…but in a certain way it divides its life and feeling off from itself [and shares them] with those to whom it joins itself in love' (*non solum in corpore…sed quodammodo vitam et sensum extra se dividit, ad illos quibus se per amorem iungit*).[123] In this communion of charity, Baldwin explained, the pain felt by one party would be appropriated and experienced with equal (or even greater)[124] intensity by the other. The degree to which Baldwin envisaged this indwelling and mutual affectivity to be possible is striking. Going far beyond empathy, he posited the actual appropriation of suffering and the desire to suffer in proxy: 'it unites itself to him so that it may suffer in his place; it pours itself into him by its desire to suffer with him and somehow manages to become part of him. It is as if it were living with him whose pain it feels' (*se illi unit ut vices eius doleat; et quodammodo prestat ut eius sit, cui se per affectum condolendi infundit, tanquam vivens apud illum*

[121] See *Balduini de Forda Opera: Sermones, De commendatio fidei*, ed. by D. N. Bell, CCCM XCIX (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), pp. 283-308; trans. by D. N. Bell, *Baldwin of Ford: Spiritual Tractates, Volume One, Tractates I-VIII*, CF 38 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1986), pp. 152-190.

[122] Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VI, 29, lines 263-264 (CCCM XCIX, p. 292); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 163.

[123] *Ibid.*, 29, lines 265-268 (CCCM XCIX, p. 292); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 163.

[124] See *ibid.*, 30 (CCCM XCIX, p. 293).

cuius sentit cruciatum).[125] It was in this vein that Baldwin understood Mary's co-Passion with Christ; she suffered with him, and the degree to which she suffered was determined by the intensity of her love. The following passage offers the clearest statement of the co-Passion of the Virgin, described as her 'singular privilege', from an English author in this period:

> The greatness of her suffering [matched] the greatness of her love, for she loved her son more than herself, and therefore, feeling his pain within herself, she endured in her own soul the wounds he received on his body. For her, the suffering and passion of Christ was martyrdom, for the flesh of Christ was in a certain way her own flesh; his flesh [had come] from her flesh, but the flesh which Christ had assumed from her she loved more in Christ than in herself. But the more she loved it, the more she suffered, and suffered more in her soul than a martyr in his body. She therefore shines forth with a special sort (*singulari privilegio*) of glorious martyrdom.[126]

Whilst Baldwin did not refer to Mary as *Co-Redemptrix* these words come close and such a reading of them is supported by *Tractatus* VII in which she was described as Christ's 'handmaid and co-operator' (*ministra et cooperatrix*).[127] Whilst the context for this statement was Baldwin's consideration of the Incarnation rather than the Crucifixion, in conjunction with the latter it points to an overall vision of Mary as the vital and necessary counterpart to Christ and the indispensable New Eve.

Through the Eyes of Mary? Contemplating Christ Crucified

Ælred of Rievaulx and John of Forde went one step further than their predecessors by not simply lamenting their own absence from Calvary, as Anselm's *Prayer to Christ* had done, but seeking to

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[125] Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VI, 31, lines 282-285 (CCCM XCIX, p. 293); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 164.

[126] *Nam secundum magnitudinem amoris eius, ita et dolor eius. Nam cum filium diligeret plusquam se, vulnera que ipse accepit in corpore, intimo sensu doloris pertulit ipsa in mente, cui et ipsa passio Christi pro martyrio fuit. Nam caro Christi quodammodo eius caro fuit: hoc est, caro de carne eius, quam a Christo susceptam de se, plus amavit in Christo quam suam in se. Que quanto plus amavit, tanto et plus doluit: plus passa in mente quam martyr in corpore. Proinde gloriosi martyrii singulari privilegio prefulget*. *Ibid*., 33-34, lines 299-308 (CCCM XCIX, pp. 293-294); trans. by Bell, CF 38, p. 164.

[127] Baldwin of Forde, *Tractatus* VII, 26, line 233 (CCCM XCIX, p. 200).

remedy it by reappropriating the Crucifixion for themselves in their own historical present. In the previous section, we used the idea of a communion of charity as a means of explaining how our medieval authors understood Mary's co-Passion, but the phrase is also apt for describing the way in which they meant individuals to participate in the Crucifixion themselves. To see as Mary saw with one's own eyes and to share her suffering in one's own heart became a requirement of the affective method as it developed amongst the Cistercians, and it required union with her in charity. For Ælred, this meant more than empathy; rather, it implied solidarity and the co-Passion of contemplatives themselves. He sought the fullest realisation of what Mary Carruthers has described as 'the richly sensory, emotional, and fully experienced recreation of "things," that profound memory work requires'.[128] In *De institutione inclusarum*, for example, he encouraged his sister to experience the Crucifixion, not vicariously through Mary or John but by standing alongside them and sharing their suffering.[129]

John of Forde also promoted this mode of affective participation in the Crucifixion, which he regarded as 'an act of the very highest worth' (*Magni prorsus meriti*)[130] precisely because it meant solidarity with Mary and the other biblical witnesses. For John, such an experience required the union of the senses and the heart: 'to lift one's eyes to the crucified, fixing them there, while pondering on these treasures of immense love with a very deep sense of devotion' (*in crucifixum oculos levare fixaque acie tantae caritatis sincerissimo pietatis affectu ponderare divitias*).[131] This experience of the Cross occupied a paradoxical place at the heart of his spirituality since it was both constitutive of moral transformation and its reward. A place beside the Cross was a sign of intimacy with Christ because it signified a partaking in the mystery of his redemptive death in the company of one of those with whom he had been closest in life, Mary. Yet the Cross did not mark the end of the journey, since just as Resurrection lay ahead of the Crucified Christ, so transformation lay before the com-passionate contemplative. To take one's place at the foot of the Cross was, in a sense, to accept the challenge,

[128] M. J. Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 84.

[129] See Ælred of Rievaulx, *De institutione inclusarum*, 31, lines 1178-1183 (CCCM I, p. 671).

[130] John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 5, line 87 (CCCM XVII, p. 217); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 164.

[131] *Ibid.*, 5, lines 90-91 (CCCM XVII, p. 217); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 164.

integral to monasticism, to grow towards spiritual perfection following the example of Mary herself: 'to see if, like the queen of lovers, [the monk] can lay hold of the Lord who has laid hold of him' (*si quomodo cum regina amantium comprehendere possit in quo et ipse comprehensus est*).[132]

John also used Mary's participation in the Crucifixion as a lens through which to gaze upon and interpret the charism of monastic leadership as 'maternal'.[133] This was not an entirely novel approach – earlier Cistercians, notably Bernard of Clairvaux (*c.* 1090-1153) and William of St Thierry (*c.* 1085-1148), had also spoken of the responsibility of prelates and abbots in such terms[134] – but John's reflections stand out for the explicit interpretation of his own role in light of Mary's experience on Calvary. In particular, John saw in the entrustment of Mary and the Beloved Disciple to one another a pattern of monastic leadership, whereby the souls of individual monks were entrusted to their abbot as nurse and guide. John understood the union of abbot and monk to be a communion of charity itself, and the words from the Cross – 'behold your son' (*ecce filius tuus*; Jn 19:26) and 'behold your mother' (*ecce mater tua*; Jn 19:27) – as a reference to 'the unity of reciprocal love' (*de caritatis mutuae integritate commonitionem*) which characterised it.[135] From the Cross, wrote John, Christ established 'a perpetual treaty of love' (*perpetuum amoris foedus*)[136] not only between Mary and the Disciple but also between abbots and monks. Such love was not an end in itself but the framework within which,

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[132] John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 5, lines 103-105 (CCCM XVII, p. 217); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 165. Whilst 'lay/laid hold' is not an entirely adequate translation of *comprehendere/comprehensus*, we cannot think of a better alternative which both enables the translation to emulate the symmetry of John's Latin and grasps the physicality of his meaning (i.e. to be apprehended in body as well as comprehended in soul or mind).

[133] See *ibid.*, 5, lines 93-95 (CCCM XVII, p. 217). Cf. Rupert of Deutz, *Commentaria in evangelium S. Iohannis*, ed. by R. Haacke, CCCM 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), pp. 743-744. Neff has linked Mary's response to the Crucifixion ('Mary's Swoon') to her maternity and labour pains, in particular: 'Mary's Swoon is also her maternity. As Eve is the mother of mankind in sin, so Mary is the mother of mankind in salvation. Mary's childbirth on calvary has, I believe, been overlooked because modern scholars have been unable to "see" a symbolism involving Mary's reproductive body, even though this imagery, far from reflecting some obscure or arcane doctrine, can be found in numerous mainstream authors'. Neff, 'Pain of *Compassio*', p. 255; cf. Duffy, 'Mater Dolorosa', p. 222. For a consideration of John of Forde's ideas about the maternal character of monastic leadership, see chapter 5 of this thesis.

[134] See C. W. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkley, LA; London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 115-120.

[135] John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 7, lines 163-164 (CCCM XVII, p. 218); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 167.

[136] *Ibid.*, 7, line 167 (CCCM XVII, p. 219); trans. by Beckett, CF 39, p. 168.

'with maternal affection' (*quam materna vos affectione*),[137] the abbot could direct his monks to Christ, the 'true mother' (*verae matris vestrae*),[138] and ultimately to perfection.

As these examples show, the spiritual methods of Ælred and John were Cross-centred; the Crucifixion was a key focal point of their affective participation in the events of the Gospels, the purpose of which was spiritual growth. It was not sufficient for either of them, however, simply to experience the event *through* Mary; instead they promoted the appropriation of the event and solidarity with the *Mater Dolorosa* in something like a communion of charity. From this they hoped that spiritual inspiration could be taken and a more profound depth of spiritual understanding be achieved. Most strikingly of all, their works revealed the potential of affective contemplation of the Cross (including Mary's co-Passion) and understandings of the monastic profession to enrich one another.

Conclusion

Whilst the purpose of monastic life in the Middle Ages was to obtain a heavenly reward – namely, beatification – its essence was perfection through suffering and the cultivation of virtue. It was, as the introduction to this study explained, a *via dolorosa*. As such, it has been appropriate to conclude this consideration of the Mariology of English monasticism with Calvary, which was the 'high point' in Mary's suffering in her relationship with Christ. As the writings of the English monks reveal, the Crucifixion of Christ came to be seen in this period as a spiritual martyrdom for his mother, too; on Calvary, they taught, Mary's soul was finally pierced by the sword of sorrow prophesied by Simeon (Lk 2:35). In theological terms, this was translated into the beliefs that Mary co-Redeemed the human race as a result of the degree to which she was immersed in Christ's suffering, and that Mary was established by her son as the *Mediatrix* between God and the world. As the words of Anselm of Canterbury, Ælred of Rievaulx, Baldwin of Forde and John of Forde show, monastic authors of this period affirmed these doctrines which, even today, the status of official Catholic teaching eludes. In-

[137] John of Forde, *Sermo* XXVI, 7, lines 187-188 (CCCM XVII, p. 219).

[138] *Ibid.*, 7, line 188 (CCCM XVII, p. 219).

keeping with chapter 1, just as the feast and theology of Mary's Conception developed first in the east before being picked up and developed in the west, these beliefs – the so-called 'correlative doctrines' of Mary's compassion – were first articulated outside western Christendom.

In spiritual terms, the reflections of our monastic authors on Mary's spiritual martyrdom were their most profound and important contributions to the Mariology of the church as a whole. In particular, they represented the culmination of a monastic Mariology which, driven by the pastoral imperative of supporting monks in their progress in the spiritual life, had participation at the heart of its vision of transformation. Ultimately, monastic life was about transformation – perfection through the cultivation of virtue and the purification of the soul – and, as we have seen throughout this study, monks looked to Mary as an icon of faithful perseverance and a model of virtue to emulate. In their writings on Mary's place at the foot of the Cross – in much the same way as in their reflections on her maternity – the monastic theologians encouraged those for whom they wrote to aspire to share her experience of the Crucifixion. As the period progressed, their understanding of participation intensified; beginning with Anselm, who advocated the vicarious participation of contemplatives by imaginatively identifying with Mary, and culminating with the Cistercians, who promoted the personal appropriation of Mary's suffering. In particular, they recommended that just as Mary took Christ's suffering upon herself on account of how much she loved him, so individual contemplatives should enter into this experience of proto-mystical union with the Crucified Christ through a communion of charity with him. The co-Passion of contemplatives, which our theologians demanded, could be read as an analogy for the monastic life itself, and the contemplation of Mary suffering at the foot of the Cross as the best expression of the synergy between monastic life and Mariology in this period.

Conclusion

The evidence which has been considered throughout this thesis would appear to support the simple proposition that English Benedictine and Cistercian monks made a number of interesting and sometimes original contributions to Marian theology and spirituality between *c*. 1050 and *c*. 1200. In some cases, the significance of their writings lay in their innovativeness as a result of which, it may even be claimed, they advanced or at least enriched the Mariology of the western church as a whole. It is also evident that the distinctiveness of the monks' Marian writings can be attributed, to a considerable extent, to their overriding pastoral and moral concerns. Almost all of our authors were also monastic leaders, writing at the behest of or with the spiritual edification of their communities in mind, and they used their Mariology to support the progress of those in their care along the monastic way of perfection through suffering and the cultivation of virtue (especially humility, as we saw in chapter 4). In this light, bearing in mind what may be described as the pastoral/moral hermeneutic with which the monks approached Mariology, their writings may be appreciated more deeply, not least for what they reveal about the intersection – even synergy – between the monastic profession and this aspect of the intellectual culture of the monasteries in which it was lived out.

As suggested in the introduction, the significance of Mary for English Benedictine and Cistercian monks was not as an abstract theological phenomenon nor as a distant celestial queen, but as a living reality, tender and near at hand, and as the manifestation of their ideals. Mary was most alive to them in their relationship with her, both as a 'trailblazer' for the monastic way of life (a proto-monk) and as their most powerful intercessor for salvation, which was, ultimately, the purpose of their *fuga mundi*. It may have been for this reason, for example, that Anselm of Canterbury (*c*. 1033-1109) chose to express his Marian thought in his devotional texts – specifically, his three Marian prayers – rather than his theological treatises; Mary was only mentioned occasionally in *De conceptu virginali* and *Cur deus homo*. Private prayer was the context within which Anselm encountered Mary and it was, therefore, in his devotional texts that her exalted status in the economy of salvation was most closely

considered. Anselm expressed his Marian thought as he may also have formulated it, in dialogue with Mary herself.

A third conclusion which may be drawn from the evidence we have considered, is that many of the changes which took place in the Marian cult of English monasticism during our period were heralded by wider historical events. It is clear from chapter 1, for example, that the Norman Conquest and subsequent changes within the English episcopal hierarchy – particularly the appointment of Lanfranc (*c*. 1005-1089) as archbishop of Canterbury in 1070 – were factors of major significance in the history of the feast of Mary's Conception. In the wake of the Conquest, the Anglo-Saxon commemoration fell victim to Lanfranc's policy of 'Romanisation', whereby a number of English feasts were suppressed on the basis that they were derived from non-canonical sources (i.e. the apocryphal gospels, including the *Protevangelium of James*) and did not have apostolic (i.e. papal) approval.

Even more significant than the Conquest was the reign of King Henry I (*r*. 1100-1135). In these four decades, the English church began to emerge from the shadow of the Conquest and entered a period of renewal, which did not fail to have an impact on the Marian cult. Chapter 2 has shown how Henry's personal intervention at a London synod in 1129, for example, precipitated the revival of the feast of Mary's Conception, which was then being championed by a number of English Benedictines. However, Henry's reign was most significant as the period in which he and his second wife, Queen Adeliza (*r*. 1121-1135), welcomed and supported the first Cistercian foundations in England at Waverly (1128) and Tintern (1131), thereby opening the floodgates to a century of theological and devotional transformation under the influence of continental thinkers like Bernard of Clairvaux (*c*. 1090-1153), many of whose ideas were enthusiastically embraced and, importantly, developed by English monks, including Ælred of Rievaulx (*c*. 1110-1167) and John of Forde (*c*. 1150-1214). The impact of the Cistercians on the intellectual culture of Anglo-Norman monasticism is shown, for instance, in chapter 6, in our consideration of the transformation of affective spirituality from *vicarious* to *direct* participation in the events of salvation history, such as the Crucifixion. The Cistercians were theologians of divine love and they reconceived the sense in which individual contemplatives could enter into biblical events, alongside their major protagonists like the Virgin Mary, in terms of an exchange of love.

Arguably the most significant contribution of this study has been to bring to light the pastoral and moral character of the Marian writings of the English monks or, rather, the fact that the monastic theologians – most of whom were also abbots with a duty of care for their communities – viewed Mariology through a pastoral/moral lens (or hermeneutic). The best examples of this hermeneutic in action have been provided in chapters 3 and 4, in which we considered its impact upon the monks' interpretations of Mary's ancient privileges of virginity and maternity, which amounted in the end to a rearticulation of the traditional doctrines. In the first case, Ælred of Rievaulx and Baldwin of Forde (*c*. 1125-1190) emphasised what they saw as the voluntary nature of Mary's virginity. They claimed that Mary took a vow of virginity, which provided a type or figure of their own monastic consecration. Thus, Mary could be called the patroness of their virginal estate – and who greater? – providing a blueprint by which it was both dignified and elucidated, and an intercessor to help them as they sought to preserve it amidst many temptations.

On the subject of Mary's maternity, the monks prioritised the moral dimension of the belief that Mary was *Theotokos* or 'God-bearer', which they had received from their patristic and Anglo-Saxon predecessors, including Bede (*c*. 672-735) and Alcuin of York (*c*. 735-804). In short, they gave precedence to Mary's proto-conception of Christ in her heart over her physical conception which, they also claimed, it merited by her consequently holy life. In chapter 5, we observed how this made for a vision of maternity which was open and inclusive, in which even monks themselves could participate. For John of Forde, for example, Mary's maternity was analogous with his own responsibility to nurse and support his monks as their abbot. Fundamentally, though, John taught that this association (between Mary's maternity and his own) was only possible because all manifestations of maternity amounted to a participation in the archetypal motherhood of Christ. John's contribution to the medieval articulation of the idea of Jesus as mother had not been analysed in any depth before now, but he clearly deserves to be considered alongside other monastic leaders whose contributions have been studied by Caroline

Walker Bynum as antecedents to the full-flowering of the idea of Jesus as mother in the writings of Julian of Norwich (*c*. 1342-1416).[1]

We may also conclude that John's proposal to predicate all maternity on that of Christ was characteristic of the monks' approach to Mary in general throughout the period. First, it ensured that the mystery of Mary was not considered apart from the mystery of her son, but always had a Christological frame of reference. Second, and more fundamentally, it manifested the high intellectual quality of their practical and spiritual wisdom. In respect of maternity, John was not content simply to posit a link between Mary and others, so he provided an explanation for it in a carefully conceived theological vision of maternity as a participation in a higher – in this case, Christological – paradigm.

We encountered another example of this theological approach in chapter 6, concerning the participation of medieval contemplatives in the trauma or pain of the Crucifixion. In this case, authors like Ælred, Baldwin and John conceived of participation as an exchange of love between contemplatives and the *Mater Dolorosa*, which was modelled on an archetypal exchange which they believed to have occurred between Mary and the Crucified Christ. In the affective spirituality of English Benedictine and Cistercian monks, Christ, Mary and members of their communities shared the experience of the Crucifixion by an exchange of love which, using a phrase from one of Anselm's letters, we described as a 'communion of charity' (*caritatis communionem*).[2] In other words, in a devotional context which prioritised the virtue of charity, they felt because they loved.

As a result of constraints of time and space, this thesis became an *intellectual*-historical study of the Mariology of the English monks, drawing out the pastoral and moral aspects of their writings. However, much remains to be done to reconstruct the monastic cult of the Virgin in its *material* aspect, especially as it developed during the twelfth century.[3] Whether by the production of sumptuously

[1] The subjects of Bynum's study were Anselm of Canterbury, William of St Thierry (*c*. 1085-1148), Bernard of Clairvaux, Guerric of Igny (*c*. 1070-1157), Ælred of Rievaulx, Isaac of Stella (*c*. 1100-1169), Adam of Perseigne (*c*. 1145-1221) and Hélinand of Froidmont (*c*. 1160-1229). See C. W. Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 110-169.

[2] See Anselm of Canterbury, *Ep*. XLV, line 10 (SAOp. III, p. 158).

[3] Most of the eleventh century has been admirably surveyed in M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

illuminated manuscripts or by the suppression of ornamentation, as in the Cistercian monasteries, medieval monks made judgements about materiality which both reflected and shaped their spirituality. The Marian cult which, historically, had inspired material expression could not avoid the implications of impulses and decisions such as these. It would be fascinating to analyse the place of *im*-materiality within the Marian cult of Cistercian monasteries; however, on the basis of some preliminary investigations, it may just be possible here to make a few observations about the representation of Mary in the manuscript art of the period and, in so doing, simply to signpost a major avenue for further research in this field.

Given the nature of this thesis, as a study in intellectual history, the overriding consideration guiding these brief remarks must be a question like this: to what extent, if at all, did representations of Mary in illuminated manuscripts produced in the English monasteries between *c*. 1050 and *c*. 1200 reflect developments which were taking place in theology and spirituality, including the adoption of a pastoral lens or hermeneutic?[4] This is not the time to analyse regional or geographical variation between manuscripts, nor to comment on the provenance of particular stylistic elements – again, these considerations are beyond the scope of our work – but only to express some general working propositions which future research can interrogate. It falls within our remit to do so, not least because manuscript art has not been entirely excluded hitherto. In chapter 2, for instance, images from a twelfth-century Winchester Psalter were briefly considered in order to illustrate the inspiration provided by apocryphal narratives about Mary's life – in particular, the *Protevangelium of James* – for the idea that her conception inaugurated a new epoch in salvation history.[5]

To begin with, preliminary investigations – including the compilation of a schedule of surviving manuscript illuminations featuring Mary (see appendix 2) from *c*. 970 to *c*. 1200 – have suggested that art could be an important type of evidence for the Marian cult within the monasteries and its proliferation during our period. Catalogues of illuminated manuscripts indicate that at least twice the

[4] To see this method in action on a more ambitious scale, see Barbara Raw's 'Artistic themes and the thought of the period', the final chapter in her *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the art of the monastic revival*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 162-187.

[5] See London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, f. 4r.

number of Marian images have survived from the twelfth century compared to the eleventh, in a similar number of surviving manuscripts from each period; the period immediately after the Norman Conquest until *c*. 1119 seems to have been particularly barren.[6] In respect of the relationship between such images and the intellectual culture, our propositional hypothesis would be that there seems to be some correlation between theological and artistic developments, especially in the twelfth century.

To illustrate this point, let us take the important idea from monastic theology (entailed by the monks' pastoral approach) that Mary was a model; for monks, this meant that she was the perfect proto-monastic figure and one for all those who came after her to emulate. In the art of the period, two scenes in which Mary was most frequently represented were the Annunciation and the Crucifixion, both of which were also occasions when she demonstrated extraordinary fidelity: first, to the divine will manifested by the angel Gabriel and, second, to her suffering son. To begin with, Mary responded to the Annunciation with faith and obedience, recapitulating the disobedience of Eve in the garden of Eden. Surviving manuscripts from the post-Conquest period contain at least seven depictions of the Annunciation featuring Mary and at least one of the heavenly Christ sending the angel down to her (see appendix 3). In respect of the intellectual culture of the period, we might link this portrayal of the heavenly Christ with the idea of Wisdom (a type of Christ) calling out to Mary from heaven, articulated by Ælred of Rievaulx (see chapter 3). The key point is that it shows Christ to have been actively involved in the choice of his own mother and suggests that their relationship began even before he became incarnate in her womb. It might even be taken as a reference to the idea that the pre-incarnate Son was attracted to Mary by the fragrance of her virtue which, according to several of our authors, somehow drew him down from heaven (again, see chapter 3).

Similarly, the intellectual culture would seem to have found expression in representations of the Crucifixion, the most popular scene featuring Mary. In fact, if we were to combine the number of images of the Crucifixion with those of the Deposition and the three Marys at the sepulchre from the

[6] The first major manuscript to have included representations of Mary (at least nine) was Hildesheim, St. Godehard, a psalter from St Albans, which has been dated to *c*. 1119. See C. M. Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts, 1066-1190*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, ed. by. J. J. G. Alexander, vol. 3 (London: Harvey Miller, 1975), p. 69. In terms of artistic production in the monasteries, on the barrenness of the period immediately after the Norman Conquest, see C. R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800-1200* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 120-122.

period as a whole, we would see that the Passion, death and Resurrection of Christ (the Paschal Mystery) was by far the most important focal point for monastic artists. Furthermore, with just one exception – a portrayal of the Crucifixion in a surviving manuscript of John of Worcester's (*d. c.* 1140) *Chronicle* – images of the Crucifixion show Mary not as a passive or stoical observer of her son's final moments but, in-keeping with the character of affective spirituality, as a grief-stricken participant.[7] The art would appear to confirm the intellectual trajectory, identified in chapter 6, towards a theology of Mary's co-Passion or spiritual martyrdom.

Our final point in this brief propositional consideration of monastic art concerns representations of Mary's death, Assumption and coronation as Queen of Heaven, and it will help us to explain the absence of any consideration of these ideas elsewhere in this study. One might reasonably have expected a chapter in this thesis about Mary's death and afterlife – so, where is it? According to the manuscript catalogues, the end of Mary's life was commemorated very infrequently in the illuminations of this period, whilst her Assumption does not appear to have been represented at all. Once again, though, this would correlate with the intellectual culture. Despite affirmative statements – such as Anselm's description of Mary as the 'Queen of angels' (*regina angelorum*)[8] – not to mention the fact that the Assumption gave rise to the *Sigillum* of Honorius Augustodunensis (*d. c.* 1140) and sermons by Ælred of Rievaulx, the monastic theologians did not dwell upon these mysteries.[9] Ælred, for instance, used his sermons on the feast of the Assumption to preach on the theme of the divine maternity; as with other aspects of the monastic theology of the period, his focal point was Christological. Similarly, in respect of Mary's place in heaven, whilst the monks frequently referred to her as their

[7] John of Worcester's *Chronicle* has been preserved in Oxford, Corpus Christ College MS 157. For other, affective, depictions of Mary at the foot of the Cross, see: Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 120, f. 3v (*c.* 1130 and *c.* 1140); Oxford, Corpus Christ College MS 157, p. 77b (*c.* 1130-1140); London, Victoria and Albert Museum MS 661, r (*c.* 1140); London, British Library, MS Cotton, Nero C. IV, f. 22r (*c.* 1150); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 293 (S.C. 21867), f. 13r (*c.* 1150x1175); Copenhagen, Royal Lib. MS Thott 143 2°, f. 14v (*c.* 1170); Oxford, BL MS Gough Liturg. 2 (S.C. 18343), f. 28 (late 12th century).

[8] Anselm of Canterbury, *Oratio* VII, line 15 (SAOp. III, p. 18).

[9] Similarly, the Assumption received scant attention in the *Summa Theologiæ* of Thomas Aquinas (*c.* 1225-1274); it was mentioned less than half a dozen times, mostly in relation to the question of Mary's sanctification. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiæ* 51, 3a. 27-30 ('Our Lady'), ed. and trans. by T. R. Heath (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969).

intercessor – implying that she sat at the right-hand of Christ – they did not speculate about the dynamics of her heavenly life. Instead, just as they were striving to live out their own monastic calling faithfully, their Marian writings focused in detail upon her life of faith and perfection through suffering. In other words, the monks' priority was the *means* of obtaining an eternal reward rather than the nature of the afterlife, and the daily death to sin which their profession demanded, meant that physical death – even Mary's – did not seem greatly to occupy the minds of their theologians or the pens of their artists.

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Appendix 1 (Fig. 1)

Moses and the burning bush; Christ between two kings;
the annunciation to Joachim

Winchester Psalter, *c*. 1145-1155

Appendix 1 (Fig. 2)

Tree of Jesse

Winchester Psalter, *c*. 1145-1155

Appendix 2

Representations of the Virgin Mary in manuscript art from the English monasteries, c. 1000 to c. 1200.

	Annunciation to Joachim/Anna	*Birth of the Virgin*	*Virgin and one/both of her parents*	*Presentation of the Virgin*	*Annunciation to the Virgin*	*Visitation*	*Nativity*	*Epiphany/Adoration of the Magi*	*Flight into Egypt*	*Presentation of Christ*	*Marriage at Cana*	*Crucifixion*	*Deposition*	*Entombment*	*Three Marys at the Sepulchre*	*Ascension*	*Pentecost*	*Dormition/Death of the Virgin*	*Assumption*	*Virgin Enthroned*	*Virgin and Child/Christ*	*Tree of Jesse*	*Other*
London, BL Add 49598 (*c*. 971-984)		✘			f.5v		f.15v	f.24v		f.34v					f.51v	f.64v		f.102v					ff.105v, 106
Rouen, BM MS Y. 7 (369) (*c*. 980)							✘								f.21v	✘		f.54v					
Paris, BN MS lat. 943 (*c*. 975x1000)												f.4v											
London, BL MS Harley 2904 (*c*. 975x1000)												f.3v											
New York, PML MS 869 (*c*. 990-1000)												f.9v									f.11		f.11v
London, BL MS Add. 34890 (*c*. 1020)																					f.115		
Rouen, BM MS Y. 6 (274) (*c*. 1020)							f.32v	ff.36v, 37	f.33			f.71v			f.72v	f.81v	f.84v						
Cambridge, Pembroke MS 301 (*c*. 1020)																							ff.1v-8v

	Annunciation to Joachim/Anna	*Birth of the Virgin*	*Virgin and one/both of her parents*	*Presentation of the Virgin*	*Annunciation to the Virgin*	*Visitation*	*Nativity*	*Epiphany/Adoration of the Magi*	*Flight into Egypt*	*Presentation of Christ*	*Marriage at Cana*	*Crucifixion*	*Deposition*	*Entombment*	*Three Marys at the Sepulchre*	*Ascension*	*Pentecost*	*Dormition/Death of the Virgin*	*Assumption*	*Virgin Enthroned*	*Virgin and Child/Christ*	*Tree of Jesse*	*Other*
London, BL MS Cotton, Titus D. XXVI & D. XXVII (*c*. 1023-35)												f.65v											f.75v
London, BL MS Stowe 944 (*c*. 1031)																							f.6r
Camb, UL MS Ff. I. 23. (*c*. 1030-50)												f.88v											
Camb, Corpus MS 421 (pp. 1, 2) (*c*. 1025x50)												p.1											
Rome, Vatican, BA MS Reg. lat. 12 (*c*. 1025x50)							f.93					f.35								f.62			
New York, PML MSS 709 (*c*. 1025x50)												f.1v											
London, BL MS Cotton, Caligula A. XIV (ff. 1-92) (*c*. 1050)	f.26r		f.26v													f.18							
London, BL MS Arundel 60 (*c*. 1060, add. 1080)												f.12v											
Camb, Corpus MS 422 (pp. 27-586) (*c*. 1061)												p.53											

	Annunciation to Joachim/Anna	*Birth of the Virgin*	*Virgin and one/both of her parents*	*Presentation of the Virgin*	*Annunciation to the Virgin*	*Visitation*	*Nativity*	*Epiphany/Adoration of the Magi*	*Flight into Egypt*	*Presentation of Christ*	*Marriage at Cana*	*Crucifixion*	*Deposition*	*Entombment*	*Three Marys at the Sepulchre*	*Ascension*	*Pentecost*	*Dormition/Death of the Virgin*	*Assumption*	*Virgin Enthroned*	*Virgin and Child/Christ*	*Tree of Jesse*	*Other*
Oxford, Wadham MS A18. 3 (Coxe 2) (late 11th cent.)															f.104v								
Hildesheim St. Godehard (*c*. 1119-1123)					p.19	p.20	p.21	p.25					p.47	p.48	p.50	p.54	p.55						
Camb, Pembroke MS 120 (*c*. 1130 and *c*. 1140)												f.3v	f.4	f.4	f.4	f.5v	f.6						
Camb, UL MS Ii. 3. 12 (*c*. 1130)																					f.62v		
London, BL MS Lansdowne 383 (*c*. 1120-1140)															f.13	f.13v	f.14				f.165v	f.15	f.159v
Oxford, BL MS Bodley 269 (S.C. 1935) (*c*. 1130-1140)																					f.iii		
Oxford, BL MS Laud Misc. 469 (*c*. 1130-1140)																							f.7v
Oxford, Corpus MS 157 (*c*. 1130-1140)												f.77*b*											
Camb, Pembroke MS 16 (*c*. 1140)								f.19v															
New York, PML M 724 (*c*. 1140)					v	v	v															v	v

	Annunciation to Joachim/Anna	*Birth of the Virgin*	*Virgin and one/both of her parents*	*Presentation of the Virgin*	*Annunciation to the Virgin*	*Visitation*	*Nativity*	*Epiphany/Adoration of the Magi*	*Flight into Egypt*	*Presentation of Christ*	*Marriage at Cana*	*Crucifixion*	*Deposition*	*Entombment*	*Three Marys at the Sepulchre*	*Ascension*	*Pentecost*	*Dormition/Death of the Virgin*	*Assumption*	*Virgin Enthroned*	*Virgin and Child/Christ*	*Tree of Jesse*	*Other*
London, BL MS Add 37472 (I) (*c*. 1140)					r			r	r	r	v												
London, V&A MS 661 (*c*. 1140)												r			v	v	v						
London, Lambeth Palace MS 3 (*c*. 1140-1150)																						f.198	
Oxford, Corpus MS 2* (*c*. 1140-1150)													f.1v		f.2								
Oxford, BL MS Auct. D. 2. 6 (S.C. 3636) (*c*. 1150)																				f.162v	f.158v		f.161
London, BL MS Cotton, Nero C. IV (*c*. 1150)	f.4	f.10		f.10				f.12		f.15	f.17	f.22	f.22	f.23	f.23	f.27	f.28	f.29		f.30			
Winchester Cathedral Library (*c*. 1150- *c*. 1180)																					f.407		
Oxford, BL MS Douce 293 (S.C. 21867) (*c*. 1150x1175)					f.8		f.8v	f.9v	f.10	f.10v		f.13		f.13v	f.14v						f.13v		
Glasgow, UL MS Hunter U. 3. 1 (*c*. 1170)																f.14	f.15v	f.18					ff.17, 19v

	Annunciation to Joachim/Anna	*Birth of the Virgin*	*Virgin and one/both of her parents*	*Presentation of the Virgin*	*Annunciation to the Virgin*	*Visitation*	*Nativity*	*Epiphany/Adoration of the Magi*	*Flight into Egypt*	*Presentation of Christ*	*Marriage at Cana*	*Crucifixion*	*Deposition*	*Entombment*	*Three Marys at the Sepulchre*	*Ascension*	*Pentecost*	*Dormition/Death of the Virgin*	*Assumption*	*Virgin Enthroned*	*Virgin and Child/Christ*	*Tree of Jesse*	*Other*
Copenhagen, Royal Lib. MS Thott 143 2° (*c*. 1170)					f.8	f.8v	f.9v	f.11	f.12	f.12v		f.14v			f.15								
Oxford, BL MS Gough Liturg. 2 (S.C. 18343) (late 12th cent.)					f.11	f.12	f.13	f.15	f.17	f.16	f.20	f.28			f.29	f.30							
Oxford, BL MS Laud Misc. 752 (1175x1200/early 13th cent.)					f.357												f.376						
Total number of representations across the period	2	1	1	1	8	4	8	9	5	6	3	18	4	4	13	10	8	4	0	3	8	3	-

✘ *Miniature sometime removed.*

Appendix 3

The angel Gabriel being sent to Mary

Shaftesbury Psalter, *c*. 1120-1140

Long Abstract

Behold Your Mother: The Virgin Mary in English Monasticism, c. 1050-c. 1200

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Trinity Term 2016

Matthew J. Mills, Regent's Park College

In the west, the eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed the flourishing of devotion to the Virgin Mary and theological reflection upon her place in the economy of salvation. This thesis argues that some Benedictine and Cistercian monks writing in England at that time made important contributions to this process which was characterised by the transition from a self-limiting and cautious patristic Mariology to one of daring theological and devotional experimentation by the friars and mystics of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. Monastic theologians, inspired by a desire to understand and ultimately to know Mary, produced theological and spiritual works which were imaginative, often intimate, and occasionally pioneering. Most of all, though, they were profoundly pastoral, composed in the belief that Mary could inspire and support those who had embarked upon the monastic *via perfectionis*.

The range of authors covered here aims to be comprehensive, especially since the category 'English monasticism' is broadly defined to accommodate several foreign figures who had an impact on the English scene or were directly influenced by it, notably Anselm (*c*. 1033-1109), archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 until his death, and his pupil Honorius Augustodunensis (*d*. *c*. 1140). This means that some consideration is given to every monastic theologian who contributed directly to the development of the Virgin's cult in England up to *c*. 1200: the Benedictines, Anselm and Honorius, as well as Eadmer of Canterbury (*c*. 1060-1126), Anselm of Bury (*d*. 1148), Osbert of Clare (*d*. *c*. 1158) and Nicholas of St Albans, and the Cistercians, Ælred of Rievaulx (*c*. 1110-1167), Gilbert of Hoyland (*d*. 1172), Baldwin of Forde (*c*. 1125-1190) and John of Forde (*c*. 1150-1214). The main sources for this study are the (more or less) critical editions of these authors' Marian writings: a selection of theological treatises, homilies and prayers. Other sources include liturgical books from Benedictine and Cistercian houses, including a few key artistic representations of the Virgin. Liturgical texts and

artworks complement the *lex credendi* of the theologians' reflections with insights from the *lex orandi* which they experienced and shaped by celebrating the Divine Office, the Mass and the sacraments.

The argument of the thesis is that these sources offer a distinctively pastoral and moral vision of the Virgin Mary and its value in bringing it to light is, in part, to begin to address neglect by earlier histories of her medieval cult. Perhaps because some of the monks' insights did not stand the test of time, little mention (more often none at all) has been made of them across the spectrum of distinguished scholarship in the field, including in works by Hilda Graef, Sarah Boss, Rachel Fulton and Brian Reynolds. However, the contention here is that the story of western Mariology cannot and should not be told without a proper consideration of English monasteries and the works of relatively minor figures, alongside medieval giants like Bernard of Clairvaux (*c*. 1090-1153). Of particular benefit for this thesis has been Mary Clayton's seminal work, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990), which took the study of Marian doctrine and devotion in England up to the time when the sun began set upon the reigns of the last Saxon kings. This study begins, roughly, at the terminal date of Clayton's work in the mid-eleventh century, before the Norman Conquest, so that Anglo-Norman developments can be grounded in the preceding period, and it concludes at *c*. 1200, just as the age of the friars was dawning. Whilst benefitting from a range of insights provided by earlier scholars, it also contributes distinctively to its field by bringing the richness of the English monastic tradition of the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries into deservedly sharper focus.

The idea that English monks articulated a vision of the Virgin Mary which was pastoral and moral as a result of its interaction with their own monastic profession, is advanced in six chapters, each of which concentrates upon a key moment from Mary's life or aspect of her character: her conception (chapters 1 and 2), fruitful virginity (chapter 3), humility (chapter 4), maternity (chapter 5), and sorrow at the foot of the Cross (chapter 6). Each chapter considers the particular contributions of the monks, including the different extents to which they developed pre-existing trends and laid foundations for subsequent centuries; traditions within which the monks worked are critically surveyed in each chapter. Mary's Assumption and Coronation, notable by their absence, would have been appropriate subjects for a final chapter but they have not been included (except for passing comment in the conclusion) owing to the paucity of monastic writing about them.

Chapter 1 attempts to reconstruct the theology of the feast of Mary's Conception as it was understood by Benedictine monks before its suppression by the Normans, and expressed in their few surviving prayers. It also begins to come to terms with the principal roots of their theology. In particular, it is proposed that those who celebrated Mary's Conception did not do so on account of her freedom from original sin but, rather, because it signified the miraculous restoration of the fecundity of her mother, Anne. They also believed it to have been the first event of salvation through Christ, since it was the precondition for the divine maternity by which the Incarnation was accomplished. The majority of the chapter is given over to an examination of the roots of these ideas, and three theological streams are proposed: the apocryphal narratives of Mary's life, principally the *Protevangelium of James*, which were circulating in England in the eleventh century; the patristic tradition, especially the works of Ambrose (*c*. 337-397), Jerome (*c*. 347-420) and Augustine (354-430); and, the liturgical and homiletic tradition of Byzantium, especially as it was articulated in the eighth century. Each of these 'streams' may have contributed to Anglo-Saxon thought. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the suppression of the feast during the primacy of Archbishop Lanfranc (*abp*. 1070-1089) as one consequence of a process of standardisation, or 'Romanisation', which sought to bring the Anglo-Saxon cult into line with the continental mainstream by suppressing those practices which did not have papal sanction or were derived from the apocrypha. This process was completed around the time of the death of Elsinus of Ramsey in *c.* 1087, a Benedictine abbot who had been a champion of the Conception.

Chapter 2 begins by analysing the catalysts for the reappearance of the feast of Mary's Conception in Anglo-Norman England in the 1120s, arguing that the eleventh-century feast was revived by a generation of Benedictine monks whose memories stretched back to its suppression, including Eadmer of Canterbury, Anselm of Bury and Osbert of Clare. At a legatine synod in London (1129), a group of devotees succeeded in having the feast sanctioned by the archbishop of Canterbury and papal legate, William of Corbeil (*abp*. 1123-1136), under pressure from King Henry I (*r*. 1100-1135). The particular significance of this chapter lies in its consideration of the contributions made by two English Benedictines, Eadmer and Nicholas of St Albans, to the gradual articulation of a theology of Mary's Conception to accompany the feast. It is remarkable that for both of these theologians, writing in the first and second halves of the twelfth century, respectively, the core theological principal was that Mary

had been free from original sin from the very first moment of her existence; this set their works apart from the prayers of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors and marked a decisive shift in the history of the feast and its meaning. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of a triptych of images from the mid-eleventh century Winchester Psalter (London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C IV, f. 4 r) and an excursus on Anselm, who succeeded where Nicholas would later fail, in reconceptualising Augustine's *causam peccati* as a lack of justice in the rational will rather than concupiscence in the flesh. This discussion is included for the sake of comprehensiveness and the ultimate importance of Anselm's innovation, but it is an excursus because Anselm himself did not draw out its implications for Mary, nor was its potential recognised until the late-thirteenth century by the Franciscan theologian, John Duns Scotus (*c.* 1265-1308), whose contribution is beyond the scope of this study.

Chapter 3 is undergirded by three key propositions, which run throughout as conceptual threads: first, that it was necessary for Mary to have been a pure (i.e. virginal) mother in order to ensure the purity of the human nature which Christ received from her; second, that Mary's life was one of elective virginity and thus provided a blueprint for the monastic life; third, that Mary's physical integrity was a sign of still greater interior chastity, in which sense it could even be described as sacramental. These key ideas are explored across four sections, each of which brings to light and analyses a particular component of the monks' interpretation of this central Mariological paradox. These discussions are also grounded in the Cistercians' theological inheritance, particularly Ambrose's *De virginibus* and the treatises, meditations and prayers of Anselm. This and the remaining chapters of the thesis are the first attempt to unfold, in a sustained and systematic way, and begin to analyse the Mariology of the English Cistercians. It is especially significant because it proposes that their presentation of Mary's virginity was not primarily soteriological, but moral and pastoral; their purpose was to offer the model of a strong woman (*mulierem fortem*) for consecrated virgins to emulate so that they, too, could preserve their virginity and grow in perfection.

Chapter 4 brings the insights of Honorius Augustodunensis and Cistercian commentators on the Song of Songs (the Canticle), especially John of Forde, into dialogue for perhaps the first time, emphasising their pastoral character. Honorius and John shared an interest in the spiritual life which they understood as a lifelong search for holiness through the cultivation of virtue, especially humility,

of which Mary was an exemplar. As elsewhere, the chapter begins with an attempt to ground the contributions of Honorius and John in their theological tradition: earlier exegesis of the Canticle by Origen of Alexandria (*d. c.* 254) and Ambrose. Honorius and John were heirs to these insights but they also made their own distinctive contributions, based upon a conviction that the Canticle found its fundamental meaning as a Marian work; that it was most correctly understood as an allegory for Mary's longing to be with her son, her search for him and her cultivation of the virtues – especially humility and charity – in order to draw him down from heaven, and their eventual union. This chapter is especially significant for the attention it gives to the theology of John of Forde which has largely been ignored or dismissed; in particular, John's understanding of humility which, following the seventh chapter of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti*, he saw as the heart of the monastic life. For John, humility was a Christological virtue – Christ being its archetype and pattern – in which Mary participated more perfectly than other any person, becoming a beacon and benchmark for the participation of others.

Chapter 5 differs from the others in that it has just two sections, the first of which is a consideration of the physical dimension of Mary's divine maternity: that she conceived in her womb and gave birth to the God-Man, who received his human nature from her. The dominant voice here was Anselm, whose three Marian prayers contemplated the divine maternity in dialogue with their two main preoccupations, the forgiveness of sin and salvation. This picks up and develops an argument from chapter 3, that in her maternity of Christ, Mary was God's partner, an *active* player in the accomplishment of the Incarnation and so, too, in the unfolding of the divine plan for human redemption. The chapter is particularly significant, however, for what it reveals about the monks' understanding of the spiritual aspect of Mary's divine maternity: Mary's proto-conception of Christ in her heart before ever he entered her womb. It also contributes to an understanding of the maternity of Jesus in the theology of John of Forde, who proposed that all the faithful, transformed by the Holy Spirit and grace were, in turn, given a share in Christ's mission. Whilst John saw Christ, who fed the faithful with spiritual milk, as the archetype of spiritual maternity, his teaching was remarkable for its wide-ranging understanding of human participation in this pattern. In the monastery, it extended to abbots, who had a maternal care for their monks, and in the economy of salvation it was most perfectly embodied by the Virgin Mary.

Chapter 6 uses the cult of the *Mater Dolorosa* to shed light on the question of the extent to which, in the eleventh century, the pendulum of monastic spirituality swung away from a liturgical and corporate emphasis, and towards more private and individualistic approaches under the influence of Anselm. It is suggested that this hypothesis is only partially correct. First, whilst Anselm encouraged a note of individualism within medieval spirituality, he was not the first to do so. Second, amongst the eleventh- and twelfth-century monks, there was a synergy between old and new in their approaches to the contemplation of Mary's suffering on Calvary. This was particularly clear in their reflections upon *caritas*, which they viewed through a monastic lens as an important virtue to cultivate and, with considerable imaginative daring, as the enabling virtue of affective prayer. *Caritas* was the means by which contemplatives could enter into and share Mary's experience of the Crucifixion. The most significant change which this chapter brings to light is that which occurred in the meaning of *contemplation*, which evolved from a simple recollection of scriptural events to a visceral participation in them, the effect of which was moral transformation. The chapter also considers the ideas of Mary's co-Passion and mediation, which have been described as the 'correlative' doctrines of the cult of the *Mater Dolorosa*. An excursus into the roots of these ideas, which takes into account their late flourishing in the west compared to the east, helps to ground the contributions of Benedictine and Cistercian theologians in their wider context. Amongst the English theologians, these ideas received their most powerful expression from Anselm, in his depiction of Mary as the Mother of Mercy; whilst Christ was *misericordissime*, his mother and handmaiden was *misericordissima*.

The thesis culminates in a brief conclusion, reiterating the central argument; namely, that the distinctiveness of the monks' Marian writings can be attributed, to a considerable extent, to their overriding pastoral and moral concerns. In-keeping with changes to the Marian cult more widely, the monastic theologians' vision of Mary was not of an abstract theological phenomenon nor a distant celestial queen, but of a living reality, tender and near at hand, and the manifestation of their monastic ideals. Throughout the period, the theologians whose works are scrutinised here and who were also monastic leaders could say to their communities, as they sought to grow in perfection through suffering and the cultivation of virtue: *Ecce mater tua* ('Behold your mother'; Jn 19:27).