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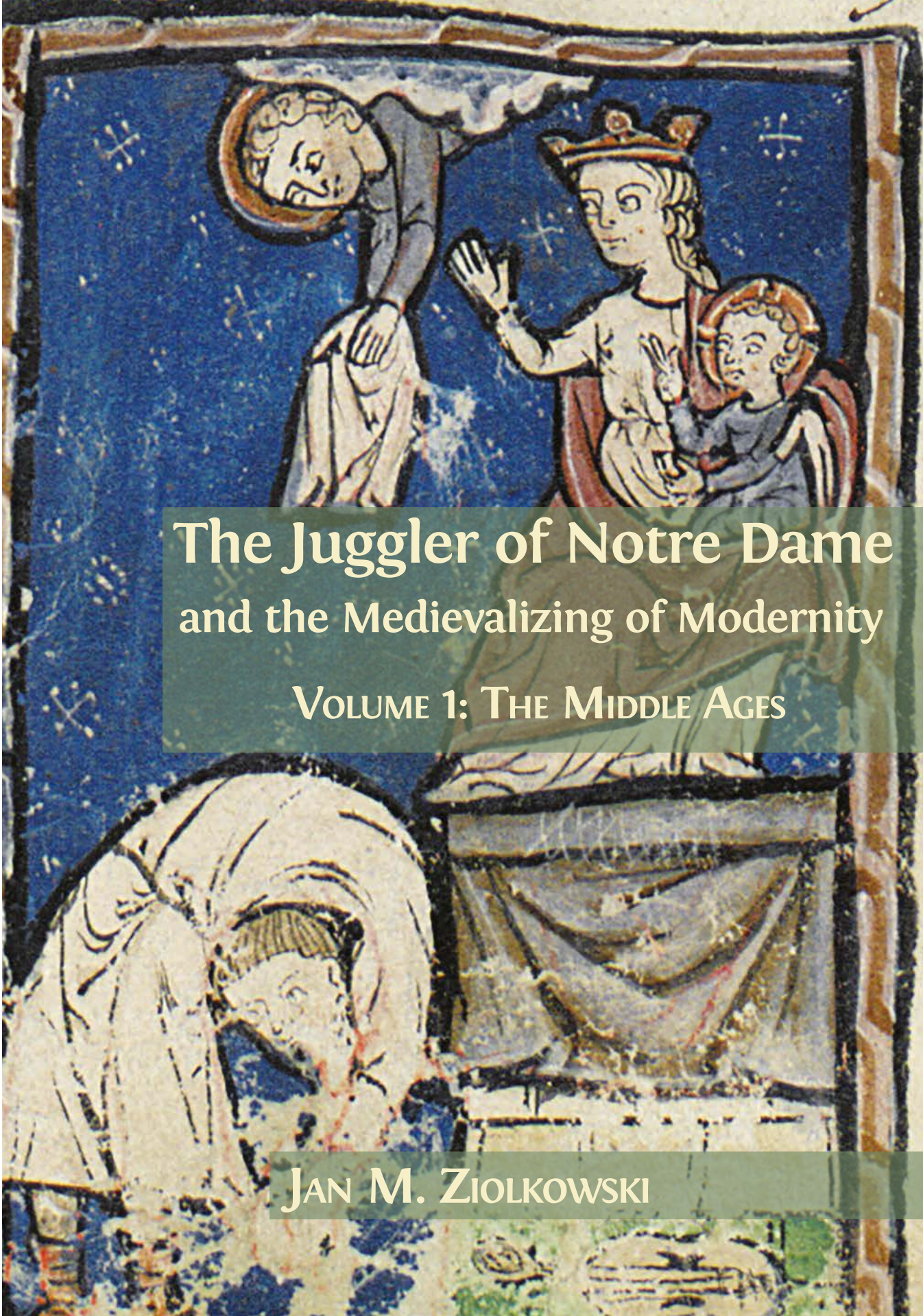
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The Juggler of Notre Dame
and the Medievalizing of Modernity
Volume 1: The Middle Ages

Jan M. Ziolkowski

THE JUGGLER OF NOTRE DAME

VOLUME 1

The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity

Vol. 1: The Middle Ages

Jan M. Ziolkowski

OpenBook Publishers



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To Michel Zink

Art and beauty and poetry are a portion of our mediaeval heritage. Our contribution to the knowledge of those times must be scholarly, first of all, but scholarship must be arrayed, as far as possible, in a pleasing form.

—E. K. Rand



Mary Garden as Jean the juggler in Jules Massenet's *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*.
Photograph by Aimé Dupont, 1909.

Note to the Reader

This volume is the first of a half dozen. Together, the six form *The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity*. The book as a whole probes one medieval story, its reception in culture from the Franco-Prussian War until today, and the placement of that reception within medieval revivalism as a larger cultural phenomenon. The study has been designed to proceed largely in chronological order, but the progression across the centuries and decades is relieved by thematic chapters that deal with topics not restricted to any single time period.

This installment, entitled "The Middle Ages," deals with the story in its medieval forms, with the nature of chief character as a dancer and lay brother, with the circumstances relating to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation that explain the disappearance of the narrative in the early modern period, and with possible sources and analogues, from the Bible on through saints' lives. The second in the series, called "Medieval Meets Medievalism," examines the reemergence of the narrative after its edition in 1873, its translation into English, and its recasting as a short story by Anatole France. Later volumes trace the story of the story down to the present day.

The chapters are followed by endnotes. Rather than being numbered, these notes are keyed to words and phrases in the text that are presented in a different color. After the endnotes come the bibliography and illustration credits. In each volume-by-volume index, the names of most people have lifespans, regnal dates, or at least death dates. Significant topics and concepts are also indexed.

One comment on the title of the story is in order. In proper French, Notre-Dame has a hyphen when the phrase refers to a building, institution, or place. Notre Dame, without the mark, refers to the woman, the mother of Jesus. In my own prose, the title is given in the form *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*, but the last two words will be found hyphenated in quotations and bibliographic citations if the original is so punctuated.

All translations are mine, unless otherwise specified.

Preface

Overture

If no one can walk backward into
the future, can anyone walk forward
into the past?

Over the last half decade, an unattributed joke in French has made the rounds of the highways and byways on the internet. In it, two musicians, one Corsican and the other Breton, chat together in a club for violinists. Both instrumentalists pride themselves on their talents. The performer from the Mediterranean island brags, "Last week I played a concerto in the cathedral of Ajaccio, in front of six thousand spectators. You won't believe me, but I acquitted myself so well on my instrument that I moved the statue of the Holy Virgin to bawl her eyes out." The entertainer from Brittany shakes his head and replies, "As for me, yesterday I played at the cathedral of Brest before an audience of more than ten thousand people. You won't believe me, but at one point I saw Jesus detach himself from the cross and come to me. I stopped playing. In the dead silence, he said to me, 'My son, I hope you know the music well.' Surprised, I responded, 'Lord, I know the score. Why do you say that to me?' He answered, 'Because last week at the cathedral of Ajaccio, a pompous little Corsican played so badly that he caused my mother to wail.'"

Jests of this sort may circulate hither and yon for a while, then die out for a bit, only to return from the jocular grave to joyous rebirth and regrowth. Yet few ever prove themselves ready for the big time. Achieving broad visibility and long durability nowadays requires the narrative to be infiltrated somehow into a mass-media blockbuster of one kind or another, such as a chart-topping film or novel. Otherwise the tale will not make much headway when the tempo of life is frenetic and airtime is packed.

For all the tenuousness of its current existence, the French joke makes a suggestive point of departure for the book before you. Its basic elements so typify the Middle Ages that no one should be startled to find that it was in fact recounted in medieval

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Europe and that in a zigzag it transited across the space-time continuum from then and there to become today's worldwide meme.

The story's humor is verbal. Even so, it presumes nonverbal performances by artists before Madonnas. The crucial actions, so to speak, take place within cathedrals consecrated to the Virgin. The punchline assumes that in her maternal capacity, Mary has special leverage over her son. The dialogue between the two European musicians takes as an ontological given either that images of the Mother of God and Christ may become animate or that the real beings for whom they are stand-ins may come as visitants associated with them. More simply, statues of Mary and Jesus are brought to life or the heavenly personages depicted in them descend to earth.

With luck, the amusement of the brief account intrigues and predisposes you, dear reader or listener, enough that you want to learn more about our protagonist, the juggler of Notre Dame. He too enacts his routine before a Madonna in a church—but that is only part of the story.

The Story of a Story

> In the introduction… I would have preferred to see a short overview of the history of the motif.
>
> —Arthur Långfors

This book, six volumes in all, tells the story of a story. In a sense, the prose to come resembles a megafarm of the sort that sprawls across the Great Plains of North America. Conceive a mental picture of a vast acreage devoted to monoculture. The plant under single-crop cultivation is one narrative and its reception. Then again, all the words that follow offer much more than the story of a single story. Just as musicians learn, perhaps especially in consorts, from playing and replaying the same piece, and readers refine themselves and their understanding by reading and rereading, the enrichment on offer here is enhanced—cultivated—by perusing multiple versions of the same narrative. To think of a different geography and geology, these chapters map a planetwide archipelago of translations, adaptations, and performances that is formed by the evidence for the reception of one medieval tale and its descendants.

Because the tale has been retold in many ways and because it relates to a host of other tales, the account presented here is not an exercise in pure monomania on my part. In fact, it leads in enough other zigs and zags to warrant comparison with *The Thousand and One Nights*. It takes us into other stories and histories, first contemporary with the original one and then surrounding it down to the present day. It offers up a succession of whodunits, although the mystery is not a murder but a miracle. As we watch the wonder unfolded again and again, we can never be certain what the upshot

will be in the final scene of each episode. Each chapter expands like the bellows of an accordion to become a different detective novel.

The tale of the story is then, more accurately, the tale of the ebbing and flowing fate that befell the narrative as it was received by this and that author or artist and audience. As such, it mirrors the tale of the medieval period as it has been reconstructed by people who have come afterward. At the same time, its trajectory reflects the overall destiny of Gothic. The jongleur, our itinerant musician and juggler, flourished, at least relatively, in two texts from the Middle Ages. The first was a poem in a form of the language now called French. The second was a preaching exemplum—an edifying story—in Latin. To judge by all indications, the written expression of the story originated in France in the first half of the thirteenth century or conceivably a tad earlier. It sprang into being in roughly the same place and time as the architectural and artistic manner known as Gothic itself took shape. Both writing specimens date to the final third of the long era and grand social construct that for the sake of convenience we call the Middle Ages. Let us say that the period extends roughly from 500 to 1500.

The relatively derisory evidence of textual transmission for both the French poem and the Latin prose suggests that before disappearing temporarily into the floss of a cultural cocoon, the tale lived on in these incarnations until the medieval era drew to a close. Perhaps a more apt choice of words would be chrysalis, since the hardened body of a butterfly pupa is better suited to the architecture of the great stone churches. In what has been called the Gothic survival, this construction style too persevered through the beginning of the sixteenth century, at which juncture it slipped largely out of both cultural consciousness and architectural practice. The narrative and the architecture alike succumbed to the wave of anti-Gothicism and antimedievalism that washed across Europe and its colonies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, along with other reflexes of the Italian Renaissance. During the Reformation, the anonymous story plunged into obscurity, where it vegetated for a few successive centuries. It resurfaced or was recovered in the early 1870s. At that moment, it elicited a romantic gusto that contributed to its being remade time and time again, down to the present day, in paraphrases, literary reworkings, and operatic refashionings. Eventually it permeated many levels and genres of mass culture. Both the medieval text and some of the chief modern adaptations have been rated of the highest grade.

The tale occupies a paradoxical position by being at once nowhere and everywhere, resembling the titular object in Edgar Allen Poe's "The Purloined Letter." In this short story from 1845, a document is plastered over by being hidden in open view. Our medieval narrative also, after having been a stock item in the storehouse of cultural literacy throughout much of the twentieth century, has now subsided from mass culture. For many reasons, a moment came, a switch was flicked. The sway of the tale had been unassailable, but suddenly language teachers and literary critics spoke of what in jurisprudence is called undue influence. More devastatingly, the

narrative dropped precipitously from popular view. In the twenty-first century, it is no longer reenacted annually on live television at Christmas as it was in the 1950s, no longer retold constantly on radio programs as it was in the 40s, and no longer promoted as a regular feature on the opera circuit as it was from 1900 through 1930. For all that, the juggler of Notre Dame seems still to be widely encountered and remembered, even if only as a warm and fuzzy memory in the minds of today's audiences. Everyone who comes across it appears to regard it as a personal find, the narrative equivalent of an objet trouvé. It is uncamouflaged. At the same time, it is a secret weapon.

Examples of its hiding in plain sight are plenty but I will limit myself to two: Five years before my godmother passed away in 2009, I mentioned to her that I was studying a medieval story and its reception since the late nineteenth century. When I told her the kernel of the narrative, she mused a moment before dropping the title of a poem by W. H. Auden. Until that point—confession time—I had not run across "The Ballad of Barnaby." As we will see in due course, the short stanzas by the great twentieth-century poet tell the same medieval story. A little more recently, I happened to be asked about my research by the longest-serving flight attendant in the world, a favorite person of mine on my weekly commuter hop. I prattled about the narrative for a couple of minutes. At first, she smiled blankly, but within an instant her mien changed completely. She recognized the tale as one preferred by her son when she read it to him decades earlier. To this day, he recalls it fondly. In short order, we pieced together that she had known the story in a children's book written and illustrated by Tomie dePaola.

The tale under discussion here is a love story, and this book of mine is a love story about it. Not all undying love is romantic, with billing and cooing. Even less is it necessarily erotic or a prologue to sex. All the same, in our hard-core world it is almost inevitable that even a guiltless juggler should be compelled to enter a seamy space in culture not too many inches removed from jiggle-booty videos. Before this book is finished, we will see the medieval narrative as it has been manipulated by filmmakers of porn—to explain, ancient carvings of the last-mentioned sort often showed a Greek or Roman god with the ramrod of an erect penis. Wait to learn how a representation of the juggler could possibly merit comparison with such a figure.

In an interview about the movie of his novella *Love Story*, Erich Segal demurred when the reporter compared him with the jongleur. Although the author balked at the comparison, he went on in short order to reveal that he knew the tale and that telling it gave him a leg up in negotiations about the film. In fact, the juggler of Notre Dame served him in virtually the same way as it would have done a preacher in the Middle Ages. It seems that during the planning for the filming of the smash hit *Love Story*, the financers from the studio had decided to save a large sum of money by lopping

from the screenplay what has become one of its most famous moments. In this scene, the hero ice-skates at Wollman Rink in Central Park. To convince them to keep the segment, Segal had a half minute to make his pitch while climbing the stairs to their office. In those thirty seconds, he narrated the tale of the performer from the Middle Ages. Won over, they agreed to retain the episode. Thus, a pivotal scene in the film owes its presence to Segal's invocation of the juggler's spiritual love.

Not only is this study about a story of love, it is also about a love of story. One emotion binds the protagonist of the medieval narrative to the Virgin. The affective tie is hitched by way of a Madonna in a crypt, before whom the lead character expresses his devotion by performing an acrobatic or juggling routine. This daily grind puts into action a heart-melting lyricism. His feeling is faith-based, but the humble attachment to Mary that is described in the narrative emanates from an era when religion was not as quarantined from the rest of life as many now experience it. The other love has less to do with the divine than with art itself. This consuming—and creating—passion ties to the jongleur every poet, illustrator, composer, and other creative soul who has remodeled the tale in literature, art, music, and other media. The makeover commences with the two medieval versions, resumes with the rediscovery of the story in the late nineteenth century, and stretches to the present day. Nor should researchers be omitted. From 1873 until this very moment, they have been inspirited by their own gusto for the narrative and more broadly for the Middle Ages. Propelled by that affection, they have transmitted it to the public, including fresh generations of artists, who have kept it living through rereading and creative reinterpretation.

From *Our Lady's Tumbler* to *The Jongleur of Notre Dame*

The account of concern to us here has traveled under various aliases. The story is simplicity incarnate, but it also displays an astonishing plasticity. Most often, it has borne in English the titles *Our Lady's Tumbler* and *The Jongleur of Notre Dame*. The two versions are closely related but not fungible. Many renderings of them have been deceptively simple in the number and nature of their narrative elements. The narrative can even be pruned at its barest minimum to the interior of a high-ceilinged Gothic church and a ball, by way of which the cover art to the program of an opera production summed up the whole narrative (see Fig. Pref.1 below).

Not even a single human being is present. Gothic is familiar to everyone who has traveled in Europe, the Americas, and many other places around the globe that were once gripped by European imperialism or tied to its national cultures. The principal elements of the style instantiate the gist of medieval Christianity: the pointed arch conjures up a monastery, a cathedral of Notre Dame, or both. By visual metonymy, the sphere evokes the juggler himself.

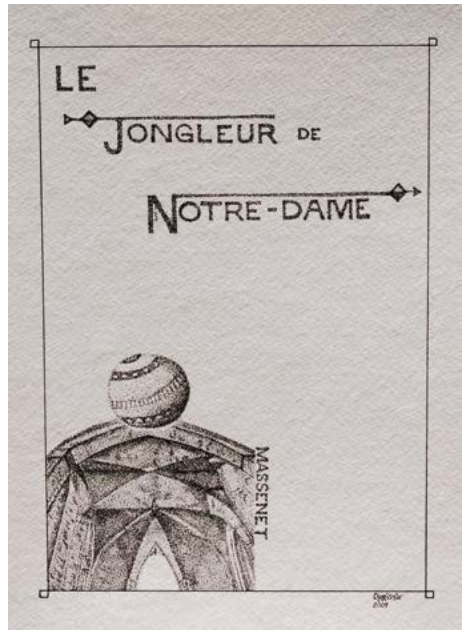


Fig. Pref.1 Christie Grimstad, *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*, 2009.
Ink pointillism, 28 × 35.6 cm. © Ken Fish. All rights reserved.

Tracing how the tale of the juggler acquired these associations has its own inherent interest. More broadly, it takes us down a path toward appreciating how the Middle Ages have been recaptured since the late nineteenth century. The medieval period as we now know it was retrieved, reinvented, and reconceived by the nineteenth century as a counterbalance to industrial society. Since then, it has been reinvoked both architecturally and literarily at times of profound soul-searching, by both individual artists and whole cultures. Everyone knows that with each passing moment we venture beyond a new point of no return and that the event horizon lies behind us. In this sense, Gothic is gone—but that does not mean dead and gone. At least half of William Faulkner's adage holds true: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." We may now have reached once again a juncture where the Middle Ages have an especially heightened relevance or meet needs that other times will not fill.

The architecture of Gothic revivals cannot be ignored. In fact, it represents an essential aspect of the overall reinvention that the medieval period has undergone recurrently. In part, the story has thrived owing to the seductiveness of the built spaces in which the imaginations of the reader have pictured it taking place. Fathoming the juggler helps us to grasp the reasons for which the construction style predominated as it did. In turn, comprehension of the buildings assists in coming to terms with the performer in the literary texts. Gothic architecture and literature are the twin terminuses of a heavily traveled two-way street. They are not in discord; we are under

no obligation to pit them against each other in a game of rock-paper-scissors. Instead, they are constantly, ever-evolvingly interactive. In both edifices and texts, Gothic may be so often seen and so readily recognized that it needs to be defamiliarized for us to perceive it afresh.

The wretched and yet transcendent jongleur himself stands beyond the intellectualism of polarities between print and oral, Reformation and medieval, and modernism and Middle Ages. He speaks to all of us who suffer the trials and tribulations of at least two anxieties. One makes us fear in the pit of our stomachs that our chosen occupation is insubstantial; the other fills us with fretfulness that our execution of it may not be even particularly authoritative or dignified. Relieving both worries, he shows us that art and physicality, acted out in the right spirit, can transfuse meaning into life and win accolades even in the afterlife.

The most common English title, *Our Lady's Tumbler*, is one translation of a French title, *Del Tumbeor Nostre Dame*, by which the medieval narrative was known when it was first brought back to light. From this story another has been crafted, a nineteenth-century adaptation called, again from the French, *The Jongleur of Notre Dame*. It recounts a miracle of the Virgin Mary. Such wonders were the abundant side shoots and suckers of medieval literature that sprouted from the much heftier trunk of hagiography, that is, saints' lives and legends. Since the late nineteenth century, these two forms of the tale—*Our Lady's Tumbler* and *The Jongleur of Notre Dame*—have undergone frequent amalgamation and adaptation. In close association, they have constituted an enduring component of culture in Western Europe, America, and even farther afield. Whereas most medieval narratives that have exercised much influence on modern culture have been familiar, at least patchily, since romanticism or even earlier, *Our Lady's Tumbler* garnered attention only from 1873.

Sometimes coming on the scene late can have upsides and confer advantages. From that year on, the story and its awesomely variegated progeny have held a place continuously in literature, as well as eventually in music, dance, radio, television, cinema, painting, sculpture, and other media. Scrutinizing the family tree of this one tale illustrates and validates the worth of the arts and humanities. This case study demonstrates how the world may be constructed creatively through language, art, music, movement, and other forms of human expression. Even just within the literary sphere (and that is a big "just"), the narrative has found expression in a multitude of genres, which include cheap paperbacks, handwritten and printed pseudo-manuscripts, miniature books, bibliophilic editions, and children's books, even pop-up books.

Until the late twentieth century, the world of learning tended to keep apart many categories just mentioned, and to ignore or boycott popular and mass culture. Oral and written, folkloric and literary, low and high, image and text, children's and adult, medieval and modern, and many other such either-or dualities were kept in place with far greater rigidity than has become the custom. Similarly, investigators speak now

of literary reception rather than tradition. This change corresponds to a shift of focus from authors and their intentions to readers and their multiplicity of interpretations.

For the breaking down of artificial balkanizations that were created and instituted long after the Middle Ages, I am thankful. Their evaporation enables us to wend our way freely across time, genre, and space. Scholarship needs the solidity of disciplines and fields, but at this point who would write off the attractions and values of building on them to attain vibrant multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity across areas? Disciplines and fields must be maintained so that we may acquire the expertise required for knowledge and wisdom, yet simultaneously, they must be resisted and transcended, so that culture may be understood holistically, across times, places, media, levels, and more.

In my wanderings, I have lighted upon beauties in narrative and in lives touched and sustained by the story that would have escaped me. At the same time, the contemplation of later reformulations has granted insights into the medieval poem that would never have occurred to me otherwise. For all the marvels that human ingenuity has reached through science, we are still unable either to outleap our own mortality or to journey back or forward in time. Try as we may, we are bogged down more than knee-deep in the here and now. Yet this story has enabled me to achieve intimacy with individuals, some accomplished, others unremarkable, most large-hearted and next to none small-minded or mean-spirited, from across eight centuries or more. Among the many delights and duties of devotees to the humanities is to role-play as bounty hunters. First, we tail our prey. After nabbing them, we parade them in a perp walk before a broader public. Why? Because they are the "wanted, dead or alive" who can expand our appreciation of culture.

Over the first few decades of the prolific aftermath that the medieval *Our Lady's Tumbler* has engendered since the late nineteenth century, the reception of the narrative owed to its intrinsic qualities. The historical circumstances when it was received were marked by particularities that would have predisposed audiences to the significations they detected in it. In addition, the story's heft has gained from the serendipity that a host of major scholars, authors, songsters, performers, and artists gravitated to it and reshaped it. Tracking the shifting fate of *Our Lady's Tumbler* allows insights into not only the life and afterlife of medieval tales and modern preconceptions of the Middle Ages but also the very nature of story.

***

The story I will tell extols humble zeal, which is how many who have fallen under its spell would like to characterize their own spirit in approaching *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Nurturing a determination to be unshowy seems inherently self-subversive, but such undermining seems to be an essential element of being human. So, let us aspire to be modest but also to help wean this tale off life support. Fiction writers might hope

to save it by composing utterly different retellings. I will instead offer a study that surveys the theme from as many analytical vantage points as my own conceptual and cultural-historical capacities allow. Our combined efforts may yet help to confirm that the pen is mightier than the sword.

The length of this study has not resulted from mere writing mania on my part, but rather from the multiplicity and richness of the issues involved in it. I cannot claim to have constructed a cathedral of learning, but I can argue that like some of the finest Gothic places of worship, this edifice of words and images has a complex structure in which each component predicates another. Great churches are cruciform, enforcing on worshipers and even on nonbeliever visitors an empathy with Christ through imitation of the crucifixion as they bring their bodies to the crossing of nave and transept. Yet the same houses of worship deposit upon the original story of Jesus many others, both precedents from the Hebrew Bible and successors from saints' lives and other subsequent tales, told in stained glass, carvings, paint, and many of the other media that go into the making of cathedrals. So too you will find here, as you thumb through this volume, a very deliberate accumulation of what ideally will serve as purposeful variety. Decide for yourself whether it adds up to more than merely the sum of the parts.

Our Lady's Tumbler and *The Jongleur of Notre Dame*, like their title characters, may seem uncomplicated and timeless. People who are humble and devout risk being described as simple, which in turn can be conflated with simpleminded. The jongleur is no simpleton. For that matter, those who have created art or artisanship about him are not simplistic either. As for timeless, on each occasion these stories are retold, they mutate. Like the jumping gymnast of the story, they are whirligigs. Despite qualities that take them out of time, many changes in fact reflect transformations brought about constantly by the passage of days, months, and years.

To rephrase what I wrote at the outset, the pages to follow unfold the unauthorized biography of a tale. Although the destiny of the story may be never-ending, and although my aspirations may be totalizing, this study of its life can be neither. All mortals, unlike some of the art they produce, have only a finite measure of vitality at their disposal. Thus, I must finish, for my own sake as well as yours. As loath as I am to pull back from an enterprise that has taught me much and brought me unbroken joy, the moment has arrived to start the show-and-tell of what I have learned. Like any biographer who aspires to do his subject justice, I am filled with fervor to delineate a detailed picture. Even more, I ache to construct one that has all the three-dimensional immersiveness of an insight gained or even entered from multiple perspectives. The fancy word for this objective is perspectivism, the practice of viewing and analyzing a situation or object from different observation posts.

This project, driven by an aim for holism, provides the ingredients for an infinity of close readings. The big-hearted soul who in the early thirteenth century left us our

earliest extant manifestation of the narrative was already in the thick of an interchange between what has been called high and low culture. His poem perched at an interface. On the one side was the sometimes spicy, unrehearsed entertainment that was made available to the illiterate common folk. Indeed, the protagonist of his poem was himself a ruefully unlettered performer. On the other end of the spectrum stood the esoteric exercises of the educated and privileged elite, especially ecclesiastics such as monks. The result is a contradiction, a beautiful and learned text about monastic life that imparts how conventional prayer may be outstripped without Latin, chant, or liturgy. Alternatively, what prevails is the simplicity of the performer's thoughts and hopes: wishful thinking comes out on top.

To elucidate, I will follow one-way lines of cause and effect, but the linear causalities will be braided together into complex bundles. I will toggle between text and context, with the added nuance that the text itself will change at every step of the way—as holds true of a human life history, since individuals develop in response to the environment that evolves around them. For all these reasons and more, digital devices have functioned for me as tools rather than interlocutors. As a humanist, I have been driven to converse with human beings—sometimes face to face with the living but more often via printed page, canvas, film, and other media with the dead or distant. The days, weeks, months, and years have heaped up like flakes in a heavy snowfall as I have picked up and put down the work. Each artist or interpreter has furnished me with another lens, sometimes microscopic, sometimes telescopic, that has amplified and clarified my vision and insight. I have been fascinated by learning about these other individuals and their perspectives. If I have been clumsy in interpreting them, I have at least tried: in our times, anxiety about past or present injuries done to others seems to encourage talking about things rather than people. Objects have become the preferred subjects. That is too bad, since in a time of materialism the consideration of humanity makes a nice counterweight to the preoccupation with materiality. Human beings win out over stuff and nonsense.

This book grapples with two equal but opposite processes. One is the making modern of a medieval story; the other is the making medieval of the cultures that have received it. In what follows, a single miraculous tale supplies the vehicle for sharing and revelation. At the same time, *The Jongleur of Notre Dame* relates to what has happened to the Middle Ages themselves. It makes this one story a synecdoche, or a rich case in point, for the entire reception of the medieval period in modernity. The description and analysis that lie ahead tell and show (to transpose the usual idiom) a tale. They alternate between countless texts and contexts. The versions of the story and the cultures surrounding them interdigitate inextricably. I would like to resuscitate the narrative, while also applying it as a fulcrum for understanding the reception of the medieval era in general.

Accept then a heartfelt invitation to commute back and forth through time and space, as retailed in words and images. We will get underway by taking a very long stride into the Middle Ages—or at least into what they have been made by those who have sought to shuttle between them and their own times, and into what they appear to be to me. (I am resisting saying that our excursion takes us back, since that carries unfavorable connotations—medieval is not another word for backward.) Then, after taking that huge lunge to 1200, we will jump part of the way forward again toward the somewhat more proximate past of the late nineteenth century. And, from the 1870s onward, we will take baby steps across time until our own day.

As chance would have it, our appreciation of medievalism is much fuller and perhaps simpler up to our late nineteenth-century starting point of 1870 than afterward. That year makes a good dividing line for at least France and Germany, which acted out important roles in the reception of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, since the Franco-Prussian War precipitated major changes in both. Even though Britain did not participate in the armed conflict, 1870 marked a seismic shift in its culture as well. As has happened ad nauseam since, the hostilities no sooner drove people apart than they made the world a smaller and more nodal place. Among other things, movements in art and culture spread like wildfire internationally, especially across the transatlantic plane.

Strictly speaking, the reception portion of my book commences in 1873. Many medievalists are well acquainted with the reemergence of the medieval in the Gothic revival of the nineteenth century. Yet that eruption of revivalism is often understood to have fizzled out in failure precisely when my timetable starts. In the conventional scheme, the main renewal of medievalizing entered its twilight by 1880 and was extinct by 1900. As a result, the timeline of this probe may catch my colleagues in medieval—or medievalism—studies, ill- or even altogether unprepared. We are not trained to be aware of second- and third-wave medievalism.

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The tale of the performer has been for me a top-notch teacher and guardian angel—or acrobat. Alongside unnerving and subversive undercurrents that only enrich it, the story possesses a redemptive goodness that has made lengthy immersion in it nothing but a charm.

This undertaking has also made me belatedly valorize the fragile durability of books. I have never considered myself an especial book lover—a bibliophile carries a gene for collecting that I lack. Rather, I have viewed myself as a craftsman in a profession that involves an untold array of tools, and printed matter forms a large and much-valued class among that panoply. Yet conducting the dragnet for this project has made me a bibliophile in the broadest and perhaps truest sense.

The end result, these six volumes, has ensconced within itself aspects of my own fondness—for the tale, for medieval cultures, and for people in my life. I owe gratitude

to all those who have fostered in me the thirst and perhaps even the knack for making the past come alive as I construe it. The Roman myth of Pygmalion is analogous only so far, since the object of my enthusiasm is not a narrative that I composed myself, but I will acknowledge that this story made me fall in love with a product of art. Whatever resemblance I may have to Pygmalion, however, I hope to bear less of one to Narcissus. I long to coax mute texts into speaking, not to coerce them into serving as ventriloquist's dummies for my own self.

The goodness of our medieval tale froths up in the foam of positive feelings and memories that the story often elicits from those who have been touched by it. Truth to tell, I have been delightedly startled again and again by the generosity of those whom I have consulted when foraging for information and materials. The repeated kindness of strangers has led me to conclude that the story is innately and infectiously constructive. The world needs more narratives like it, for a story can be improving, a tale can be a tonic: a treatment known as bibliotherapy exists, with good cause. To be less highfalutin, we refer routinely to feel-good stories. This is such a narrative. If any of its qualities have rubbed off on my project, enough to make this book instill warm feelings in the cockles of others' hearts, that outcome gladdens me.

1. The Medieval Beginnings of *Our Lady's Tumbler*

I find that I always get back to the twelfth century when left to myself.

—Henry Adams

The French Poem

The poem often called *Our Lady's Tumbler*, comprising 684 lines in 342 rhyming couplets, is held by common consensus to be a bright spot of French literature, among the most beautiful texts from the Middle Ages. Magnum opus though it may be, the piece poses quintessentially medieval puzzles. The tale it recounts has also come through to us in a later, no-frills Latin prose version. Rudimentary facts about interconnections between the poem and prose turn out not to be facts at all but moot points. When all is said and done, we can do nothing first except read, reason, and seek out hard evidence. Then we may proceed to formulate, substantiate, and evaluate hypotheses by trying them out in the proving grounds of public delivery. By taking precautions and implementing preventive measures against slipperiness, we can tiptoe around slippery-slope fallacies. Just by itself, the verse in Picard-flavored medieval French remains, in important regards, unexplored territory. Among the unknowns are authorship and precise date of composition. Even more mystifying is the exact relationship between the two actual written texts and any conjectural unwritten forms. Did an oral narrative stand behind the poem that is our earliest datum? Did one, either inspired by the poetic version or independent of it, lead to the later exemplum? At the end of the day, the only two foregone conclusions are the story itself and the manuscripts that transmit it. Both these diamond-hard certainties warrant close examination.

Our Lady's Tumbler has been termed a "stand-alone moralizing piece." The tale it tells resembles a specific type of medieval literature known as an *exemplum*. Exempla,

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to use the plural, were illustrative stories that furnished entertainment in speeches. By doing so, they particularly enlivened sermons. Generally, they were pithy. While providing a modicum of mirth, the brief narratives, which like most rhetoric were protreptic, served as launch pads for edification. Often they impressed salutary or redemptive ethical lessons. Sometimes they afforded humdrum, concrete explanations; at other times they illustrated complex, abstract doctrinal issues. These exemplary tales can be heterogeneous in nature, but many purport to relate an actual event in the life of a real human being. That is, they are presented as being true. Thus, they can approximate closely what today we might categorize as anecdotes or, alternatively, legends. At the very least, they are usually plausible. Whether they actually happened is almost beside the point.

Preaching became ever more prevalent after 1200. Inside the beehives of Cistercian monasteries, abbots were expected to utter daily homilies in chapter meetings to the monks under their oversight. Beyond this routine expectation, the same community kingpins were also to hold forth in church on festivities, when pontificating was the order of the day. Those feasts, of course, included the major Marian celebrations. The white monks, as those of this order were called, spread throughout Europe, into the Eastern Mediterranean and even beyond. They carried with them their sermons and exempla in speech and writing, and enriched their stock of such narratives with what they heard and read during their travels. The store of these little tales swelled. In the world outside the abbeys, sermonizing proliferated as clerics were reoriented to devote far greater time and energy to the moral welfare and spiritual life of laypeople. In the process, the clergy tasked with pulpiteering developed a taste for enlivening and enlightening their orations with engaging and edifying stories. Eventually the friars, too, became especially enmeshed in proselytizing among the laity. All these preachers, monastic, fraternal, and clerical, felt an imperative to grandstand and to find attention-grabbing tales that lent themselves to moralistic or religious interpretations—in a word, to preachiness.

Both the theory and praxis of homiletics necessitated familiarity, both broad and deep, with exempla. Consequently, the requirements of would-be sermonizers opened up niches for new sorts of reference works. In these books, aspiring orators who sought out stories suited to specific themes could forage for ones that met their needs. They rooted around in exempla collections conveniently arranged in clusters by topic. Alternatively, they consulted systematic "arts of preaching." Illustrative stories often turned up in the model speeches that were implanted in or grafted onto such manuals. The exempla became only more pervasive as this type of rhetoric took an ever stronger hold on oral and written culture alike. In those two cultures, the noun "sermon" carried a dual meaning. On the one hand, it referred to a declamation proclaimed aloud and live to an audience. The delivery could come from memory, improvisation, a written outline, or a full text. On the other hand, the word could denote a text copied in a manuscript for reading and consultation.

Churchgoing listeners, whether monastic or lay, had far fewer reservoirs of diversion on which to draw than we have today. For them, the exemplum was a happy innovation that came into its own in the thirteenth century. It remained well liked throughout the remainder of the Middle Ages. Viewed from a higher altitude, this literary genre can be lodged within a broader framework. Even outside churches, the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries saw an explosion of both tales and tale-telling. To describe the trend toward fiction as a development of "story for story's sake" would go too far. After all, many narratives had lessons or at least germs of wisdom to convey. Yet with or without morals, narrative mushroomed. The formulation "emancipation of story" may be the snappiest catchphrase that has been concocted to describe the proliferation of romances and "songs of heroic deeds," fabliaux and so-called elegiac comedies, and fables and exempla. Like many others in society, preachers had to be good storytellers if they wished to compete and succeed.

But let us turn inward from context to text. The poem of *Our Lady's Tumbler* tells a stirring tale of a professional entertainer who specializes in dizzying double somersaults, light-footed leaps, and other such feats. In our terms this key figure might be called an acrobat, gymnast, or dancer. All three pursuits involve nonverbal bodily movements that are intentionally rhythmical, and all three follow patterned sequences. All three have interdependences between body and emotion, in strong contrast to the associations of linguistic expression with the mind and reason. Dance constitutes a symbolic form of communicating and representing. Its connection with symbolism elevates it. Yet it is also ineluctably physical, with the positives and negatives that corporeality entails. The hero of the poem is radically new, a role model who is simultaneously a roll model.

Whatever name we assign to the profession and activities the tumbler transacts in the story, this simple layman tires of his existence as a secular performer. World-weary, he feels like a misfit, and he cannot stomach any more years of aimless wandering. From the medieval Christian perspective that he assumes, all his possessions are ill-gotten gains. In a sudden and definitive change of heart, and without any forethought, he repents by giving away his hard-earned money, horse, and clothes. He is game now to lead life *pro bono*. The entertainer aspires to cure his newly developed agoraphobia by yielding to claustrophilia. He joins a monastery as a lay brother, and he plunges in with a blank slate. The abbey is his spiritual promised land. Yet his notions of *tabula rasa* and a clean break prove to be illusory. All too soon, one form of hopelessness gives way to another. In his new environs, he realizes that he is far from his wheelhouse (or cartwheelhouse). He has no capability for singing or reading. Shortly, he despairs over his inefficacy. He cannot fulfill the duties of a regular monk—in fact, he is incapable even of deciphering the codes of monastic communication and conduct. After one life-changing transition, he needs another. This time he must invent a new life for himself, but within the inflexibilities of monasticism.

Eventually, the jongleur figures out a means for overcoming his life's ennui. It dawns upon him that his priorities are all amiss. He needs to put the (cart)wheel before the horse: by recognizing in a way uniquely his own that the show must go on, he hybridizes his two ostensibly irreconcilable métiers. The physics of his devotion has its own space and time. To express himself in the only medium he can devise, the tumbler takes to slinking off to the crypt when the robed and hooded monks fulfill the canonical hours above. He leaves it to others to preach to the choir. Instead, in solitude he develops the custom of stripping down from his habit to his underclothes. Upon entering the abbey he divested himself figuratively of his property; now he does a literal divestment. In this array (or disarray), he venerates the Virgin Mary by enacting his devotions in solitude before an image of Our Lady. His reverence takes the shape of acrobatics. His physical exploits are intermingled with breast-beating, sighs, whimpering, and other indicia of penance. The moral of the story would appear to be "As you weep, so shall you reap." The sequence culminates in genuflection before the Madonna. At the end of the whole-body workout (but perhaps especially the legwork), he collapses, not groveling, but parched and prostrate, lips chapped, lungs gasping for oxygen, his quadriceps heavy as lead.

The story continues. Fellow monks have noticed the absenteeism of the tumbler, who supposedly abandoned the wandering without purpose in which he engaged professionally in the world outside. They remain unconvinced that despite now being at least nominally a monk of some species, he has not lost his bearings and reverted to his old ways. In their petty-mindedness, they suspect him of being shiftless. What does he do while they knuckle down to execute their duties by singing in choir? Could he be lounging, a laggard or loafer? Acting upon their suspicions, they trail him, ferret out his alibi, see his unorthodoxy in action, and disapprove. The lay brother believes that by tumbling, he is worshipping. Their reaction is dismissive: what they observe, they judge as "not a prayer." Through them, the abbot is alerted to the unaccustomed and nonnormative behavior of the unwitting tumbler and spies upon him, at which moment he witnesses a miraculous visitant. Spoiler alert! The Virgin herself descends from heaven and, in her role as comforter, fans the tumbler. The scheming of the brethren has backfired.

A while after this celestial encounter, the overwrought entertainer is summoned to a meeting in the abbot's quarters. The lay brother is tied in knots with worry. Has he transgressed by riffing so radically on the regular worship? Has he committed not really but metaphorically a faux pas? Will his superior have him ejected from the abbey? Will he be defrocked for his frocklessness in the crypt? All these anxieties prove to be ungrounded. Instead of being reprimanded and penalized, he receives a commendation. In the view of his spiritual father, his dance routine gives evidence not of shirking but of supererogation: it is a balletic form of going above and beyond, except it takes place below ground. Relief washes over the tumbler. What happens

next may seem a kind of physiological non sequitur. Beyond the physical drain of performing multiple times a day, he has been under insufferable psychological duress. The sudden turnabout from anxiety to reassurance and relaxation overloads his constitution, which has become damaged through overwork. He immediately falls ill and soon expires. In one sense, he has attained the release from life that is designated technically as quietus. Peace and salvation have been his goals, and now he has reached them. From another perspective, he has truly worked himself to death. He has achieved the ultimate in work-life imbalance.

Thanks to another intervention by Mary, angels wrest the tumbler's soul from demons who have swooped in to claim it as their own. Despite being the beneficiary of the Virgin's leniency, in neither case does he witness the act himself. He cannot measure up to a saint. He has not died after being martyred nor after living an entire life of unpolluted virtue, from cradle to grave. At the same time, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the entertainer who has become a lay brother has won ringing endorsement from the Mother of God. Although he is rail-thin and worn to the nub by asceticism, what happens around him are not his own fatigue-induced hallucinations. The miracles may function to his maximum advantage, but they take place unbeknownst to him. Rather, they are genuine epiphanies to which others can testify. They are wonders for which impartial, even skeptical eyewitnesses can vouch.

If we dissect the tale and seek to taxonomize it within present-day categories of literary genres, we might waver in classifying *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The genre of the poem, if not altogether uncharacterizable, is problematic to characterize—but fortunately those who write literature have often been much less fussy about generic exactitude than those who criticize, historicize, and theorize it. We could sort the poem under the heading of short story, if we regard the account as fiction. Alternatively, we could class it as minor biography, if we buy that it was meant to be taken as a record of reality—a moment in history. We could compare it profitably with the Occitan literary form called vida, which presented in prose a brief life story of a troubadour. Then again, we could subsume it within one subset of writings about the saints. Hagiography encompasses writings on the lives and deaths of saints, their miracles, and the fate of their mortal remains. By this measure the French text fits squarely within the form—it recounts a miracle tale about the Mother of God, who is a saint even if the tumbler is not. To go a step further, it tells a double wonder: In the first instance, the Virgin intervenes to succor physically a devotee of hers. In the second, she tops her earlier assistance by interceding to save his eternal soul from hell for heaven. The poem is technically a soteriological Marian miracle tale, in which the Mother of God performs a wonder to redeem an individual. As such, it falls within a subgenre of miracles about Mary that is not attested definitively before the eleventh century.

To return to familiar territory, the narrative unfolded in *Our Lady's Tumbler* is an exemplum, just as the preamble to the poem declares. As might happen in a sermon, the tale concentrates our undivided attention upon reversals in stature. The tumbler has attained worldly success and prosperity, which he abandons. Within the monastery, he rates himself a total washout. Yet in the end, he manages to reach the ultimate of un- and otherworldliness. He attains recognition by securing a lifeline twice, both times courtesy of Mary. *Our Lady's Tumbler* conjures up a hefty set of oppositions. It sets in competition the categories of lay and monastic, literate and illiterate, official and unofficial, public and private, liturgical and non- or paraliturgical, verbal and nonverbal, devout and blasphemous, and even aboveground and underground. Indeed, the list of such antonyms could be extended almost without end. What is more, the poem raises urgent questions about love, regarded at least nowadays as quite possibly the most powerful and mysterious aspect of human life, whether directed toward another person, God, or both.

But we get ahead of ourselves by delving into such subtleties and shades of grey before dealing with more elementary issues. Prompted by the medieval text, our path must commence, whether we recognize it as such or not, with words preserved in ink on parchment. We must toe our way carefully, letter by letter, across and down painstakingly prepped and smoothed rectangles of cowhide. The manuscripts that transmit the text help us to hear the words and read the minds of people from the Middle Ages. A codex has an altogether different shape from a low-caliber revolver, yet if we seek out a smoking gun in the distant past of the Middle Ages, we need to start our search for the fumes by looking at the books made of animal skin.

The Manuscripts

Manuscripts can bear a deceptive resemblance to printed volumes, but by their very nature the first are handwritten (Latin *manu* "by hand," *scriptus* "written"). Consequently, all such products are unique. No mass-produced items of this sort exist, any more than do assembly-line medieval cathedrals. No two styles of penmanship are the same. These objects, each one of a kind, pump the lifeblood of medieval studies, or at least fill the circulatory system for that vital force. In many respects, they were the vascular network of the Middle Ages themselves. They constitute the veins and arteries of the bloodstream through which medieval folk, especially the educated, have been best able to reach across the centuries and millennia and to communicate with us—and we with them. For all the skewing that results from their being the output of literate elites, such codices have always offered a sweet spot for access to the minds and hearts of many medieval people. By metonymy, they present medievalists an illusion that the era in which they specialize is remote but not intangible. Parchment leads to poetry and prose. Poems take us all the way to poets.

Books made of vellum and its kin embody a massive societal commitment. The investment came partly in what might now be called "staff time." Preparing an animal skin to create a proper writing surface, penning texts upon it by hand with quill and ink, and binding it into a codex were all labor-intensive processes, often requiring teams of specialists. This cursory conspectus elides many steps in the production of even the plainest of plain-vanilla manuscripts. The economic costs of materials were also real and mounted high. The pelts employed for parchment could have been used instead for fabricating clothing, buckets, harnesses, or any of the thousand other functions that leather fulfilled in the Middle Ages, which plastics or synthetic fabrics might serve today. Although the parchmenting process often renders the hide soft and smooth, the resultant material is tough. It may be scuffed, scratched, and snipped, but it can stand a lot.

Where manuscripts now reside holds interest, but far more consequential than the libraries in which they sit today is where they originated and how they relate to one another. In total, five codices of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries preserve the verse work *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The original, at least as it has been handed down to us, is recorded in a form of French marked with many features of the language spoken and written in Picardy, a territory in the northern part of France. It could be termed Franco-Picard. The relationship between the literary idiom now customarily called Old French and the living colloquials or dialects grouped under the name Picard remains heatedly debated. When the poem was composed, the pecking order of languages within France was not yet established. Picard has devolved into a regional tongue or dialect under the overall umbrella of *langue d'oïl*, the language employed in the northern half of the country and other nearby areas, but in the early thirteenth century, the linguistic and dialectal spectrum looked very different. Whatever label we attach to what is now a patois, the important thing is that the text is, and had to be, in the vernacular. It tells of a leading character who is nonclerical, illatinate, illiterate, and unlearned. Without making a conscious effort, he contests the world that belongs to his Latin, literate, and learned confrères. Thus, it juxtaposes very deliberately at least two or three discourses and sets of values.

The text's prototypes have vanished. We do not have a rough draft that the poet wrote out himself or that he dictated to a scribe. We lack even the next stage of a clean and corrected version. But we possess one manuscript closely related to the lost original. The other four all seem to stand at two or more additional removes from the hypothetical author's original, or holograph. The unconfirmed authorial fair copy is sometimes designated the urtext, a term taken from German. The affiliation of the handwritten versions has been set down graphically in a genealogical chart that is known as a stemma (see Fig. 1.1).

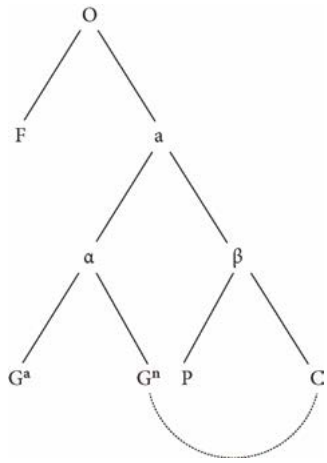


Fig. 1.1 Stemma of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Vector Art by Melissa Tandysh (2014) after Hermann Wächter, "Der Springer unserer lieben Frau," *Romanische Forschungen* 11.1 (1901): 299. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

This kind of diagram is meant to isolate what is styled an archetype. This primogenitor sires a lineage of descendants, whose relative purity and propriety are to be spotlighted. Low-quality codices are black sheep (or cows, if the writing surface is vellum). We could take the metaphor further to call them bastards in the family tree. The propinquity of copies to the real or hypothetical original is determined by detecting what are called fallacies. Editors of texts, following the procedures of stemmatics, hunt down common errors that are shared by different manuscripts. By doing so, they narrow down how the varying texts preserved in the medieval books are related to one other.

Textual edition and criticism prioritize the identification of supposed misapprehensions by those involved in writing out words by hand. To a degree, these two arts rest on an assumption that manuscripts and the scribes who produce them are error-prone. Consequently, they are often not enterprises that nurture positive and charitable thinking about the work of others. Philologists committed to such pursuits may go to great lengths in tallying errata. Over the centuries, the medieval copyists who have been put under the microscopes of these scholars have been on the receiving end of much obloquy for their real or alleged blunders. Helpless to defend themselves, they have been excoriated over and over again as stupid and slovenly bunglers. They have been taken to task especially for luckless efforts to make changes on the fly when they encountered wording that made no sense to them. Another consideration important for us to recognize is that the processes of editing and criticizing texts were held in the highest regard in the late nineteenth century, when nation-states were created and coalesced in Europe. Researchers contributed to the construction of nationhood by delivering to the public through the educational system the earliest literary expressions of national identities. First, they identified and

concurred about texts worthy of being considered foundational. Then they located and validated the manuscripts most faithful to their originals so that they could constitute reliable editions.

In the sort of genealogy that a stemma provides, letters from the Greek and Roman alphabets customarily serve to signify individual manuscripts. Each such designation is called a siglum. In this case the letter *O* represents the lost original or archetype, which transmitted the urtext. The letter *a* stands for an early exemplar that was made as a copy of the archetype, although it, too, has not lasted. The alpha and beta, α and β, that come below the Roman letter are two further exemplars that were copied from it. Neither of these is extant either; they also are hypothetical. Tangible and legible reality arrives in the next stage. From each of α and β, two handwritten versions were copied that survive. In each pair, the text of one shows signs of having been affected by consultation of one in the other couple. To indicate this crossover, the sigla of these two are joined by the dashed line that traces an arc between them.

Of the five manuscripts that are not merely hypothetical but indeed exist, one has been deemed higher-ranking by all editors to date for the text it transmits. Its shelfmark, a notation that indicates its place in a collection, refers to the Arsenal library. Although far from infallible, the folios in this codex lack the major errors that are common to all the other codices that descend from the lost archetype, *a*. This text is largely without the omission or inversion of verses, faults in rhyme, mistakes in diction, and so forth that mar the other exemplars. This five-star copy has been assigned the letter F as its siglum in the stemma. In recognition of its superiority, it has been accorded a fork in the family tree all to itself. Alas, the prime quality of the text does not mean automatically that the manuscript has been passed down to us intact or even in sound condition. Fourteen folios have been vandalized. Most of the miniatures have been cut out, with attendant damage to many texts in the codex. What lingers of the art is the sad equivalent of the chalk on asphalt that outlines where the body of a homicide victim was found. But by exceedingly good fortune the image accompanying our tale remains mainly undamaged. The year in which the manuscript was written and assembled can be inferred from a piece of internal evidence. A perpetual calendar at the beginning commences with the year 1268. For readily recognizable reasons, we can conclude that the poem was composed before then—but by how long? To take on a still more intriguing question, by whom?

Gautier de Coinci and Anonymity

Our Lady's Tumbler leads off a section in the Arsenal manuscript that mainly comprises miracles of the Virgin. Not one of the codices gives the faintest indication of authorship: in all five the poem is anonymous. The poet's name may have been present in the archetype but gone missing between it and the earliest codex, or the author may have kept his identity a deliberate cipher. Anonymity would have been consonant with medieval Christian values as a fitting assertion of modesty. Such self-suppression

would have been especially appropriate if the writer had been a monk. Remember that the central figure of the poem is likewise unnamed. Since the tale is all about modesty and simplicity, it is apt for both the poet and his protagonist to be nameless. For application to the Middle Ages, the Shakespearean question "What's in a name?" could be reformulated with equal relevance as "What's in namelessness?" The anonymity of the title character befits his humble occupation as well as his personal humility. For that matter, the anonymity of the poem itself could be construed as an apt touch of modesty.

Despite the lack of an ascription, many translators and authors who have adapted the story have credited it unequivocally but wrongly to a specific northern French poet and musician in the Benedictine order (see Figs. 1.2 and 1.3). Particularly in France, this Gautier de Coinci has enjoyed favor and name recognition among literati far beyond the degree to which he has been translated and read. He was born in the village of Coinci-L'Abbaye, south of Soissons, probably in 1177 or 1178. Notre-Dame de Soissons was the abbey there, with a church dedicated to Mary. A good-sized portion of the monastery as it existed in the times of this monk withstood the hazards of time until the French Revolution (see Fig. 1.4). At that point the complex of buildings suffered a blindingly rapid demise, from which little now remains (see Fig. 1.5). In Marian relics, the church possessed a slipper of the Virgin that became revered for the miracles associated with it.

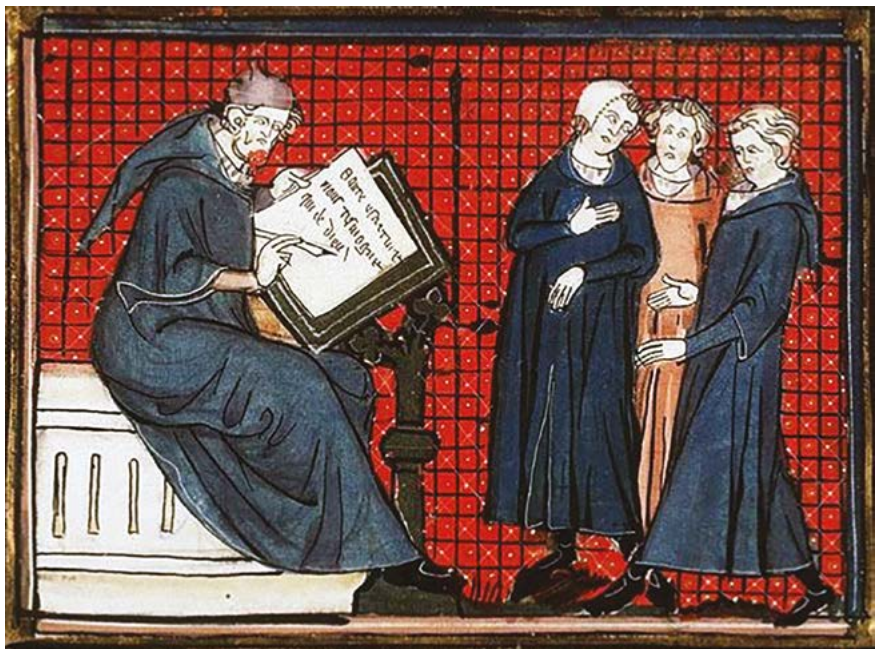


Fig. 1.2 Gautier de Coinci at work. Miniature by Fauvel Master, 1327. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 71 A 24, fol. 49v. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gautier_de_Coinsi.jpg



Fig. 1.3 Gautier de Coinci (detail). Miniature, 1260–1270. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale Albert I, MS 10747, fol. 3r. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque royale Albert I, Brussels. All rights reserved.

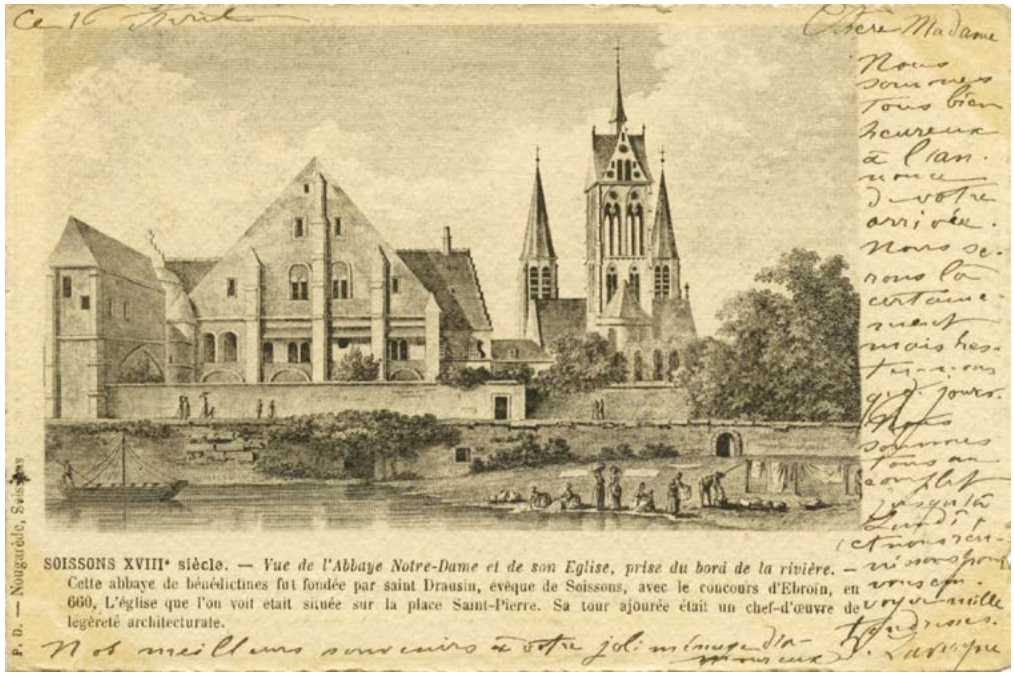


Fig. 1.4 Postcard depicting Notre-Dame de Soissons in the eighteenth century (Soissons, France: Nougarède, 1903).



Fig. 1.5 Ruins of Notre-Dame de Soissons. Photograph, 1938. Photographer unknown.



Fig. 1.6 Postcard depicting the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes (Paris: Levy Fils et Cie, early twentieth century).



Fig. 1.7 Postcard depicting the cloisters at the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes (Paris: Neurdein et Cie, early twentieth century)

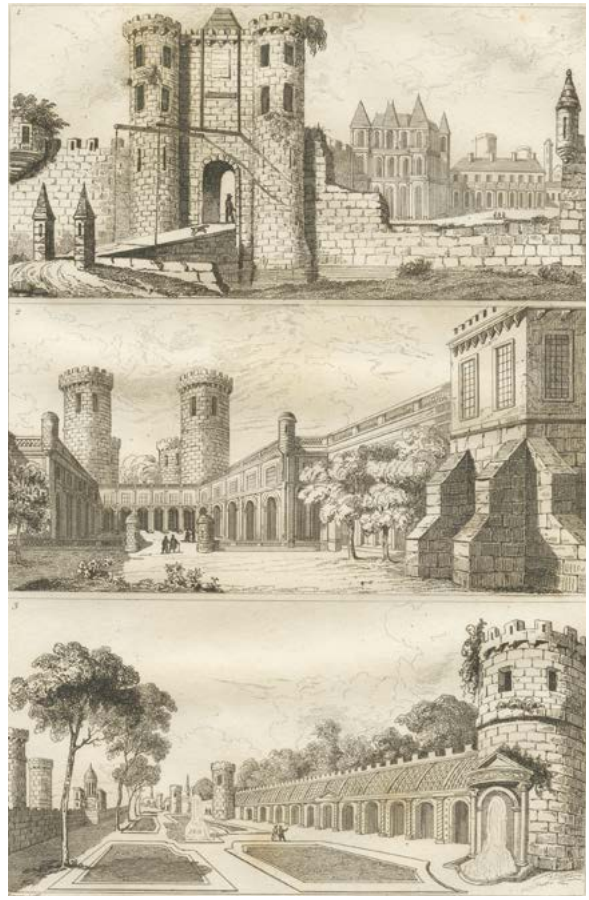


Fig. 1.8 L'Abbaye de Saint-Médard, Soissons. Engraving, date and artist unknown.

Gautier grew up in a region tied particularly closely to the Mother of God. Sometime after 1143, a Latin author by the name of Hugh Farsit composed a prose collection of miracle stories, many of them connected with the local Madonna. He was a regular canon of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes, a monastery of Augustinian canons in Soissons (see Figs. 1.6 and 1.7), and his book of traditions about Mary from the vicinity records the miraculous healings she performed in this municipality during the fast-spreading epidemic of ergotism that swept over northern France in 1128. This outbreak is often identified by referring to the French victims as *ardents* "burning people." The qualifier alluded to the discomfort that they experienced: the hot and bothered.

At the age of fifteen or sixteen, Gautier himself entered as a novice monk into the Benedictine house of Saint Médard at Soissons in 1193 (see Fig. 1.8). He remained there for more than two decades. In 1214, he became prior of Sainte Léocade at Vic-sur-Aisne, a village within hailing distance of Soissons, and served there nearly twenty years. In 1233, he was appointed Grand Prior back at Saint-Médard, an office that an uncle of his had held. If he had been the author of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, he would have

had good cause to be impressed by the chilly crypt of Saint-Médard and to think of it as the venue for the tumbling of the lead character in the poem (see Fig. 1.9). The space would have been as striking then as it is today. The poet died in 1236, in the same monastery where he had begun his monastic calling.

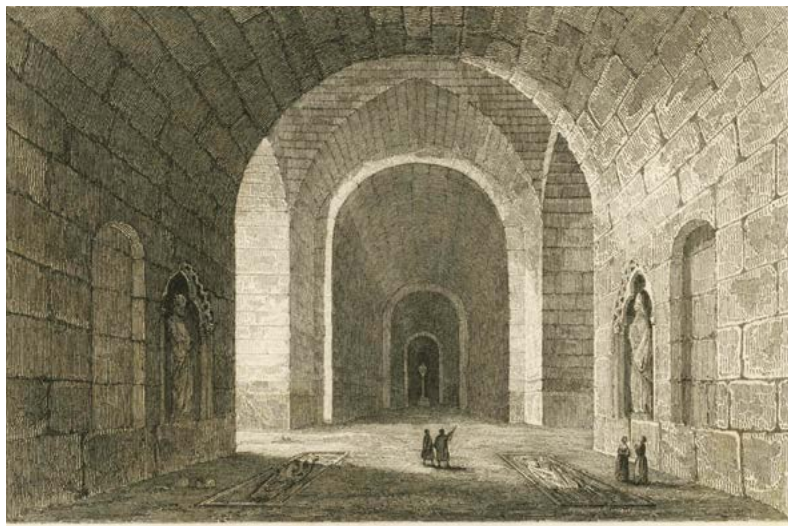


Fig. 1.9 The crypt of the abbey of Saint-Médard, Soissons.
Engraving by Léon Gaucherel, date unknown.

Between 1212 and 1236, Gautier composed two books of verse Marian miracles known as *Miracles of Our Lady*. This chronology means that he had two staging grounds for his poetic creation. Although he wrote the individual segments mostly in Vic-sur-Aisne, he began and finished them at Saint-Médard in Soissons. His text achieves an extraordinary range in its language and rhetoric, holds to a careful and goal-oriented plan, and puts on display a discriminating and satirical perspective on both the secular and ecclesiastical society of his day. Many of his versified tales touch at least in passing upon images of the Mother of God. In numerous instances he introduces Madonnas when they were not mentioned in the Latin sources upon which he draws. Eleven of his stories go so far as to involve such representations as characters within their narratives. If Marian miracle tales qualify as a specific literary genre, ones about statues or paintings of the Virgin form a distinct and multipart subgenre within it. Time and again, such narratives were associated with sites where relics of Mary were held, and where pilgrims devoted to her would come.

Gautier's *Miracles of Our Lady* were enormously popular, to judge by the total of 114 extant manuscripts. This figure plants his composition squarely in the realm of bestsellers of the day, although none of the codices dates to his lifetime. A dozen of these copies contain extensive musical notation. Twenty-nine have the added drawing power of being beautifully illustrated. Likenesses of Madonnas and of Madonnine

miracles constitute a salient feature of the codices. The depictions emphasize figures as they kneel in supplication before images of the Virgin. In the Byzantine world, the act of genuflection was intrinsic within the veneration of icons. In the West, it became anachronistic by the thirteenth century. In writing, Gautier verged on describing himself as a *jongleur*, or at least as a *trouvère* or minstrel of his lady, Notre Dame. The stance the poet takes in his text correlates nicely to the pose in which he is presented in one manuscript portrait, where he is portrayed as a musician in black Benedictine monastic garb. While bowing the fiddle-like stringed instrument called the *vielle*, he looks down at a big sheet of parchment with two facing folio sides of musical notation that lies on the bench beside him (see Fig. 1.10). Thus, like the hero of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, he managed to combine in himself strains of minstrelsy and monasticism.



Fig. 1.10 Gautier de Coinci. Miniature, 1260–1270. Brussels, Bibliothèque royale Albert 1, MS 10747, fol. 3r. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque royale Albert I, Brussels. All rights reserved.

When all is said and done, the fact that Gautier was a highly successful poet from Picardy who wrote extensively in verse on miracles of the Virgin does not suffice to ascribe to him the authorship of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. For better or worse, we have become acclimated today to requests that we identify ourselves by our names and birthdates, commit to memory and reel off numbers that have been affixed to us by states and businesses, and even surrender to biometric analysis of our fingers, faces, eyes, or more. Naturally we expect the past to bestow upon us at least some of the same trivia about its authors.

But here we must reconcile ourselves to the anonymity in which much medieval literature has been engulfed. Some authors cloaked themselves in this kind of impersonality by choice, for reasons of Christian humility or owing to differing conceptions of authorship. The indifference of scribes or the happenstances of sloppy transmission imposed namelessness upon others. In any case, the identity and individuality of authors mattered far less, or at least far differently, in the Middle Ages than now. Many works traveled under aliases. Along with Pseudo-, Anonymous was the most prolific of medieval authors. She or he composed *Beowulf*, *The Song of Roland*, and *Aucassin et Nicolette*, to name only three texts from the many that spilled out from the cornucopia of anonymity.

In the same company, the poet of *Our Lady's Tumbler* has no name right now. Indeed, none is likely ever to be accorded that will win general agreement. In medieval times, stories tended to be treated as in the common domain, whether they surrounded legendary figures of late antiquity or the early Middle Ages such as Arthur and Charlemagne, were connected with the heroic wars and haphazard wanderings of classical myths relating to Troy and Thebes, or celebrated the travails and triumphs of saints. No conventions of copyright existed, let alone of royalties, and the conception of plagiarism differed starkly from our own. Both copyright and unacknowledged borrowing have been under constant renegotiation since the advent of personal computers. The authors, collectors, scribes, readers, and hearers of medieval literature appear often to have been untroubled about the fine points of authorial rights.

Many authorless texts from the Middle Ages are subject to a high degree of textual variance. With each rewriting by a scribe, they have been affected by variations in dialect, minor changes in lexicon here and there, thoroughgoing expansion and contraction, and sometimes even more drastic redrafting. This sort of textual mobility, a hallmark of manuscript culture, is alien to the fixity that has become expected of printed texts. It has been described with an imported French word, *mouvance*.

No deduction about the author of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is unquestionable or unimpugnable, beyond the fact that a poet was at work—and a very fine one at that. Yet when all is said and done, the anonymity need not deal us as expositors a crippling blow. All is not lost. We can still gain some sense of him, and an even greater one of the characters in his *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The challenge is to exercise caution and not, in our eagerness to know the writer, to draw any hasty inferences. The unnamed poet

had his finger on the pulse of monasticism, but he need not have been a monk. He knew the minstrelsy, but he does not have to have been a minstrel himself. Regardless of his status, we have a fighting chance of determining the pecking order of human values in which he participated. In that valuation, the spiritual was privileged over the material. The ne plus ultra was to attain heaven through a mystical communion with the divine. But let us get both feet back on the ground, by examining the language and region with which the poet and poem are associated.

Picardy

Of the five medieval manuscripts, the earliest witness for *Our Lady's Tumbler* survives from the second half of the thirteenth century. As mentioned, the poem has been described as being in Old French, the tongue spoken in the northern half of modern France and related regions from the ninth through the fourteenth centuries. Yet attaching this linguistic tag to the tale may oversimplify and distort the situation. The study of French in the Middle Ages, like that of most medieval languages, was established in the nationalistic atmosphere of the late nineteenth century. To serve the end of buttressing nation-states, the major languages of Europe that existed or were being willed into existence at that time were read back into the medieval past. The dialect that became modern French was in fact hardly the most important in the literary production of twelfth- and even thirteenth-century France, but its later centrality was retrojected upon it by the philologists who constructed the field of Romance philology.

The patriarchs of Old French in the glory days of the field lived in a world of nationalism. Furthermore, their nation under the Third Republic revolved around a clearly defined and outsized capital city. If Paris was the axle, it was set into a hub, the greater Parisian region known as Île-de-France. This conceptualization does not apply to the Middle Ages, but it was forced upon it by simultaneous anachronism and anatopism. By the late nineteenth century, dialects existed on the margins of a standardized official language, French. The concept of Old French assumes the existence of a similarly standard idiom already during the medieval period.

By the touchstone of today's population distribution, at the very northern tip of what is now France, Picardy may look peripheral. The territory is extrametropolitan, since it lies outside Paris. France has many cities but at the same time the country has been centralized for centuries now around the capital. The national transportation systems and governmental reporting structure may be visualized as a set of spokes radiating from what is now the City of Light and reaching out to the felly of the French frontiers. Yet this was not the organization of communication and power in the early thirteenth century, when *Our Lady's Tumbler* was written. Localizing the poem in this northern area and in the Picard dialect likely means that the poet in fact was born, reared, and lived in that region. Those credentials place him at a long distance

geographically from daily life where the events of *Our Lady's Tumbler* reputedly occurred. Clairvaux was a monastery in Champagne. Among other things, it was the abbey of Saint Bernard, from its foundation as daughter house of Cîteaux Abbey, mother house of the Cistercian religious order of monks and nuns, until Bernard's death in 1153. The white monks sought to reignite strict observance of the Rule of Saint Benedict, framed in the day of the founder himself, and to hammer home self-sufficiency through manual labor, as early Benedictinism had done.

Obviously, the poem cannot have been written after the earliest datable manuscript in 1268, but the earliest surviving record of a text can come from long after the time of its writing. In this case, a frequent conjecture suggests that the text was composed around 1200, or even in the late twelfth century. The most thoroughgoing analysis has pegged the dating approximately in the late third decade of the thirteenth century. The linchpin of this chronology rested upon resemblances to the poetry of Gautier de Coinci, who died in 1236. As to place of origin, the most cogent hypothesis has been that the poet settled as a white monk in Ponthieu, a feudal county in northern France. Yet this reasoning, close to being a sophism, capitulates to the fallacious argumentation that is called the thin edge of the wedge. The premise that the writer was a Cistercian arises from the glowing praise that he gives to retreat from the world. The supposition that he belonged to a community in this particular locality has only one toehold: he singles it out for mention once. Both inferences are tenuous at best.

The Identity of the Poet

In a way, the name of the poet is nearly extraneous. Even if we knew this one detail in isolation but had no certitudes about social class, educational background, or other life circumstances, we would be no better positioned for guesswork about how his biography could inform our interpretation of the work. The style and content of the poem are tantalizing, since they imply that its writer was as sure-footed a metrist as his protagonist was an athlete. Although incontestably literate, he does not have all his facts straight about Clairvaux, however. Still, he was reasonably well acquainted with monks and monasteries. His ready knowledge of monastic life has long led some readers to assume that he was likely a brother himself, but the groundwork for this assumption warrants close and careful appraisal. The delineation that we are given of the tumbler's life among the lay brethren may be a touch misleading. No one in his capacity would have been allowed to rove daylong—or at least during all the eight canonical hours of prayer—without having set duties. Coenobites were closer to being battery hens than free-range chickens.

At the same time, the author of *Our Lady's Tumbler* also had deep involvement in the lay world outside the monastery. He comprehended the simultaneous awe and alienation that the laity felt before the wealth, sophistication, and foreignness of

abbeys and life inside them. Nothing would have stopped a knowledgeable layman outside from writing of a lay brother's experiences within a cloister. The poet tells a tale that gives no hint of being intended to establish or popularize a shrine, monastic or otherwise, as a pilgrimage site. Yet the poem could have been meant to disseminate the fame of the Cistercian order generally. More particularly, it could have served to highlight the contributions that lay brethren made inside the order, as well as to uphold the esteem in which they deserved to be held within it. Could the poet have been privy to the inner workings of both classes of brothers, from having taken the cloth only after having lived a relatively long life as a laic? The reality is that uncountable, not fictional medieval monks and friars found their monastic vocation and donned a habit only after having spent full lives in the world.

An argument framed just about a century ago posited that the poet of *Our Lady's Tumbler* was identical with the one who produced two other anonymous medieval French poems from the beginning of the thirteenth century, *The Knight of the Barrel* and *The Hermit and the Jongleur*, going so far as to posit *Our Lady's Tumbler* to be a pendant to the latter. The case was built on strong similarities in language, versification (including rhymes), themes, and motifs. Both tales relate narratives that could be reckoned as exemplary in a twofold sense. First, they tell of characters who provide sterling examples to imitate and emulate. Second, they could easily be imagined as having been or as becoming exempla, those short tales used in sermons for illustrative purposes. Both stories have as their point of balance the theme of repentance. Although the penance takes place near religious figures, it does not require in either case a priest or mea culpa.

The Knight of the Barrel is anything but a barrel of laughs; it is more like the medieval equivalent of a bucket list. Its outcome demonstrates the principle "Only tears will be weighed at the Last Judgment." In this tale, a venerable hermit charges a cruel, impious, and blasphemous nobleman with filling from a rivulet a keg that he gives him (see Fig. 1.11 below). After the water refuses to enter the under-hydrated container, the knight sets out a-wandering. At each spring or river he passes, he tries to fill the small vat. Only at the end of his existence does the nobleman return to the old solitary and shed a tear for his former life of misdeeds. This one sign of contrition is the defining moment in what is revealed to be the archetypal sob story. As it turns out, this single globule of liquid suffices miraculously to leave the little vessel waterlogged. The sole deposit from his lacrimation is the drop in the bucket that gives the lie to the proverbial turn of phrase. Just as *Our Lady's Tumbler* compels its audience to ponder the nature of true devotion, so, too, *The Knight of the Barrel* impels its readers or listeners to contemplate the purport of penance (see Fig. 1.12 below). In modern figurative use, we describe a forgetful so-and-so as having a mind like a sieve, since by design this utensil normally fails to retain all its contents. In the medieval tale, one special barrel performs differently from usual ones, so that it may serve as a spiritual test.



Fig. 1.11 The Knight of the Barrel. Miniature, from an unidentified manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Reproduced in Émile Abry et al., *Histoire illustrée de la littérature française* (Paris: Henri Didier, 1946), 32.



Fig. 1.12 The Knight of the Barrel. Illustration by Pio Santini, 1946. Published in Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, *Les contes de la Vierge* (Paris: Société d'éditions littéraires françaises, 1946), between pp. 140 and 141.

The second poem, *The Hermit and the Jongleur*, is extant in two additional versions. One of these adaptations is by a poet who has been held to be a Cistercian. The story had a rich afterlife in exempla as well. Thus, its transmission presents loose parallels to that of *Our Lady's Tumbler*.

In the opening three lines, the poet flags as his inspiration the genre known as Lives of the Fathers (citing its common Latin title overtly)—and the relationship is unambiguously one of source and influence. The title that this poem cites in the learned language corresponds nearly verbatim to that of the French *Life of the Fathers*, from which *Our Lady's Tumbler* likewise claims to have drawn its story.

The tale sketches a hermit who displays such devotion that God sends him his sustenance by way of an angel. Regrettably, being distinguished by this signal honor makes the loner grow self-important and insolent. Emboldened, he asks to be told who will accompany him in paradise. To his displeasure, the spirit relays God's fiat: his companion will be a jongleur. In this instance, the performer turns out to be a fiddler. The ascetic puffs up indignantly that he has expended no inconsiderable efforts in his religious life; he does not appreciate being made to share his lot in the afterlife with a base entertainer. The messenger of God replies that by divine grace a repentant sinner can become rich in good works. The recluse then strikes out to find his promised companion. After leaving his abode and going to town, he encounters in the market place a poor but pious jongleur who has no means of earning his keep except with his stringed instrument and bow. After being upbraided by the skeptical solitary, the musician furnishes three examples of his virtuous conduct in the past. When the minstrel learns afterward from the hermit what has been foretold, he passes out. Upon regaining consciousness, he announces his intention to remain with the recluse. When the two return to the hermitage, its previous occupant finds himself locked out for his affront against God. An angel wafts down and signifies that the offense has been venial, but predicts that after three days the reclusive fellow will be pardoned. Yet one holdup arises: his companion will enter paradise before him. After two days and a night of prayer in penance, the fiddle-player becomes debilitated and dies. On the third day, the man of God also expires. Attendant spirits ferry their souls to paradise.

The poem of *The Hermit and the Jongleur* is pious, but for whom was it intended? Likewise, who wrote it? It belongs to a clump of tales that has been labeled "the cycle of brotherhood." The tag describes characters who are related, much as siblings would be. They share an aspiration to achieve perfection and to determine their salvation through their demeanor on earth. Yet they issue from disparate social strata and vocations. In all three cases, those of *The Hermit and the Jongleur*, *The Knight of the Barrel*, and *Our Lady's Tumbler*, we the readers are left guessing whether the poet was a monk or not. Without a doubt, he was conversant with monastic life. For all that, he was under no contractual obligation to make his composition a versified customary: he does not have to detail hour by hour the practices of brothers. By the same token,

in the imaginary landscape of his poem he was not constrained to abide exactly by the architecture of Cistercian churches. The author could have been a onetime professional entertainer but now a monk, formerly drilled to satisfy lay audiences but latterly dedicated to his monastic brethren. He would have known how to address both insiders, the cliquish cenobites within monasteries, and outsiders, such as prospective converts who came from professions as marginal as his had been. And he would have been intimate with the type of protagonist he portrayed in *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The poem, like its hero, has a topsy-turvy quality that enables it to beckon to both the status quo and its revolutionary opposite.

The Bas-de-Page Miniature: Of Marginal Interest



Fig. 1.13 "Can I just look at the pictures?" © Paul Taylor. All rights reserved.

Medieval literature plays out first and foremost, textually, artistically, musically, and otherwise, in the manuscripts that transmit the texts. The codices are often the sole equivalents we possess from the Middle Ages to printed books, audio-recordings, live performances, musical notation, illustrations, or most of the other media we take so much for granted nowadays. When those handwritten objects contain artwork, it should be vetted with the greatest care. In addition to its own inherent value and importance, it holds importance for its relationship to the text. Literary critics may use the written word to achieve interpretative liftoff, regarding the art as no more than an auxiliary element in the interpretative context. Art historians may do the opposite. To a degree, both are right. The two sets of experts contribute essential perspectives to an understanding and appreciation of what the codices furnish us. In some cases, medieval art and written work may be meticulously aligned. Often, but not always,

the interpretation of the words dictates the pictures that are supplied. In other instances, the art leads a life of its own—text and image are on the same page literally but not metaphorically. That is the situation with the miniature accompanying our poem from the early thirteenth century.

In the case of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, the original text has motivated many modern literary imitations. Do we dare go so far as to call them knockoffs or even rip-offs? Be that as it may, some of these copies have been inspired directly by the medieval poem, while many more have been tied to it only unconsciously and indirectly. Alongside the literature, pictorial representations of the tale have also existed since the Middle Ages. Still, the precariousness of the early evidence for illustration must be underlined.



Fig. 1.14 The jongleur before the Virgin and Child. An angelic hand delivers a towel from the heavens while a *vielle* lies at the Virgin's feet. Miniature, thirteenth century. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arsenal 3516, fol. 127r. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque national de France, Paris. All rights reserved.

As we have seen, a fivesome of medieval manuscripts transmits the text of the medieval French version. Of the five, just one contains a miniature by way of embellishment (see Fig. 1.14). The persistence of this single illustration hung on a thread in multiple ways. For a start, more than two dozen other paintings that should precede this specimen have gone missing by being sliced out of the manuscript at some point in its mysteriously checkered past, becoming nondigital clip art. It is the lucky survivor.

If only it could talk, to tell its story as in the Book of Job: "I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Another fragility of the artwork owes to its placement on the folio. It differs from most in its codex, and in fact from those in any whatsoever, by being unusually misaligned. It sits in what would otherwise have been the unwritten-on and unornamented void below the left column of text on the folio side, which in French is termed *bas-de-page*, designating the lower edge of a side of parchment. In illuminated manuscripts, embellishments and marginal illustrations often appear in this area, but only atypically would a miniature in a contained frame be put there in the border. This placement was avoided for a good practical reason: by being set at the foot of a page, a piece of this kind is subjected to increased wear and tear from handling and from trimming. (It has no margin of safety.) By being enclosed, such a painting stands out from unenclosed marginalia, which are far more commonly found in this location. The nonstandard placement was probably not prearranged. Rather, the item may have been an afterthought supplied only after the text had been written. The inference that this artwork was a late addition is fortified by the stylistic separateness of the portrayal. The brushwork was done by a different hand than that involved in all the other extant pictures from this codex.

The artist has been associated with the one who participated in producing a copy of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* and its *Continuations* that may have been created in Arras. In this town in the northernmost region of France, an extremely famous miracle connected with two entertainers and involving a statue of the Virgin Mary was reputed to have taken place. Although the episode is not mentioned in our poem, it may help to explain why the miniature contains a depiction of the *vielle*. An artist, patron, or both would naturally have associated and conflated the tumbler-minstrel with the renowned pair of local jongleurs, promoted by a municipal confraternity. If the composition is viewed as a stage setting, the instrument is placed lower stage left. It lies at the bottom of a line that runs to the semiotically all-important position of upper stage right, where a supernal forearm extends a fabric toward the bowed acrobat. Is the fiddle meant to recall the professionals of the other stories?

Within the text of the poem, the seminudity of the tumbler is provocative. In contrast, the illustrator painted the performer as anything but half-naked—the athlete is portrayed fully clothed. Indeed, the lithe figure even has his long garment cinched demurely at the waist and is shod in mid-calf boots. Were these touches the results of a purposeful prudery, to avoid showing even a lay brother in substantial undress, or do they demonstrate the irresistible attraction of the other story set at Arras, in which a minstrel would have been clad in his normal attire when sounding his fiddle?

The process by which this illuminator worked is unascertainable. We cannot divine whether the medieval artist read or was read the text, had no direct exposure to it but at least was clued in about the gist of the narrative by being given a short and sweet summary, or was directed by a scribe or manuscript compiler to depict

this scene without being told the tale in full. The placement of the miniature—very nearly at the foot of the page as it has now been trimmed—may have been motivated by the simple reality that the space was free, or it might equally have been prompted by the suitability of the position on the folio side to the standing that the performer would have had in society at the time, reflecting the ignoble societal associations that acrobats and dancers endured at the time when the illustration was painted. Within the artwork, the tumbler himself has his head positioned level with his own backside. He stands curved back upon himself, below the plinth on which the statue of the Virgin and Child begins. Thus, the representation conveys abasement both literal and figurative.

In Romanesque statuary, we find jongleurs pictured in privileged places on façades, portals, and capitals throughout Europe, or at least from Germany and the south. In the Gothic period, only slightly later, the entertainers seem to have cascaded to lower orders, and slipped as well to a back seat within the iconographic hierarchy. Their images are now placed in subservient locations. For instance, they are depicted on the underside of the folding seats known as misericords, wooden carvings found in choir stalls, to say nothing of their place in miniatures and marginalia in manuscripts. Just as a lay convert has baser status than does a choir monk, so too the location of the image on the folio could be construed as signifying its humbler value.

The English adjective *humble* derives from the Latin *humus*, for soil or ground. By setting the miniature at the farthest point from the top of the page, the artist or the person overseeing him may have intended to humiliate—put down—the humble tumbler. Strikingly, the angel, Virgin, and Child are positioned far above him. The tumbler is located before the statue of Mary and the infant Jesus on the altar, with his head at the height of his buttocks. This could be called making a rumpus, even though the last noun owes no etymological debt to the word *rump*. His head is cocked downward and groundward, and his line of sight is directed at his own hindquarters, rather than at the carving above him. Talk about low-profile! If the lower classes are supposed to aim at an ascent to the upper, what are we to make of a man who is the opposite of a social climber, with his head not far from the floor? Matters are made only worse by the fact that the ground is in a crypt, itself the lowest space within the building.

Humbleness is one of the tumbler's conspicuous traits. A nineteenth-century interpreter averred point-blank that the tale had been composed "to debase pride and exalt humility." It is much likelier that the protagonist's physical posture makes his meekness plain to see than that it conveys a message that we should damn the acrobat or dancer for ungodliness. The condemnatory alternative meaning can be found in an exemplum that compares a sinner with a jongleur who ambulates on his palms with his feet turned heavenward. Whereas human beings should do their best to keep their heavy-lidded eyes open on the supernal realms, entertainers

subvert normal human bearing and do the opposite. In their upside-down stance, performers effectively trample what is heavenly, while fixing their heads and gaze, along with their hands, on the earthly.

Another perspective is to view this liminal location as sitting outside the official realm of control over the elite and sacred. Instead, this position at the threshold sets the illustration within a space reserved for the least hoity-toity, popular or folk culture. In a sense, the miniature resides in a no-man's zone. The bas-de-page is seldom occupied by miniatures, but often by marginal art. It can become a veritable freak show, depicting drolleries and grotesques such as fools, wild men, monkeys, monsters, and minstrels. One common form of marginalia that may offer a glimpse of real-life performances portrays two entertainers who show the bread and butter of their trade: a musician strums an instrument alongside a male or female acrobat who performs a somersault, flip, or handstand. These representations are always parked in the lowest register of the folio sides (see Figs. 1.15, 1.16 and 1.17). In codicological terms, art in this ribbon of parchment is comparable to carvings in wood or stone, such as misericords, chimeras, and gargoyles, that lay somewhat outside the controlled formulation of iconography. Consequently, the imagery is itself marginalized and is put beneath the text, in value as in position. The placement could bring home visually and symbolically the story's revolutionary outlook on lay and monastic relations—to wit, the jongleur holds a questionable ranking even within the laity but with the help of Mary's reaction to his sincere devotion, he turns out to be superior spiritually to the monks. Then again, such an interpretation could conceivably be overthinking. The miniature could have been put in the bas-de-page not through premeditation but through poor planning or mismanagement, which unwittingly saved it from damage when the other miniatures preceding it were excised.

The image may be easier to appreciate closely in a black-and-white facsimile made in the early twentieth century, because in the meantime some degradation has taken place: part of the bas-de-page has been trimmed off (see Fig. 1.18). Occupying the bottom left quarter of the frame, the miniature shows the tumbler performing acrobatics by arching backward in a hoop. The depiction could offer the freeze-frame view of a gymnast in the middle of a backflip. A performer is captured in a similar circular pose, with his hands clasping his lower legs above the ankles, in a portion of a sculpted limestone pilaster that is now in The Cloisters (see Fig. 1.19). Then again, and perhaps likelier, the miniature need not be a split-second of seeming stillness that has been isolated from lightning-fast motion. It could portray a specific pose the acrobat has struck. It could show him not midway into a backward flip, but rather in the gymnastic position known today as a bridge. He is recurved, like the tusk of a wild boar or an elephant. Frozen in this posture like an (athletic) insect trapped in amber, he has bent backwards until both his soles and his palms rest upon the ground. Literally as well as metaphorically, he is no backslider. Instead, he is well grounded, levelheaded, and down-to-earth.



Fig. 1.15 Musician and tumbler. Miniature by Petrus de Raimbaucourt, 1323. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 78 D 40, fol. 108r. Image courtesy of Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague. All rights reserved.



Fig. 1.16 Musician and tumbler. Miniature, late thirteenth century. Lausanne, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire de Lausanne, U 964, fol. 343v. Image courtesy of the Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland, www.e-codices.unifr.ch, CC BY-NC.



Fig. 1.17 Musicians, dancers, and tumblers. Miniature by Jehan de Grise, 1338–1344. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 264, fol. 90r. Image courtesy of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. All rights reserved.

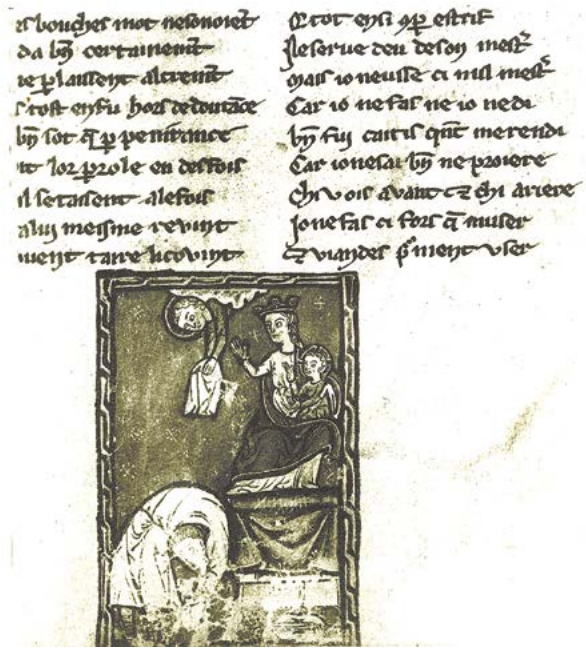


Fig. 1.18 The jongleur before the Virgin and Child. Miniature, thirteenth century. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arsenal 3516, fol. 127r. Monochrome facsimile, published in Alice Kemp-Welch, trans., *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady & Other Miracles* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), frontispiece.



Fig. 1.19 Portion of a pilaster with an acrobat, ca. 1150–1170, Lyonnais. Limestone, 30.8 × 21 × 26.7 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In medieval manuscripts, text and image can be foils to each other. They can affirm in two separate media one and the same message; contrarily, they can set in conflict a couple of different perspectives. In this case, the kineticism of the acrobat in motion contrasts with the sedate stability of the text. By the same token, the mobility of the devotion that the lay brother performs is opposed to the static state of the monks as they stand rooted to their spots, singing the songs of the liturgical office in the choir somewhere above him. Yet the tumbler's movement is not wobbly: his flipping back and forth is not like the flip-flopping in policy and backpedaling in rhetoric that are belittled in politics. He is at the midpoint of a happily steep learning curve.

Paradoxically, the tumbler's half-inverted stance calls to mind the likeness that Bernard of Clairvaux drew between the monks of his order, on the one hand, and jongleurs and tumblers on the other. The impressively athletic posture in which the performer has been caught has a sheer devotional aspect. We cannot forget that, after all, he bends over backward both literally and figuratively to please none other than the Virgin. If he is an athlete, he is (however unconventionally and even raffishly) an athlete of Christ. If he is masculine, his masculinity has no more machismo than does Jesus when hanging on the cross. At the same time, his pose approaches being Dantesque or infernal in its unnaturalness. Despite having no permanent deformity, he has misshapen himself temporarily. One commonplace, built upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, held that human beings were unique among the creatures of this world in their posture. They were formed to stand erect so that they could train their sight easily upon heaven. This natural inclination seems twisted in the stance of the tumbler, which is against the grain. As a result, he bears a resemblance to one of the

monstrous races that captivated the imaginations of teratologists in the Middle Ages. Take, for example, the creatures called Blemmyes, who were believed to lack heads but instead to possess eyes and mouths in their stomachs (see Fig. 1.20).



Fig. 1.20 Alexander the Great encounters Blemmyes. Miniature, ca. 1445. London, British Library, Royal 15 E. vi, fol. 21v.

The miniature reflects knowledge on someone's part of the text it accompanies, but even so it does not match it in a facile, one-to-one correspondence. The upper right quarter depicts a likeness of the Virgin. In Western European fashion, she is crowned in her guise as Queen of Heaven. Yet she is unhaloed. Seemingly seated, she has no visible throne or chair. She clings to a strapping infant Jesus, who sits on her left thigh. With nimbus but crownless, Jesus is here God made man rather than the king of the universe. Both Mary and Jesus lack the frontality of much sculpture from the twelfth century. Rather, they gaze sideways from us as viewers, toward a figure

with a nimbus who floats down from a cloudlike projection at the center top of the miniature. Angelic but wingless, this being holds out and downward in his helping hands a thick towellike cloth with many rumples. This mega-serviette, probably of linen, is to be used for either wiping or ventilating the jongleur. Many later artists envisaged the item as a part of the headcloth, veil, sleeve, or hem of any garment worn by Mother of God herself (see Fig. 1.21). Here it is incontrovertibly a separate item. Both the Virgin and Child have their right forearms raised to the other figure. She is draped in a red mantle, and her right hand is splayed open fully. Jesus holds the ring finger and pinkie of his right hand curled down against his palm while extending the thumb, index, and middle finger in blessing. In his left hand, the child clutches an unidentified object.

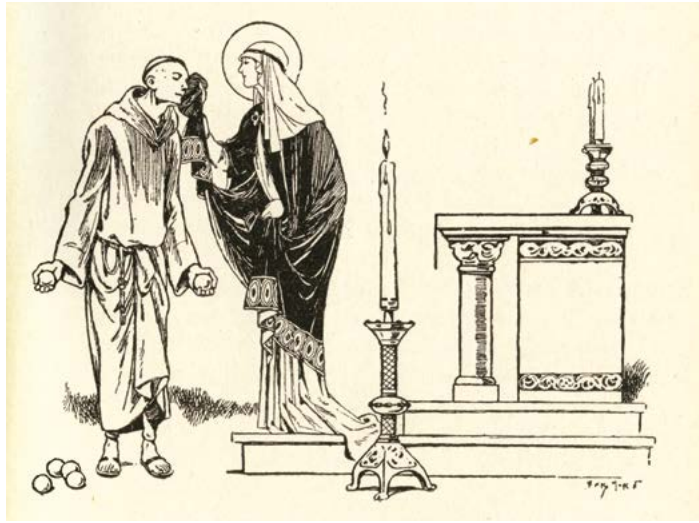


Fig. 1.21 The Virgin wipes sweat from the juggler's brow. Illustration by Henry Morin, 1928. Published in Anatole France, *Abeille / Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame / Les Pains noirs*, ed. R. L. Graeme Ritchie (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1928), 133.

The scene's construction conforms with other depictions of miraculous Marian images. The artist takes care to convey that the miracle is enacted not by the statue itself but by divine potency. The image that the tumbler honors is shown to remain a representation on the altar as the wonder takes place. But the staging as portrayed in the bas-de-page departs from these other portrayals in not showing a life-size Virgin who intervenes. In contrast, the figure emerging from the heavenly stratocumulus at the top looks to be a divine emissary of another sort, anything but hands-off. In the world of medieval miracles about Mary, no sky is completely overcast: every cloud, even the blackest thunderhead, has an angelic silver lining.

The predominant background in the miniature is a dark blue. The color makes good sense: in medieval art, no one likes better than the Mother of God to come out of the

blue to mediate salvation. Against the cobalt stands out what could almost be called a wallpaper of symbolism. These signs strongly resemble the rice symbol in Japanese typography, modern stylizations of the snowflake, and, most directly relevant, ancient forms of a textual mark that is still used today (see Fig. 1.22). The asterisk or star goes back ultimately to Byzantine images in which a so-called star-cross appears on the forehead or veil of the Virgin, or elsewhere on her person or garments. The token may well have signified the luminosity of the Madonna. The emblem also resembles one found in the fresco by Giotto on the vault of the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, where Mary and the infant Jesus are encircled against an azure backdrop, with a gospel writer at each of the four corners (see Fig. 1.23). The miniaturist could have meant viewers to envisage the jongleur's showstopper as taking place outside, against a starlit night sky. Likelier is that the illuminator had seen vaultings in chapels studded with stars, fleurs-de-lis, or other similar devices. A representative ceiling close to home would be the wondrous lower chapel of the Sainte Chapelle on the Île de la Cité in Paris, where at least as the nineteenth-century renovation has left the adornment overhead, asterisk management has been thrown to the wind (see Fig. 1.24).

As mentioned, the jongleur is dressed more fully and modestly than the poem suggests. Does the clothing reflect concern for decorum? Although to all appearances untonsured, he also lacks the facial hair that was the most distinguishing physical feature of Cistercian lay brothers. Does the beardlessness typify the well-kempt self-presentation of entertainers at the time when the painter did his work? Professionally, the performer as painted here is not a specialist, restricted to the gymnastics he is caught doing. We can tell that he is a generalist in his entertainment abilities because a musical instrument is plainly depicted at the bottom right of the miniature. The unplayed device, a kind of wide-waisted violin, lies on a greenish mat at the foot of the dado-like altar (see Fig. 1.14). Has it been laid down at the foot of the altar as an offering, a sacrifice made by the tumbler? Its presence may hint that solo dances like that of the tumbler normally took place to the accompaniment of instrumental music, but that this performer could not do his solo routine and play simultaneously (see Fig. 1.25). In general, dancing has been often inextricable from stringed instruments. Think of the proverbial saying "If you want to dance, you must pay the fiddler." Or consider the etymology of "jig." Words in English and Romance languages from which it probably derives signify a kind of lively dance. A similar-sounding noun in German preserves the sense of violin. A conjectured relationship between the dance and the instrument has led to speculation, not very convincing, that the English term "gig" when denoting a live musical performance originated in a form of this name for a stringed instrument. Then again, the ostentatiously inactive instrument in the manuscript painting may not signal that dancing and fiddling go together. Rather, it could indicate exactly the opposite. It may be left aside so as not to mislead the reader into thinking that the solo tumbling is in any way analogous to lowly instrumental music, to the collective liturgical song in the choir above or, on a far higher level, to the heavenly music of the spheres or angels.



Fig. 1.22 The Japanese *komejirushi* ("rice symbol"), so called for its similarity to the kanji for *kome* ("rice") and used in Japanese writing to denote an important sentence or thought. Unicode U+203B. Vector art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.



Fig. 1.23 Giotto, Vault of Cappella degli Scrovegni, 1303–1306. Fresco. Padua, Capella degli Scrovegni. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giotto_di_Bondone_-_Vault_-_WGA09168.jpg



Fig. 1.24 Ceiling of the Lower Chapel of Sainte-Chapelle, Paris. Photograph by Benh Lieu Song (2007). Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Benh Lieu Song (2007), CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ste_Chapelle_Basse_s.jpg



Fig. 1.25 Fiddler and dancer. Miniature. Graz, Universitätbibliothek Graz, MS 32, fol. 106v. Image courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek Graz. All rights reserved.

The *vielle*, a fiddle (and therefore by definition fretless), had four or five gut strings with a flattish bridge and frontal tuning pegs. It was played with a bow on the arm or shoulder. Here it occupies a position that can only be called low-key: it can be seen where the jongleur has laid it on the ground on what could be green tiles or a green rug beneath the statue of the Virgin and Child. Far less probably, another performer could have set it down there as an offering. Its function may be to provide visually what we cannot receive aurally, namely, the musical accompaniment that the painter took as a given for dance. The tumbler cannot have it in arm as he does his routine. He may not need it, since he has internalized the rhythmical grace of music. In any case, the instrument is left there intact as the minstrel performs himself into exhaustion. By the end, he is a wreck. In contrast, the proto-violin remains, well, fit as a fiddle.

The *vielle*, a progenitor of the violin, became known in the Renaissance and baroque periods as a viol. It looks to have been roughly the size of a large modern viola. Later it also evolved bit by bit into a cranked contrivance more like a hurdy-gurdy, with a handle to turn. Simultaneously, it became associated with rustic performers in clogs, peasant dances, and songs in dialect (see Figs. 1.26 and 1.27). The stock-in-trade of medieval jongleurs in many regions of Europe, this kind of instrument is often shown in the hands of musicians playing to honor the Virgin. For example, a renowned manuscript from medieval Germany known as the Manesse Codex contains on one folio side a rollicking scene. A portrait of the vernacular lyric singer Frauenlob occupies the center (see Fig. 1.28). Sounding a *vielle*, the poet is flanked by four entertainers.

He has above him to one side the emperor and to the other the Virgin herself. The representation of Frauenlob brings home that in the miniature accompanying *Our Lady's Tumbler* the tumbler has set the musical instrument aside. With his salvation at stake, he is not going to fiddle around (and there is no second fiddle). At the time, much dance involving these entertainers may have presupposed instrumental music. Yet our performer has opted instead to act in silence. He cannot very well fiddle a tune to accompany a routine that overtaxes every fiber of his whole musculature. His body is his sole instrument, and he applies it to a ritual dance of his own devising.

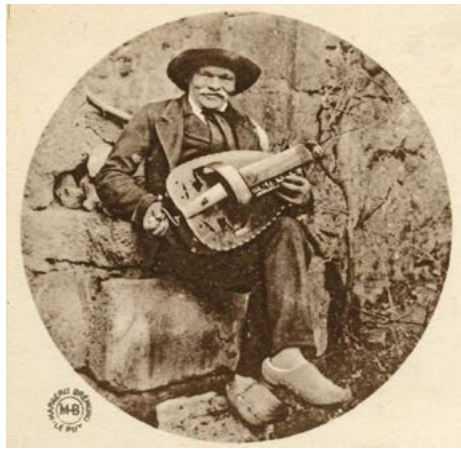


Fig. 1.26 Postcard depicting a musician and his *vielle à roue*, also known as a hurdy-gurdy (Le Puy-en-Velay, France: Margerit-Brémond, early twentieth century).



Fig. 1.27 Postcard depicting dancers and a man with a *vielle à roue*, also known as a hurdy-gurdy (L. Ferrand, 1911).



Fig. 1.28 Frauenlob and his fellow performers. Miniature, 1300–1340. Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Bibliotheca Palatina, Cod. Pal. Germ. 848, fol. 399r. Image courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, CC BY-SA 3.0.

Since the early twentieth century, artists have not needed to travel to Paris to inspect the miniature firsthand. Rather, they have had access to it through facsimiles, photographs, and imitations. The bas-de-page that accompanies the medieval French poem in one codex has been reproduced repeatedly. For example, it showed up already as the frontispiece to the 1908 English translation of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Furthermore, modern book illustrations have been influenced heavily by the original artwork, the frontispiece reproduction of it just mentioned, and modern illustrations inspired by it either directly or indirectly. Thus, the jongleur illustrating the story in one medieval painting has had a robust afterlife.

What does the miniature tell us about the understanding of the narrative, as told in the text, at the time when this codex was produced? From the outset, we must remind ourselves that the medieval book may have been made nearly a half century after the poem itself as we have it was composed. Consequently, ample room existed at that time for conflation and confusion between tales of an athletic jongleur and a musical one, since in the Middle Ages the two functions were often fulfilled by one and the same entertainer. The painter could have incorporated the fiddle simply because of the presupposition that most performers were multitalented, and that an acrobatic member of this profession would likely play a stringed instrument as well. Then again, the illuminator could have caught the drift of the story from the scribe or someone else, and in a slapdash way blended it with other narratives—for instance, miracles in which Mary responded to musical rather than gymnastic performances by jongleurs before Madonnas. In either case, the artist was notably unworried by any controversy over the presence of musical instruments in church. Even long before stormy debates over the appropriateness of organs in ecclesiastical settings, proto-viols were not at all universally welcomed. This presents another interpretation to explain the setting aside of the *vielle*: it signifies a renouncement of corporeal music to make way for spiritual music. The minstrel's routine has no need of a physical instrument beyond his own body. When push comes to shove, all that is needed is to act in accordance with divine law and worship.

An intriguing pair of carvings that may relate to *Our Lady's Tumbler* can be found at Exeter in southwest England. They hover on the south side in the cathedral church of Saint Peter. One corbel, representing the Virgin carrying the Child in her arms, was badly damaged at some point, perhaps by iconoclasts (see Fig. 1.29). Opposite it, the second of these supporting projections depicts a minstrel playing a *vielle* (see Fig. 1.30). Above the music-maker, a tumbler either turns a somersault or walks upside down (see Fig. 1.31). In 1910, the experts who craned their necks to catalogue figural bosses on the ceilings and brackets on the upper levels of the interior architecture in this building were tentatively seduced by the notion that these projections might render in lapidary form the legend of the tumbler. They were apparently under the spell of a translation that had been published sixteen years earlier. Apart from this one possible allusion in medieval ecclesiastic art, the narrative in *Our Lady's Tumbler* is otherwise unattested in Britain before the late nineteenth century. If not referential to our story,

the two carvings at least suggest that the two jongleurs, the one an instrumentalist, the other a tumbler, perform in homage to the Virgin and Child.



Fig. 1.29 Damaged corbel of Exeter Cathedral. Photograph by Anna Hulbert, no date. Image courtesy of Anna Hulbert's Estate. All rights reserved.



Fig. 1.30 Corbel of Exeter Cathedral. Photograph by Anna Hulbert, no date. Image courtesy of Anna Hulbert's Estate. All rights reserved.



Fig. 1.31 Corbel of Exeter Cathedral, no date. Image courtesy of the University of Exeter. All rights reserved.

Beyond the medieval manuscript, the only certain allusion to the story that appears in ecclesiastical architecture is in a twentieth-century work of art in New York City. In the church of Saint Thomas, one panel illustrates a performance of *Our Lady's Tumbler* (see Figs. 1.32 and 1.33). The oak carving, like the others in the chancel, was made as an offering of thanks for the armistice that ended World War I. All these wood sculptures were carved not too long after the identification, right or wrong, of the corbel at Exeter as relating to our story. In sum, the oaken figure in Saint Thomas stands as the proof of concept. It demonstrates the popularity of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, not as the follow-up of an unsundered tradition from the Middle Ages, but as reinvigorated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



Figs. 1.32 and 1.33 Panel from the Church of Saint Thomas, New York City. Photograph by David M. Daniels, no date. Image courtesy of David M. Daniels. All rights reserved.

The Genre: Long Story Short

Perfectionism in the taxonomy of stories is a modern malady, or at least an affliction of professional literary critics. In the Middle Ages, authors and scribes apparently lived undeterred by any such obsession. Thus, they resort often, seemingly indiscriminately, to words that correlate to our "exemplum," "legend," and "miracle," to cite only a few. Understandably, they do not apply the plethora of generic terminology that originated only after the medieval period.

In many respects *Our Lady's Tumbler* has ample claim to warrant being called a miracle, and more particularly a Marian one, like those of Gautier de Coinci. Then again, the miraculous aspect of the narrative pertains more to its contents than to its literary form. In any event, the story of the acrobat or dancer is nowhere labeled as a miracle within the text itself or within the manuscripts. If calling *Our Lady's Tumbler* a miracle gives pause, we have even more reason to hold back from styling it a legend.

This term, designating the biography of a saint, derives from the Latin *legendum est* or "it is to be read." Such accounts of holy men were regular fare in places and on occasions where texts in the learned tongue were read aloud ceremonially, especially on the feast-days of given saints. Reading of this kind happened, for instance, in the installments that were recited in monastery refectories at mealtimes. One insuperable impediment prevents us from construing *Our Lady's Tumbler* as a saint's legend: the jongleur is not a saint or even saintly. Furthermore, the tale lacks the connection with pilgrimage that is evident in many legends, miracles, and exempla.

For whom then was the poem composed? Was it to be plowed through by individuals or declaimed in cadenced voices before groups? By whom was it copied? To return to the question of literary form, what kind of literature was it? In modern terms, the story satisfies the generic criteria of a pious tale or, to use a modern French term, a pious *récit*. Both *The Knight of the Barrel* and *The Hermit and the Jongleur* have been categorized within this genre of short narrative. Stories in this category, which is associated particularly with the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, can be in prose, but are more often in verse. They bear a close resemblance to hagiography, and they draw often on the *Life of the Fathers* and Marian miracles.

Pious tales are more reverent and less worldly cousins to fabliaux. Contrary to the tug of instincts some of us may feel, the two forms can overlap or even be coterminous. *Our Lady's Tumbler* is in fact sometimes called a fabliau. If the designation is understood to mean nothing more than a tale in verse, *Our Lady's Tumbler* can be classed more precisely as a pious fabliau. It must be noted that piety need not be identical with po-faced; a pious tale may in fact be comic as well as didactic. That said, the assertion does not carry much conviction that the apparent piety in *Our Lady's Tumbler* is somehow laughable.

Yet another literary type with which the pious tale deserves comparison is the *exemplum*, a brief story told to entertain and edify by setting an example or by exemplifying a moral lesson. Many pious tales are such illustrative stories that have been expanded and dramatized. Like exempla, they are designed to instruct. Exempla are meant to be repeated, revised, and remade. In this regard, they live up to their etymological relationship with the technique of "sampling" in today's popular music: a portion of one audio recording is reused, almost like an instrument or component, in a different piece of music.

The exemplum existed at the intersection of two distinct planes, amusement and didacticism. These stories throw open windows that allow us to look back upon two often distinct groups and processes in the Middle Ages—they convey the mentalities of those whose actions are described as well as of those whose writing framed that behavior within the discourses and values of Latinate, literate, ecclesiastical culture. Short narrative was one of the many rhetorical devices that medieval preachers, above all from the twelfth century on, enlisted to make their sermons more effective. They may have been especially reliant upon these devices when speaking before illiterate audiences of lay people. The entertainment of the tale helped to stave off

yawns of boredom, while the edification worked to win over listeners to the ethical or theological doctrine being purveyed, particularly by epitomizing the recompense of good behavior, or punishment of bad. A loose nexus to legend exists, since the accounts are often based on recent incidents, actual or supposed.

What does *Our Lady's Tumbler* claim itself to be? This may turn out to be a trick question. The poem is identified in its preamble as an *examplel*, a "little example" or a "mini-exemplum." The poet could have meant the noun in a broad-brush or generic sense, just as an "example." After all, the word has that as its fundamental definition. Yet the likelier alternative is that the French refers here deliberately and explicitly to the specific oratorical and literary genre. While the medieval text is not, strictly speaking, an exemplum in a sermon, its narrative has that form at its very core.

Like other categories of rhetoric, the exemplum is intended to persuade by its cogency. In *Our Lady's Tumbler*, the narrative applies all the power of learned wordcraft toward the objective of suasion, but the persuasion ends up subverting the authority of learnedness itself. The protagonist who prevails does so despite his utter lack of learning. The prior and choir monks stand for one hegemony within medieval society: they are the literarily and liturgically literate class. Without any conscious effort, the tumbler confronts this status quo head-on. In some high-altitude circles, he would be called counter-hegemonic for his de facto commitment to dismantling hegemonic power. The irony of ironies is that the story of his quiet and unwitting opposition comes down to us in writing that is thoroughly salted with learning, liturgy, Latin, and literature.

The exemplum is an autonomous literary genre. Yet it exists almost intrinsically to serve the construction of narrative in other genres. At the same time, we may commit a stark injustice by forcing this type upon the Procrustean bed of present-day literary-critical or -theoretical categories. To the Cistercians in the first century of their order, the form would have been anything but an abstraction. Rather, it would have occupied a space not unlike episodes in the Gospels: it recorded momentous aspects in the community life through which the monks sought redemption and expressed their shared values and aspirations, the ties that bind. Exempla offered means for tellers within the Cistercian order to inform their peers about their worldviews.

The white monks were remarkably prolific in the exemplary genre, but nowhere more than at Clairvaux. The collections they assembled there were rife with exempla about the lay brothers known in Latin as *conversi*. The frequent appearance of such brethren in short illustrative texts should surprise no one. Presumably this Cistercian literature served to shape the conduct of the converts as well as to forge a body of basic beliefs and principles held in common by both the choir monks and them.

Our Lady's Tumbler is too long and too truly poetic to qualify narrowly as an exemplum. But sound reason exists to take the poet at his word when he suggests that the tale at its base originated in this genre. We may require no further evidence beyond the use of the term *examplel* to assure ourselves that the poet was well acquainted with preaching and perhaps even with the formal teaching of it in homiletics. If we do

need more grist for our mill, we can consider that the poem enfolds within itself a miniature authorial sermon or homily. We should have no difficulty in appreciating either how easily the narrative could have grown out of an exemplum, or how readily it could have been distilled back into one.

The *Table of Exempla*, in Alphabetical Order

> A Jesuit, Dominican, and Cistercian were stranded on a desert island. They came upon a magic lamp. After they rubbed it, a genie materialized and offered each of them a wish. When the Jesuit said that he wished to teach at the world's most famous university, he vanished. When the Dominican announced that he wanted to preach in the world's largest church, he disappeared. The Cistercian said, "I got my wish."

The heyday of medieval exempla stretched from the late twelfth through the fifteenth century. During these hundreds of years, the Church obligated preachers to pronounce more sermons and the laity to attend more of them. The narratives are sometimes handed down on their own, free-floating; alternatively, these tales may be incorporated individually or in small groups within other types of writing. In fact, they pop up in almost every genre written in the later Middle Ages. Finally, they may be corralled into systematic assemblages, first in learned language and later in colloquial, nonstandard (vulgar) tongues.

In similar fashion, *Our Lady's Tumbler* is documented first in relative seclusion, as an independent poem in a manuscript codex. Long thereafter, it is attested as one narrative within a specific type of prose collection. This alternation has held true in the subsequent fate not only of the medieval tale, narrowly defined, but also of adaptations made from it. The story has been both transmitted by itself and passed down in repertories with other short texts. How it transits from one medium to another, or even if the surviving evidence suffices to allow us to speculate about the routes of transmission—these questions demand thoughtful consideration.

The same story related in *Our Lady's Tumbler* is also preserved as an exemplum in the schematic Latin prose *Table of Exempla, in Alphabetical Order*. This reference work for preachers composing sermons was confected in the second half of the thirteenth century, about 1277. The compendium comprises more than three hundred illustrative anecdotes. They are schematized under 151 headings that traverse the Roman alphabet from the letter A all the way to X. The abecedarian arrangement facilitated the efforts of pulpiteers on the prowl for materials with which to embellish sermons that they draft. The headwords were intended to sum up the main themes of the exempla. Another bonanza to sermonizers was the table of contents, to which the title refers. Both alphabetization and tables of contents were thirteenth-century refinements in the organization of exempla collections. Both innovations owed specifically to the

religious movement known as Franciscanism, since the members of this new order committed themselves particularly actively to preaching to the laity. These untried tactics contributed to an explosion of unprecedented formats that changed the look of manuscripts in the later Middle Ages. Many alterations expanded and enhanced the investigation and consultation of handwritten books through reference systems, indexes, and other aids to study and reference.

The anonymous compiler of the *Table of Exempla* was probably a French Franciscan, quite possibly of rural origins. The fraternal connection may help to illuminate the purposes for which the anecdote about the tumbler was woven into the compilation. The friars minor had ample cause to be hospitable to the notion of religious devotion embedded in the basic narrative underlying *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Their founder referred to himself as a "jongleur of God," and was the subject of stories in which he performed stunts and behaved like jongleurs and jesters.

Equally to the point, the followers of Saint Francis of Assisi made a policy of pursuing social engagement in large urban settings. This venue required them to practice preaching, especially in the vernacular languages, that would attract people's notice. To this end, they needed the paraphernalia of skills, and tricks of the trade, of professional entertainers. Able sermonizers could give new meaning to the old injunction "practice what you preach": they could help the audience members, even as they sat and listened, to picture the minstrel performing. Thus, the exemplum could achieve the slick effect of bringing the tumbler, at least in their listeners' imaginations, from outside into the church. In the process, it could lure auditors away from the antics of real street entertainers in market squares and entice the same individuals into services, either out of doors on a thoroughfare or within formal ecclesiastical settings. The assembly could even have been spectators in the full sense. The speaker recounting the tale from the pulpit or on a piazza could have punctuated a recapitulation with gestures at reenactment, by feigning somersaults and other movements that would then taper off at the finish of the story.

Franciscans delivering sermons would have found ready use for the narrative. They could have retold it to lay listeners to spur them on to the possibility of converting, becoming friars, and seeking redemption within that religious context. Whatever their specific objectives in repeating the exemplum, preachers from any order could have conveyed the gist of the tale about the jongleur to listeners who could and would never have waded through the text of the French poem.

Whatever the most common medium of transmission was, whether textual or oral, we cannot know how many in the audiences would have recollected their experience of the narrative. The hermeneutic gap between what the preacher delivered and what the listeners recalled could have been imperceptible or unbridgeable. The story could have gone in one ear and out the other, or it could have made a life-altering impact. If it figured in many sermons with large congregations, it could have benefited from the closest equivalent that the Middle Ages had to mass communication. Then again, it could have been only sparsely used and known.

The Latin Exemplum

The source, properly so called, of the
poet is still unknown.

The gist of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is relayed in an exemplum that is compartmentalized in the *Table of Exempla* under the rubric "Joy." If we set aside the preoccupation of *Our Lady's Tumbler* with penance and devotion, its placement under this heading is altogether appropriate, since gifted performers were thought to display and to engender jubilation. They could render joyful their audiences of both human attendees and heavenly onlookers, such as God, angels, and saints. Such euphoria has been expressed in life by the faithful whose commitment to dance has been documented extensively over the past century and a half.

The essentials of the narrative in this Latin version from around 1277 are summarized telegraphically.

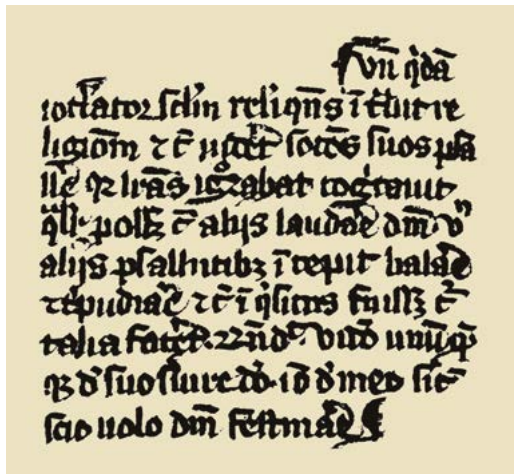


Fig. 1.34 Excerpt from *Liber exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti*, chap. 49, no. 28, "Gaudium." London, British Library, MS Additional 18351. Image courtesy of British Library, London. All rights reserved.

The whole of the closely packed two-sentence original reads in translation as follows:

> A certain entertainer, forsaking the world, entered a religious order and, when he saw his peers singing Psalms, since he did not know his letters, thought how he could praise God with the others. For that reason, when the others sang their Psalms, he began to dance and leap for joy, and when asked why he did such things, replied, "I see everyone serving God in accord with his faculty, and for that reason I wish to celebrate God in accord with mine, as I know how."

The relationship between this later, roughly fifty-word exemplum in Latin prose and the earlier 684-line poem in medieval French verse cannot be established conclusively.

One sure thing is that this in-a-nutshell version differs radically from the piece of poetry in more than length alone. The Madonna and Virgin are suppressed in favor of God. We hear nothing of the crypt, nothing of the venomous monks, nothing of the abbot, nothing of the miracle, nothing of the jongleur's death, and nothing of his soul's fate.

Nearly a third of the short text comprises the closing utterance of the entertainer. The exemplum is sheer paradox, being made all of words but all about deeds. Then again, it embodies the famous principle of writing, "Show, don't tell." Its hero is a man who expresses himself most effectively through private acts. Yet here the physicality of the earlier tale is shucked to make room for an uncensored statement by the solo artist, almost like the moral to a fable. He has the last word—and then some. We know only a little about him. It is as if he entered the monastery—the order is not even specified—in a fugue state that made him an amnesiac. In our times, names are essential to being and identity, but, again, as in the vernacular verse, the tumbler and the poet resemble each other in their anonymity. The protagonist is notable in both the poem and exemplum for his namelessness. Lacking a name makes him even more exemplary. For being a nobody, or at least a no-name, he becomes an everyman. Does he have a specific identity at all, or is he incognito deliberately? Does his virtuousness support the argument that he is made up—that he must be fictitious because he is too good to be true?



Fig. 1.35 Postcard depicting Thomas Frederick Crane (left) and David Hoy (right), ca. 1910. Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Archives. Image from Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Davy_and_TF_Crane_1910.jpg

No evidence exists that would facilitate illuminating the interconnections between our two surviving attestations of the narrative. The exemplum is the merest scrap of a tale. In 1911 an American folklorist asked, "Is this prose story the hitherto undiscovered original of the French poem?" (see Fig. 1.35). The question is astute. The Latin in the *Table of Exempla* could transmit, even word for word, a text as the author of the French verse read it. Then again, the early twentieth-century researcher could have gotten it backwards. The prose from the late thirteenth-century compendium could be a distillation that the anonymous Franciscan made directly from reading the medieval French piece of poetry, or indirectly from hearing it performed verbatim or its contents related less punctiliously.

Underlying the folklore scholar's question is his conjecture that the medieval poet did not personally invent the fundamentals of the story as we have it. But accepting that hypothesis does not force the conclusion that the version passed down by the Franciscan author lay any closer to a notional original. Both the French versifier and the Latin prose writer could have been indebted to a common written source, without any intermediary; or another exemplum in the learned language could have predated the medieval French poem. The short Latin prose version could have inspired both *Our Lady's Tumbler* and the exemplum. Then again, the poet and prose writer alike could have picked up the tale orally from sermons or some other form of anecdote. Possible explanations could be constructed in abundance if not ad infinitum, but potential shreds of proof for any of them are regrettably elusive.

The likelihood is that both the French and the Latin survive, by a mere twist of fate, from a much larger multitude of lost versions, as the story pulsed back and forth between oral and written, popular and elite, lay and clerical, short and long, vernacular and Latinate. Both the poem and the prose are likely to have been under an obligation somehow to an exemplum that achieved diffusion through the Cistercian monastic order. Initially, such a tale would have been recounted by itself. A monk who heard or witnessed a miracle might relate it, others might press the point, and ultimately the head of an abbey might employ it in speaking with the brethren in the chapter house. It might be retold for hosts at another monastery. A choir monk could relate it to a lay brother, or vice versa.

In a later stage, such exempla agglutinated within collections, often produced for and by the monasteries where many are thought to have originated. The white monks were great collectors and carriers of edifying and entertaining short narratives, especially those that bore on miracles relating to the particularities of their monasteries. During the period from roughly 1140 to roughly 1200, the Cistercians put together the stories of both monks and lay people, particularly lay brothers. When recapitulating what they had heard, the compilers presented the tales in succinct and straightforward Latin, with a minimum of rhetorical flourishes. These assemblers may be imagined as having relied heavily on oral reports and even on what we might call oral literature. They were prototypical oral historians.

The activities of the Cistercian collectors coincided with the emergence of a new form of transmission for vernacular literacy in what were in those days the two principal tongues of France: Occitan (the language of Languedoc, including what was formerly known as Provençal) and what is now called French. The designation "minstrel manuscript" has been applied to simple codices, with texts invariably in single columns, written in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. Such handwritten books, small and portable, could have been carried as manuals in the literal or etymological sense. The best-known exemplar of all the ones to which this name has been attached conserves the text of the famous French epic, *The Song of Roland*. In the past quarter century, the longstanding assumption has been rejected or at least strongly critiqued that such objects were produced by dictation from oral poets for their use in rehearsal or recitation. The extant texts are not actual working copies, and we must take pains not to project upon them romantic views of minstrels. At the same time, it has not been misconceived to seek connections between surviving medieval literature and the contents of oral performances that took place without being recorded or successfully transmitted.

From the mid-thirteenth century, the early Cistercian exempla collections were tapped by friars. Both Franciscan and Dominican tabulators of these illustrative stories resembled the white monks of the order's first few decades in aiming at narrative brevity and rhetorical simplicity. Like many mendicants of his day, the anonymous author of the *Table of Exempla* drew systematically upon such accounts available from contemporaneous and earlier friars and Cistercians. The line of descent that has been laid out has emphasized the roles of first white monks and later fraternal orders. It demands little imagination to devise a mental image of an abbot relating the short narrative in the chapter house to choir monks, to motivate them to be kind to lay brothers. Alternatively, the same teller could recount the tale when recruiting prospective lay brethren. The story could spur them to act on their impulses by converting to join the Cistercians.

The likeliest venue for the hypothetical lost exemplum is a Cistercian monastery, specifically the one at Clairvaux. As with so much else, we cannot be certain. Interestingly, many exempla associated with this order do seem to have emanated from that very abbey. As rotten luck would have it, the chief early collection of Claravallian anecdotes has not weathered the storms of time. Consequently, we can only speculate about whether our poem, set as it is in Saint Bernard's institution, ever formed part of it.

In all periods, the tale has lent itself remarkably to compression and subsequent re-expansion. Even visually, the whole of the story can be expressed by the most economical of metonymies. For example, one artist active in the early twenty-first century called the entire narrative to mind by illustrating an orb caught in the air at the top of a soaring pointed arch (see Fig. Pref.1). The ball stands in for other objects being juggled, but not pictured, by a likewise unrepresented juggler. The lancet recalls

a whole Gothic church, presumably a Notre-Dame, or even a cathedral dedicated to the Virgin, with a Madonna, though Mary too is not shown. In sum, the jongleur is reduced to the rounded geometry of a sphere; Our Lady, to the pointed one of a lancet.

The Life of the Fathers

More than any other literary genre, edifying Christian tales have been subjected over the course of centuries to successive re-readings. Many of them go back to the tradition of the Desert Fathers.

Ah, scholarship—or should I say, ah, pedantry! Brace yourself, dear reader, for alternation between the titles *Lives of the Fathers* and *Life of the Fathers*. The inconsistency is deliberate and owes nothing to typographical errors. Let me do my best to unravel the tangled skein, so that we may tease apart the individual strands and make sense of them. By referring in French to *Lives of the Fathers*, the poem invokes as an ostensible source what may appear to be, to switch metaphors, no more than a red herring. Works in both French and Latin exist that could have been designated in this way in the thirteenth century, although nowadays the names in both languages are reserved for incomparably different texts.

The fact that the tale of *Our Lady's Tumbler* has turned up in none of them could lead to three conclusions. One is that the wellspring of the poem bubbled up in a version of *Lives of the Fathers* that has failed to survive. Another is that poet's reference was calculated to be a false scent. If the citation was meant to be taken under such false pretenses, one reason could be that the author sought to keep under wraps his actual inspiration in another source, which either no longer exists or remains unidentified. The third interpretation could be that the writer of *Our Lady's Tumbler* made up the story out of whole cloth, but succumbed to a characteristically medieval impulse by alleging that his fabrication had authoritative underpinning, as it was drawn from a respected work.

A total of at least five French poems of the thirteenth century claim as their origin a text that may be either *Lives of the Fathers* in Latin or the related but distinct *Life of the Fathers* in French. Only *The Hermit and the Jongleur* has been tracked conclusively to an item in any such narrative treasury. In the other four, the citation of *Lives of the Fathers* appears to be a literary device to misguide readers. Two of them share with *The Hermit and the Jongleur* the feature of being both miracles and pious tales. The same combination occurs in both the French *Life of the Fathers* and the *Miracles* of Gautier de Coinci. Furthermore, the manuscripts of the French *Life of the Fathers* overlap substantially with those that transmit the Marian miracles of Gautier de Coinci.

Lives of the Fathers designates in the first instance a Latin collection that emerged in the last quarter of the fourth century and later, presumably based on Greek originals. The text amasses in ten books brief narratives that are comparable in a coarse way to the one about the jongleur. Such accounts are known as "spiritually beneficial" or "useful tales." They are narratives, but at the same time they could be called spiritual exercises. More than a thousand such stories were recorded at the latest in the late fourth century, but some of them may have circulated orally long before then. At the other extreme of the chronological spectrum, most of the major collections in the genre had been put together by the beginning of the seventh century. Additional tales cropped up, singly and in clumps, for centuries afterward.

The genre assembles traditions, running the gamut from completely developed biographies to much shorter dialogues, sayings, and anecdotes. Many of these materials relate to individual Christians who from the end of the third century withdrew from society to devote their lives to spiritual self-improvement and hyperascetic severity in the solitude of the wilderness. The so-called desert fathers at the heart of the collections were the earliest such figures from within Christianity. They inhabited the wilds of what we call the Mideast, especially the region around Thebes in Egypt, Judea, and Syria. All of them were hermits, in that they dwelled in wastelands. In Greek, the root of the word for "hermit" means "deserted," "uninhabited," or "solitary." Initially they were solitaries, but eventually they lived mostly in ordered communities. *Lives of the Fathers*, which pertains to the early stages of development, admits stories of laypeople who do not reside in the sunbaked desert and whose concerns are not strictly religious but sometimes even inarguably secular.

Lives of the Fathers exercised appreciable influence in the Middle Ages. In the beginning the work would have been particularly esteemed among monks. The monastic appreciation began early, since the Rule of Saint Benedict prescribes the text for collective reading after a sit-down dinner. Among Cistercians, recitation took place during balanced meals in the refectory as well as at the close of the day when the brethren huddled in the collation gallery. *Lives of the Fathers* belonged among the favored texts for reading aloud, since it affirmed to the monks the achievements and vicissitudes experienced by some of their earliest and most important role models, the desert fathers. But the reach of the collection was destined to extend far beyond the cloister. In time, it was translated into many European vernaculars. In French, versions of different portions from it were created in both verse and prose between the late twelfth and fifteenth century.

In the literary history of medieval French, the title *Life of the Fathers* (differing by use of an initial singular rather than plural) refers most often to an agglomeration from the first half of the thirteenth century. This heavyweight piece of poetry from the Middle Ages enjoyed a lasting success. Its popularity is confirmed by the existence of more than fifty complete and partial manuscripts, from the thirteenth into the sixteenth century. The narratives contained in this verse compendium have

often been subsumed within the genre of pious tale, although some of them bear a stronger resemblance to fabliaux. Although *Life of the Fathers* has a similar title and overlaps very loosely at the beginning with some material found in the Latin *Lives of the Fathers*, no part of the whole poem as it has come through in the spoken language is directly connected with the latter, or with related Latin compositions that deal with the sanctity of the desert fathers. The three main thrusts of the French text are toward the ascetic existence of those early fathers, aspects of monasticism, and miracles of the Virgin Mary.

To get down to further nitty-gritty, the *Life of the Fathers* in the vernacular language comprises three collections. The first one has been attributed to a formerly anonymous author who has now been identified provisionally by majority opinion as one Ernoul Langny. Although well disposed toward the Cistercians, this individual is remarkably clear in suggesting that lay existence is in no wise inferior to monastic. In fact, it establishes that laymen may overshadow monks in their way of life. The poet is likely to have written near Paris in the 1220s or thereabouts. The second and third collections were added later to the first one. The additional stories that make up the second are probably to be dated shortly after the first was completed. They show signs of having originated in western Picardy. The third is later again. It may have come from the hand of a Franciscan. Thus, we can see familiar fellow-travelers, with white monks preparing the way for friars minor, and with a Picard connection.

The forty-two tales in the first assemblage of tales take place mostly in Egypt in the days of the desert fathers. The prologue to each proffers a truth of Christian life or dogma, which is exemplified by the narrative. At the other end, an epilogue teases out the moral. The narratives in the other two collections are more often given a contemporary thirteenth-century setting, with their concluding commentary being shorter. Some of them tell miracles of the Virgin, unlike the stories in the first, set in olden times. For example, we have seen that *The Tale of the Barrel*, which is loosely related to *Our Lady's Tumbler*, surfaces among these accounts. The lay brothers are heavily represented among the narratives included within the French *Life of the Fathers*. Yet neither the Latin *Lives of the Fathers* nor the French in any guise manifests any reflex of the legend that corresponds to the exemplum recounted in *Our Lady's Tumbler*. All the same, the reference in our poem does not necessarily constitute false advertising. Instead, it may point to a tangential, rather than a straight-line, indebtedness.

In seeking tales comparable to *Our Lady's Tumbler*, we could look for other narratives about professional entertainers. Adhering to this criterion, we find that the French *Life of the Fathers* incorporates a tale about a minstrel. The story of the tumbler might be construed as a narrative that counters it. The forty-two episodes making up the French text are conventionally known by short titles that were assigned to them in 1884 by Gaston Paris, a scholar of language and literature who will appear often in this book. This episode goes by the name "Goliard." The epithet originally applied to members of the medieval clergy, particularly students, who composed Latin squibs

and drinking poems. In other words, goliards belonged to the same social stratum that included jongleurs. To speak in terms of present-day academic attire, they were tweedy, but their heavy-twill jackets sometimes had holes through which their elbows poked, rather than the leather patches that have become metonymous with "professor." In this case, the story centers upon a bibulous cleric with a compulsive gambling problem and the French appellation of Lechefrite or "Grease Pot." This malfeasant converts to become a Cistercian monk. His hidden intent is to pocket gold and silverware from the monastery and make off with it. Yet for twenty years, his conscience renders him unable and unwilling to carry through on either his initial intention to commit theft or his later resolution to leave the order.

Although at the outset the goliard only feigns a resolve to be a monk, a miracle causes him to undergo a conversion that is both authentic and enduring. On one occasion, after holy orders have been conferred upon him, he decides to forsake the monastery once he has said Mass. His first objective is to officiate at the altar of the Virgin, so that Mary may protect him from temptation in the world outside; but the best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry. Just when the goliard-turned-priest elevates the host, the right hand of the infant Jesus, who is pictured in the altarpiece with his mother, reaches out and grabs it from him. No sooner has the would-be escapee lamented and prayed to the Virgin than Jesus returns the wafer and wine to him. After the penitent goes back to bed all sackcloth and ashes, the monk who assisted him at the altar reveals to his superior what happened. In turn, the abbot visits the onetime worldly wordsmith. Eventually the reformed monk, no longer a wannabe runaway, is himself elected to the highest office within the abbey, whereupon he dies and is granted entry into heaven.

The tales of "Goliard" in the French *Life of the Fathers* and of the entertainer in *Our Lady's Tumbler* are by no stretch of the imagination one and the same. Yet the overlap suffices to render it at least plausible that the author of the jongleur poem was not merely indulging himself in the supremely medieval whimsy of citing a spurious source with his mention (and perhaps significantly, in the plural form) of *Lives of the Fathers*. Both pieces of poetry gloss over inaccuracies about time and place by engaging in anachronism and, to resort to the corresponding term for a comparable spatial disjunction, anatopism. To be specific, both texts present tales that are identified as happening in medieval Cistercian monastic contexts, but as if the characters and events belonged to the Egyptian desert of the fathers from late antiquity.

To turn to the two poems' protagonists, both the tumbler and the goliard issue from marginal groups with reputations that are antithetical to those of monks; both convert to the Cistercian order, which is treated favorably by the poets; both undergo crises when performing before altars dedicated to the Virgin; both elicit motions from within representations of the Virgin that become animated; both become the focus of communiqués made by a fellow monk to the abbot; and both are admitted to the celestial realm at the close of the tales. Despite the risk of growing unctuous, it is

worth mentioning in addition that both are connected pointedly with cooking fat. In *Our Lady's Tumbler*, a strikingly oleaginous simile describes in animal terms the perspiration of the performer after he completes his routine to honor the Virgin: "Just as grease comes out on the spit so the sweat comes out of him… from his feet up to his head." The image of the meat sizzling on the skewer underlines the carnality of the gesture that the minstrel makes in devotion to the Virgin. The goliard and eponymous character "Grease Pot" is related to oily matter through his very name.

Then again, we may misjudge if we make the profession of the protagonist the benchmark for the degree of proximity between *Our Lady's Tumbler* and any of the tales in the Latin *Lives of the Fathers* or French *Life of the Fathers*. The fact that an entertainer plays the foremost role in both stories may be a distraction. Instead, we should think about the progression of events in specific narratives that we compare. Evaluation in this spirit leads to the episode in *Life of the Fathers* that has been entitled "Miserere." The tale is so called because it has at its nucleus the prayer for mercy known by this name. The Latin imperative *miserere* or "have pity" is the first word of Psalm 51. For the major moving parts of this narrative, this story would seem to have a common source with a miracle in Gautier de Coinci.

In "Miserere," a simple but goodhearted man makes up his mind to give up all his possessions and to join a holy hermit, which the solitary allows. The recent arrival prays repetitiously, using shaky phraseology in the learned language that does not follow the wording of the biblical verse as it should. Liking the text for its sincerity and humility, God causes a miraculous glow to gleam whenever the unflashy fellow worships. Unaware of God's favor and the miracle, the recluse insists that the beginner use only the proper Latin. The miracle ceases, the man is distressed, and in his perturbation, he sickens. One half year later, the ascetic visits, discovers what has transpired, recognizes the piety of his former companion, and has him return to his earlier practice and phrasing. At this point the light resumes. The hermit witnesses the wonder. Duly awestruck, he remains with the man forever after.

Finally, the reference to *Lives of the Fathers* in *Our Lady's Tumbler* could have one more explanation. The poet may have intended to acknowledge that he was beholden not so much in content as in spirit. The tale of the tumbler shows a person, saintlike even if not a saint, who wins divine favor. He achieves this grace not through martyrdom but through conversion and staunch belief. To be precise, he expresses piety through humility in the face of public humiliation. Even the profuse sweating could be construed as referring to a hagiographic motif and implying the tumbler's saintliness, by calling to mind the deacon Lawrence. When tortured by being placed upon a red-hot iron grille, this famous martyr of the third century reportedly responded only by telling his tormentors, "This side is done, turn me over." Similarly, the tumbler makes himself into a human roast, but through the blistering heat of his own exertions rather through the effects of a torture device. Both men have the last laugh in their ordeals. At the end of his routines, the tumbler is prone. The position is reminiscent of the

obeisance that is known technically now by the Greek προσκύνησις, *proskunesis*. In this act of devotion, the worshiper bends down and kneels. In extreme cases, he lies face down. The Rule of Saint Benedict prescribed a humble posture of penance, with head and eyes glued to the ground, and body stretched out. Pride is the deadliest sin, and the self-debasement of humility affords an opportunity for avoiding the fall that the prideful are known to suffer. Portraits, even self-portraits, may be found in which monks are shown in such a position before the Virgin and Child (see Fig. 1.36). To take a remarkable instance, a manuscript of a chronicle contains by way of proem a self-depiction of its author in this stance. A large framed drawing portrays the historian (and artist) himself on his knees in deference before the Virgin and Child, shown enthroned. The picture is the medieval equivalent of a snapshot that catches Christ in motion as he presses his face against his mother's, strokes her hair, and clambers up toward the apple she is holding.



Fig. 1.36 Kneeling monk (Matthew Paris). Miniature by Matthew Paris, 1250–1259. London, British Library, MS Royal 14 C VII, fol. 6r. Image courtesy of British Library, London. All rights reserved.

The self-abasement here is true to the word, since etymologically abasement refers to a lowering. The comportment ascribed by the painter to the worshipful monk is more characteristic of the heroic asceticism and devotion of the early centuries in the church. The performer in *Our Lady's Tumbler* takes down the humility, or even self-humiliation, by one additional gradation. To be clad in the attire of a monk is already humble enough, but he strips down to the even lowlier layer of his underclothing. In attire as in all else, he becomes the opposite of vainglorious. While not wholly in the buff, he molts to a very exposed and defenseless state. In any event, the story of the tumbler's redemption through humility conveys a message consistent with the biographies of the desert fathers. The gist is worth chewing over. People, especially

odious ones, have always been inclined to misconstrue humility for softheadedness. Often they also commit an error by assuming that simplicity will be the kiss of death. So much the worse for them, because simplicity can be powerful.

True Story: Why the Story Succeeded

What garnered the story its modest success in the Middle Ages? A fact beyond speculation is that whatever the relative priority of the Latin, the medieval French, and any hypothetical versions no longer extant, the piece of poetry in the spoken language alone accounts ultimately for the impact of the tale from the late nineteenth into the twenty-first century. Here we are probably very fortunate that the author opted to express himself within the vernacular literary tradition. At the time when the poem was composed, most writers working in the learned tongue and its heritage would have felt obliged to pull out all the rhetorical stops. The results would have made a verse or prose version in the language of liturgy and learning less attractive to us.

Yet the mere fact that *Our Lady's Tumbler* was set down in French is not the whole story. From the twelfth century on, the laity was incited ever more strenuously by the clergy to attend church and hear sermons. On the supply side, the clerics were bidden to preach publicly far more often than had once been customary. The papal assembly of 1215 (Fourth Lateran Council) enjoined preachers to indoctrinate lay folk in virtuous living. As a result, the application of exempla became more entrenched, with the hard-minded aims of enticing listeners and holding their interest so that they would not slip away before the preaching had finished. Finally, it bears mentioning that from early in the second half of the twelfth century, the Cistercians were exceptionally active in collecting and employing exempla. A case has been made that they intended their digests of such stories for brethren in their order, as a means of corroborating collective identity, memory, and values.

Of course, sermons had to vie with other forms of amusement. The types of entertainment furnished by professionals would have posed acute challenges to sermonizers. We must not forget that traveling preachers jockeyed with jongleurs for audiences. At times, sermonizers entered into rivalry with singers, dancers, and jugglers, as well as with very different performers of public speech-making (construing the word broadly) such as lawyers and heretics. Yet the two different groups were not always at each other's throats. They may have journeyed together in company sometimes and would have by various avenues been familiar with each other's techniques and practices. Because medieval churches were not merely official places of worship but also de facto social centers, most of these different professions plied their trades at least some of the time either outside the churches or even inside them. Under the circumstances, speakers would predictably have resorted to techniques we would associate today more with stand-up comedy in an open-mike club than

with church, especially when they were delivering sermons before open-air crowds in cities.

Entertainment and edification have always intersected. In English literary history, two anecdotes set in Anglo-Saxon times make the matter perfectly clear. One is a legend told in the twelfth century by the monk and historian William of Malmesbury about what allegedly took place four hundred years earlier, in the seventh century, when the abbot, bishop, and Latin author Aldhelm would attract audiences in Malmesbury by playing a proselytic pied piper. He would sing Old English lays on a bridge to listeners whom he would then lead to church. The other is a celebrated episode related in Bede's *Ecclesiastic History of the English People*. In this blow-by-blow account in Latin, a simple herdsman named Cædmon cares for the animals at what is now known as Whitby Abbey during the abbacy of Saint Hilda. The herder is illiterate and therefore, it goes without saying, a layman. One evening, when the brethren croon to the strumming of a harp after dinner, this poor fellow absents himself out of the equivalent to stage fright on an amateur night. Like the tumbler, he feels shame at his inability in a skill possessed by the monks with whom he lives. Subsequently, he has a dream in which he is asked to sing of creation. Soon thereafter, he inaugurates Christian song in Old English oral-formulaic verse by performing a short encomium to God as creator of heaven and earth. On the following morning, he adds to his earlier composition. The foreman of the farm, after hearing of Cædmon's vision and gift, has him visit the abbess, who first puts his compositional acumen to the test and then has him take monastic vows.

The animosity toward non-Christian pastimes is typified by the later Anglo-Saxon Alcuin, who in a Latin letter written in 797 denounces monks for regaling themselves with narratives about pagan protagonists, rather than Jesus Christ in his role as Messiah. Referring to one such hero, he asks, "Let God's words be read at the episcopal dinner-table. It is right that a reader should be heard, not a harpist, patristic discourse, not pagan song. What has Hinield to do with Christ?" Yet in both the legend of Aldhelm and the anecdote of Cædmon, the non-Christian diversion is something to be set aside or transcended. The legendary Aldhelm seduces his auditors into leaving behind secular pleasantries. Cædmon gains notice through the innovation of directing toward Christian ends the conventions of Old English verse-making, otherwise to be eschewed or at least forgotten. In fact, the herdsman passes muster as an old Germanic jongleur of God. He bears comparison with the tumbler in his dithering about the value of what he can offer in his devotion, as well as in his fix about participating in collective activity.

In the relationship between the French and the Latin treatments of the tale, the vernacular verse of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is less likely to have been informed by the prose of the learned language than vice versa. Alternatively, the two works could have been prompted by other sources, written, oral, or both. No evidence has come to light thus far to suggest that anyone paid the slightest heed to the story from when the

Latin prose fell out of fashion in the late fifteenth century. For reasons both linguistic and cultural, the medieval vernacular form could have ceased earlier to be readily intelligible. To all intents, the tale of *Our Lady's Tumbler* and its Latin equivalent evanesce for four hundred years, until the late nineteenth century.

In the Middle Ages, people had the desert fathers for inspiration and imitation. In the twentieth century, avid readers called their utmost favorites "desert island books." These were readings that they fantasized they would take with them if marooned as castaways on an isolated atoll with only the smallest of libraries. The two gravitations, toward the fathers and islands, are not unrelated. Human beings crave a furlough from distractedness in direct proportion to their addiction it. We are at once extroverts and introverts, herd animals and lone wolves. The little story of the tumbler can tell us about both poles of our shared condition. In fact, medieval monasticism has much to teach on the same topic, since in a certain sense it constitutes a system of social solitude. Let us follow in the footsteps of the minstrel made monk, first into the entertainment world and then into the cloisters of the Middle Ages.

2. Dancing for God

I would only believe in a God that knew how
to dance. […] Now a God dances in me.

—Friedrich Nietzsche

To make sense of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, we must transport ourselves to the Middle Ages. We have delved into the manuscripts, and we have begun to come to terms with the texts and the single image that they transmit. For all that, we have not advanced very far in decoding what the narrative portends. The words are never mere words. They constitute our best guides to the meanings that individual writers, their communities, and, even more broadly, their societies hoped to relay across the chasms of time and space to others—including, now, us. All the same, the verbalism is, at the risk of appearing flippant, only part of the story. To wrest the richest and deepest significance from the tale, we will be obligated to go beyond the strictly and solely lexical level. Through the lexicon and subject matter, we may identify and reconstruct discourses. In the poem and exemplum, we need to uncouple the conceptual framework of the entertainer from that of the monk. The two are overlaid, like electrochemical cells in a battery or conductors in a capacitor, to create the extraordinary electricity that the lay brother and jongleur in this tale discharges.

The Tumbler

Scribes in the Middle Ages manifested nearly the same indifference to transmitting exact titles as they did to pinning down exact authorship. The names of medieval texts were often not authorial, but concocted by scribes or readers. Thus, the manuscripts of *Our Lady's Tumbler* divulge no consensus as to the original title, if one even existed. To the contrary, they identify the poem in five different ways. Each codex, to judge by the captions for our poem, tells a different story:

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Of the Tumbler of Our Lady
This Is about the Tumbler of Our Lady
The Tale of the Jongleur
Of a Minstrel Who Became a Monk to Whom Our Lady Showed Grace
Of a Minstrel Who Served Our Lady by His Own Craft.

The common element in all these combinations is a term for a professional entertainer, whether tumbler, jongleur, or minstrel. But exactly what sort of performer? Even more to the point, what manner of tale should we have in mind? Finally, what type of association with the Virgin should we envisage the protagonist having? After all, she is mentioned in four of the titles. Research is detective work. Let us become gumshoes ourselves, on a manhunt to understand the character who dies at the end of our story. In our medieval film noir, the blackness is the ink on folios of parchment.

Various factors would have made advantageous a shift from a tumbler into a jongleur. The latter is usually lowlier in social status than the troubadour, but the two nonetheless share resemblances. One is that both could be instrumental musicians, singers, or both. Another is that both have an interesting connection with passion for women. The troubadour belongs to the system of courtly love, in which the beloved and unattainable lady is idolized. The jongleur here, at his most pious, is presented as a humble but sincere worshiper of the Virgin, who is embodied in a Madonna. He does everything, and gives his all, for the love of Mary alone. In the titles that four of the five manuscripts offer, this character is associated with the Mother of God. In other words, he too is a fool for love, but his inamorata is Mary. He dances attendance upon her and upon no one else.

The most literal-minded transposition of the prevailing medieval title into present-day French would be *Le tombeur de Notre Dame*, word-for-word "The Tumbler of Our Lady." The hitch with retaining this wording unmodified in the modern tongue lies in the element *tombeur*. While the verb *tomber* means "to fall," for more than a century the derivative noun has come to connote in French not a tumbler, in the sense of acrobat, dancer, or acrobatic dancer, but rather a lady's man, ladykiller, womanizer, cad, or bounder, for whom incautious women may fall, sometimes much to their subsequent remorse. Although the term is by no means an obscenity, and no one would be foulmouthed in using it, it carries a charge of moral disapproval and condemnation. Imagine if every time English speakers employed the word *tumble*, their thoughts turned to sexual intercourse, because of the euphemistic "a tumble in the hay." Under such circumstances, they might shun the noun *tumbler*, which is the predicament that *tombeur* thrusts upon French-speakers today. The medieval verb is another matter, since it carried no such associations.

The discomfort about transposing the original term from medieval French into the modern language can be inferred from a heading in a 1912 volume of French literary

history. The caption leading into discussion of the medieval poem reads "Le Tombeur (Jongleur) de Notre-Dame," and the following sentence glosses the word in question as "a tumbler or performer of tumbles." To bat away objectionable associations of *tombeur* that ill befit a spiritual tale, the closest and otherwise most natural modern rendering of the thirteenth-century French has been unloaded in favor of *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. The present-day title can be and has been rendered into English as *The Jongleur of Notre Dame* in the hybrid of the two languages that has been styled Frenglish. In this case, key noun is a loanword that can mean generally minstrel or particularly juggler.

The situation in French hastened conflation of the medieval story with its fin-de-siècle adaptations by the Nobel Prize-winning author Anatole France and the once supremely successful songwriter Jules Massenet. We need not bid them au revoir, since we will encounter them again repeatedly. Their short story and opera, respectively, carry the title *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. Thus, in French both sides of the narrative equation, medieval and medievalized, are known unvaryingly as *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*. In contrast, in English, despite occasional contamination across the divide, the medieval tale tends to be called *Our Lady's Tumbler*, whereas the texts by the above short-story writer and musician are designated by the half-Anglicized title of *Jongleur of Notre Dame*. Modern authors have contrived myriad ways of ringing changes, mostly slight but some radical, upon each of these captions.

Notre Dame versus Saint Mary

At first blush, the other panel in the diptych-like title looks problem-free. No troubleshooting would appear to be called for. When used as a possessive, the medieval French *Nostre Dame* morphed into the modern *de Notre Dame*. Yet this other phrase too requires at least a little examination. *Notre Dame* designates the Virgin in her capacity as "Our Lady." Even more often, it serves as shorthand for a religious foundation dedicated to her, with the cathedral of Paris being by far the best known. The more relevant matter is what led to the formulation *Notre Dame* in the first place. Despite its familiarity, it should not be taken for granted. French is unusual in calling Mary what it does, in having as many dedications of places, buildings, and institutions to her as it does, and in vaunting a cathedral named after her that has become emblematic of both Gothic architecture overall and particularly the city of Paris. Let us take a gander at all these aspects of the one seemingly simple phrase.

The designation of the Virgin as "Our Lady," from the Latin *domina nostra*, has hardly been universal in the Romance languages. Calling her Saint Mary was, and perhaps still is, more common (see Fig. 2.1). To take one well-known nautical example, Christopher Columbus's largest ship was not christened *Nuestra Señora*, Spanish for

Our Lady. On the contrary, it was the *Santa Maria*—Saint Mary if translated into English. In French, usage has differed markedly—and the divergence from most other languages began early. Notre Dame may well have become current already in the eleventh century. To all appearances, the phraseology took strong hold first at Chartres in the second half of the twelfth century. From there, it seeped by linguistic drip-drip into other forms of Romance speech, such as Occitan and Catalan, at the expense of the formulations for "Saint Mary" in these tongues.



Fig. 2.1 Edward Maran, *The "Santa Maria," 1492*, 1892. Painting, reproduced on color print from original *The Santa Maria, Niña and Pinta (Evening of October 11, 1492)*.

No one knows what bright soul coined the locution Notre Dame. (Nobody filed for exclusive rights to it.) The turn of phrase may have arisen among the laity rather than among ecclesiastics, as a means of marking the Virgin apart from other saints, including virgins, to accord her special credit for her uniqueness. By not being labeled "saint" she is elevated, not to the point of heading a matriarchy, but still head and shoulders above all others. The discrimination makes perfect sense, since she occupies a degree below that of Jesus Christ but above ordinary saints. At the same time, Mary was the most popular, in the fullest sense of the word, of holy women. Yet Notre Dame differs interestingly from, for instance, the Italian Madonna, which could be equated to "my lady" or "milady." We may not stop to puzzle over why we say "your Majesty" as opposed to "my Lord," but the possessive adjectives have been driven by specific forces. The plural in the French first-person possessive for "Our Lady" brought home that she belonged to everyone. The form "Our" may well reflect liturgical practices, in which the members of a church collectively invoke the Mother

of God. The noun *Dame* had the simultaneous effect of coordinating the Virgin with feudalism. In French, Jesus Christ is *Notre Seigneur*, or "Our Lord." By being called "Our Lady," Mary is recognized in rank for being what she was, that is, the most powerful female in Christianity. In medieval society, women were ringed around by constraints, but the Mother of God knew no limitations: she had to shatter no stained-glass ceiling. Making her into a lady had the self-contradictory, but understandable effects of simultaneously ennobling, familiarizing, and humanizing her. As obligatory within the feudal system, the Virgin would indemnify her devotee as a lady would shield a vassal against all threats and arm-twisting.

The upswing in the wording *Notre Dame* took place within a much larger swing, namely, the cult of Mary. This veneration began to proliferate in the eleventh century, and in the twelfth century reached in both lay and clerical piety a pinnacle from which it would not be dislodged for the rest of the Middle Ages. The high point turned out to be a mesa-like plateau. Devotion to the Virgin must be reckoned among the most instrumental forces in spiritual life and creative achievement from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. There is no hyperbolizing the number of sculptures, paintings, stained-glass windows, and other artworks created in honor of Mary, and no overstating the volume of hymns and stories composed on her behalf. This literary flowering coincided with the efflorescence of courtly love literature, in which the lady occupied an exalted place. The two developments would have supported each other, and would have initiated many-sided interplay.

The Mother of God as elevated through mass devotion was manifold. At first the Virgin won favor through her relation to Christ. She enabled the Word to become flesh when she accepted her role in the Incarnation, as the human mother from whom the Son of God took his humanity. In her own humanness, she was later the grieving Mary. In this guise, she would become formalized as the *Mater Dolorosa*, or "Sorrowful Mother." Even more particularly, her griefs would be numbered seven. In this connection, we should not overlook the parallels between the maternal Virgin as she keens over the deposed Christ, and the Mary who assuages the jongleur after he collapses before the Madonna. Eventually, the Mother of God won a clean sweep through her Assumption into heaven, which positioned her first for coronation and then for being seated on the right side of Jesus as the Virgin and Child in majesty.

On a civic plane, Mary constituted a favored last-line defense for municipalities, in the first instance Constantinople. She earned this reputation after the siege of the Byzantine capital by Persians and Avars in 626. A progression becomes clear: she acquired status as the invincible defender and invulnerable protector of, first, the city, then the whole Eastern Roman Empire, and ultimately all Christendom. Despite having a power quotient that bordered on omnipotence, the Mother of God was not preempted from transitioning to being a merciful mediator. In her maternal

capacity, she acted as a vigilant lookout for the best interests of humanity. As the Virgin of Mercy, she went from merely being Mother Confessor to playing an active role in motivating her son to absolve repentant sinners. Beyond the Marys in all these capacities burgeoned a multiplicity of other Virgins, including Madonnas that triggered local affection and devotion while generating miracles. In popular devotion, such images served as the focal points for personal and affective language that invoked the Mother of God as intercessor. In exchange for the worship, the Virgin traveled to and fro between heaven and earth with a facility disallowed to Jesus himself. She was especially approachable, and uniquely capable of working miracles. All these Marys traveled with a long train of miracle stories, sermons, popular literature, art works, and shrines.

In modern French, *Notre Dame* has come to denote without distinction the Virgin Mary herself and a cathedral, since almost all such foundations in France are dedicated to her. After the bombing of Reims in World War I, an author spouted about the synecdoche with patriotic wholeheartedness:

> When we speak indifferently of "the Cathedral" or of "Notre-Dame" we do not confound the Palace with the Queen; we affirm that the Palace is the Queen's, and that she is at home there; we mean to say that the Cathedral is her domain, her sanctuary, that one cannot separate the one from the other, that to touch the Cathedral is to touch Our Lady, and to violate the Cathedral is to violate Our Lady.

What rendered Mary exceptional, and why was she worshiped so warm-bloodedly by so many? The special saving grace of Christianity was that the religion made monotheism approachable by incorporating a man within its divinity. For all that, in time the godhead became regarded as aloof and forbidding to the rank and file. At the top of the social hierarchy, emperors and kings were God's anointed. In that capacity, they had a privileged relation to Jesus. In Christian iconography of the East, we find Christ Pantokrator. In Greek, the epithet means "almighty." In the corresponding imagery of the West, we encounter Christ in Majesty, enthroned as ruler of the world. In contrast to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Mother of God seemed within reach to everyone, no matter how humble. The reforms of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 suggest that by then she was sought after more than ever to intercede with her offspring. One explanation was that the Church was not equipped to deliver the level of pastoral care demanded for the swelling numbers of needy Christians. Filling the gap, the Blessed Virgin could be counted upon to sway Jesus through her maternal influence. The underlying guideline was the common reality of life that a solicitous son can be prevailed upon to do anything for his mother. Thus, Mary assumed an unexcelled place within personal piety from which she shows no signs of being budged even today.

The Equivocal Status of Jongleurs

Not all those who wander are lost.

—J. R. R. Tolkien

It is high time to read beyond the title and to think about the protean character to whom it refers in its first part. In French as in English, jongleur can now designate performers of innumerable different complexions. It behooved the practitioners of this profession to wear many hats. In their versatility, they diverted their audiences, both lay and ecclesiastical, with displays of verbal, musical, and physical skill. Even a very approximate taxonomy of these entertainers ramifies into a many-branched family tree. As artists of the word, they composed, ad-libbed, or rattled off verses and told tales. To detail these activities in composition and delivery more specifically, a jongleur could be a singer or composer of love songs, comic narratives, heroic lays, or other narratives such as histories and saints' lives. In the fullest sense of the expression, they would sing for their supper.

What is more, jongleurs were actors. At the humblest level, they mimed and mummed in dumb shows. Likewise, they tried their hands (truly) as puppeteers. Then too, they served as buffoons, clowns, fools, and jesters. Beyond acting, they ventured before their audiences as musicians, singers and instrumentalists alike. In another direction, they could perform physically as acrobats, contortionists, dancers and dance masters, fire-eaters, gymnasts, jugglers, ropewalkers, stiltwalkers, and sword-dancers, -jugglers, and -swallowers. Among other things, they were conjurors and magicians. To go beyond the purely human, they tamed, trained, and exhibited animals, such as bears, dogs, and snakes, and they entered the fray as equestrians too. All told, it may sometimes seem harder to determine what they were not than what they were. They acted as the archetypal and ultimate crossover artists, prepared to do whatever would attract medieval thrill-seekers.

The repertoires of such entertainers were not restricted merely to acts of physical adroitness such as acrobatics, prestidigitation, and juggling. Their stock-in-trade also had a verbal (and voluble) dimension. Indeed, these performers drew upon all the sorts of words and music associated with the wandering minstrels and court jesters who long ago became embedded in modern conceptions of medieval life (see Fig. 2.2). Although sometimes courtly, such figures were often related to discreditable places and activities, such as taverns and throwing dice. A jongleur could be a professional gambler, instrumentalist, or contortionist—or all of the above. Likewise, he could be a mountebank, an individual who would hop onto a long seat to do his act. The last designation, originating in the Italian imperative "climb on (the) bench!," is a metonymy

that tends to imply an inn or alehouse, where the bare minimum of furniture would have been trestles, tabletops, and benches. We are not talking about fancy marquetry. In worlds without theaters, the altitude of such seating was often as close as actors and audiences could get to stages or circus rings. In time, the mountebank became as we know him today, a nomadic charlatan who stands atop an elevation, maybe even a plank on two sawhorses, not so much to enact an entertainment routine as to peddle a nostrum or some other overpriced product of quackery.



Fig. 2.2 Postcard depicting court jesters (L. Vandamme et Cie, 1905).

Guiraut de Calanson, often termed (with only flimsy support) a Gascon troubadour, frequented the courts of northern Spain. In the first two decades of the thirteenth century, he composed a dozen poems in Occitan that are extant today. In one of these compositions, he lays out the talent that a performer worthy of being called a jongleur should have. In enumerating an ideal repertoire, he touches upon the abilities to speak and rhyme wittily, be steeped in the Trojan legend, balance apples on the tips of knives, juggle, jump through hoops, and play multiple musical instruments.

What can the etymology of *jongleur* tell us? The English is scrounged from the French, which in its turn is a direct blood relative of the Latin *ioculator*. By whatever name, the term denoted then a joker or jokester, usually professional. At its broadest, the word meant any kind of entertainer. The primary sense of the original noun in the learned language derived from *iocus*, meaning "game, play, or jest." The English word "joke" comes from the same noun. In the Middle Ages, both the Latin and vernacular nouns became contaminated by association with a similar-sounding term of Germanic origin, *jangler* (babbler, chatterbox, gossip, liar, scandal-monger, calumniator). Yet the early medieval labor market did not allow many entertainers to specialize in the arts of speech alone. They learned to move among verbal, musical, and physical skills. Therefore the Latin noun gave rise in English not only to "joker" but also to "juggler."

Ioculator was but one item in the sprawling Medieval Latin nomenclature to indicate this ilk. In the ferocious Darwinian battleground that language can constitute,

this noun rode roughshod over its closest predecessors and eventually displaced them. The results can be cross-checked in many European tongues, including English. Throughout Europe, the Latin word has progeny that go back to the Middle Ages. In contradistinction, the root of *histrio* survives mainly as a later and learned reintroduction from Greek, whence the adjective *histrionic*. Likewise, the stem of the other derivative from the same language, *mimus*, has become largely restricted to the ambit of mime-player. Finally, the Latin *scurra* has persisted solely as embedded in *scurrilous* and *scurrility*. As performers became more professionalized, stark shifts took place in the old meanings of words. In English, the most common derivative of the Latin *ioculator* became not a "joker" in general, but much more narrowly a "juggler." In medieval French, it denoted above all entertainers who specialized in song. Similarly, the jester turned into a clown-like figure, even though the name originally implied an artist or teller of tales or stories. A *gestour* was a teller of *gestes*, or "stories." From him descended the jester as we know him. Another Latin noun of the Middle Ages has been largely omitted so far.

The *ioculator* had a major competitor in the *ministerialis*. The two, jongleurs and minstrels, were sometimes conflated. The medieval Latin *ministerialis*, better known now as minstrel, signified literally "of a little minister, servant," but more commonly "minor court official." In turn, the term in the learned language came from the noun *ministerium* for "service, office," itself derived from *minister*. It signified the hireling of a lord, either secular or ecclesiastical, or prince. The French for "minstrel" derived from this Latin. The vernacular word soon referred to a person who had mastered a craft. The word to describe what a minister does is *ministerium* "ministry." *Mestier*, the medieval French derivative of that noun, gives us *métier*.

To slip from conflation to its opposite, a primary distinction has been predicated between jongleurs and trouvères. Cognates of these two terms exist in the language of southern France and other neighboring Mediterranean regions. In presentations of poetics in this other Romance tongue, the two groups are sometimes differentiated by stressing that the *joglar* performs, whereas the *trobador* invents or composes. By this standard, the two types of professionals were as distinct or indistinct as artisans from artists. The underlying premise is that the jongleur or *joglar* is a professional musician and singer, whereas the trouvère or *trobador* is a songwriter and lyricist—not quite gentlemen scholars, but much closer to them than the jongleurs. The last-mentioned were marginal beings whose social standing and reputation could be deemed equivocal, at best. They were edgy in every sense of the word: they specialized in brinkmanship, by operating at the margins. In contrast, trouvères could have achieved exalted status through their affiliation with noble courts.

The dichotomy can apply as well to Latin. Cognates for trouvères and troubadours are not used there, but substantially the same line is drawn between functions. Clerics could concoct texts in Latin or even in vernacular languages, such as medieval French. Often, they relied upon lay entertainers to deliver them. In this schema, jongleurs perform orally in the vulgar tongue before lay audiences. All the same, we should not

suppose that the writers in the Middle Ages who used these words upheld the nuance regularly. We should be even less disposed to credit that composers and performers themselves had fixed terminology to describe themselves. The relevance, or even existence, of such glib sociocultural distinctions between trouvères and jongleurs has been rightly challenged. The differences in meaning between the two are not nearly so straightforward and schematic as some would wish us to believe. Take the courts, for example, where minstrels and jongleurs are often discussed as if they were transposable. As the associations of their name suggest, minstrel is the diminutive of the noun *minister*. A minstrel can be then a minor official attached to a set retinue. To warrant being named what they were, they may have largely abandoned the rootless itinerancy that put wandering players into friction with the sedentariness and stability esteemed within much of medieval society.

Another factor to weigh is a reshuffling that may have occurred over time. Troubadours who became impoverished may have cascaded many rungs to become jongleurs, while jongleurs who succeeded may have scaled the social ladder. Whatever the causes, over time the neat differentiation between troubadours and jongleurs seems to have become muddied. In 1274, a late troubadour penned a lengthy poem of supplication to King Alfonso X of Castile. In it, he asked that the inhabitants of his kingdom maintain bright-line distinctions between the two groups. This poet approved that the Castilians still discriminated among instrumentalists, imitators, troubadours, and even more reprehensible performers. In contrast, in Provence at the time, the troubadours had become déclassé and lost the cachet of their name, the supremacy that originated in their ability to compose. They were all called jongleurs without differentiation.

Certain proclivities of jongleurs stand beyond dispute. For a start, these performers tended to be transients who subsisted and worked on peripheries. With their special privilege of laissez-aller, they existed at the fringes of princely and ecclesiastical courts, villages, and everywhere else they circulated. The marginality in which the entertainers were enveloped because of their profession meant that they were often considered disreputable—personae non gratae. Yet their rakishness was not an undiluted negative. For instance, they could venture into places where, and at times when, others could not. The protagonist of *Our Lady's Tumbler* may have benefited from the carte blanche accorded jongleurs, at least when they appeared as characters in fiction. He seems to have enjoyed license to roam the monastery at will.

When considering the medieval French poem, we must take note that the hero is not a street performer in straitened circumstances, however often grinding poverty and professional failure are assumed to be the case in post-medieval adaptations of the tale. On the contrary, the tumbler has proven himself to be a successful entrepreneur in entertainment. Unlike the visionaries who experienced many of the most important apparitions of Mary in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the dancer betrays no sign of enduring economic deprivation, political upheaval, or brewing war. What he

does let drop is that he lives in a time of high religiosity, particularly when devotion to the Virgin enters consideration.

Traditionally, jongleurs were expected to be multitalented. Yet no one individual could be a true jack-of-all-trades, thoroughly competent in all the arts that were ascribed to this class of entertainers. A little before 1215, Thomas of Chobham produced a vade mecum of practical theology on penance and confession for priests, which accrued wide favor. In it, the English-born but Paris-educated ecclesiastic distinguished among three classes of performers, referring to all of them generically as *histriones*. Thinking of 'histrionic' gives a clue. The first category in his taxonomy comprises those who specialize in what we might call physical comedy or burlesque. Part of their disgrace consists in their habit of disrobing to a level of attire (or should we say non-attire?) that common folk found shocking, even horrid. These entertainers rate the lowest in Thomas's hierarchy. The second of his groupings encompasses gossips, while the third comprises singers. The last two have in common that their tongues wag. He subdivided the vocalists in turn into two clusters, one praiseworthy and the other not worth a tinker's damn.

The ethical framework of this manual tags as bad those jongleurs who do not direct the body to spiritual goals. These lowlifes do not shrink from unabashed buffoonery in either words or deeds. In effect, they submit the spirit to the flesh. Still worse, they engage as agents provocateurs to sin. By engaging in obscene movements of the anatomy, they incite concupiscence in other people. From Genesis 1:27 on, we know that a person's frame is made in God's image. As such, the human body is not to be deformed. Neglectful of this divine analogue, acrobats writhe their limbs out of shape. By employing their physique to despicable ends, they have the look of streetwalkers. If the tumbler were truly like such gymnasts, he would resemble at best a harlot saint like Mary Magdalene or Thaïs before conversion. That is, he would earn his living by selling his body through enactment of base acts. Yet his solution differs, since he does not so much turn away from his profession by leaving it as redeem it by inventing a means of making the performance private and transcendent.

As a caste, physical jongleurs deserve their comeuppance. They not only indulge in frivolity themselves, but even worsen matters by implicating others. Through their sensuality, they stimulate lustfulness and turpitude among their audience. But what can be said of good jongleurs? On the positive side, Thomas excepts from condemnation jongleurs who "sing the lofty deeds of princes and lives of saints, furnish solace when a person is sick or unsettled, and do not commit the disgraceful acts that male and female acrobats perform, as well as those who put on shameful shows." This laudable type of trouper serves the aims of the Church and elicits wary approval above all for helping to propagate the cults of saints and pilgrimage. The approved kind restricts physicality to a sober-minded bearing and to the playing of musical instruments. To this top-flight echelon in his classificatory system the ecclesiastical writer grants careful but ungrudging approbation. In concluding his consideration,

he relates an anecdote about a jongleur. This individual addresses himself to Pope Alexander III to test the waters about his fate in the afterlife. He wants to find out if he can win salvation. His holiness asks him if he knows another trade. Despite receiving a negative answer, the supreme pontiff assures his jumpy inquirer that he can live without fear so long as he avoids suggestive conduct or obscenity.

In the *Romance of Flamenca* we again encounter three genera of jongleurs, but the taxonomy is not at all the same as in Thomas of Chobham. First come those who sing songs, lyric and narrative; then instrumentalists; and finally, physical performers. Before entering a monastery, the artist in *Our Lady's Tumbler* would have been completely at home in this third cadre. By the same token, the acrobat in the medieval French poem belongs to the final one in Thomas's three ranks of entertainers. His flair, like theirs, lies in the body. So far as we are given to know, our tumbler is an old hand solely in acrobatics, including what we would regard as dance. Indeed, we are told explicitly that he knew only to make his leaps and that he was incapable of anything else. He is not an odd-job man in the entertainment field.

What accounts for the permafrost distrust and disregard in which performers, especially of the physical sort, were held? One pat answer would be that Christians in the Middle Ages were meant to leave the body behind, and not to dwell upon it. The anxieties of people across the centuries about the human plight of having an immortal spirit caged within a mortal frame were captured starkly in medieval debates. In the culture of the Middle Ages, body and soul were often presented as antithetical. Debate poems abound in which the two are pitted against each other. This makes sense, considering that the tension between them is a common and perhaps even a fundamental human dilemma. How do we reconcile two such different pulls upon us?

In such exchanges, the soul often occupied a position of superiority over the body. It held the moral high ground. In other cases, the two were equally inculpated. Within the asceticism and body-denying spirit of medieval Christianity, it was questionable enough for the entertainer to have a sharpened sensitivity to his own body. How could the joy of dance qualify as asceticism? Even worse, spectators would have been inspired too by the tumbler to pay closer heed to their corporeality as human beings. Yet we must also remember that the acrobat kills himself through the mortification of his devotion. He makes his physicality the means to an end: his body serves as the instrument for the expression of his soul in worship. He makes the prison of the spirit into an escape hatch.

Physicality thrusts the tumbler to the bottom of the scale for jongleurs and minstrels. It took a long time for the shame of his corporeality to be destigmatized. Generally, both kinds of artists are portrayed in vernacular literature as being able to sing and play the fiddle-like *vielle* or harp, as well as perhaps to tumble and perform acrobatics. A manuscript of the Old Spanish *Canticles of Saint Mary* portrays King Alfonso X the Wise on bended knee before Mary as he calls upon a gaggle of jongleurs, both

instrumentalists and dancers, to join him in performing in her honor (see Fig. 2.3). The fragmentary Old Occitan epic *Daurel and Beton* depicts a professional jongleur named Daurel who possesses both skill sets, musical and athletic. Yet he refrains from imparting his gymnastic arts to his king's son Beton, and instead gives him a boot camp in music and song alone. Implied is that the physical stunts would ill besuit the station of a nobleman. Whatever their menu of professional skills, jongleurs tended to be regarded with suspicion but not with universal condemnation. A more benevolent outlook upon them can be detected in a thirteenth-century poem by the troubadour Cerveri de Girona, which gives utterance to nail-biting about the spiritual salvation of jongleurs. After initially exhorting them to renounce their wrongful and debasing profession, the poet comes around to urging them instead to put their gifts at the disposal of the Virgin Mary.



Fig. 2.3 Musicians before the Virgin and Child, as depicted in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Codice Rico). Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, MS T.I.1., fol. 170v.

The tumbler has in common with the jongleur a mobility that was shared in medieval times almost uniquely by pilgrims and merchants. They could go it alone, or travel in troupes. When plural, they swarmed in a kind of proto-circus. For self-protection, they organized themselves ever more tightly by forming guilds and wearing a distinctive livery. The clothing remains with us in popular stereotypes of clowns and court jesters.

Jongleurs could move from the crossroads, central squares, and street corners of yokel villages to the halls of lordly castles, from the parvises of the saintliest cathedrals to the interiors of the seamiest brothels and bathhouses, and from everyman's pilgrimage route to the choosiest cloisters. The itinerancy of the jongleurs could border on vagrancy. In a monastic context, steadfastness of place is often designated by the Latin expression *stabilitas loci*, by which the *Rule of Saint Benedict* stipulated staying put as one of its most sacrosanct principles. The vows of a Benedictine underlined stability of residence in a single monastery as one of a monk's paramount duties. Brothers were supposed to abstract themselves from the world at large. By remaining stably in place, they would show the constancy that could elide the otherwise immeasurable space between divinity and humanity. Like the entertainers, the act of wandering elicited praise in some cases and uneasiness in others. The Latin expression *homo viator*, concretizing the conception of man as nomad, captures the article of faith that the human condition is to range between two worlds. The meandering has logically as its pendants the notions of pilgrim and pilgrimage. But not all drifters were created equal. Those brethren who moved about were condemned for their rambling and roving. Consequently, the monk who was remiss and failed to stay put in one place risked being degraded as a gyrovague. This term for a monastic defector melded a Greek root for a round plane figure and a Latin one for wandering. It has never been thought good to go in circles. The scholar who wheeled about from one venue to another held the shady status of being a wanderer or vagrant. The pilgrim might be righteous or not. The minstrel who accompanied the pilgrim also might be upstanding or not.

When in the world, the jongleur in *Our Lady's Tumbler* was a boundary-crosser. No container could hold him: he stretched limits, pushed the envelope, and expanded horizons. In contrast to a pious monk, he could epitomize instability. In some ways, he would have resembled a knight. He strayed about sometimes by himself as a knight errant would do, sometimes among troupes of peers. Yet his errancy was not construed as a redemptive quest. He led a vagabond life. He alternately straddled and transgressed, embodying the concept of liminality by crossing thresholds as he went from town to town on a hunt for income from performances. The society around him almost instinctively conflated physical waywardness with moral or spiritual error. Since to be errant and arrant are closely related not merely in etymology, he was more like an arrant knave than an errant knight. He incurred suspicion for being a desperado, a truant, or even a felon.

At the end of the day, the jongleur was regarded as a weak prospect for experiencing an enduring conversion. He issued from a class seen as being especially prone to recidivism. When he first entered the monastery, the inveterate rambler would become by force of circumstances a stay-at-home—or this story's medieval equivalent, a stay-in-monastery. In our story, the tumbler remained just as much of a wanderer, as he shuttled between the ground level or slightly elevated plane of the church where

the monks carried out their devotions and the crypt below where he executed his performances. For all that, the entertainers had their good sides and strong suits. For instance, they could serve as cultural vectors across geographic boundaries and social barriers. In this function as intermediaries, they could carry culture from high to low and vice versa, ecclesiastical to secular and vice versa, region to region, language to language, and ethnic group to ethnic group. The performers transported stories and techniques across the lines that ran between such steely oppositions as lay and clerical, oral and written, Germanic and Romance, and worldly and religious. In a year-round open season, they lifted material and methods liberally from others, just as others drew at liberty from them. This unrestricted aspect of jongleur life is evident in the many dance steps with which the tumbler of Our Lady demonstrated familiarity. To judge by their names, he was exposed in his earthbound life to a rainbow of different regional styles in gymnastics. In mobility, the jongleurs bore a likeness to the wandering scholars who are often lumped together and called goliards. Yet our tumbler was no free-and-easy student. Whereas the prerequisite for academic status was Latin, he was unscathed by exposure to the learned tongue. If he had a universal language, it took the form of nonverbal communication in the use of body movements and gestures.

Contrary to what many later variants of the story intimate, the protagonist of *Our Lady's Tumbler* in its original medieval French verse reflex flourished in his career before entering the abbey. Prior to becoming involved in a miracle tale, he was not a failure but a success story. The geographic diffusion of the balletic steps or acrobatic moves enumerated in his practice suggests that he interacted with entertainers from far and wide. His routinized dance shows the cosmopolitanism of his trade as well as the breadth of his travels and the many ethnicities of his audiences. He was anything but a one-trick pony. Through whatever channels, he familiarized himself with movements indigenous to regions all over Western Europe. Relatively nearby, he was conversant with dance steps or gymnastic moves characteristic of Metz, Lorraine, and Champagne. Further afield, he alluded to Brittany, Spain, and Rome. The distribution may even imply that he traveled in person to these places.

Yet since all the steps or moves named are otherwise unknown and unknowable, the real nature of the drill cannot be reconstructed. Though the play-by-play names names without inhibition, we have no frame of reference for them. We cannot discern how one national or regional style of sport or dance differed from another. To complicate matters further, we must even consider that the complex acrobatic or balletic cycle corresponds to no performance that a tumbler or dancer ever put on show. At the remove of many hundred years, we cannot analogize with confidence to any event in our experience. At one extreme would be calypso or cancan moves in freestyle dance competitions; at another, calisthenics before floor exercises in gymnastics. In any case, the supposed routine could be entirely the fancy of the poet, as a way of almost parodying the overwrought psalmody that goes on in monastic churches.

Finally, we have no idea how much the dance varies from one performance to the next. Is it mechanical and even robotic, or it is improvised anew in each instance—does the jongleur rejig his jig each time he does it? The "vault of Metz" is the first and last named regional move that he performs. Does he save for last the best leap or handspring of his imagination? How does his routine relate to the ritualism of the liturgical offices enacted by the monks above?

Our Lady's Tumbler has sundry associations with Picardy: its dialect contains features typical of the region; it has common ground with the miracles of Gautier de Coinci, who hailed from the heart of the area; it shares motifs with stories from such places as Arras; and so forth. In view of these factors, it is intriguing that in later centuries tumblers and jongleurs from Chauny earned special renown. The Picard town had its own Confraternity of Trumpet-Jongleurs. The guild staged its own festival and went on the road as well. But just as we may not discover much that is meaningful about the supposedly local dance moves that the tumbler made, we are unlikely ever to make great inroads in coming to grips with the particularities of Picard performers. No matter how fine-toothed the comb with which we check the ledgers, relevant information may well never emerge: however great the information explosion may be, not all facts will be at the tips of our fingers.

A stock view in Western Europe held that jongleurs were damned automatically, for the very fact of being jongleurs. A systematic exposition of the Christian faith presents a snatch of dialogue to this effect between its author Honorius Augustodunensis and one of his students. The pupil asks if these entertainers have any glimmer of hope for salvation. His master with the catchy Latin name replies with a stiff negative. The outlook of the churchman meshed with a perspective in which these performers were social outcasts. Often others of this type are mentioned pejoratively, with disapproving terms in French that became modern English *lecher* and *ribald*.

Although the relationship of the jongleurs with the clergy was fraught, their standing shot up from the early Middle Ages to the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Subsequently, the entertainers who earned their keep in urban or at least curial settings attained a noticeably higher socioeconomic status. Though some remained squalid and marginal, an appreciable number came to have property and wealth. One of them was the tumbler in the original medieval poem, who was far from a penniless failure. The modern image of the jester relates to this intensifying fixity of place or, to be more accurate, milieu. One element in the evolution was the engagement of entertainers with courts and palaces, of both noblemen and ecclesiastical magnates, such as bishops. Jongleur and jester are nearly substitutable terms. An entertainer of this ilk was also attached to a set circle, in this case the entourage of a noble or king. After him, the professional buffoon arrived. Jongleurs and the Church had abundant reason to make common cause when they could. On the clerical side, monks and friars composed legends, increasingly in the vernacular, that they wanted delivered before the widest audience. Sometimes they would have profited from witnessing and appropriating the performance techniques of the jongleurs, to make their own

preaching more appetizing. On the other side, professionals had every reason to ingratiate themselves with the clerics who policed many of the common spaces where the largest publics awaited them.

By describing in loving detail the virtuosity of a resourceful entertainer, the preacher who resorted to the exemplum of the tumbler would have coopted some of what his competitors in entertainment had to offer. In effect, the stimulation of hearing an eloquent exemplum about a high-quality performance could have rivaled the experience of watching an actual performer in action: score one for the pulpiteer versus the puppeteer. The equivalence would have held especially strong if the sermon-giver employed gestures or movements to convey mimetically how the acrobat's tumbling might have appeared. Along these lines, a parish priest is reported to have later called himself a "mime of Christ" in the inscription at his burial place. If true, this allegation would transmute the mimetic art into being an "imitation of Christ." In this case, the jongleur would have mimed the elation of creation upon being saved. In an added Marian wrinkle, he achieved salvation through the grace of the Virgin. At the same time, one main thrust of the exemplum is to burnish the reputation of a professional entertainer who repudiated his profession and converted. By drawing upon the narrative, a sermonizer would have exalted religious devotion over more earthly pursuits. When a speaker related the story at the pulpit, he could claim for his narrative the full weight of institutional authority. Such church-sanctioned use is what the poet of *Our Lady's Tumbler* assumes by referring to the tale as a "little exemplum."

Many valuations of jongleurs and their colleagues have come to light from the medieval period. Ambivalence about them percolates into plain sight in Gautier de Coinci. The poet of the Virgin takes pains to establish the veracity of the legends he relates. By doing so, he differentiates his narrative repertoire from the fallacious and fraudulent miracles retailed by footloose and fancy-free goliards and itinerant sermonizers. Gautier, nobleman turned Benedictine, monk promoted to abbot, was no jongleur himself. Nor, the odds would imply vigorously, was the author of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. But both poets, alongside preachers who drew upon the exemplum for their sermons, had incentive to assert control over the sometimes reviled and sometimes dreaded members of their guild. They could do so by promulgating a view of what a proper entertainer—one who merited the approbation of no less than the Mother of God herself—should be and do.

During the Reformation, all entertainers, both jongleurs generally and jugglers specifically, fell into even deeper disrepute than in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, jugglers and their skill became anti-Catholic slurs in England. Priests who officiated at Mass were likened to entertainers of this sort, as the Mass and transubstantiation were to their characteristic craft. The theologian John Wycliffe went so far as to smear such fathers with being "the devil's jugglers." In many parts of Europe a story with a jongleur as protagonist would have stood an even slimmer chance of eliciting favor during the sixteenth-century reform movement than in most earlier times.

Trance Dance

So he became a dancer to God.

—T. S. Eliot

Dance and spiritual practice sometimes relate strongly to each other. No one how-to or do-it-yourself manual can tell everyone how to achieve transcendence through an altered state. For some, the best means of attaining an out-of-body experience comes through the body itself, through the ecstatic ritual of dance. The liturgy of Christian worship may seem excessively verbal and slow-moving, even stalled, but in every single one of its expressions it involves motions as well as words. We would not go too far to say that the prayer books of many denominations seek to formulate for worshipers a coherent message from both a choreography of ritualized steps and a content based on set texts. Analyzed against this backdrop, the juggler had landed in a quandary. As an illiterate lay brother, he was not permitted to participate in the sequence of motions, and he could not understand the foundational texts. The scriptures and formal ceremonies were unintelligible to him. Although not anti-intellectual, he was inalterably unintellectual. What was to be done? His achievement came in dreaming up a silver bullet all his own. His leggy liturgy was a worship with movements and language of his own creation. A clash and crisis follow, since his veneration through dance is initially indecipherable to the other monks. We have competing, mutually uncomprehending, and uninterpretable illiteracies, the one of texts and the other of dance.

Despite the distinctly detail-oriented description that the poet of *Our Lady's Tumbler* furnishes, we cannot reconstruct the tumbler's jumps in their entirety. We are unable to state with assurance how a single move in it would look, or even to establish for sure whether the act was properly a dance, a gymnastic routine, a fusion of the two, or something different again. We do know that a multitude of religious systems, distributed widely across time and space, have allowed for the physical expression of ritual adoration—for sacred performance. In ancient Greece, the athletic competitions of the Olympic Games were tied so tightly to religious festivals in honor of Zeus that they ceased only when the Christian emperor Theodosius banned such pagan cults. In pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, ballgames constituted symbolic and ritual actions while they also served the purposes of politics and entertainment. In Buddhism, monks still dance to offer their bodies to the Buddha.

This is obviously not to say that all dances have been accepted in any religion, and even less that any type of such rhythmic stepping has been rubber-stamped across the full religious spectrum. From the Fathers of the Church through the Middle Ages, Christianity showed itself highly disposed to condemn dancing. Many ecclesiastical councils and synods, as well as texts concerned with penance, leave the distinct impression that priests wished to extirpate dance. The taboos held with remarkable hardiness against any movement remotely resembling it during divine service,

especially in sermons and sacred processions. By the same token, dancing elicited frowns and furrowed brows when it took place in hallowed sites, such as churches, churchyards, and cemeteries. By both timing and place, the conduct of the lay brother in *Our Lady's Tumbler* was glaringly provocative to orthodox views within Christianity. In almost every way imaginable, but particularly in this one regard, he challenges the inelasticity of the dissociation that the Church sought to impose between lay and clerical culture.

During the same span of a millennium and a half, Christians never stopped gyrating for long. Despite hostility to the medium, some of the recurrent denunciations themselves confirm that dancing took place. In fact, even priests engage in ritual dances sometimes. In special cases, the physical activity could lead to mystical experiences. Through balletic performance the tumbler could have attained a state of altered consciousness that is achieved through the manner of movement known as trance dance. This type of effortful motion facilitates entry into ecstasy. Such a condition of heightened being is achieved, above all, in religious rituals. A particularly ancient manifestation is the leaping for which the followers of the Greek god Dionysus were known in Greece. It was associated with the choral song or chant known as the dithyramb, which to this day is associated with wildness and irregularity. In dances associated with possession, the participants may undergo visitations from spirits that take hold of them. Incidentally, they may do spectacular feats beyond their normal abilities.

The line between religious ritual and entertainment is often porous, especially in the case of fire-walking (see Fig. 2.4). As captured in an image of Fijian men from the 1960s, this sort of religious ritual features barefooted people who lope unharmed over white-hot stones or coals. The tumbler's performance resembles the custom of the Pacific islanders mainly in his ability to locomote through what a person in a normal state might have experienced as extreme discomfort. The joys of his movement and his worship are analgesic in the same way as religious ecstasy protects pyro-peripateticists.

Medieval asceticism and mysticism abound in manifestations of devotion that originate in self-inflicted suffering. The order of white monks is devoted in large part to the expression of piety through penance. Their goal is to merit intercession, not merely for themselves but also for others. Cistercianism included its fair share of devotees who inflicted penitential pain upon themselves. Alongside exaltation and exultation, the lay brother would have braved with gritted teeth the pain of penitential prayer and worship. The tumbler's self-imposed physical torment, although whipless, faintly resembles that of radicals in the late medieval movement known as flagellantism who lashed themselves with scourges or cat-o'-nine-tails (see Fig. 2.5). In turn, the European flagellants bring to mind the pious in the yearly ʿAshūrāʾ ritual in Twelver Shiʿism, who march through the streets flogging themselves in remembrance of al-Ḥusayn, the Prophet's martyred grandson. Loosely similar to both groups, the gymnast puts himself on a treadmill of self-annihilation through physical expression of devotion. By continuing despite exhaustion, he kills himself through the enactment of his love for Mary, working or worshiping himself to death. In the story of *Our Lady's Tumbler*,

the acrobat suffers the reality suggested by the etymology of *contrition*, which derives ultimately from a Latin participle for "broken" or "ground down." He is stomped down through the stamping of his own feet.



Fig. 2.4 Postcard depicting Fijian fire-walking (Suva, Fiji: Stinsons, 1967).



Fig. 2.5 Trade card depicting a flagellant procession in Avignon, 1574 (London: Liebig's Extract of Meat Company, 1903).

The late Middle Ages and early modern era witnessed their own distinctive manifestations of dances in dazes. These phenomena peaked in number and intensity from the late fourteenth down through the seventeenth century. In these events, packs of people would go berserk and engage in a frenzied mass hysteria of dancing in the streets. Such manic episodes hinged upon collective dance that was associated with music, sometimes allegedly either precipitated or palliated by the playing of instruments (see Fig. 2.6). The causes of the flare-ups remain disputable. One explanation that has gained traction lays the blame on poisoning, the culprit being either toxins from infected foodstuffs or bites from spiders or scorpions. Another line of reasoning sees the illness as having no real physiological etiology. Instead, the impulse would be psychogenic or psychosomatic. Supposedly this balletic "monkey see, monkey do" on a grand scale resulted from shared stress.

In contrast to the group dances of the laity, the tumbler's performance is the solo act of an individual. So far as he is aware, his audience has just one member. His disporting is neither competitive nor spectator sport. Only the Virgin Mary watches him, through the proxy of the Madonna. He does not join others in ad hoc line dancing, but instead remains in solitude. What he does by himself is pray, but for his soliloquy he resorts not to verbose utterances, but to physical maneuvers. He apostrophizes the Virgin through his steps, without realizing that she sees and esteems what he accomplishes. Although not lonesome, the tumbler dances alone. The aloneness of his dance sets it far apart from collective dances, whether in rings or not. If such a thing as penitential dancing existed, it would be his atonement in this way. His dancing is also distinctive in not entailing possession by a spirit. On the contrary, it turns upon



Fig. 2.6 Pieter Brueghel the Younger (attributed), *The Pilgrimage of the Epileptics to Molenbeek*, late sixteenth to early seventeenth century. Oil on panel, 29.2 × 62.2 cm. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dance_at_Molenbeek.jpg

performance before an image that leads to the appearance of a presence. But the balletic routine of the individual performer does set the stage for a death that makes him loosely comparable to the victims of the mass dance frenzies. He dances himself into oblivion. Before the tumbler dies, his practice results in a loss of self. Whether his state amounts to mania in any way equivalent to the madness of the maenads or bacchantes in Greek mythology remains open to debate. Likewise requiring further discussion is whether the leaping and falling match up with spiritual exaltation and depression. Is the leaper subject to mood swings in tandem with his physical undulation? One surety is that late in the game he suffers, both physical and psychological, prostration as he buckles before the Madonna.

Christianity is the religion that enters the equation in *Our Lady's Tumbler* and its diverse progeny. The tumbler coordinates his personal expression of devotion with the liturgical song of the monks who chant in the church above the crypt. Similarly, he aligns dance from the lay realm with monastic ritual. Both the liturgy and the performance of the tumbler prescribe movements that function as a language of signs. Even so, we must not assume that the jongleur's routine could correspond reductively, step by step, to an utterance or a text. In part, dancers dance to express what cannot be conveyed verbally, rather than to translate verbal pronouncements into physical actions. In this case, the tumbler makes into motion the emotion that moves more learned monks to transact the set words and gestures of worship.

The tumbler shares with the victims of dancing mania a compulsion to dance until he is emptied of all his cyclonic energy and crumples. Indeed, he could be said fairly to have danced himself into his grave. The outcome of self-immolation through this activity reappears in the nineteenth-century French ballet *Giselle, or The Wilis*, set in the Rhineland during the Middle Ages (see Fig. 2.7). Its star-crossed title character dies of a broken heart after catching wind that her lover is betrothed to another. The Wilis, who summon the peasant girl from her grave, target her beloved for execution, but her love extricates him from their grasp. In legend, these nightwalkers are the ghosts of young ladies who, having died before their wedding days, cannot remain at peace in their tombs. To fulfill the unbridled passion for dance that they could not sate during their lives, they dance in troupes at midnight. Woe betide the young man who meets these seductive spirits, since he must dance with them until he drops dead.

To look beyond the motif of death through nonstop dancing, the routine of the jongleur anticipates approximately the enthusiastic vocalization and bodily movement that have been incorporated into the worship of various religions. For example, adherents of the American religious sect known as the Shakers sang and danced. Similarly, worshipers in some churches in the Southern United States engage in "praise dance" as a channel for sacred expression. Outside Christianity, the fevered steps of the tumbler bear comparison with the corkscrewing moves of dervishes. Such Muslim Sufi mystics wandered from place to place; stood apart from normal people in their dress, behavior, and language; and expressed their piety through a vigorously

athletic mélange of music and motion. Like them, the jongleur loses himself in a physicality of bodily movements and touch (by Mary), but, alone when he does his routine, it constitutes at once a private ritual and a one-person festival. More especially, the apparition of the Virgin herself from heaven relates to the collective delusions in medieval dancing mania. Are the collapses of the tumbler merely the unintended outcome of overexertion, or are they the purposeful results of performances designed to achieve ecstasy through whirling? We would do well to recall the etymology in Old English of *giddy*, which referred literally to scatterbrained possession by a God, and *dizzy*, which meant "foolish" or "witless." Older still is the Greek *enthusiasm*, from a word meaning "possessed by a god." Thus, our God-filled character was not a madcap innovator in doing his vertiginous dance before the Madonna.

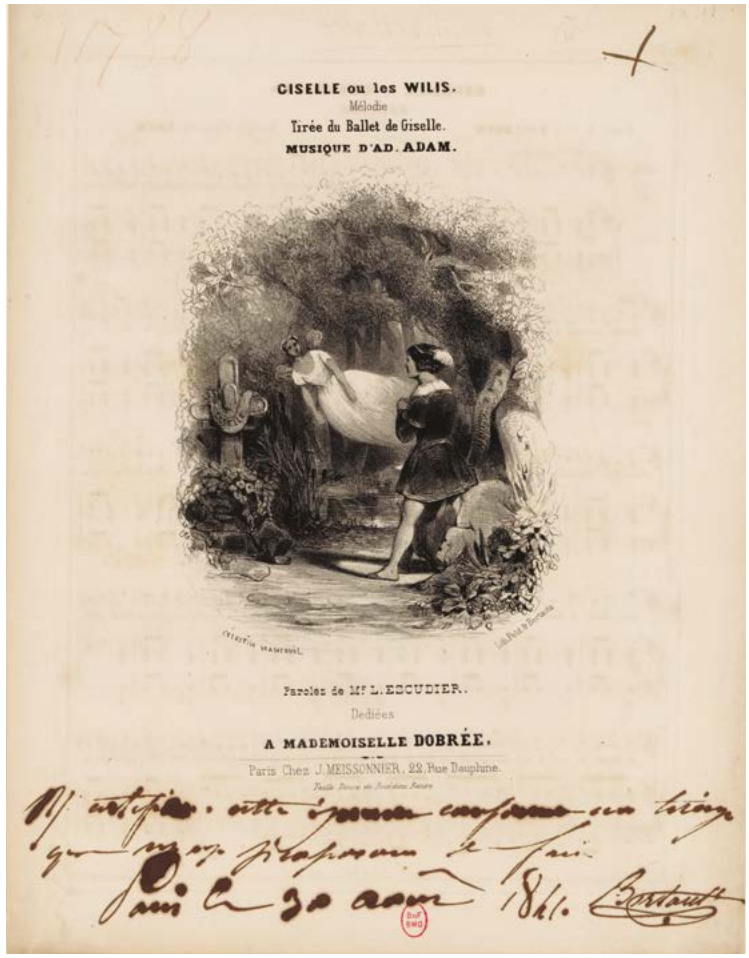


Fig. 2.7 Front cover of Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Théophile Gautier, *Giselle, ou les Wilis*, illus. Célestin Nanteuil (Paris: J. Meissonnier, 1841). Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. All rights reserved.

The tale does not advocate the abandonment of conventional worship. Rather, it reminds us that traditional veneration exists as a conduit for a spirit of reverence, devotion, love, joy, and hope. All of us must decide for ourselves where soul or mind begins, and where body stops. Likewise, we must determine, for both ourselves and the tumbler, what constitutes thought and feeling, reason and faith. Finally, we should cogitate about song and instrumentation. If music of any sort is set aside, the performance is a form of acrobatics; if the rhythm and melody are internalized, dance results. (Break dancing, which is often held to have originated in the mid-1970s, is only the latest and best-known style of acrobatic dancing, with its spinning headstands, fancy footwork, tumbling, and pantomime.) Laying down a boundary between the two can be ticklish, even impossible.

Jongleurs of God

The jongleur captured the theologians' attention because he was an antitype of themselves.

The pleasure principles in which jongleurs were ensnared brought them inevitably into tension with Christianity, at least in fits and starts. Were they divine or diabolic forces? Was their artistry licit or illicit? The position of these performers was ambiguous. Often it was judged to be very negative, but sometimes more positive. For hundreds of years, churchmen, almost unanimously, voiced stentorian disapproval of such entertainers. Yet in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, dissenting murmurs of approval can be heard at the fringes of the loudly condemnatory chorus. Indeed, Church luminaries spoke of their own missions in life as resembling those of entertainers. As the jongleur relates to his earthly patrons, so too does the inspired devotee to his divine ones.

Cistercian monks had a complicated self-image as God's jesters. The foremost exponent of Cistercianism, Bernard of Clairvaux, was accused of having in his misspent youth devised minstrel-like ditties and suave melodies. He referred to himself, no doubt with a measure of irony, as an "acrobat of God." In a letter dated around 1140, the celebrated saint-to-be presented monastic life as a kind of humbling game that pleases the Almighty even as it elicits stares and sniggers from men. Continuing, he contrasted the transcendence of spiritual exercise to the deformity of physical entertainment. The gymnasts are yogis who practice yoga in ashrams; the others are contortionists who bend themselves into pretzels to divert the public. In a world where values are upended, monks may appear to the worldly to cavort. Elsewhere they will seem to angels to enact a wonderful spectacle.

Understandably, Bernard does not himself refer to spectacle here in describing the behavior of monks. The large-scale, public display that is implied by the concept of the spectacular is attested first in English in a 1340 psalter by Richard Rolle. Interestingly, the mystic writes of such showiness specifically when referring to the "hopping and dancing of tumblers." The context he evokes is one familiar from present-day

reenactments of medieval and Renaissance fairs, in which colorful gatherings of many people include such performers as jugglers, jesters, and other entertainers often popularly associated with the Middle Ages.

To return to the passage by Bernard from two centuries earlier, the gist of his point-by-point description is that professionals, such as actual jongleurs and dancers, turn themselves wrong side up to provide pleasure to their terrestrial audiences. In contrast, monastic brothers exemplify humility and serve heaven. They engage in apparent frolic as sacred play. The Cistercian's audacious simile is in no way inconsistent with the vitriolic verdicts against jongleurs and other traveling entertainers pronounced by him (even in this very snippet), as well as by other monks and clerics. Yet he opens a pathway to redemption for the professional performers that others who follow him see reason to maintain. After him, his fellow white monk Caesarius of Heisterbach speaks of unassuming souls whom he esteems to be "jongleurs of God and of the holy angels." He describes folk without airs and graces, who upend worldly values. By the same token, they make what is reasonable seem nonsensical, and vice versa. To him, they are like gymnasts who twist themselves to ambulate with their heads down and their feet aloft. If we let our imaginations run wild, we can make out the gentle sound of their handfall (let us give *footfall* a sibling). In characterizing the simple man, Caesarius treads carefully among the many connotations of simplicity. He does not correlate the noun and concept completely with simplemindedness or vacuity. Similarly, he leaves implicit the notions of humility, ordinariness, and inexperience.

Later, Saint Francis of Assisi transcended simile. He counseled his companions to eschew Latin books when preaching. Instead of putting on any airs of learnedness, he disguised himself as a beggar or busker, performed the medieval equivalent of air guitar by miming a jongleur fiddling, and trilled songs in French. This was one way of saying, "It's showtime, folks!" All these behaviors had the goal, or at least the effect, of making the public titter at his expense. By extension from their founding father, the Franciscans collectively remain famed even today for having styled themselves provocatively jongleurs or minstrels of the Lord, of Christ, and of God. These pairings were oxymora that bordered on being blasphemous. Despite his miming, the Poor Man of Assisi made apparent that he was a God's troubadour who juggled with words rather than physical acts (see Fig. 2.8). He took a bold roll of the dice by equating the words of songs such as lyrics and ballads with the Word of God, and vernacular entertainment with Latin preaching. In all cases Francis and the friars minor served as jesters of the divinity, not of the Church. They claimed divine rather than ecclesiastical sanction for their conduct. The ruler for whom they tumbled was God; the court, heaven.

The first generation of the saint's original stalwarts supposedly included Brother Juniper, who joined the friars in 1210. Known in time as "the jester of the Lord," this legendary figure was renowned for simplicity and humility. At the same time, his radical humbleness caused him to be bracketed as a fool. Through pranks and practical jokes, hoaxes and hilarity, Brother Juniper defied social norms and sought to subvert them. In contrast, our tumbler abstracted himself from the conventions of

the closed society that he entered within the abbey, and charted and piloted a course uniquely his own, without making the slightest effort to prescribe it to anyone else.



Fig. 2.8 Film poster for *Francesco, guillare di Dio*, dir. Roberto Rossellini (Minerva Film, 1950).
© Minerva Pictures. All rights reserved.

The example of Francis, building upon that of Bernard of Clairvaux, had a strong bearing upon the standing of jongleurs, at least in similes and metaphors. The Castilian poet Gonzalo de Berceo differentiated between two classes of artists in societal rank, presenting himself as a troubadour when singing to the Virgin, a jongleur when dealing with Saint Dominic of Silos. Nicolas de Biard was a mendicant preacher of the late thirteenth century in Paris who assembled two much-esteemed sermon collections. In one of them he likened confessors to jongleurs, or vice versa.

Francis was not the only jongleur-like solitary who attracted enough champions to warrant founding a religious congregation in the early thirteenth century. Blessed John Buoni was another. He lived licentiously as a professional entertainer until suffering a near-fatal illness at around the age of forty. After that moment of truth, he saw the light in 1209. He turned into a true troglodyte, a bona fide hermit in an equally real grotto (see Fig. 2.9). Through his stringent asceticism he attracted hermitic acolytes. In 1217, he formally established a following. His admirers became known as Boniti, after his cognomen.

Jongleurs of God stand not too far from jongleurs of Notre Dame. What is Our Lady's tumbler, if not such a minstrel of Mary? Like others of this kind, he consolidates two qualities that would seem mutually exclusive. Though humble to the core, he is still so self-assured that he rashly breaches the conformity and obedience required by monasticism and even by Catholicism. He throws caution to the wind and improvises an entire liturgy for himself, determined not by readings, chant, and hallowed movements and objects, but rather by a physical performance that he has devised from scratch. Contrary to the very basis of monasticism, he serves as his own drillmaster and taskmaster. Such pluck might seem dim-witted, but the apparent empty-headedness is holy.



Fig. 2.9 John Buoni. Engraving by Adriaen Collaert after Maerten de Vos, 1585–1586. Published in Jan Sadeler, *Solitudo, sive vitae Patrum Eremicolarum* (Antwerp: Jan Sadeler, ca. 1590s).

Holy Fools

We are fools for Christ's sake, but
you are wise in Christ.

—Paul the Apostle

The distinction between faith and folly can be cut very finely. If truth be told, the dividing line may be invisible to the naked eye. The fool of God, also known as the holy fool, is an even more multifaceted and omnipresent conception from medieval Christianity down to the present day than is the acrobat of God. The two concepts are interrelated, and the figure of the jongleur has sometimes been superimposed upon that of the holy fool.

From one end to the other in both time and space, the Middle Ages were anything but foolproof. That said, the notion of the fool of God or the fool for Christ became disseminated far more widely outside than inside Western Europe. The cultural importance of this type has loomed large, first in the Greek East and later in Russia. One of the first attested examples of such a character is the sixth-century Symeon of Emesa. Two other cases, both fools who happen to be nuns, are found in the *Lausiac History*, a major compendium of traditions about the desert fathers that enjoyed popularity through the East. Such figures often make idiots of themselves in public through (un) intentional absurdism. They engage in seemingly weak-minded behavior from which a clear-headed person would refrain. They dispose of all their possessions, sometimes even down to much or all their clothing. They express themselves in babbling or blustering twaddle that others may find inexplicable, meaningless, or even unhinged. Yet there is method to the madness. From one perspective, these religious fools may appear to profane the sacred. From another lookout point, they take to an extreme what is called in Latin *imitatio Christi*. That is, they humiliate themselves to imitate the humility and humiliation of Jesus.

Within Western Europe, Saint Francis of Assisi stands out as the paragon of the holy fool, just as of the jongleur. His clowning had the collateral effect of illuminating the degree of his simplicity. The jongleur of God reportedly presented himself likewise as a slow-minded fool or jester of God. He and the first generations of Franciscans paralleled the tumbler in rejecting the finery and splendor of the conventional Church for lowness and abasement. For their stance, they earned regard as what Erasmus called "fools to the world."

Beyond the general homogeneity of the protagonist in *Our Lady's Tumbler* and of holy fools, it bears noting that the exemplum resembles accounts of so-called hidden saints. These secret servants of God are typically retiring in their comportment. They slave at a humble vocation, their sanctity unrecognized by others. An archetype would be Saint Joseph, the carpenter. Such holy men are numerous in Byzantine hagiography. There we encounter individuals whose holiness goes undetected or is even mistaken for negative qualities, such as derangement. A lesson could be drawn from all these stories that communities are not always capable of the discernment required to tell apart a mere jongleur from one of God, or a fool from one of God. For instance, Daniel of Scetis, an Egyptian monk and abbot, tells the tale of Mark the Fool. This saint pretends to be demented and passes himself off as a raving lunatic. For eight years, he plays the role of a Robin Hood among fools by distributing to others what he begs and steals. It emerges that earlier he had lived fifteen years in a monastic community, before his eight years as a solitary. On the morning after the facts of his life have become known to the pope, Mark dies and subsequently his body emanates the odor of sanctity—a mystical scent of incorruption that was construed as a sign of saintliness. Another example is a narrative recounted in the *vita* of Daniel himself. While visiting a convent, he allegedly witnessed a sister there who to all appearances was sprawled intoxicated. That night the future saint and his disciple observed how the same nun would stand in prayer until a passerby appeared, at which point she

would sag to the ground. They brought this behavior to the attention of the abbess, who realized rapidly that the alleged falling-down drunk was a hidden saint. When the report of the sister's piety spread, she fled the nunnery. Still other tales in the genre have principals who are entertainers, apparently leading unseemly lives but in fact recognized by God as being on the side of the angels.

The type of behavior that these individuals display is attested in Byzantine hagiography throughout the Middle Ages. A memorable case of such holy and high-functioning folly from the fourteenth century is Maximos. This man, a soon-to-be saint, acclaimed from childhood for his devotion to the Virgin, became a monk rather than enter into a marriage arranged for him by his parents. In Constantinople, he dwelled for a time in the gateway of the church of Saint Mary of Blachernae in the guise of a fool for Christ's sake. Later, on Mount Athos, Maximos earned his colorful cognomen, the Hut-Burner, as a kind of auto-arsonist. Whenever he moved to a new dwelling for greater seclusion, he would torch his old hovel.

Likewise worth mentioning are the later Russian descendants of the Byzantine hidden saints—the holy fools or fools in Christ—who are stock characters in first Muscovy and later Imperial Russia. In Western Europe, fools of God are far from unknown in French literature from the early thirteenth century. To cite only two examples, *Life of the Fathers* contains a story that goes simply by the short title "Fool," and Gautier de Coinci wrote a miracle on the topic.

Distinct from a saint who poses as a fool would be a court jester who has occasion to display miraculous piety. In 1878, the German author Gottfried Keller composed a poem based on a purportedly actual event of 1528. Entitled "The Fool of Count von Zimmern," the piece describes how an entertainer of this sort was called upon to assist in the office when the chaplain was shorthanded. At the point when a bell was to be tolled, none was to be had, and so the joker improvised by shaking with all his might to jingle his fool's cap, whereupon a golden glow shone out from the large lidded flagon that held the host for the Eucharist.

In recent times a figure well worth examining in this conjunction is Dario Fo. His first major work after receiving the 1997 Nobel Prize in Literature was *The Holy Jester Francis*. Like the medieval saint, the modern Italian performer immersed himself in folk culture, popular theater, and oral tradition. Although the laureate wrote extensively, his texts presumed performance. He was himself styled a holy jester. His theater entailed mime and pantomime, song and dance, acrobatics, clowning, puppetry, and above all storytelling. Fo's main stance was as a latter-day jongleur. Accordingly, he termed his one-man show "jonglery." His objective was to demonstrate how culture belonging to the unempowered masses ha an inherent worth that has been either arrogated or effaced by the dominant cultures of the Church, aristocracy, and bourgeoisie. The Italian author's conception of a subaltern jongleur suits the tale of the medieval tumbler well. In a way, the paradox of the spiritually inspired fool was hardwired within *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The story is built upon the radical innovation and challenge that enabled lay brothers to serve within cenobitism. Of the various trials made in this direction, that of the twelfth-century Cistercians may well have

been "the most successful and significant." This experiment allowed the depiction of a man without education and culture, who lacked institutional or political muscle but possessed the power of boundless charisma. He was not a fool so much as a simple man of God, not a jester so much as a jongleur of God.

The tumbler may have been a legend based on an otherwise unattested reality. Then again, he may have been fabricated as an exemplum to occupy a vacancy that real-life personages had not filled. In either case, he perpetuated the image of real-life holy fools who had preceded him. By the same token, he was a proto-Franciscan who anticipated equally actual jongleurs of God who would succeed him. Like all of them, he was a beatific ascetic. He blurred the absolute lines that some have sought to draw between religious and profane, as between monastic and secular.

Fact or Fiction?

> Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; Truth isn't.
>
> —Mark Twain

The story of the jongleur poses fundamental and ultimately unanswerable questions, some of them along the lines of the old chicken-or-egg conundrum. Did the reports of saintly behavior rest on reality? Did *Our Lady's Tumbler* monasticize or monkify a preexisting motif that storytellers had imagined and transmitted in written or oral literature? Or did it remodel an actual occurrence that played out within a monastery? Was it, then, history rather than story? How far did the tale lie from bona fide lived religion? By a process almost equivalent to convergent evolution, personal and social circumstances of all types have led in radically different cultures across time and space to astonishingly similar cases of performers who have dedicated their crafts to God. These peas in a pod deserve our full attention.

In *The City of God*, Augustine, bishop of Hippo and later saint, quotes from a lost treatise *On Superstition* by Seneca the Younger. In the passage, the Roman philosopher lambastes a down-at-the-heels mime. Formerly at the top of his profession, the washed-up thespian, now in his declining years, performs daily on the Capitol in Rome with the expectation of pleasing the pagan gods. The old man seems to have subscribed to the belief that in the end, artists and artisans devote their achievements to the gods. Although the dotard may have been pressured by material needs to perform, no mention is made of payment by temple keepers or passersby. In effect, the worn-out entertainer enacts the routine in a spirit of "the show must go on." Yet however humble the player, the spectator may be divine, in the person of Jupiter as worshiped in the sanctuary on the Capitoline Hill.

Such a story as Seneca tells, and Augustine repeats, need not have been altogether fanciful. Professional actors may have rendered performances in honor of God, the

Virgin, and others. Afterward, events may have ensued that came to be credited as miracles. Both the fragment quoted by Augustine and *Our Lady's Tumbler* present performers who have withdrawn from their practices but who offer their acts in homage to divinities. Yet would the storyteller with whom *Our Lady's Tumbler* originated have needed the provocation of either a written source or an actual performance by a jongleur to come up with his idea? To create any of the tales as we have them, would he have required such a propellant?

Before answering these questions, we should consider one half dozen historically attested cases from western Christendom. One tells of a humble Spanish friar in the sixteenth century who was unwittingly seen prancing before a statue of the Virgin over the refectory door. Another concerns an Italian priest whose methods for drawing youths into the values of the Church included following and preceding prayer with presentations of juggling, acrobatics, and magic. The third relates to an incident in 1935 that involved a female American trailblazer of modern dance, Ruth St. Denis. The fourth pertains to a French ballerina who turned nun. Once she took the habit, her longing to dance for God put her at odds with the ecclesiastical hierarchy later in the twentieth century. The fifth is a man who first came to live in a circus while a Jesuit. After leaving the Catholic religious order, he remained a clown with his troupe. The final—and most recent, bringing us into the twenty-first century—is an Italian lap- or pole-dancer. Although no longer gyrating or grinding, her persistence in dancing after her conversion to religion created hassles for her like those that the ballerina faced.

The Church has demonstrated abiding ambivalence toward dance as an expression of devotion, not least within the setting of formal monastic institutions. The hierarchy has sought to devise and decree the proper forms of praise and prayer, and to make its decisions the pathway to miracles. Not all individuals have complied. Instead, some have chosen, not always consciously, to find or make rituals of their own. They have realized that even the mundane may be magical—that ordinary lives turn out to be filled with miracle whenever the people living them feel grateful for the ordinariness of their lives. If God moves in mysterious ways, so too do worshipers.

***

Dancers are the athletes of God.

To begin with our first attested instance, we have a sixteenth-century friar who began life as a Spanish rustic. An illiterate herdsman born in Aragon in 1540, Paschal Baylon was devoted to the Eucharist and the Virgin. Out of devotion to the latter, this future saint taught himself to read so that he could make use of the Little Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the prayerbook most favored among laypeople. He adopted habits of going barefoot, fasting, and eating only simple fare. Not content merely with being ascetic, he wore beneath his shepherd's cloak an imitation of a friar's habit. In 1564, at the age of 24, he was at long last granted his heart's desire and allowed to enter the reformed Franciscan friary of the Blessed Virgin of Loreto in Valencia, where

he distinguished himself as a lay brother by his sanctity, especially in love for the poor and in visions of the Eucharist.

Most mainstream hagiography and all the iconography concerning Paschal focus on his attachment to the Eucharist. Secondarily, in popular devotion he is widely associated with cooking, above all in Mexico. In the Mexican state of Chiapas and in Guatemala he has tertiary associations in folk traditions with death, as a bony "King of the Graveyard." Finally, the good friar is known for dancing. Holding special relevance to *Our Lady's Tumbler* is an episode connected with the functions of the future saint in the communal kitchen and scullery. Despite his complete inexperience as a cook, the lowly man was put in charge of tending to the refectory. A beautiful statue of the Virgin stood above a doorway of the room. As refectorian, Paschal made sure always to deck the altar there with fresh-cut flowers. On feast days, he supplied candles. While attending to his duties by himself, he would sing quiet songs of praise to the Mother of God. Once a fellow Franciscan caught him in an unguarded moment as he gamboled in rhythmic steps of joy, by some accounts a rudimentary gypsy dance, moving forward and backward, before the statue. The image of Mary allegedly assumed a real body and blessed the saint. Dancing is also a motif in a tale about a journey by foot that the friar made as he returned from engaging with heretics on his return trip from Calvinist France. In at least one telling (see Fig. 2.10), he first prayed before his staff and thereafter broke into a jubilant jig. The given name Paschal draws attention to Easter. In contrast, the cognomen Baylon suggests a sense of "one fond of dancing." If this is the case, the nickname could have come to him specifically thanks to his predilection for high-stepping in honor of the Virgin.

Paschal's cult has developed especially strong connotations with dance in the Philippines, where in the eighteenth century Spanish Franciscan missionaries in Obando built a church dedicated to him. Thanks to the interpretation of his second name as an epithet, the saint became associated with a ritual known as the "Obando Fertility Rites." These feast days, which take place on the streets on three consecutive days in May, feature dancing by men, women, and children in traditional dance costumes. On each day, an image of the patron saint of the day heads the procession—in effect, as lead dancer. The first day of the Obando festival, the official feast day of Paschal, which falls on May 17, is dedicated to Paschal; the next is dedicated in honor of Saint Clare (whose regular feast day is August 11); and the third is to celebrate Our Lady of Salambao (see Fig. 2.11). Paschal is called in this conjunction "the dancing saint." Some faithful believe that when accompanied by dance, prayer to him will be granted more readily. For these associations with rhythmic movement, he has been termed "a second jongleur de Notre-Dame."

Our second example goes in English by the name of Saint John Bosco. This holy man grew up fatherless and in poverty in Piedmont, in the north of what is today Italy. At the age of nine or ten, he had the first in a series of life-determining dreams. He first saw himself in a field with a knot of poor juvenile delinquents who played and cursed. Then, when he failed to stop the penniless urchins from misbehaving, a man

of noble dress and bearing counseled him to win over the boys from vice to virtue through gentleness and softheartedness. Toward the end of the vision, a woman appeared. The guttersnipes turned into a pack of wild animals until she put out her hand, whereupon they changed into a flock of capering lambs.



Fig. 2.10 San Pascual Bailón. Comic illustration, 1961. Published in *Vidas ejemplares* 7.113 (November 15, 1961).



Fig. 2.11 Statue of Our Lady of Salambao, Obando Church, The Philippines. Photograph by Ramon Velasquez, 2012. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Ramon Velasquez (2012), CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Salambaojf.JPG

John Bosco put into action the oneiric advice that had been offered him. Very literally, he practiced what he preached (see Figs. 2.12, 2.13 and 2.14). By watching traveling showmen he learned juggling, acrobatics such as tightrope walking, and magic tricks. Seizing the initiative, he made himself as teacher into the class clown. He would punctuate with prayers his activities in sleight of hand and as a physical performer. In effect, he refined circus stunts into a means of enticing young people to say the rosary and attend Mass (see Fig. 2.15). Conjuring maneuvers such as ostensibly changing pebbles into coins became a trademark of his repertoire. In addition, he made demonstrations of rough-and-ready skills the basis for lessons in basic theology. For example, he would plait three cords to become a single rope. This uncomplicated action would bring home the nature of the Trinity.

In the decade that followed, the man who would become a saint left behind life as a shepherd to take the clerical collar. Eventually, Bosco founded the Society of Saint Francis de Sales. The Salesians, as the members of this order came to be known, were divided into three groups, namely, priests, seminarians, and lay brothers. The holy man, canonized in in 1935, is regarded as the patron of stage magicians. Abracadabra! On his feast day, Catholic illusionists sometimes show their veneration by offering displays of conjuring gratis to poor children.

The third instance takes us forward to the mid-1930s. The modern dancer Ruth St. Denis had long cherished an interest in dance as a spiritual medium. She defined her performances as "religion-art." In the wake of a broken marriage and financial meltdown, she poured herself ever more into integrating her art form and her spirituality. Toward this end, she founded a Society of Spiritual Arts, tantamount to a Church of the Divine Dance, which evolved into a performing ensemble.

During the early part of this phase, St. Denis made a specialty of dances on Christian themes that were performed to the accompaniment of music in churches. The most important such composition was *The Masque of Mary*, which premiered in 1934 in Riverside Church in New York. The dancer was introduced in the guise of the White Madonna (see Fig. 2.16). With thick makeup on her face and equally heavy paint on her finger- and toenails, and with veils wound around her, she posed on an altar. At the same time, the Angels of the Heavenly Host danced joyously around her. When their routine ended, she acted out what was effectively a sacred striptease by peeling back the layers of milky white to show her true colors: a gown of deep turquoise. Now as the Blue Madonna, she danced vignettes that illustrated the major moments in the Virgin's life (see Figs. 2.17 and 2.18). In writing and speaking about the goal of the spectacle, St. Denis described the Mother of God as the incarnation of femininity and creative love, in terms not wholly incompatible with either Henry Adams, an American thinker of the generation preceding hers, or Sigmund Freud. No one will be nonplussed to hear that "Madonnas were the passion of her last years."



Fig. 2.12 Teresio Bosco, *The Children's Priest: St. John Bosco*, illus. Alarico Gattia (Turin, Italy: Editrice L.D.C., 1988), 8. All rights reserved.



Fig. 2.13 Teresio Bosco, *The Children's Priest: St. John Bosco*, illus. Alarico Gattia (Turin, Italy: Editrice L.D.C., 1988), 9. All rights reserved.



Fig. 2.14 Teresio Bosco, *The Children's Priest: St. John Bosco*, illus. Alarico Gattia (Turin, Italy: Editrice L.D.C., 1988), 10. All rights reserved.

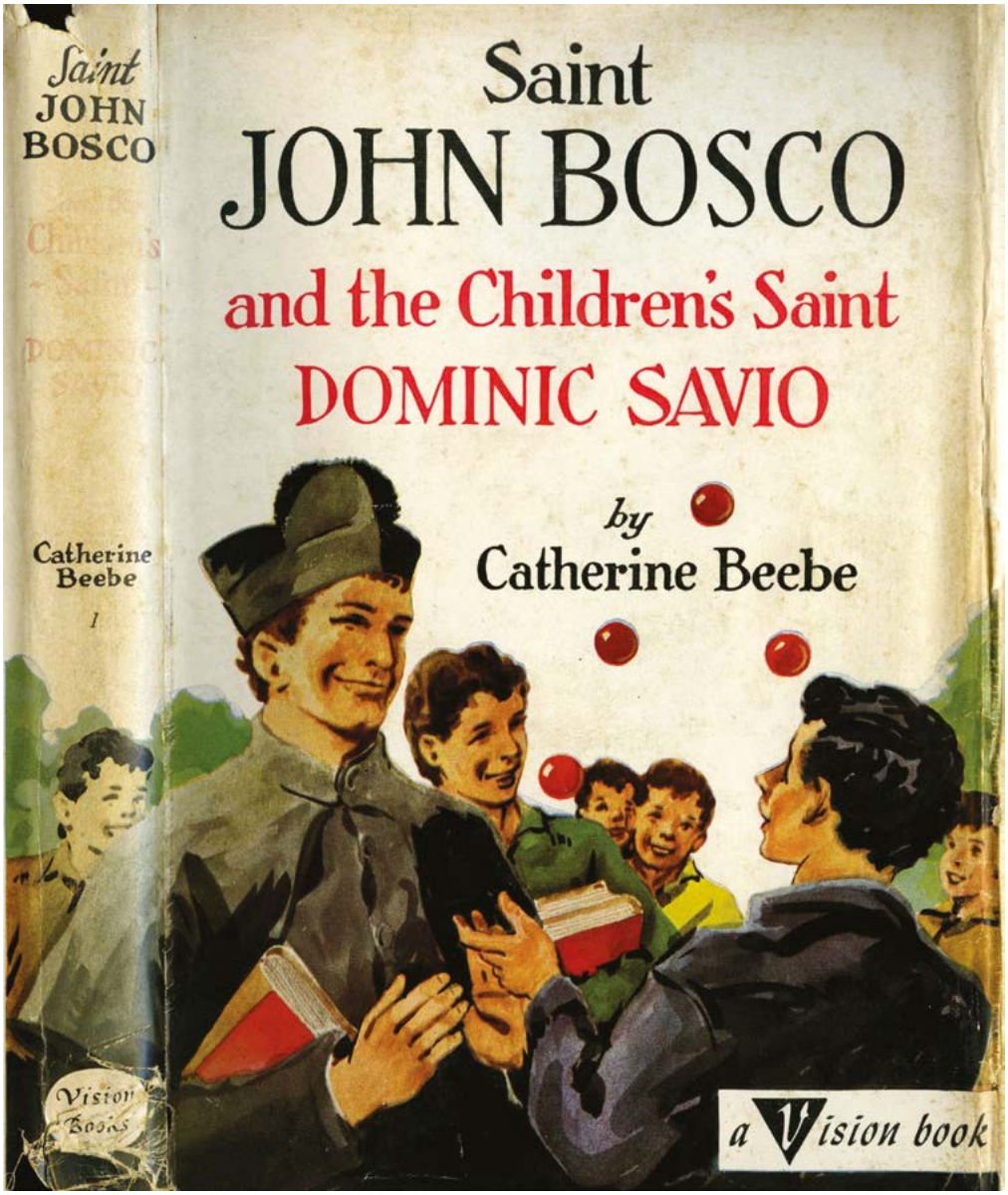


Fig. 2.15 Front cover of Catherine Beebe, *Saint John Bosco and the Children's Saint Dominic Savio*, illus. Robb Beebe (London: Vision Books, 1955). All rights reserved.

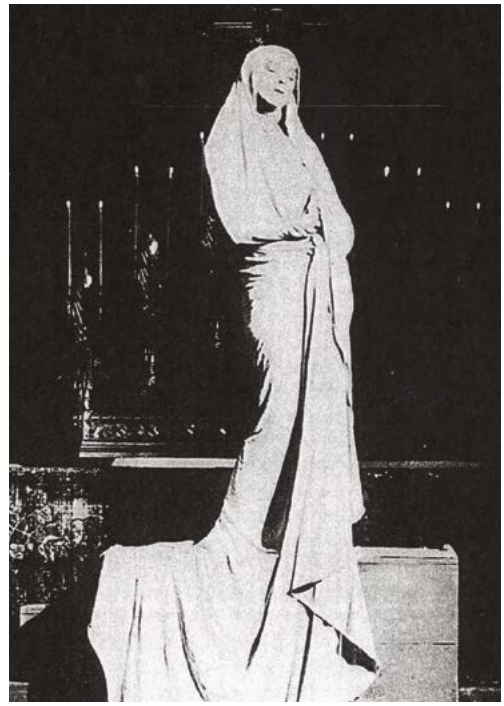


Fig. 2.16 Ruth St. Denis as the White Madonna in *The Masque of Mary* (Riverside Church, New York). Photograph, date unknown.



Fig. 2.17 Ruth St. Denis as the Madonna in *The Masque of Mary*. Photograph, 1934.



Fig. 2.18 Ruth St. Denis as the Madonna in *The Masque of Mary*. Photograph, 1934.

One Sunday in 1935, St. Denis caused a stir by celebrating a religious dance before the altar in another jam-packed Manhattan church, with congregants pressed shoulder to shoulder. The occasion sparked scorching controversy, all because of pedicure. St. Denis's decision to color her toenails led to huffing and puffing against dance very generally. In support of this physical activity as a form of worship, one writer cited first scripture and next, foreseeably, Anatole France. The French writer belongs among the fistful of authors and artists who have done most to make *Our Lady's Tumbler* famous in a modern guise.

For the fourth case, we have a much fuller dossier, thanks largely to the written reminiscences of the woman herself. As a two-year-old toddler in Paris, Mireille Nègre boarded an elevator. When it departed, her left foot slipped through the metal framework at the bottom. As the lift ascended, this lower extremity of her body became lodged between the grille and the top of the entrance. Although fortunately spared the amputation of her left leg, she still lost two toes. At the age of four she was sent to begin studying classical dance, in hopes that the training would correct the limp she had developed. Despite her handicap, she made such progress that once she turned seven, her father put her forward at the National Opera (Opéra national) of Paris.

The commitment of the Frenchwoman to dance became extraordinary, but so did her attraction to a devotional life. Nègre came from a religious family, but she took spirituality to an extreme far beyond her kinfolk. At the age of twelve, she had an epiphany of sorts. As an adolescent, she achieved ever greater success in ballet at the National Opera. In 1965 she took a retreat in a convent and had the revelation of her religious calling, but for five years she temporized in indecision between a spiritual vocation and dance. In 1973, at the age of twenty-eight, she entered the Carmelites of Limoges on a probationary but extended basis (see Fig. 2.19). The liturgy of this order lays notable emphasis upon holidays associated with Mary.



Fig. 2.19 Portrait of Mireille Nègre. Photograph, 1973. Photographer unknown.
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The almost fanatical Marianism of this religious society has not gone unquestioned. In the late Middle Ages the Carmelites were sometimes reproached for misrepresenting their relationship with Mary by disseminating half-truths and out-and-out lies about her. In one case in point, an antifraternal text from the very end of the fourteenth century charges that the brethren "make themselves out to be Mary's men (so they tell people), / And lie about Our Lady many a long tale… ." The members of these brotherhoods and sisterhoods encompass friars, nuns, and layfolk. They may have been well suited to Nègre in their capacity as the order of Thérèse of Lisieux, because of the saint's defining characteristics as well as her special connection with Mary. Known as "The Little Flower of Jesus," this holy woman claimed to have experienced an apparition of the Virgin while still a child. At the age of fifteen she entered a Carmelite convent, in 1897 she died at the age of twenty-four, and in 1923 she was canonized. She incarnated naïveté and simplicity that are not worlds apart from qualities associated with the tumbler or jongleur, in both his medieval and modern manifestations.

For three of Nègre's ten years at Limoges, she embraced the combined contemplation and asceticism of the order happily, with Saint Teresa of Avila as her model. In the process, she was required to abdicate the body, and refraining from dance formed part of the abdication. The renunciation entailed modifying her ballerina's posture and carriage. When caught striking a balletic pose while plying a broom in the refectory,

she found herself chided by the mother superior. Despite the discouragement from above, the passion for dance would not leave Nègre. Many Bible passages reminded her of the performing art, and with twinges of nostalgia she would hear during Mass words from scripture that referred to it: "I will dance for you, Lord, as long as I live." When invited to serve as cantor, she replied that she could never do so, because she was "exasperated at not being able to pray for God by dancing for him." For Nègre, the leaps of ballet became degrees of rapture that could lead to union with the divine through love. Despite all the potential for joy, her reminiscences make no attempt to sweep under the carpet the painful sacrifices she made in forgoing her customary mode of asserting her identity. She establishes an equivalence between physical and verbal expression that recalls the tumbler, as indeed does much else in her account.

During the remaining seven years of her decade within the religious society, Nègre endured protracted tribulations marked by nervous breakdowns, bouts of anorexia, and the development of a triple scoliosis. Eventually, she left the Order of Carmel for the more complaisant Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary in Vouvant. Although the religious society to which she switched may have been less rigorous, the former ballerina's ambition was unabated. On the contrary, she aspired to broaden the concept of spiritual self-consecration to Christ so that it would comprehend the dedication to Him of her body as a dancer. For her, God was the lord of the dance, and in her view, the art could be devout in consonance with the dictates of Christianity by entailing ascetic discipline while resulting in joyous ecstasy. In due course, the Church authorities came around to Nègre's viewpoint. The Carmelites permitted her to resume dancing. In 1986 she became consecrated as a sister. Since then she has danced in hallowed places, such as chapels and churches. She has even performed at Chartres, an archetypal cathedral of the Virgin. Since Vouvant, Nègre has choreographed the words of the liturgy. This experiment constitutes a fascinating parallel to the performance of the tumbler in the medieval French poem, who made his leaps correspond to the progression of the offices being performed in the choir above him. Just as the tumbler, versed in neither Latin nor monastic sign language, contrived to express himself through his acrobatics, so too this later Frenchwoman came to view ballet in linguistic terms.

To what extent has Nègre's self-presentation been shaped by knowledge, filtered or unfiltered, of the tradition that originated in *Our Lady's Tumbler*? She plants a seed when she presents herself, in her guise as "the protector of dancers," to being "like the jongleur on the façade of Notre-Dame of Paris, who used to represent for me the struggle of an artist who finds no recognition in the world." This simile, which points to sculpture rather than literature, suggests an acquaintance with the story through secondary or back channels and not even through Anatole France. In fact, it would be a little hard to swallow that a professional dancer in France would not hear of the tale at one point or another. But it would be even more cockamamie to contend that a person would strive to replicate a story so far as to enter a nunnery for a decade—or to leave

the same institution and return to a career of dancing. Both the story of the tumbler and the biography of Nègre speak to clashing and yet compatible loves that have fired many artists, one of which passes under the name of art for art's sake, while the other craves transcendence of mere art. Can dance and devotion go together? More to the point, can organized religion countenance the expression of prayer outside liturgy? The crux for this ballerina was her creed "I dance for God."

Our fifth example is Nick Weber, who was interested in both dramatic art and theology. After becoming a practiced clown, he was ordained as a Jesuit priest. Soon thereafter, he happened to see a medieval morality play, reconceived and enacted for a twentieth-century public. The experience became the germ of his idea to retool a traditional troupe, suited for the greatest show on earth, and to make its performances the vehicle for conveying Christian messages. Weber's Royal Lichtenstein Circus traveled the United States for twenty-two years, from the summer of 1971 through 1993. Eventually the founder returned to the lay state, but in the prolonged intermezzo he approached becoming at least in aspiration a twentieth-century Saint Francis. By seeking to demonstrate the credal compatibility of Christian faith with what could be called sacred comedy, he strove to fulfill in reality what Dario Fo has sometimes acted out in his performances. Weber's clowning rested on two convictions. One was that comedy allows for the boisterous celebration of life. The other was that laughter does not diminish the expression of worship, but in fact offers an additional avenue for it.

An Italian nun, Sister Anna Nobili, will serve as the sixth and final example of a real-life individual who has chosen to pray and worship through dance. Like most of her predecessors, her choice has generated both fascination and unease within the Catholic Church. Images of her in action have graced mass-circulation newspapers and magazines. Her tale has been told in on-screen interviews and set forth in a tell-all memoir with an Italian title meaning *I Dance with God: The Sister Who Prays Dancing*. The blurb on the cover of the paperback concludes by referring to her "true and mysterious acrobatics of the heart and soul."

Born in 1970, as a young woman Anna Nobili became a dancer who performed on raised platforms in bars, nightclubs, and discotheques of Milan. Although really a go-go dancer, she is described often as having been a lap dancer and stripper. In 1998, at the age of twenty-five, she left the dance floor and went on a three-day visit to Assisi. During those days, she had an epiphany under the inspiration of Saints Francis and Chiara. In a subsequent repudiation of the heavy guzzling and no-strings lovemaking in her former life, Nobili entered the order of Worker-Sisters of the Holy House of Nazareth. Rather than abandoning her previous calling altogether, she drummed up permission ten years later to open a school devoted to contemporary sacred dance. She continues to do so, in an operation called HolyDance.

Nobili now runs the program with clearance from the local prelate in her diocese of Palestrina, near Rome. The episcopal backing has not prevented her from being controversial. Although she considers herself a ballerina for God, some find her

ungodly. As Sister Anna Nobili, her participation in a public event at the Cistercian monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, along with other celebrities such as the pop star Madonna, may have played a contributing role in an imbroglio in May of 2011. The charges related especially to the monks' handling of finances and liturgy, as well as their questionable behavior and moral discipline. Undeterred by such setbacks, Sister Anna has persisted in making many appearances on the small screen, disseminating her story in a book, and, above all, performing dance. She contends consistently that she has been driven from the beginning by a desire for love, but that it took her a long time to find that the truest love was love for God.

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What are we left to conclude about the French poem and Latin exemplum from the Middle Ages? Regardless of which came first, we confront the riddle of whether the earliest written form of the tale bore any relation to an actual incident in which a lay brother who had been an entertainer ever performed a devotional dance before an image of the Virgin Mary. Was the jongleur a mythic, legendary, or real goody two-shoes? As the saying goes, there are stranger things in reality than can be found in romances. The only finality is the *ben trovato* principle: "If it is not true, it is well conceived." Even if not necessarily the record of a literal truth, the story still bears scrutiny. It rings true in a deeper sense. If situating the tumbler among his fellow medieval entertainers does not explain everything, then we will do well to pay heed next to his monastic context.

3. Cistercian Monks and Lay Brothers

He who labors as he prays lifts his
heart to God with his hands.

—Bernard of Clairvaux

The Order of Cîteaux

Vox clamantis in deserto

Our Lady's Tumbler manifests vividly both strains and rapprochements that recurred between laity and clergy within medieval Christianity. It offers a mostly laudatory close-up of life among the white monks in the twelfth century. Its protagonist stands in deep awe of Cistercian monasticism. Despite all this, it demonstrates that at least this once, the layman goes the monks one better in devotion. The amateur prayer outwits (or outdoes) the unpaid professionals at their own game. The stresses heightened during the late Middle Ages, before finally scoring their most drastic effects in the temblor and aftershock known as the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation. Our story, from roughly three centuries earlier, has at its hub issues that anticipate the shock waves to come in the later period. To be specific, it points out cognitive dissonances between the faith that was professed in Christ and apostolic life, and the attitudes encoded in daily life within leading religious institutions. Let us look closely at how the tale of the tumbler fits within Cistercianism.

The medieval French poem that forms the cornerstone of this book tells of a prosperous minstrel who wearies of his secular lifestyle and its turpitudes. In response, he redistributes his worldly possessions, such as money, horse, and clothes, and joins the Cistercian monastery of Clairvaux as a convert. He is not said to enter a novitiate. The untested brother has the objective of devoting himself to God, or rather to his more approachable mediator, the Virgin Mary. The initial dilemma, if not tragedy, for the former performer is that he takes the step of committing to a new walk of life within a monastery without grasping what it entails. At the time of his conversion, he does not know that he should be concerned about his preparedness to be a brother,

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nor can he gauge realistically whether he has the wherewithal in cultural literacy and the psychological temperament for the monastic mode of life. Soon after his induction, he discovers to his consternation that he is out of his depth. He lacks the savoir faire and savoir dire to fulfill the services required of a monk.

The value of the entertainer's donations to the abbey could have been substantial. In the economy of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, jongleurs were often remunerated in kind rather than in cash. The objects that the minstrel conveys to the abbey are interesting, but when all is said and done, what he leaves behind matters less than what he takes on by embracing the specific brand of monkish life that the Cistercians represent. He goes from being at least modestly successful in the medieval entertainment world to being an underachiever and a nonentity as a monk in this order.

Cistercianism was a new branch of monasticism that had been inaugurated in France at the very end of the eleventh century, around 1098. Although not a Crusade movement, it was established in sync with the first of those expeditions. Indeed, it absorbed many young men of the same sorts who were drawn to the movement across Latin Christendom to recoup the Holy Land for Christianity. From its inception, the order was tied closely to the Virgin, and it grew apace with the rise of Marianism in the twelfth century. It soon diffused throughout Europe. By 1200, the Cistercians tallied five hundred abbeys for monks and probably, grosso modo, the same number of convents for nuns. By the end of the thirteenth century, the white monks, as they were often styled, occupied approximately seven hundred houses. The explosive enlargement was not without growing pains. Eventually, envy over their ease in accumulating immense tracts of land and the resources that issued from them meant that the order incurred plenty of vilification, alongside praise. Even the monks themselves sometimes gave voice to fretfulness about what would be defined today as mission creep.

For the site of their seminal "New Monastery," the founder chose Cîteaux, south of Dijon in France. Cistercianism promoted a radical reformation of Benedictine monasticism by emphasizing a literal, even fundamentalist interpretation of the celebrated sixth-century *Rule of Saint Benedict* of Nursia. The movement was formulated for frugality, in conscious reaction against the perceived immoderation of Benedictinism. Its aesthetic, in architecture, manuscript production, and all else, was deliberately humble. In fact, humility may well have been the most prominent of the values that the Cistercians professed. All branches of Christian coenobitism have had their own forms of law and order at their core, but the Cistercians were especially strict. Sundry dos and don'ts set these brethren apart from their confrères in longer-established orders. In contradistinction to the major older ones, the white monks did not acquiesce in child oblation (the practice of giving children to monasteries or convents), ran no schools, and expected postulants to have been educated before seeking entry. The last factor is intriguingly relevant to *Our Lady's Tumbler*.



Fig. 3.1 Postcard depicting l'Abbaye de Cîteaux, Saint-Nicolas-lès-Cîteaux (early twentieth century).

The original medieval buildings of Cîteaux have all but disappeared, beyond rack and ruin. The place took its name ultimately from the Latin for "cistern," a holding pen for runoff precipitation. Calling their venue after a catchment for rainwater acknowledges nicely its location amid the effluvia of low-lying swamps and swales. Benedictines—or, to use a name for the order after its tenth-century reform, Cluniacs—were montane: they tended to inhabit mountainous heights. They liked to be between a rock and a hard place. Whereas they sought out the highlands, Cistercians gravitated toward the lowlands (see Fig. 3.1). They were paludal and fluvial. Initially, they took as theirs the rural marshes and riverbanks, wetlands and boglands, basins and springs of France. Soon, they fanned out to similar environs elsewhere with high water tables, inhabiting neither terra firma nor open sea, making fens far and wide their own. The contrast between the two orders was embedded in an old aphorism that encapsulates the locations that their respective initiators purportedly favored: "Bernard loved the valleys, Benedict the hills." Put differently, the white monks situated their monasteries with the goal of being siloed and freestanding. As their wasteland, the desert fathers of late antiquity had had windswept and sand-covered barrenness, especially in Egypt. For the Cistercians, Cîteaux constituted their equivalent: drainage trumped dryness. Even so, they saw their home as harking back to the glory days of asceticism: one of their foundational texts from the early 1120s refers to the site in France as a desert. There they emulated the way of life that they believed the original inhabitants of such

spaces had practiced in the third and fourth centuries, and aspired, like the earlier Christian hermits and monks, to simplicity, poverty, and chastity.

Monasticism has at its heart an antinomy that is latent in the very noun *monk*. In fact, the etymological meaning of the word flatly contradicts the communal nature of the organization it customarily assumes. It derives from a Late Greek substantive for "single" or "solitary," itself from the earlier "alone." Ordinarily, however, the people dwelling in monasteries are anything but alone. On the contrary, as the rank and file of tightly organized religious communities, they have no choice but to be gregarious. In performing the liturgy and especially in chant, they act in synchrony as a team. They should share an esprit de corps. In hardheaded terms, monastic brothers are not alone at all. Rather, they live shoulder to shoulder. Even referring to them as brethren indicates that they are bound together in something larger, an elective extended family. In acknowledgment of this reality, they are known as cenobites, from a Greek word composed of elements that mean "common" and "life." They form complex societies, with a social contract. Within these groups, specific liturgical duties are shared by individuals who also execute a varied range of specialized functions. They imprison themselves voluntarily in cells, perpetually in a self-imposed lockdown. Still more paradoxical than monks generally are the Cistercians particularly. Their order encompasses both withdrawal and engagement—both the wilderness and the world.

All the paradox accords well with the situation of the tumbler. He barters away a life in which he is a loosely regulated, venturesome individualist. In place of such freedom, he takes on the millstone of rule-bound conformity to set hours and practices. When the swap proves to be untenable for him, he devises or improvises a fix that fuses individualism with communitarianism. Small wonder that his story would regain appeal in the modern world, which has displayed inconsistencies as keen as any ever before about the mutual rights and responsibilities of individuals and communities.

Cistercian communes were meant to be secluded from the secular world. Architecturally, they achieved this objective through claustration—that is, they confined their members within cloisters. To the same end, the abbeys were situated in unpopulous regions so that the monks could worship God apart from the distractions and irritants of worldly activity, by conducting a celibate life of devotion and work. Thanks to their location in wildernesses, the brothers of this order often turn out to bear at least some sketchy likenesses to solitaries. Despite their sometimes cohering in communities, they can be antisocial or even (to push the point) downright misanthropic. After all, the noun "hermit" denoted originally a person who inhabited a desolate place in isolation. *Heremum* is Latin for "desert" or "wasteland," a place in the middle of nowhere. Yet a fundamental difference remains between the two classes of religious. Whereas a hermit runs a one-man operation, a monk does anything but that.

A monastery has a complex ecology. The hermitage stands in opposition to the abbey, where the foodchain is topped by the official who gives the institution its very name. The term *abbot* goes back ultimately to Aramaic. In the New Testament *abba* is a form for "father" that Jesus and Paul use in addressing God intimately. Whereas the nature of eremitic life is solitude, the word for the leader of a monastery presumes the collectivity of a family. It also presupposes patriarchy and paternalism (the question posed in the slang expression "Who's your daddy?" has never required more than a split second for monks to answer).

Within a Cistercian context, the heads of a handful of the oldest communities, such as Cîteaux and Clairvaux, have additional special status as proto-abbots. That is, they could be considered "abbots plus" or superfathers (better than superdad). At the top of the paternalistic pecking order, they figure out how to administer love, including tough love, toward the end of helping individuals grow and communities cohere. The chief job requirement might be called prior knowledge, especially in the form of *Menschenkenntnis* or (to translate the German) people knowledge. These monastic managers are owed obedience. In the story of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, the monk who sees the tumbler's performance finds it both ridiculous and unnerving; he hastens to deprecate the incongruity that arises when the lay brother unclothes himself to show submission through dance to the pious solemnity of the Virgin (and presumably Child). Yet the head of the abbey refrains from joining a rush to judgment about the unconventional behavior of the erstwhile entertainer. In the end, the abbot models multiple lessons for the brethren under his charge. The most important may be a deeply Christian message of tolerance. In his wisdom, the superior of the monastery takes his time to watch and listen: he is all ears. He conveys that it is not right to devalue or condemn any form of worship based upon sincerity. Sincere devotion to God deserves understanding and even praise.

The minstrel in the medieval French poem takes very seriously the final say of his superior. A little while after the principal of the monastery has sighted the display of miraculous favor by God's mother in the crypt, he summons the tumbler to his office. The abject entertainer, who has bizarrely performed his lack of stature through a ritual of his own making, expects that he has committed a trespass and that he will be expelled from the abbey. Instead of making him an outcast, the kindhearted abbot bids him to recount his life story, from beginning to end. After hearing it, he assures the minstrel that he will be in good odor in their order—and they in his.

What does this distinction between two communities mean? The tumbler is designated a *convers*, a word that could be translated loosely as "convert." As such, he held a status not necessarily identical with a full conversion to monastic life. In some ways, the functions of a laic convert, and the position of the jongleur as such, speak to the abiding tension between the two views of monasticism, hermitic and cenobitic. Even more broadly, the lay brother carves out a no-man's- or no-monk's-land in two

tripartite schemas that are often invoked to describe the warp and weft of medieval society.

One framework comprises the three orders of the faithful, namely clerics, monks, and laymen. The other threesome comprehends those who pray (meaning clerics and monks), those who fight (the nobility), and those who work (peasants). Within this second triad, toil signifies above all agricultural labor in the production of food. The lay brother fits frictionlessly into none of the above slots. He embodies a radically new construct, as a layman, usually from the rural poor, who can shed the scarlet letter of being illiterate and lead a life that virtually guarantees salvation. The jongleur is an individualist, in leaving society outside as well as in striking out on his own within the monastery. First, he abandons the world. Then, after getting off to a halting start as a cenobite, he makes himself into a do-it-yourself recluse.

With the intent of earning redemption or at least of showing penance, the former entertainer goes off to be at one with God, or rather with the Virgin. He breaks away from the communal liturgical offices to perform in camera his personal rituals of penance and devotion. In doing so, he enacts a solitude for which the white monks were known. Yet he achieves this end in a manner that would almost not have been permitted within the realities of Cistercian regulations governing both monks and lay brothers. In effect, he invents his own form of contemplative spirituality. He becomes a contradiction in terms. A recluse within a cenobitic community, he lives solitarily within a well-run organization that is structured around communal life. Such a paradox may have been lauded in eulogies on Clairvaux, but it is dubious that such nonconformity would have been countenanced in the actual day-to-day business of the monastery.

Cistercianism could not have survived long, and could not have burgeoned with as much vim and vigor as it did, without the involvement of "converts" or lay brethren like the tumbler. The order specialized in first acquiring land that had hitherto been agriculturally unproductive and then fructifying those same fallow swamps, valleys, and springs. This was the turf war in which they engaged with the Benedictines and other religious societies. The monks dammed waterways with weirs to create fish ponds, channeled running water in millraces and flumes to power mills and presses, planted crops on new tillage, established vineyards, and herded sheep and made wool. For their establishments to be self-contained, managing all the temporalities and carrying out all the many agrarian tasks required a sizable work force. The so-called converts were the best solution to the chronic problems of being overstretched and understaffed. By enlisting extra help from such operatives, the full monks could have many hands available for manual labor without altogether sacrificing the proposition of uncompromising disengagement from the secular world. That said, the lay monks never outnumbered the so-called choir monks. The plus side to the care shown in keeping down their tally is that the order did not lose its founding focuses or values.

A not-so-good drawback is that, if we allow ourselves anachronism by imposing present-day business administration upon the distant past, the organizational chart of a typical Cistercian foundation could have been regarded in present-day terms as top-heavy, with a preponderance of staff in administrative positions. Especially at times when the monasteries were undermanned, friction between the two groups was inevitable. To invoke a twentieth-century synecdoche, the tensions between lay and choir monks would have sometimes resembled the oppositions between blue-collar and white-collar workers.

The categories of the convert monk and the lay brother were not always synonymous. At times, the Latin *conversus* was applied to any adult entrant into monastic existence. Such a full-grown joiner stood in contradistinction to the child oblate. In the learned language, the word for a convert implied a phrase that denoted "to the monastic way of life." Within Cistercianism, the term evolved to signify a lay brother, usually of humble peasant stock. The monasteries did not hold to an open-door policy of accepting all would-be entrants, but they needed strong hands, sturdy backs, and stout shoulders, and the lay brethren contributed to monastic life first and foremost through heavy toil. The hardest work took place on the abbatial estates. These operations usually served agricultural purposes, as may be surmised from the usual name for such an estate, *grange*, which derives from a Latin adjective that relates to (and is cognate with) "grain." Most often, lay brothers lent a hand with the grueling drudgery of food production. As farmhands, they provided the animal husbandry connected with sheep, grew vegetables and herbs, cleared land, and managed irrigation. In addition, they commonly ran the kitchens, infirmary, and guest-house. Their living conditions could not hold a candle to those of the full monks. Yet under the best of circumstances the two monastic sorts coexisted in mutual respect and interdependence. In a metaphor that drew upon specific personages in the Bible, the lay brother played the active role of Martha in executing physical labor, while the choir monk acted out the contemplative one of Mary. At least ideally, both types of brethren aspired to spiritual redemption, and both had equal claim to salvation.

Choir monks were bound to perform the divine office in choir, to pray and study, and to do manual work. The first chore required, among other things, knowing by heart in Latin the hundred-and-fifty Psalms. As much as anything, the occupation of Psalm-singing marked these monks apart from the rest of society. It positioned them to be quasi-angelic. In contrast, lay brothers were exempted from liturgical practices that, nearly without exception, their counterparts in the choir were obliged to fulfill. Mostly illiterate, perhaps proud possessors of experiential knowledge but almost invariably intellectual vacuums where formal education entered the picture, these laymen were not called upon to engage in the so-called divine reading. *Lectio divina*, to use the customary Latin phrase, was a practice of unhurried scriptural reading, contemplation, and prayer that was cultivated by Benedictine monks and others. And

thus, questions arise about whether the very existence of lay members implies that the equilibrium between the office and work, or between contemplative study and corporeal slog, had been lost unrectifiably.

Even under the most auspicious circumstances, lay brothers would generally have been segregated physically from choir monks in worship as well as in the remainder of life. The monastery was a house with many rooms, and a large number of the most prestigious ones lay off limits to the *conversi.* Within the honeycomb of the monastery, lay monks had their own separate spaces in the church, the meeting place known as the chapter room, the dining hall called the refectory, and the dormitory (see Fig. 3.2). Typically, the domain of the lay brethren was situated in the west range of the cloister. Inside the church, they were not allowed access to the choir, where the regular monks performed the office. Instead, they were quarantined in stalls outside and to the rear of it. The separateness was enforced by a partition, such as a roodscreen. The balance between the dueling duties of the lay brothers to do manual labor and to participate in the liturgy was disputed. They were expected to execute only a shortened form of the office, since often at the set hours for prayer they were far from the monastic churches and carrying out the tasks that had to be done in the fields. The lay members also would not have been included in most all-hand meetings in the chapter house, where abbots delivered homilies: the monasteries were places where preaching was nearly always directed at the choir monks.

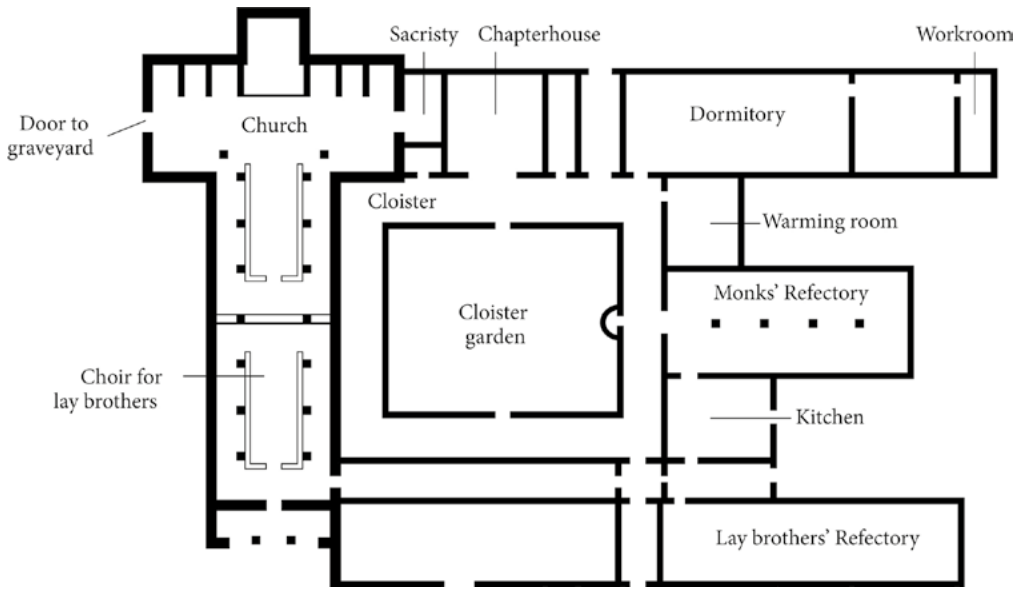


Fig. 3.2 Floor plan of a typical Cistercian monastery. Vector art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014.
Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

The reasons why monks of this higher class could have justifiably missed the office are few, but their lay counterparts had many more sound excuses. Bernard of Clairvaux, the great Latin preacher of Cistercianism and much else, reportedly uttered a sermon in praise of one such *conversus*. A busy farmworker, the poor soul in question failed to take part in the worship of Mary at the monastery in order to discharge other obligations on his to-do list, of which some necessitated his presence at a grange that was far off the beaten path. When lay brethren happened to be present at the main institution, they were to perform their version of the office silently. In the meantime, choir monks chanted theirs on the other side of the partition that ran between the two groups. Lay brothers differed, because they specialized in physical labor as contrasted with the *opus Dei*, or "work of God," that took place in the choir. All the same, they were not meant to be second-best citizens.

The Cistercians' empathy for badlands and solitude remained strong across the centuries, but the breakout success of the order meant that very soon the marches of Cîteaux were not the only place with which these monks were identified. Before long they became known equally, or even more, for Clairvaux. The "bright valley," to put its name into English, was a beacon toward which Christians flocked from throughout the West. The abbot of the monastery there was Bernard, the most prominent exponent of Cistercianism. This saint in the making sought to place his foundation under the tutelary spirit of Mary. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the abbey acquired massive power from the trifecta of its associations with the white monks, Bernard, and the Virgin.

Cistercians and the Virgin

The theological term *hyperdulia* combines two Greek words meaning "more than" and "servitude." It signifies service to the nth degree—super-service, as it were. It denotes the special veneration, next to the worship due to the Lord, to be paid to the Virgin in acknowledgment of her unique status as the Mother of God. Such ministrations to Mary sprang up in the Middle Ages. Among the many groups and individuals who aspired to render tribute of this kind, the Cistercians stood out for the intensity of their deference. The Virgin occupied the center of their universe (see Fig. 3.3). They consecrated themselves to her, and in return she acted as their hidden advantage. If the search for salvation had been a card game, she would have been their ace in the hole.

In all their locations, the Cistercians were marked by their aspirations toward simplicity, asceticism, and holiness, and they strove toward all three goals at least partly in the name of Mary. We can be confident that the Madonna was the sole female presence in the otherwise all-male environment of most monasteries. What

was she doing there? She exemplified monastic virtues, since she practiced asceticism and study. Like at least some of the monks, she remained a lifelong virgin. As all of them had taken a vow to be, she was chaste. Mary also specialized in intercession. This was likewise the remit of monks, especially white ones. In this capacity, she was the sovereign mediator, the special patron and point person for their whole order. Christianity is, by its very definition, Christocentric. Yet Jesus can be forbidding and fearful, even terrorizing, to the skittish. Here the intercessory role of the Virgin enters the picture or even (since images are at stake) becomes it. (In emergencies, she is the hotline to call. Better still, she is the switchboard operator.) She can be asked to approach Christ for any help that is needed. Jesus remains at the top in the hierarchy of the holy, but the Mother of God comes next, well before saints and incalculably far before ordinary people on earth.



Fig. 3.3 Jehan Bellegambe, *The Virgin Sheltering the Order of Cîteaux*, 1507. Oil on panel, 91 x 74 cm. Douai, Musée de la Chartreuse. Image courtesy of Musée de la Chartreuse, Douai.

In this world, self-help or how-to guidance played no role, except in figuring out how best to beseech Mary for her intercession. She was the genie whose response to prayer would be "Your wish is my command."Among the highest and rarest forms of devotion that faithful followers could promise was to consecrate themselves to the service of the Virgin. In a way the tumbler manifests this type of observance. Merely by joining the Cistercian order, he takes upon himself an institution-wide obligation to practice devotion to the Mother of God. Beyond any official responsibility, he undertakes a personal commitment by descending into the crypt to perform his routine in honor of her.

In return for his dedication the tumbler seeks no specific recompense, least of all a miracle. Although the Virgin wipes or fans his sweat-beaded brow, we are not given to understand that he has any awareness of the gesture. He apparently has no idea that she has taken upon herself to be his guardian angel. From what we can judge, whatever she does is impalpable and immaterial to him. We learn only that others witness the boon he garners from Mary herself for the attentiveness he has displayed toward her Madonna. Such care in the fulfillment of obligations toward the Mother of God is a hallmark of lay brothers as they are portrayed by their advocates in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. When the soul of the lay brother is wrested from the devil, thanks to Mary, the performer is already dead. Consequently, he does not know while still a mortal the premium he has earned. He has not received breast milk from the Mother of God, as legend would hold that Bernard of Clairvaux did, but he has been saved. In the process, the very nature of Christian worship has been demystified. The hocus-pocus of the liturgy has been set aside.

The entertainer's constancy is distinctive in its specific form of expression, but parallels the solitary worship of the Virgin by this Doctor of the Church. The saint's trueheartedness to the Mother of God is well attested from sermons and prayers, and his voice, amplified by successors who only heightened the intensity of his Marianism, became a dominant one in the Mariology of his day. Both before and after him, Cistercian writers were passionate proponents of Mary. After championing the Blessed Virgin in his lifetime, Bernard was laid to rest before her altar. In his own afterlife, he achieved recognition for his dedication to the Mother of God from Dante, who chose the sainted white monk as his final lodestar in the *Divine Comedy*. Eight hundred years after his death, Bernard was memorialized for his inspirational relationship with the Virgin by being pictured with her on a commemorative stamp from the Vatican.

Across the various orders, and across time, Christian monks and nuns have viewed Mary as embodying monastic virtues. Among the qualities in the Mother of God that Cistercians would have found resonant with their own values, humility and chastity are salient. Bernard, among others, admired the characteristic of humbleness in her above (or below) everyone else. Another trait of the Virgin that could have exercised

special appeal to white monks is her uncommunicativeness. In the Gospels, she is nearly wordless, and in scenes and sermons of the Passion she is frequently sketched as expressing an unvoiced grief. Humility, chastity, and silence are all qualities associated in Cistercianism with lay brothers too.

Without saying so, *Our Lady's Tumbler* peels back the overlayer from the self-contradictions of the entire Western monastic tradition, especially as the Cistercians adapted and articulated it. It sets the stage for its audience, whether readers or listeners, to examine many major imponderables of monkish life. To single out four examples, it explores how much conformity to collective liturgy, as opposed to individual worship, life in a monastery requires, how individual seclusion relates to group living and praying, how much asceticism and physical expression of devotion the order calls for or allows, and how much the imperative to obedience within the priorities of such religious societies may be upstaged by allegiance to God and his intermediaries.

Among its other distinguishing features, the Cistercian order has been marked since its very commencement by its fealty to the Virgin. Cîteaux arose in a century that was stamped on all sides by confident dedication to the worship of Mary and unwavering trust in her. Even in a prevailing climate of fevered Marianism, even against a backdrop of such generally intense commitment to the Mother of God, the white monks were second to none. In a letter censorious of their liturgical innovations, the theologian Peter Abelard (d. 1142) commented upon the custom that these brothers maintained in consecrating all their churches to the Virgin. In the same spirit, the seals of most of their abbeys bore her image, first as their mediator with God and later as their special protector (see Fig. 3.4). These emblems, mostly of wax, featured within an architectural canopy in Gothic style an image of the Virgin, usually with Child.



Fig. 3.4 Cistercian seal depicting the Virgin surrounded by devotees.
Seal (modern cast from original), ca. 1300–1500. Paris, Archives nationales.
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Mary was not decreed a queen by the pope until 1954, but the Middle Ages greeted her routinely in that capacity—and that reginal reverence held particularly true for the white monks. An early statute stipulated officially that every Cistercian church and cloister should be founded in honor of the "Queen of Heaven and Earth." Not the faintest doubt exists that by this formulation the Mother of God is meant. The designation of the Virgin as Queen of Heaven and Earth had been conventional for a long time already. This status positioned her to operate as a unique conduit between the two realms. In an extension of this power, relics of her and of physical contact with her earthly self could also provide petitioners with a pipeline to God and all the holiness surrounding him on high. Madonnas, as images of her, could fulfill the same funneling function.

The Virgin, along with these tokens of her, arbitrated between the simplicity of humble believers in the sublunary realm and the loftiness of God above. She was not unapproachable and unresponsive in her queenliness. On the contrary, she thrust herself forward as mediator. In medieval and theological terms, she came not as an accessory to the crime but as an intercessor for the sinner. The movements involved in Marian intercession were perceived to take place in both directions. Petitions from votaries on earth were relayed to Christ in heaven. Rebounding in the opposite course, expressions of divine grief, joy, and other emotions were transmitted from heaven through visions or animated images. Those celestial feelings could take palpable terrestrial form, with tears, milk, blood, and oil being four of the most common drippings that exuded from the Virgin, especially as represented in Madonnas. In the Middle Ages, virgin olive oil was not at all the same as today.

Veneration of the Mother of God belonged among the paramount manifestations of Christian practice. To go further, it reigned supreme in that same class. Consequently, nothing is strange about the fact that the liturgies of the Cistercians were heavily Marian. Each of the daily offices features a special reflection on her vocation. Since the thirteenth century, each day in a monastery of white monks has been capped by the singing of "Hail, Holy Queen" as the final antiphon. This hymn praises the Virgin in her guise as Mother of Mercy who intercedes with the Lord. It can be difficult to know which personage is meant when a Mary is mentioned within a Cistercian context. A reference to a woman by this name could allude to the historical person, the Jewish woman who was the mother of Christ; to the patroness of the order, ever to be trusted to champion the life- and soul-saving of contrite sinners; to the buildings dedicated to her, especially in this case all Cistercian churches and most cathedrals; or to the mother Church as an institution.

Since 1109, Cistercian monks have not worn the black vestments of the Benedictine order from which they branched off. Rather, they dress in ones of natural, unwhitened, and uncolored wool. The resultant hue is off-white, effectively a beige. For all that, the brethren have tended to be called white monks. In the Middle Ages, they were also

known sometimes as gray monks. In either case, they were dyed in the wool for being undyed. Wherever we place the color of the Cistercians' unbleached woolen habits on the chromatic spectrum, the most common explanation for the adoption of this lightness in preference to black was a specific of Marian symbolism. The color honors Mary's purity and spotlessness. A hue unblemished by blackness is what *immaculate* conveys etymologically in the original Latin: unstained and ultraclean.

The Cistercians wore clothing as white as a sheet—a modern and not a medieval one, since bed linens would not have had the incandescence often prized today for its connotation of cleanness. The whiteness betokened not ghostliness or fear, but virginal purity. More than once, they explained the color as bespeaking their service to the bright splendor of the Mother of God. In legend, the change from black to its opposite resulted directly from an apparition of the Virgin. One August morning, Mary made herself visible among the monks as they chanted matins. Not stopping at merely appearing, she went up to the second abbot of Cîteaux and later Saint Alberic, and threw a white cowl over his shoulders (see Fig. 3.5). At this moment, the habits of all the other monks present also turned the same color. The bright cleanliness of Mary makes even more vivid her gesture of having a towel supplied to suck up the saline solution that sluices from the tumbler.



Fig. 3.5 St. Alberic receives the Cistercian habit from the Virgin. Fresco, 1732–1752. Zirc, Zirc Abbey Church. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alberic_receives_habit.jpg

Bernard of Clairvaux, who championed the growing cult of the Virgin, has himself been described as Mary's greatest devotee. Since the eight hundredth anniversary of his death, he has been called the Marian Doctor. By extension, the Cistercians have been styled collectively as missionaries of Marianism. The saint's principal work of Mariology would be four homilies on the verse in Luke "The angel Gabriel was sent." These circulated together under the title *On the Praises of the Virgin Mother*. Other homilies of his deal with Mary too. Bernard's famous sermons on the Song of Songs identify the betrothed in that book of the Bible as the Mother of God. He articulates his commitment to her in a way analogous to the dynamics of courtly love. He came honestly by his cloisterly courtliness, since before becoming a monk he had been the son of a knightly family. By breeding and upbringing, he was destined to be versed in the culture and ethos of chivalry and chivalric love, with their distinctive ideology and poetry. Perhaps to buff Bernard's Marian credentials, he was misassigned authorship of texts about the Blessed Virgin in the composition of which he had no hand. Thus, he was often wrongly credited with authorship of a beloved Latin liturgical hymn, "Hail, Star of the Sea," which honors her. In a further miscue, he is sometimes still supposed to have composed the prayer to her known as the *Memorare*, while in fact it is apparently from the fifteenth century.

By all accounts, Mary was as favorably disposed toward Bernard as he was toward her. According to many legends, she had a stand-by-her-man loyalty to the holy man. Sometimes statues of Our Lady pumped the affection of the Virgin toward him. Take, for instance, a Madonna in the Benedictine abbey of Affligem, a Belgian municipality. The image reputedly leaned down to receive the "Hail, Mary" of the saint-to-be as he prostrated himself at her feet one day in 1146. In return, she said "Greetings, Bernard." The legendary episode allegedly prompted him to give the monastery his staff and chalice. This was far from the strangest case in which the Virgin and a Madonna bestowed their favor upon a devotee.

Mother's Milk

The international advocacy group La Leche League, which took its name from the Spanish word for milk, claims on its website to have been inspired by a statue and shrine to "Our Lady of Happy Delivery and Plentiful Milk." But Mary's association with such health and bounty stretches back at least to the Middle Ages. The Virgin is often depicted in medieval images, particularly in paintings, with one breast exposed to feed the infant Jesus. The pose is known in iconography as the nursing Madonna. To judge by the reactions of twenty-first-century students, the most bizarre expression of attachment to the Mother of God may be a story that builds on the motif of nursing. Called the lactation of Bernard, this exchange between Mary and her preeminent Cistercian enthusiast takes filial devotion and recognition to the highest and most heart-to-heart degree. The saint asks to be placed, and is indeed put, on the level of a son sucking milk from the breasts of the Virgin as mother.



Fig. 3.6 Master I. A. M. of Zwolle, *Saint Bernard Kneeling before the Virgin*, ca. 1480–1485. Engraving, 32 × 24.1 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:StBernardFS.jpg

The accounts, none of them dating from before Bernard's death, vary in the behavior that they identify as preceding the miracle. In some, the saint prays before a Madonna. This is possible, of course, although he and the early white monks issued pronouncements against images. Furthermore, no statue exists that can be demonstrated to have come from a Cistercian abbey before the thirteenth century. In other versions, the mellifluous doctor sees Mary in a vision. Regardless of what happens first, the aftermath is the same in all the accounts. The saint-to-be requests the Virgin to show herself as a mother. In response, she obliges by projecting a jet of milk from her breast through his open lips (see Fig. 3.6). The jet or droplets endow him with his wisdom and eloquence. Similar motifs surface repeatedly, not only in the twelfth century but even earlier and predictably later. They do not always pertain to Saint Bernard alone. Thus, the Virgin infuses her breast milk into the mouth of her aficionado Bishop Fulbert of Chartres, who promoted in that city the cult of Mary's tunic. He collects in a vase and treasures three drops that cling to his face afterward. This element in the legend of Fulbert likely became the ultimate inspiration for most subsequent variations on the theme of Marian lactation. Such stories go back to the

exemplum known as Roman charity, a very real demonstration that the milk of human kindness exists. In this legendary episode, a woman keeps more than her cards close to her chest: on the sly, she breastfeeds her father to spare him from a sentence to death by starvation.

Later, the feature of Mary's suckling a devotee spreads. In assorted miracle tales, she comes on scene with her best bedside manner to heal ailing people of one sort or another miraculously, by inviting them to feed at her breast. For instance, one cleric is taken by an angel to the other world, where the Virgin gives him her nipple. Another is saved from a throat tumor after she atomizes his face by spraying it with her breast milk. In a third case, a worshipper of hers is cured of his writer's block by lactation. By the fourteenth century, the notion that the Mother of God formed this most special union with Bernard in her guise as nursing mother is solidly established among the traditional stories and iconography of the saint.

Mary's Head-Coverings

The time has come for full disclosure of veiled references. Likewise, the moment is upon us for picking up for the first of many times the thread of an argument about textiles. Bernard was hardly the last Cistercian to do obeisance to the Virgin. To take just one example, Helinand of Froidmont (d. after 1229), himself a former jongleur or troubadour, composed sermons for Marian feasts. In his writings, he declared that his brethren in the Cistercian order "do homage to this great lady and avow everlasting service to her." If Venn diagrams had existed in the Middle Ages, the categories of Cistercian and Marian would often have come close to total eclipse. The white monks were bound in a privileged rapport with Mary in myriad ways. To rehearse only one more instance, they are often presented in exempla as receiving special guardianship from the Virgin. Her intervention in the tale of the tumbler speaks to the willingness of the white monks to show ordinary monastic authority tempered or even subverted by her maternal power. The Mother of God was permitted to be the exception to the Rule.

In art, Cistercian iconography gives graphic form to the notion of the special favor that the order enjoyed from the Virgin. One type of representation depicts the Mother of God as Our Lady of Mercy. In this capacity, she provided asylum to her faithful beneath her mantle. Before and beyond its strictly Cistercian lineage, the portrayal of "Mary of the Protective Cloak" was due ultimately to Byzantine literature and art. In the tenth century, Saint Andrew the Blessed witnessed a miraculous apparition in the Blachernae church in Constantinople. In this episode, the Virgin cloaked the congregants with her *maphorion*. A still of her stretching out this veil or robe came to signify the unfailing tutelage that she extended to her devotees. The sanctuary that the Mother of God afforded through her intercessions was celebrated in the liturgical feast of the Veil of Our Lady.

Depictions of Mary's protection in Cistercian art give the motif a special torque. The diminutive figures who take refuge beneath the Virgin's garment are all white-hooded monks (see Fig. 3.7). Like a posse of tots clinging to their mother's shins, they are medieval mothers' boys who have not the faintest desire to do whatever would have been the medieval equivalent of cutting the apron strings. The motif can be traced back to an episode in the *Dialogue on Miracles* by the Cistercian monk Caesarius of Heisterbach, eventually repeated by many others. In this incident, a brother had an eschatological vision in which he encountered Our Lady in the afterlife. In heaven, he could not find his fellows. In due course, the visionary queried the Mother of God. In response, she hiked her cloak to reveal the monks, lay brothers, and nuns of the order who were protected beneath it.



Fig. 3.7 Master of the Life of the Virgin, *The Virgin of Mercy*, ca. 1463–1480. Tempera on oak panel, 129.5 × 65.5 cm. Budapest, Szépmüvészeti Múzeum. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Master_of_the_Life_of_the_Virgin_-_The_Virgin_of_Mercy_-_WGA14594.jpg

In *Our Lady's Tumbler*, the Virgin comes to assuage a lay brother whose sole mode of veneration is his body. In general, the tumbler clings fast to Cistercianism by making purgation and purification of his anatomy a means of penance. That said, his choice of bodily self-mortification is atypical. Yet however much outside the norm the performer's conduct may fall, for Mary to weigh in and signal her approval is altogether appropriate. Her cult made a priority of the ways in which the very humanness of her physique brought salvation, through pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing. She constituted living proof that the corporeal frame need not be detested as solely sinful. On the contrary, the body could be a vehicle for the expression of goodness and virtue.

The fanning or mopping of the tumbler with a textile belonging to the Virgin may ring a humbler change upon this popular motif. Two exempla, only crudely datable, constitute cases in point. To the best of our present knowledge, they are preserved first in the early 1600s in a book produced by a Jesuit. This volume is itself based on an anonymous collection that was printed first at the end of the fifteenth century, and compiled materials from earlier assemblages of exempla. In one exemplum, Mary appears to the dying in their final throes. With her little kerchief or handkerchief, she dries the sweat of mortality from them. In the other, she ventilates them.

The text of *Our Lady's Tumbler* leaves unspecified what the Virgin used to cool her devotee. She is said, with no further explanation, to be holding a cloth. In the French text, the textile is called a white towel. Both the etymology and meaning of the medieval vernacular noun used here are fraught. *Touaille* could denote a piece of fabric to be carried in the hand or worn on the head, including what we would call a napkin, hand towel, handkerchief, kerchief, veil, scarf, or rag. In Romance languages, the most vigorous living relatives are the Italian for tablecloth and table napkin. As the last two words suggest, the cloth could be meant for household use as well as for personal cleanliness. In English usage worldwide, the noun *napkin* has bifurcated. The split fossilizes the two potentials within it. It can denote either a sanitary napkin in feminine hygiene, or a table napkin or serviette. But let us not allow lexical semantics to distract us from the physical reality of the object in question. In the bas-de-page with the sole medieval illustration of the tale (see Fig. 1.17), the item in question looks very much like white terrycloth. No one is throwing in the towel, but it is being projected downward from a heavenly thunderhead by a haloed figure, perhaps an angel. The cloth has not come directly from the crowned Madonna and Child nearby, but instead presumably indirectly through their mediation.

Could the fabric be of her own making? Like many women in premodern literature, Mary had an up-close-and-personal connection with textile production in her own life. As a girl, she reputedly dedicated six hours daily to weaving, with a regularity reminiscent of monasticism. More to the point, what is the material? The stuff could be a corner of her veil, the velvety sleeve of her dress, or soft goods of some other sort that would have been on or near her person. A modern viewer not grounded

in Christian art may be surprised to realize that the Mother of God is customarily portrayed, particularly in Byzantine and Italian art, wearing a head-covering that resembles the hijab worn nowadays by some Muslim women as an expression of modesty. Often blue, brown, red, or purple, the cloth overspreads the head and chest. While not so extreme as the type of veil called the niqab that covers all the face apart from the eyes of its Muslim wearer, it can still be so extensive as to function effectively as a one-way window. The opposite of a blindfold, it wards off the gaze of others while allowing the wearer to see out.

We may forget that in much medieval art the Virgin typically wore a multipurpose kerchief. Taken by itself, the last word derives from the French phrase meaning "head cover." As the elements of the compound presuppose, such a fabric wraps around the skull and encircles the face as a scarf. In the kit of textiles and paper goods available to us today, the covering is largely restricted in its use to fulfilling the tasks that the original sense of the term conveys. The many purposes to which headgear could be put are fossilized etymologically in the near oxymoron of "handkerchief." Parsed element by element, the noun would mean a head covering kept in hand. This item is then a cloth of a size, texture, color, and general appearance that could function as a headscarf or veil. In a pinch, or a sneeze, it could also meet other needs. Along similar lines, a cowboy's bandana could serve as sweatband or neck-cloth, facemask or dust mask, tourniquet, or all-round handkerchief. It was a one-item ragbag. Nowadays, people will most likely use cloth towels for blotting or wicking away dampness, and disposable plies for facial hygiene. Whatever we call Mary's fabric, she uses its edge to comfort the man who has danced madly in her honor: it is the lunatic fringe.

In Marian iconography, the jumbo-sized veil is known as a *maphorion* (see Fig. 3.8). This Greek term designates a head-covering in which noblewomen in Greece customarily enveloped themselves. These ladies were tradition-bound both literally and figuratively. The Virgin's textile has been equated at different times also to a shawl, mantle, and outer robe. Often represented as a long length of cloth, it not only draped her head but beyond that fell in deep swags down her arms and chest to her knees or even ankles. One color renders the fabric Virginal: if blue is present, the dye is cast. In representations of the oversized veil, the garment is decorated at Mary's forehead and shoulders with four pellets, positioned to suggest a cross. Later in the Middle Ages, the points were sometimes made stellar. Such foursomes of dots around stylized crosses may be discerned in the background of the miniature to illustrate the miracle in the story of the tumbler. The Mother of God was often associated with stars, but usually singly or in threes, to represent the threefold nature of her inviolate virginity. The unstated message of the four-star iconography in all cases may be that the Nativity led continuously to the Crucifixion, which brought salvation to humankind.



Fig. 3.8 Virgin and Child enthroned between angels. Mosaic, sixth century. Ravenna, Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, north wall. Image from Wikimedia, © José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro (2016), CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madonna_and_Child_-_Madonna_and_Child_between_Angels_mosaic_-_Sant'Apollinare_Nuovo_-_Ravenn.jpg

The *maphorion* serves multiple uses. Veneration of relics was deeply ingrained in medieval Christianity. After the Virgin's death, the length of material doubled as her shroud. As Mary's body was never found on earth, her grave-clothes became powerful for the immediacy that they granted to the purity and incorruptibility of her last corporeal presence before her Assumption into heaven. Such contact relics enjoyed lofty prestige and occupied a place of special privilege in the cult of Mary, since they granted the closest possible approach to an otherwise altogether absent body: they gave it a common thread. By a very easy to use and apply principle of transference, the fabric embodied her materiality. At the same time, the lack of bodily remains helped to make the Virgin the most universal among saints. She became present everywhere, capable of performing miracles anywhere.

However we translate the Greek term, the textile in question was believed to have been found in the Holy Land at the latest in the fifth century. Initially, it was transferred, along with Mary's girdle, to a church in Jerusalem; later, the cloth was moved to Constantinople, where it belonged to the glitz and glamour of the many

major Marian relics possessed by the great capital city. The fabric was showcased in a chapel close by the seacoast that the Byzantine emperor and empress Leo I and his wife Verina added to the Church of the Blachernae. Together with the icon known as the Great *Panagia*, or "All-Holy," the *maphorion* perished in a fire that destroyed the church in 1434, not even two decades before the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The waistband, ostensibly dropped as a token by the Virgin as she ascended from earth, survived the conflagration. It was preserved in a church in the Chalkoprateia quarter of the Byzantine metropolis, near Hagia Sophia.

A tidal wave of Byzantine influence struck Latin Christendom in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Roman Catholics were immensely indebted to Eastern Marianism in things plundered, purchased, and imitated, as well as (to a degree) in practices emulated and replicated. Byzantium contributed substantially to the fascination with cloths and clothing connected with the Virgin in the cult of Mary in the medieval West. During the Crusades, ever more travelers had opportunities to see and hear of such relics. After the looting of Constantinople in 1204, many such valuables were carried to the West, or at least the claim was made that they had been taken there. In ways that warrant much further inquiry, the treasure trove of Marian textiles was greatly expanded by contact between the crusaders and the Byzantines. But the Fourth Crusade was not the very beginning. The acquisition of fabrics pertaining to the Mother of God had begun even earlier.

The Church developed a vested interest in textiles of the Virgin. Mary was associated with many types of cloth, such as girdles, corsets, sashes, and veils. No pains were spared in procuring them, through diplomacy, trade, despoliation, theft, or manufacture. The most famous, the object of a flourishing relic cult, was undoubtedly the chemise, camisole, or "interior tunic" of the Mother of God at Chartres. Charlemagne acquired this trophy in the Holy Land. After he brought the precious item back to France, four armed sentinels guarded it twenty-four hours a day. The actual garment, by all accounts worn by the Virgin on the night she gave birth to Christ, was seldom seen directly but was depicted nonstop on locally produced leaden badges. These little images of the chemise were known by the diminutive "chemisettes." The tokens were purchased and taken away by pilgrims to Chartres as travel trinkets, as proof and reminder of their visits. Another major item, sometimes identical and often confused with the chemise, was Mary's veil.

One of these cherished fabrics occasioned a brouhaha at Chartres after a blaze in 1194. When the old cathedral was destroyed in the raging fire, this famous former possession of the Virgin's was thought to be lost. Days after the all-clear was sounded, the prize was found by a rescue team and unearthed from the crypt. Along with a few monks, it had been interred there beneath rubble. Thanks to Mary, both the treasured thing and the pious people had been kept safe and sound. The poet of *Our Lady's Tumbler* may have lived near a site with a relic of such a fabric. In that event, the poem may have helped to promote a cult associated with the cloth. The place need not have been Chartres, or for that matter anywhere else named in this book.

Mary's intimate apparel was often the focus of intense devotion from women who hoped to have a healthy childbirth at the end of uninterrupted pregnancies. Somewhat contrarily, a spotless towel, symbolizing purity, is also a Marian attribute. At times, the Mother of God is portrayed cuddling her divine infant in her lap with a linen blanket or handkerchief. The most influential image of her along these lines is the Virgin and Child from around 867 in the mosaic apse of Hagia Sophia (see Fig. 3.9). This representation belongs to the Byzantine genre known by the Greek epithet *Theotokos*, or "God-Bearer." Because of Mary's immaculateness, an undyed towel made an ideal symbol for her. Many textiles connected with her were reputedly without seams, in keeping with the seamlessness of her body. Her very physical structure as a living human being was a garment in which Jesus had been clothed. As his mother bore him during her pregnancy, so he wore her as a covering.

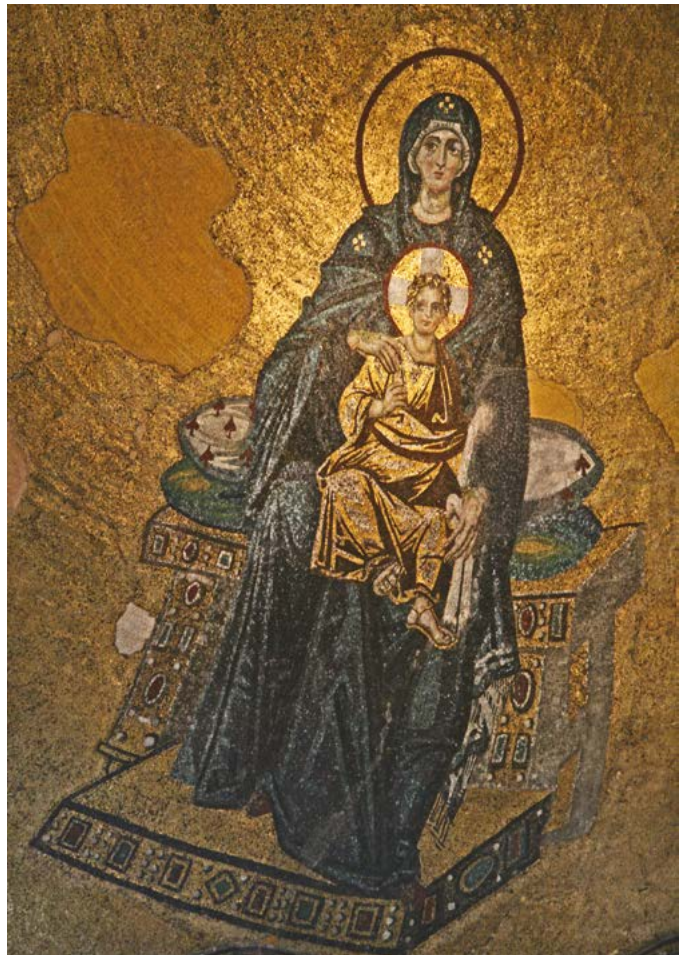


Fig. 3.9 Virgin and Child enthroned. Mosaic, ninth century. Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, apse semidome. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © SBarnes (2007), CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hagia_Sophia_Interior_Virgin_2007.JPG

If the trading in objects relating to Mary was heavy, ideas and stories flowed even more abundantly. The Virgin was an *unica*, but she came in almost as many forms as there were believers. The same observation holds true today as well. Both laymen and churchmen cherished her, but often very differently. The tumbler's simple and unlearned attachment typifies what might have been encountered within a parish church, or even in the fields among country cousins. His determination to express his love through a solitary and purely physical ritual of his own making runs counter to monastic norms and rituals in all ways except frequency. Remarkably, his teeth-gritting mode of devotion outperforms all that the brethren do in the choir above him. The uneducated but passionately sincere lay brother smuggles his own peculiarly efficacious reverence for the Mother of God into the theologically more rarefied ambience of a Cistercian abbey. Now let us scrutinize the relationship between choir monks and lay brothers.

Cistercian Lay Brothers

No good deed goes unpunished.

While Cistercians sported white habits, as distinct from the black ones worn by Benedictines, the two orders differed from each other in much more than the mere tint of their attire. Rather, they were distinguished by their attitudes toward the elemental injunction in the *Rule of Saint Benedict* to pray and work. The twofold imperative raised a very real challenge that put monks in jeopardy of being neither fish nor fowl in the fauna of faith. On the one hand, the obligation to prayer could be construed as service to God; on the other, the injunction to toil could be regarded as furnishing ministrations to the world. The disharmony between the two activities is self-evident. Christ, to quote a law unto himself, said clearly, "No one can serve two masters." As a category, then, the lay brothers within the Cistercian order rendered perfect service to neither God nor the world. How imperfectly they fulfilled their duties could be a cause for sarcasm. The German Benedictine nun Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) was only one of many in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries who engaged in wordplay by positing that Cistercian converts were intrinsically perverts.

By the time *Our Lady's Tumbler* was composed, lay brethren were probably no longer at their high-water mark in numbers. Even so, the poem could have served not so much to proselytize for fresh-faced recruits to join their ranks as to remind the choir brothers of better days. In earlier times, newcomers from the laity had endued the monastic society with a devout simplicity. Later, the white monks may have worried that the same quality was being eroded by the twinned processes of clericalization and secular learning. The unlearned piety of lay brothers in the heroic age of the Cistercians would be preferable any day! At that point, the order was

engaged in a boundary-pushing experiment in social engineering by bringing in laity to the extent that they did. The monasteries were not classless, but they tried at least to be egalitarian.

From the abbacy of Alberic around 1120 on, the Cistercian order, as also later the Carthusians and Grandmontanes, relied extensively upon lay brothers. These members of the institution furnished a creatively drastic solution to the tension between prayer and work that had pervaded cenobitic monasticism since its establishment. They took vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, yet rather than concentrating upon chanting the hours, they funneled their energies toward manual, and usually agricultural, labor. In fact, they were strictly forbidden from becoming choir monks. At the same time, lay brethren were not altogether devoid of monklike obligations. For example, they were bound to the punishing Cistercian custom of silence, the white noise of the white monks. Most notably, they followed a simplified version of the office that they could enact while at work. Under the circumstances, their reputed proclivity to sleepiness is understandable. Run-down from physical toil and unable to parse the language and semantic code of the liturgy, they would have had good reason to grow heavy-lidded and to doze when they were constrained to sit in wordless stillness and attend the office in the monastery's chapel.



Fig. 3.10 Cistercian monks and *conversi* before the Virgin. Miniature. Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, MS IF 413, fol. 145r. Image courtesy of Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Wrocław. All rights reserved.

In physical appearance, lay brothers were differentiated from choir monks by a few distinct features. The main item in their clothing was a cloak or mantle, which in all likelihood lacked the cowl that betokened monastic status. The tumbler bore such a garment. In addition, lay brethren had no tonsure, a glabrous patch on the scalp where the hair was clipped or shorn. This characteristic haircut was a token of belonging for those men with clerical or monastic status. It signified imitation of the apostles. Much like a passport today, it entitled its bearers to a specific legal and civic status within society. Finally, lay members wore facial hair of not more than two fingers in length (see Fig. 3.10). The last characteristic led often to their being called "bearded brothers." Not exactly groomed for success by not being close-shaven, they were clean-cut only in a metaphorical sense.

As mentioned, lay brothers took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Paradoxically, they were described as the equals, in everything except monkhood, of those who sang beyond the rood screen. The proviso of not possessing this status meant that the laity had no hope of being admitted to the ranks of the choir monks, who towered above them in the monastic hierarchy. They were not required, either before or after entry into monastic life, to be conversant in Latin, song, or the liturgy. Accordingly, it is altogether consonant with actual practice and reality that the lay brother in *Our Lady's Tumbler* cannot chant, read, or understand Latin. He is excluded from the sociolect of the full brethren; rather than being simply a different dialect with its own jargon, the tongue they speak is a distinct language from the vernacular that he employs. In many respects, he makes himself incommunicado. This illiteracy means that most, if not all, Latin exempla about lay brothers reflect the viewpoint of the choir monks, who presumably had many preconceptions about them, not all complimentary. Thus a distinction between elite and nonelite, choir monks and lay brothers, was baked into Cistercian monasticism.

Like education and culture, ignorance and stupidity are all too often conflated. Thus the mostly analphabetic lay brothers were wrongly assumed also to be simpleminded morons. In the Latin Middle Ages, not knowing Latin, being unlettered, and lacking formal education were regarded as intimately related and often interchangeable weak points. In modern European languages, the consequences of the interrelations among these categories remain enshrined in etymology to the present day. On the one hand, *idiots* are conversant only in their own idiom or speech. By their very nature, they are bereft of access to the schooling available in the learned tongue. On the other, even the unintelligent deserve acknowledgment for belonging within the Christian community—despite suffering intellectual deficiencies, the *cretin*, as its etymology indicates, is a Christian and not a non-Christian human being or even a beast.

The simplicity of lay brothers could cut two ways, leading in one direction to sanctity and in the other to sheer folly. At times their simultaneous paucity of secular learning and plenitude of unpretentiousness could call to mind lay heroes of early monasticism,

such as the desert fathers. Simplicity in this sense was a good thing, the opposite of duplicity and double-dealing not merely etymologically, but also semantically. A simple person was undivided, whole, and integral—everything but two-sided or two-faced. At other junctures, the undevious nature of lay brethren elicited snobbery from Cistercian abbots, and instead of administering care and oversight, they sneered. The order made its eagerness for recruits, including those who became lay brothers, a point of pride. Accordingly, the superiors of the monasteries were obliged to be evenhanded in dealing with new entrants incoming from lower social classes. They accepted the recruits, warts and all. The obligation went beyond mere administrative responsibility. In fact, it rose to a matter of spiritual life and death, since on the Day of Reckoning the monastic head was expected to render account for the monks in his charge.

What is meant when the protagonist is called a *convert*, in this case using the French singular? The term does not imply just that he has converted to monasticism and is on course to being accepted eventually as a fully developed choir monk. Rather, it signifies that he has been permitted to join as a lay brother. The innovation of this special subset among the white monks raises a host of issues. The word's horizon was far more spacious than even the spread between the two preceding usages would suggest. Complicating matters, the Latin equivalent (and original) enveloped its own partly distinct semantic sweep. Furthermore, the reputation of the "convert" covered an even more imposing span, from a presupposition of humble holiness through suspicions of unseemliness.

To oversimplify, let us pose four questions, without seeking to answer them right now. First, was a *conversus*, a lay convert in Latin, or *convers*, to use the corresponding but not exactly congruent French singular, a second-class citizen within the Cistercian context? That is to say, was he generally a Latin-less rustic of innately inferior status who was exploited for physical labor by monks who were his social superiors? Second, was he typically a bread-convert? That is, did he take up the burdens of his lot within (or without, as the case may be) the cloister mainly as a precondition to receiving a daily dole? (By becoming a lay brother, the typical twelfth-century peasant would have left behind the bottom of the hardscrabble feudal world and the elusiveness of a regular per diem of food. It is imaginable that the destitute would have been drawn by the magnetism of board and lodging in return for work, according to the same terms offered centuries later in workhouses.) Third, was he of markedly higher social and economic class than his blinkered education and culture might lead us to believe? In other words, could he have been unliterate, un-Latinate, and therefore more surely rooted in popular religion than in the Latin-based liturgy and theology, while possessing enough wealth to have been stung by the price of admission? (The Cistercians required lay brothers to forswear property.) And, fourth, if the manual labor of lay brethren in the agrarian work of the granges and fields was sanctified,

what of other physical expressions of devotion? How much of a thorn in the side was it, during the salad days of what might be called lay Cistercianism, to winnow permissible from impermissible physicality in worship? Could *Our Lady's Tumbler* speak to the crosscurrents of a dispute within the order over the very nature of piety?

One feature lay brothers shared with full-fledged (or full-habited) choir monks was the fervor of their fidelity to Mary (see Fig. 3.11). Their adoration stands to reason, since in countless miracle stories the Mother of God was touted for her charity toward unchaste nuns and priests, light-fingered thieves and scoundrels, and other sundry reprobates. The tales showed her again and again in her guise as Lady of Mercy, rescuing from eternal fire and brimstone, perhaps especially at their deathbeds, individuals who had little or even nothing in their favor apart from their allegiance to her. Even that faithfulness might have been shown to her only fleetingly, perhaps just lately. Yet in the ultimate crisis of salvation or damnation, the Virgin intervened to ensure that in the weighing of souls, the balance tipped toward those faithful to her. This motif appears in *Our Lady's Tumbler*, following upon the description of how after his death, when his body is laid out in the church for last rites and he lies in repose, the lay brother is treated as a choir brother would be.



Fig. 3.11 The adoration of Mary. Stained glass window, ca. 1280. Wettingen, Kloster Wettingen, cloister, north walk. Image courtesy of Swiss National Library. All rights reserved.

The largest and most ambitious omnium-gatherum of Cistercian stories is Conrad of Eberbach's *The Great Beginning of Cîteaux*. In the 1180s and 1190s, when the great monastery was evidently a hotbed of creation and exchange for exempla that pertained

to the genesis of the order, its author spent time at Clairvaux. Conrad's compendium is notable for arranging its illustrative anecdotes in a logical structure, and for making their morals easily identifiable to readers. The fourth book offers numerous narratives that recount the divine favor shown specifically to lay brothers. Miracle tales about brethren of that sort were ideal for the genre, since the stories graph intersections between learned and lay, clerical and secular, and literate and illiterate. The centrality of liturgy in the miracle of *Our Lady's Tumbler* suggests that the tale took shape when the nature of veneration within the cult of Mary was developing and being negotiated, perhaps in novel directions. Such creative haggling was under way throughout Europe, but early Cistercian foundations such as Cîteaux and Clairvaux saw as much of it as anywhere. They lived through what was tantamount to a heroic epoch in Marianism.

One anecdote in Conrad's text tells of a devoted lay brother who was obliged to tend a flock of sheep and therefore to miss the services for the vigil of the Assumption of the Virgin. In place of the formal liturgy, he recited the few prayers to Mary known to him. At least through the mid-twelfth century, converts were expected to know by heart only the Our Father, Apostles' Creed, and Psalm 51. These three texts were their spiritual survival kit. By the time of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, circumstances had not altered radically. "Hail, Mary," the hymn in the learned tongue based on the angel Gabriel's salutation to Mary, might have been added, but throughout their existence, most lay brothers remained innocent of Latinity. To the tumbler, even the paternoster—the Lord's Prayer in Latin—seems the esoteric stuff of higher learning. Lacking the ancient language does not dishonor a *conversus* within the monastery or order. In the exemplum that Conrad relates, Bernard of Clairvaux himself was so impressed by the fervor of the lay brother who privileged his shepherding over the office that the saint incorporated the incident into a sermon as a lesson in obedience.

In 1223, Caesarius of Heisterbach completed his *Dialogue on Miracles* (see Fig. 3.12). In format, the text pairs a tyro who poses questions with a veteran monk who responds. The situation was well known to the author, who served as novice-master for some years in the monastery. The fictitious exchange purported to purvey actual spoken interactions recorded by Caesarius, as rapporteur. As such, the work was well positioned to draw upon both written and oral sources. The 746 medieval miracle stories were assembled a half century after the magnificent flowering of Cistercian exemplum literature began at Clairvaux.

Caesarius's extended conversation contains scores of tales in which lay brothers come on the scene. In most, these brethren elicit favor from God. The seventh book of this major collection is given over to miracles of the Virgin and relates more than five dozen visions of her. It includes an account of a *conversus* named Henry, from the cloister of Himmerod in Germany, who experienced a number of sightings of Mary. In one, he saw her enter the infirmary and bless invalids as they languished on their sickbeds. In another, he looked on as she materialized in the separate choir of lay

monks, where she lingered before the devout but passed by the sluggish or drowsing. In every case, the visionary, whether a priest or cleric, lay brother, knight, or woman, is alone in discerning the Mother of God at the time of the apparition. Although the status of lay brethren varied from period to period, it was never automatically or intrinsically second-rate. The converts were not so much marginal as medial, going back and forth between clergy and laity.



Fig. 3.12 Benedict of Nursia (left) and Caesarius von Heisterbach (right). Miniature, early fourteenth century. Düsseldorf, Universitätsbibliothek Düsseldorf, MS C-27, fol. 2r.

Conversion Therapy

In the Middle Ages the Latin noun *conversio* designated simultaneously retreat from the secular world and consecration of a spiritual life to God, within either the isolation of a hermitage or the community of a monastery. Consequently, it is not at all preposterous that a man such as the tumbler would be attracted to the notion of becoming a lay brother. Medieval historical sources and literature bristle with portrayals of jongleurs who convert, particularly late in life, to become hermits or monks. In the twelfth century, converts who elected to spend their last-chance final years among the Cistercians hailed from many slices of society. Rulers, noted laymen from various professions, and ecclesiastics from priests through abbots to primates—individuals from all these ranks and callings took on the habit of white monks.

In the Latin *Lives of the Fathers*, the Egyptian desert father Paphnutius, who had been a disciple of Saint Anthony, is said to have converted a jongleur who had already

become esteemed for his good deeds. A tradition attested from the early twelfth century held that such an entertainer built a hermitage dedicated to the patron of his native town. In turn, the site on a hill known as Publémont became the center of an abbey in Liège, in what is today Belgium. The late twelfth and thirteenth centuries provide numerous cases in which a performer saw the light and converted. Quasi-legendary would be the short life entitled *The Monk of Montaudon* (see Fig. 3.13). The man in question enters (no surprise here) a religious foundation at Montaudon. He subsequently becomes head, first of this otherwise unidentified priory and later of another near Villafranca in northern Spain, in the province of Navarre. Reportedly, he composes poetry but gives what he earns to his monasteries. Eventually, the monk is released from his vocation to join the court of King Alfonso II of Aragon, where he is appointed lord over the poetic society of Puy-Saint-Mary at Le-Puy-en-Velay. Sadly for our purposes, Saint-Mary has no relation to the Virgin: no tangible Marian connection is to be found. In other well-documented instances, poets and other entertainers converted to monasticism, including Cistercianism. A shining example would be the famed troubadour and later fanatic in the anti-Cathar Crusade, Folquet of Marseille. He disavowed his profession, repudiated his poems, torched the texts of them in his personal possession, and became a Cistercian. Eventually, he was elevated bishop of Toulouse (see Fig. 3.14). His songs included a dawn song in praise of the Virgin that Pope Clement IV, himself a former troubadour, certified. Folquet's conversion was itself made the stuff of an exemplum.



Fig. 3.13 The Monk of Montaudon. Miniature, thirteenth century. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fr. 854, fol. 135r. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



Fig. 3.14 Folquet de Marseille. Miniature, thirteenth century. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Fr. 854, fol. 61r. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

A robust list can be constructed of other troubadours who became Cistercians. To take another instance, a man known as Guiot de Provins lived at the turn of the twelfth to the thirteenth century. While young, he studied in Arles and elsewhere in Provence. After serving as a court poet and composing love lyrics, he became a white monk at Clairvaux, but he was not there to stay. He left his life as a trouvère definitively four months later to enter Cluny. At the beginning of 1206, twelve years after taking up the habit, he completed the social satire known as *Bible Guiot*, or "Guiot's Bible." The roll call does not end with Guiot. Far from it! Helinand of Froidmont also put his career as a minstrel behind him to become a Cistercian at the monastery from which he takes his name. Jean Renart, the thirteenth-century author of the Old French romance *Guillaume de Dole*, may also have finished his days in an abbey. Perhaps the most pertinent of the many virtuosi among lyricists who converted to Cistercianism is the thirteenth-century Adam of Lexington, from Melrose in Scotland. To honor the Virgin, he passed his winter nights in playing the lute and singing before her altar in the abbey church. The Scot was an antibusker who would hand out provisions to others rather than solicit alms for himself. To give the gritty (or at least grainy) details, he would take a seat near the church doors and pore over the psalter with a basket of bread at the ready to allot to the helpless and needy.

The decorum of conduct within houses of God now differs materially from what it was in the Middle Ages. The buildings served as places not merely of worship but also of congregation more broadly. Children were unruly, babies cried, mothers breastfed. Scuttlebutt would be exchanged, loudly. Mongrels barked and bayed, ran about nipping at each other, and even urinated on pillars. The churches were at once communal recreation centers and homeless shelters, providing soup kitchens and social services, as well as entertainment. Accordingly, in many regions of medieval Europe, it would not have struck anyone as odd that jongleurs frequented cathedral closes, churchyards, and even the interiors of cathedrals or larger churches, at least for certain types of performance.

But what would reactions have been to a jongleur-become-monk who wished to ply his trade within cloisters or even inside a monastic church? The Cistercian General Chapter of 1199 passed a statute that in theory issued an all-inclusive call for the routine expulsion of monks who composed poetry. Given medieval perspectives on performance, recrimination could have been even stiffer against brethren who sought to engage post-conversion in gymnastics, instrumental music, or most other performing arts. Yet the world, even the rule-reverencing monastic one, can be an inconsistent place. Policies and practices are often at odds, sometimes noisily and sometimes tacitly. Not ten years after the passage of the statute, a brother of Clairvaux wrote a statement against versifying by monks that would have been fit for chiseling into a stone tablet. The only hitch was that the memorable line itself took the form of a verse in a poem by him.

The Language of Silence

> There once was a very strict monastery. Its vow of silence forbade the brethren ever to utter a syllable—with one exception. Once every decade, each monk could say two words. After one brother spent ten years there, the prior asked him to speak. "Bed hard" was the reply. After the same stretch of time passed again, the monk said, "Food bad." Following ten more years, the head asked again and heard, "I quit." The prior responded, "That makes sense. All you ever do is complain."

Our Lady's Tumbler grapples in part with themes of reading, lack of success in interpreting what is read, and misjudgings of signs—in other words, a failure to communicate. To go further, the poem expresses the limits of semiotics. Monasteries are loci of written and unwritten, even unspoken bylaws. At the same time, the story plays out behind a curtain of silence. The Cistercian recruit who is the protagonist cannot understand Latin or follow sign language—he finds himself at a loss for words and even for gestures. He chafes at his ignorance and consequent incompetence. Not being versed in the prestige language, he cannot chant or pray at times of worship. He goes from jongleur manqué to monk manqué—or the other way around. From his learning tour of the abbey, he learns at first nothing except that he has no learning to make him a contributor within the community. His secret escape, as a jester, is to scrabble his way to gestural expression, true body language.

The medieval liturgy was a kind of schooling. In scholastic settings, repetition is the mother of learning. The opportunity and opportunism for acquiring competency by parroting newly acquired pieces of knowledge, or even just repeatedly witnessing the performance of acts and recitation of words by others, were especially great for lay brothers. Alas, the entertainer in the poem has a learning disability: he cannot find a way around his lack of Latinity. With an occluded view and an equally obstructed understanding of the rituals, he is a thwarted voyeur. Instead of being blocked out, he wishes to participate fully in them.

To make matters worse, the tumbler cannot decipher even the special system of hand signs by which his confrères communicate when speaking aloud is taboo. Their signals are a semaphore that he has not been trained to decode. As it turns out, his plight is still more annoying. Incapable of talking the talk or even understanding it, he cannot grasp the mode and protocol of monastic silence either. Playing dumb without knowing what he is doing, he gets the silent treatment and has no idea what it means. He does not know when to keep quiet or for how long, and he is not fluent in the lingo of crying and caterwauling, moaning and mewling. He makes a transition from being a man of few words to being one of none, but he fails even in that drastic solution. In

his self-imposed dumbfoundedness, he is devout and well meaning, but bumbling. He embraces elective mutism to mimic monks, but this only deepens his disheartenment. Then, vexed by his own inadequacies as a semiotician, he finds himself misread—his French (or Picard) leave from the offices in the choir is misinterpreted as a dearth of devotion, when the opposite is true.

A word, or at least a sign, is needed to explain what the language of signs was. The *Rule of Saint Benedict* put a mute exclamation point on the importance of quiet, and Benedict recommended specifically that at table it would be preferable to indicate the unavailability of an item by using a sign rather than a word. A fixed system of gestures emerged a little at a time, with the evidence for so-called "signs of speaking" surfacing soon after the reformed Benedictine monastery of Cluny was founded. By muffling or muzzling the men within the monastery, the Cluniacs endeavored to mirror the quiet that prevailed in heaven. From then on, the lexicon of hand signs grew ever more extensive. Monks learned to give the finger—and then some.

The Cistercian order, which took its cue from Benedictinism, was renowned for the lengths to which it elevated the monastic injunction against inane speechmaking and cultivated silence. The directive extended even to lay brothers. The white monks were to mind their own business and refrain from even whispering in the cloister, refectory (especially at mealtimes), dormitory, and infirmary. As part of the taciturnity that they were enjoined to practice, they also developed hand signs, contriving some specifically for communicating with lay brethren on the grange. The theologians and administrators of the order paid considerable attention to regulating where, when, and among whom the signals were to be practiced. Overall, the heavy reliance on sign language within Cistercianism was regarded with misgiving and maligned by many of their contemporaries. Visitors from outside the order perceived a potential for abuse in an excessive reliance on hand signs. Unregulated, the gestures could devolve into their own brand of volubility. According to non-Cistercian satirists, but also to regulators from within, the use of hand and finger movements was not restricted to necessary business but served to facilitate idle exchanges, even chitchatting and joking. Monks became much less taciturn and even talkative in their silence: at times it could be hard to get a sign in edgewise.

In the *Rule of Saint Benedict*, the holy man established a daily cycle of monastic offices. The rotation, which established the circadian rhythm of the faith, mirrored a verse in the Psalms that called for lauds to be given seven times by day and once around midnight in each liturgical day (see Fig. 3.15). These canonical hours of prayer that make up the divine office are known as lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline. The seven were raised to a total of eight by the addition of the night office, or vigils. Staggered to be celebrated punctually at roughly three-hour intervals, their fulfillment demanded waking in the deep of night and all but sleepwalking—a form of institutionally mandated somnambulism.

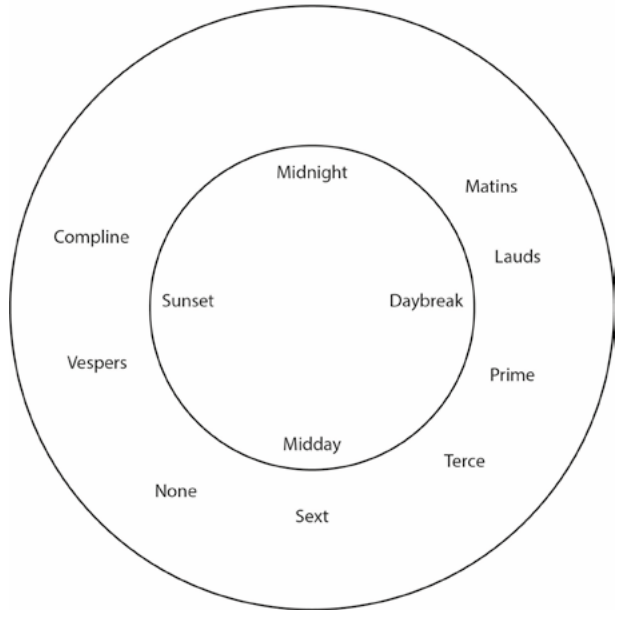


Fig. 3.15 St. Benedict's monastic rotation. Vector art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014.
Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

Cistercianism and similar reform movements can be presented as rejecting Carolingian monastic traditions. Of their reactions, one ran against what the white monks perceived as an overgrowth of ritualism in the liturgies of mainstream Benedictine monasteries. Yet even the supposed restoration of the observance set forth in the *Rule of Saint Benedict* to its pristine and primitive form is too much for the erstwhile minstrel. Despite being streamlined, the cycle outpaces what a community member unseasoned in Latin, song, and ritual can manage. In lieu of the prescribed routine, he performs his own offices, a gymnastic improvisation loosely analogous to the later "Hours of the Virgin" that evolved among the laity.

At first the tumbler is caught in a bind, since he has no abilities in either work or prayer. He feels that no one will sing his praises, because he lacks the savvy to fulfill the duties of a choir monk in Latin. Thus, he has no means of expressing his devotion except by remaining as quiet as a church mouse. Even in this self-abnegation he proves to be ignorant of the seemly occasions and measures for silence. Consequently, he finds himself the butt of wisecracks among his peers. Such tensions about on-the-job training must have arisen often when lay brothers included converts who were ill equipped for the grind they were expected to perform. Not only converted jongleurs, but converted clerics and nobles as well would have been unfamiliar with and mismatched for even the rudiments of agricultural labor.

The hero seems predisposed to guilt. His ne'er-do-well feeling intensifies rather than wanes after his debut as a monk. He has gone from second-tier and sidelined

in the world to being a runner-up within the monastery too. As he wrestles with his shortage of skills suited to abbey life, the entertainer seems on the verge of succumbing to despair. He hates the thought of being a putterer and (even worse) a leech, sucking away resources from the community without giving back anything in return. He would not have been unique: such aimlessness and listlessness, with an accompanying apprehension of pointlessness, often befell monks. The condition of soul-crushing weariness and wanness even had a name—the Latin technical term *acedia*, itself derived from a Greek noun meaning "lack of care." Yet it does not denote what could be a happy state of "being carefree" from having a sinecure so much as "not caring." Such numbness was also called the noontide demon or the sin of sloth. Whatever name we assign, it can become a tiredness of life. It anticipates the sort of ennui that at times has been deemed characteristic of modern existence. Such anesthetized lethargy bears no small resemblance to degrees of clinical depression. This deadened state as diagnosed today also frequently entails in its sufferers a dread of being good for nothing. The miracle in *Our Lady's Tumbler* depicts a man racked by such deadness, self-doubt, and despair. He overcomes these afflictions triumphantly, thanks not to medication in the form of antidepressants, but to the godsend of heavenly intervention in his earthly world. Immortality and mortality crisscross, as do hope and hopelessness.

Despondency of the sort that the performer endured must not have been uncommon among the Cistercian brethren, both choir monks and lay brothers. Members of the second group lived and labored in harsh conditions that may not always have corresponded well with what they had imagined beforehand. One anecdote set in Clairvaux describes a lay brother at a grange who cried at not being permitted to participate in the liturgy for the feast of Mary. While he wept, the Virgin appeared in a vision to tell him that he ought to take part in the devotions with the choir monks. Thereupon, he heard a choir of angels singing the office. Another story describes a lay brother who would sigh before the altar, since the number of times he could take communion was strictly limited. A third exemplum tells of a lay brother who when asked to explain his melancholy, clarified that he knew he would be denied entry to paradise for not saying his prayers as he had formerly done while among the laity. Eventually, this doleful soul drowned himself in the millpond.

Christianity has contained since the earliest days a strain known as apophatic or negative theology. Designated in Latin as the way of negation or denial, this approach requires describing God solely by spelling out what may not be said of him. The tumbler is the ultimate apophatist, since he concludes by abnegating speech about God altogether. Maintaining the most restrained and rigorous silence, he utters nothing in either Latin or the vernacular. The poem becomes a quagmire of reading and interpreting, hogtied reading and interpreting, and misreading and misinterpreting. The entertainer cannot follow Latin or sign language. He cannot devise a mode of

communication that rises to the level of God, even as mediated through the more obliging channel of Mary. When he seeks to remedy his insufficiencies by performing, his colleagues misunderstand his absence from the conventional office for this purpose. Eventually, the performer casts off his dejection and finds a getaway route out of the apophatic bind. Instead of constraining himself to privation, he employs the idiom of dance. He validates in his own unique way that actions speak louder than words. Instead of paralyzing himself with the fearfulness that comes from expressing veneration directly to God, he resorts to the Virgin through her Madonna.

Bernard of Clairvaux famously harangued against sculptural art in the cloisters, but he favored the presence of books there. The gymnast finds his own way to make of bodily movement a private text. He makes acrobatics his own kind of Bible of the Poor. Long before choreographers devised a system for recording movements in dance, the tumbler creates a liturgy through his physical moves. By the same token, he achieves the wondrous feat of staying in rhythm chronologically with the other monks while performing his devotions. Although out of sync spatially with his peers in where he does his worship, he transcends them through the efficacy of his balletic prayer.

Gym Clothes

One old saw declares, "Clothes make the man." Another holds, "The habit does not make the monk." Does the second saying suggest that a male not in the monastic uniform may still be a monk, or only that a person who dons it may not make the grade as one? Let us turn now to the tumbler's clothing (or scantiness of it). As his fellow monks in the choir above fulfill their liturgical duties, he peels off his cowl and other outer garments and enacts an elaborate gymnastic sequence in the crypt to honor the Mother of God. What exactly was he wearing, when he dressed in next to nothing? The text and the illumination are at variance. In medieval art, men who strip down to their most intimate underclothing are depicted as having on a filmy undergarment that covers their lower body. Not so our performer, when he performs his strange equivalent of rolling up his sleeves for hard work.

We learn that the entertainer has on nothing but a "little coat" that serves as hardly more than a shirt. The coatlet that constitutes his undergarb could be pictured as a short smock or kirtle or, to resort to a shade more familiar term, a short nightshirt. Perhaps we should go so far as to envisage something along the lines of a romper, the one-piece outer garment worn by a young child. In all cases, the item would have had a T-shaped cut with an oval neckline, so that it could enclose parts of the arms, the whole torso, and a mite below the midriff and upper thighs. Whatever we call it, the de facto jumpsuit would have concealed enough of his body in a critical situation to be decent (even though he was not expecting to be seen by anyone terrestrial, just

celestial, and he was most certainly not out to air any dirty linen). That said, his outfit would not normally have been sufficiently long to provide seemly covering for the active movements in which he reportedly engaged.

The nightshirt-like item would shield mainly the trunk and above. For the nether limbs, men could rely on linen breeches and fabric hose on their shanks. The Cistercians elicited many sniggers because they refrained from sporting such coverings except when they served at the altar. The white monks were as distinctive for their underwear (or lack thereof) as for their outerwear. Remember the metonymy that gave them one of their principal names. Being whispered about as the brethren who wore no undergarments was a gossipy equal-and-opposite reaction to the designation of "white monks." The practice of not bothering to wear underpants under clothes is known now in slang as "going commando," but in the Middle Ages it could have been called "going Cistercian."

The Latin author Walter of Map (d. ca. 1210) offers a slurring explanation in the anecdote-ridden Latin prose of his twelfth-century *De nugis curialium* (Courtiers' Trifles). In it, the habit of dispensing with underclothes was allegedly intended to maintain coolness in the sexual organs, for fear that flashes of heat would stimulate their possessors to lechery—an alternative etiology for "some like it hot." Whatever the real rationale for forgoing the lowest layer of clothing, non-Cistercians rolled into the aisles in sidesplitting laughter at the hazards of accidental exposure to which white monks were purportedly prey. Thus, the same Map recounts the scurrilous anecdote of a hapless member of the order who inadvertently mooned King Henry II of England. While scrambling from the path of the oncoming royal cavalcade, the poor unfortunate fell head over heels. With nothing covering his bottom, he went once more into the breach (but breechless) and exposed his posterior to the monarch. In these cases of a bottom-up process gone awry, the covering the monks failed to wear was breeches. They dispensed with unmentionables altogether, opting not to be encumbered even by a shortened form that extended only so far as the upper thighs.

The tale of the tumbling lay monk in the French poem and Latin exemplum is not concerned with exhaustively documenting the practices of the order regarding monastic unmentionables, as engrossing as such an investigation could have been. Rather, it brings into higher resolution the peculiarities of an individual. To go further, it concentrates on the minimalism of clothing and not on the absence of underthings. Thus, the story lacks any clear-cut connection with the Cistercian sartorial convention against undergarments. That is probably a good thing, because if it had one, we would have to delve into the issue of the order's policy on underclothing for lay brothers, which may well have been different and more lenient than for the choir monks.

The tumbler's near nakedness as he goes about his business contrasts with the wealth he waived upon entering the monastery, since the tangibles of a successful jongleur included without fail a sumptuous wardrobe. Clothing forms part of the

stock in trade for professional entertainers. In their compositions, those who compose and perform songs and poems, like medieval jongleurs, strike a pose of operating within a well-developed sartorial economy. At work, they petition, even beg, their patrons for cloaks. At play, they win and lose such items in gambling.

Yet the wardrobe that jugglers of words earn for their craft stands far apart from the representations in art of the physical entertainers as they do their routines. Medieval performers of the physical sort were known for their scandalously insufficient attire. In practical terms, it made sense for the gymnastic jongleurs to strip in preparation for their acts. Both *gymnast* and *gymnasium* are built upon the Greek adjective *gumnós*, or "naked," by way of a verb meaning "to exercise naked." The various words reflect the reality that the backbreaking movements of gymnastics require skintight and scanty clothing, or even none at all. The medieval legends of Alexander the Great perpetuated knowledge of the so-called gymnosophists or "naked wise men" of long-ago India, who among other things eschewed conventional dress to achieve greater purity of thought (see Fig. 3.16). The tumbler resembled them in keeping little under wraps: he lives by a principle of unveiled truth. Millennia later, similar claims for the spiritual and epistemic benefits of shedding clothes continue to be advanced by nudists and naturists. Anatomized etymologically, the designation *gym suit* is a contradiction in terms—an antithesis of the first order. The only suit on view in ancient gymnasia was the birthday suit.

The jongleur of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is atypical to the extreme in the sartorial sacrifices that he makes unprompted. Upon becoming a monk, he relinquishes his entire collection of worldly clothes. Whether he wears breeches beneath or not at the commencement of his acrobatic routine of performing for the Madonna is a footnote (or a note on some other body part) best left to the imagination, but the light clothing heightens the physicality of his skills as a dancer-acrobat. At the end of his self-inflicted ordeal, the physical crumpling of his nearly unclothed person can call to mind the Passion of Christ or the martyrdom of any number of saints. Having been stripped down for at least part of the torture that culminated in the cross, Jesus was shown consistently as dressed in next to nothing for the Crucifixion and Deposition. The four soldiers who crucified him took his clothes and divided them in four shares among them, leaving him with only his undergarment (see Fig. 3.17). After he was taken off the cross, Jesus had on next to nothing when cradled for the last time by his mother. Thus, being nearly undressed was part of the overall sacrificial offering. At the same time, it belonged to the deliberate humiliation to which Jesus was subjected, and which he embraced. The humbling imposed by involuntary nakedness becomes a routine part of legends of saints, perhaps particularly virgin martyrs. Such harassments can be depicted with a meticulousness that might strike a viewer today as verging on pornographic.



Fig. 3.16 Alexander the Great encounters gymnosophists in India. Miniature by Maître François, 1475–1480. The Hague, Museum Meermanno, MS 10 A 11, fol. 93v. Image courtesy of Museum Meermanno, The Hague.

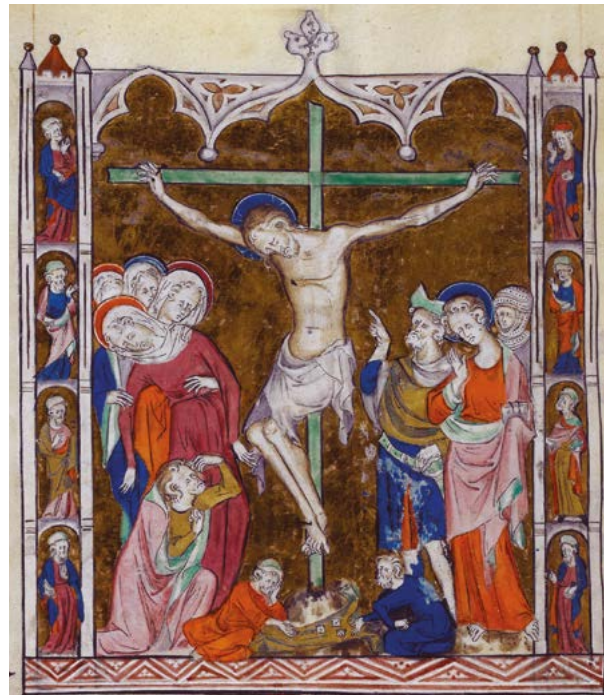


Fig. 3.17 The crucifixion of Christ, with soldiers shown casting lots at the foot of the cross. Miniature by Queen Mary Master, 1310–1320. London, British Library, MS Royal 2 B VII, fol. 256v. Image courtesy of the British Library, London.

Outside the context of martyrdom, being in the buff or close to it was viewed negatively in the Middle Ages. To be seen unclothed by accident was customarily found ridiculous and comic in medieval culture. The tumbler's look may verge on black comedy. For him to be nearly nude in the presence of the Virgin may also raise gender issues, just as his virtual nakedness near fully clad monastic brothers may point to a difference in status between entertainers (as a subset of lay brothers) and monks. Yet the juggler's gym suit signals on a textile level his true simplicity. In this sense, his minimal attire outshines even monastic garb; his nakedness is not merely virtual but even virtuous. In the end, the poet need not have been scoring any special point, either comic or commendatory. The reality of athletic performance would have required jongleurs in the world outside the cloister to strip down, which could have contributed to the poor reputations accorded them by the Mrs. Grundys of their day.

To view the tumbler's disrobing from an utterly different vantage point, the medieval commentary tradition, in both exegesis of the Bible and interpretation of secular writings, emphasized peeling away protective layers of the surface text to arrive at the hidden meaning of subtexts. Tropes developed to express the hermeneutic process. Thus, interpreters could winnow to separate wheat from chaff, crack shell to reach kernel, shuck husks to get at the ear of corn (had Europe had maize), and so

forth. Two comparisons, ever present in the twelfth century, involved the Latin terms signifying "wrapper," "covering," or "envelope."

At the same time, the tumbler's appearance nudges the scene close to the borderline of the sexuality and even promiscuity that are sometimes detectable in miracles of the Virgin. Sexual sinners are far from abnormal among those saved by Mary. The whorish *meretrix*, "prostitute" in the learned language, could be spared thanks to the virginal *mediatrix*, the Latin qualifier of the Virgin in her capacity as mediator between earthly sinners and heavenly redeemer. As the junction where God and humanity intersected, the Mother of God was ideally suited to help individual human beings and her child meet each other halfway. By interceding with her son and being heard by him, she has access to the heavenly father who can bring a magic solution through salvation.

As the chant rises, the tumbler's leaps and skips grow more arduous. He coordinates his physical devotions with the verbal and musical worship of the monks in the church above him. In straining to execute his service, he goes so far as to extemporize hitherto unseen and unattempted new moves for the Virgin. Finally, the heavy-breathing exertion causes him to collapse, sweat-slicked from head to foot. A simile that likens the wetness exuding from him to fat oozing from meat on a spit may bring home how he treats his fleshly self like a dray animal. In this self-inflicted physical mortification, the tumbler resembles Arnulf, a lay brother from the Cistercian monastery at Villers in Belgium, whose life was celebrated in the second decade of the thirteenth century by the monk Goswin of Bossut. According to the macabre minutiae, the masochistically inclined, devout brother scourged his body with all manner of homemade devices to cause himself exquisite pain. Another lay brother from the same institution afflicted his flesh to the point where a witness likened him to one of the desert fathers. In any case, the entertainer's sweatiness in *Our Lady's Tumbler* is reemphasized in a later performance, when his perspiration dribbles down into the middle of the crypt. In his one-man sweatshop, we can picture the paving stones whitened by the salt from the effusion of sweat and tears. Let us scrape a sample and submit it to a little testing in the laboratory of language and literary history.

Sweat Cloth

The convert makes a habitual routine of his impromptu ritual. Mystified by his absence during the canonical hours, one of the brethren shadows the former jongleur stealthily, spies upon his acrobatic dance, and, finding it comic, induces the leader of the abbey to join him as an onlooker. The guffaw he intended was not a "laugh with" of shared joy, but a "laugh at" of jeers, heckling, and tongue-clucking. Yet the last laugh ends up being on the tattletale. When the dance ends, he and the abbot see the statue of Mary come to life, descend, and dry the tumbler by fanning him with a cloth.

What are we to make of the sweat that exudes from the lay brother? What did the damp signify, and how would it have been viewed? Madonnas in crypts have often

served females. Women have put their faith in such images to be magical solutions, expecting them to act as fertility drugs, take the edge off pain in childbirth, ensure successful delivery, and fix diseases of the reproductive and sexual organs. Yet let us not forget that the jongleur is male. His manliness is particularly apparent in his bedraggled wetness. The aphorism holds that "royals glow, women perspire, and men sweat." By this measure the jongleur belongs among the sweatiest of the sweaters. In medical jargon, he could be diagnosed as hyperhidrotic. Apparently, he has pores like fire hydrants. The perspiration could further betoken the physicality that makes so very lowly the tumbler's type of profession and performance. In this event, the Virgin's gesture could be tantamount to a healing touch. It cures the gymnast of the corporeality that threatens to debar him not merely from monasticism but even more grievously from salvation.

As we know by now, the Madonna's treatment for the entertainer's condition in *Our Lady's Tumbler* is to apply a textile. Whatever functions the object may have fulfilled earlier, in this scene it is pressed into use for sopping or fanning. A person communicating in Latin would have called it a *sudarium*, or "sweat cloth," which refers to the liquid that such fabrics mop up. A modern Italian would designate it instead as a *fazzoletto*, or "facecloth," which goes back ultimately to the noun for face, from where people most often wipe sweat. The associations between sweat cloths and athletics fall entirely within the realm of the ordinary in today's world. The religious context for such pieces of fabric within Christianity may be less familiar. For centuries, wrangles have raged over a crazy quilt (so to speak) of relics that have been designated at one time or another by the above-mentioned *sudarium*. The Gospel of John provides a major basis for the subsequent interest in such artifacts. The writer makes no mention of a sweat-soaked textile in the entombment of Jesus. Yet in describing the empty sepulcher, he refers to both nondescript linens and a cloth of this specific type that had been upon his head. The original Greek word is *soudarion*, a borrowing from the language of the Western Romans.

Various items designated as sweat cloths have been revered as relics of Christ. One would be the facecloth of Oviedo in northern Spain. At the risk of casting a pall upon this discussion, burial cloths must be mentioned. They are intimately related to face- and sweat cloths. Most famously, the shroud of Turin, a much-controverted length of linen that bears the image of a man and that has been alleged to be the winding cloth from the burial of none other than Jesus himself (see Fig. 3.18), remains the subject of debate to the present. So too does the image of Edessa, an imprint allegedly left on a cloth by the visage of Christ while still living. This likeness of Jesus was in effect the first icon.

Any discussion of perspiration that involves the Christian savior cannot help but call to mind the visuality and viscerality of the episode involving Veronica (see Fig 3.19), whose very name speaks to her function. Perhaps a hybrid form from two languages, the compound may fuse a Latin adjective for "true" and a Greek noun, scrambled by metathesis during Latinization, for "icon," "image," or "likeness." In



Fig. 3.18 The Shroud of Turin (original on left, processed negative by Dianelos Georgoudis on right). Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Dianelos Georgoudis (2014), CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turin_shroud_positive_and_negative_displaying_original_color_information_708_x_465_pixels_94_KB.jpg



Fig. 3.19 Martin Shongauer, *Saint Veronica*, ca. 1480. Engraving. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 3.20 Hans Memling, *Saint Veronica*, ca. 1470–1475. Oil on panel, 31.2 × 24.4 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection. Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

legend, a woman of Jerusalem by this name (so the story goes) held a veil, cloth, or piece of linen to Jesus's countenance as he carried the cross to his crucifixion on Calvary (see Fig. 3.20). With it she wiped away sweat, blood, and gore. By being pressed to Christ's features, the swatch became a life mask. From his bodily fluids, it received a miraculous imprint that reproduced his features (see Fig. 3.21). The story goes that Veronica presented the textile to the Roman emperor Tiberius. To this day, a piece purporting to be this very item is held in the basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican. In iconography, it is sometimes borne by two angels. (In *Our Lady's Tumbler* the towel is gripped in one, perhaps angelic, hand that reaches down with it to swab or fan the tumbler's brow.)

In a nod to her truly iconic name, the cloth of Veronica is known today as the vernicle, a Western Christian equivalent of a depiction of Jesus's face that had its own name and story, both connected with the Greek East. The *mandylion*, as this other image was called, was supposedly painted by one of Christ's contemporaries. The legend held that the portrait by this painter was brought to Edessa at the request of the monarch there, Abgar the Black. In the tenth century, the object was moved to Constantinople. It disappeared from the capital city of the Eastern Romans during the sack that occurred in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. Its subsequent whereabouts



Fig. 3.21 Martin Shongauer, *The Bearing of the Cross with Saint Veronica*, ca. 1480. Engraving, 16.5 × 11.8 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art. Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

have been the stuff of much conjecture. It has been associated with various textile relics owned and displayed later in the West, some of which still exist. The Western cloth of Veronica vaporized the whole problem of iconicity, since it was not a painting by an artist but the direct impression that the countenance of the Christian savior left upon a cloth. In the legend, the textile had been applied to the front of his head as an act of charity by the woman after whom it was named. Thus, it belonged squarely among images that were designated by a Greek adjective that means "not handmade": the fabric was manufactured, but not the face represented upon it. In this quality it can be compared with the shroud of Turin.

The material was also designated by the Latin word that later evolved via French into the English "towel." In *Our Lady's Tumbler* the equivalent noun in the vernacular describes the textile the Virgin wields. This same word also denotes a holy cloth inserted in a piece of wood that was purchased by King Louis IX of France in 1247. This relic was conveyed to the Sainte-Chapelle, the royal "Holy Chapel" located in the heart of Paris. It may have been identical with the mandylion. The item employed to comfort the tumbler could have been either a thick and absorbent fabric designed to sponge away sweat or a thinner strip from a bigger piece of clothing. In either case, the stuff must not be underappreciated. Thanks largely to contacts with the so-called cult of the Mother of God in Constantinople, textiles insinuated themselves into the fabric of life, death, and afterlife in the medieval West. Their cultural resonance at the time was anything but threadbare.

The Weighing of Souls

No pain, no gain.

After the abbot has seen the monkish acrobat in action, nothing happens for a while to rupture the ritual. But eventually the leader of the community bids the tumbler to meet with him. A summons from a person higher in the hierarchy can be overawing, along the lines of a subpoena—literally an injunction to come "under penalty." Being dragged into the boss's office or into a judge's chambers is not often a good thing.

The lay brother shows up in a fright for the interview with his superior. He is not braced for a David-and-Goliath fight of lone laic against "the man." Instead, he is scared nearly to death that he is to be drummed out of the cloister. The outcome is not what he expects. Quite the contrary: he finds himself praised—a monastery is just the place for his cultlike devotion. Upon realizing that he is not in trouble, he goes weak in the knees and swoons from what might be diagnosed medically as orthostatic hypotension. At least in the case of the enervated entertainer, the physiological effects of breakneck change from grave apprehensiveness to intense relief are dire. Furthermore, they are compounded by exhaustion from untold days of repeated performances in the crypt. The result overwhelms his debilitated constitution. The initial fainting spell is only the first symptom of a more drastic turn for the worse. The

burdens, both physical and spiritual, have overtaxed the brother and take a dreadful toll. After a swift decline, he dies. His only hope for salvation rests upon the Virgin: she remains, as she has been all along, his sole exit strategy. When the jongleur's soul departs from his body to transit from the vale of tears (at death, human beings "give up the ghost"—literally, they breathe out their spirit), Mary must release it from damnation by wresting it from the talons of demons. These agents of Satan thought to claim the tumbler's spirit as theirs because of blemishes in the life he had led before entering the abbey. The performer is saved and ends up on the side of the angels, but only after a white-knuckle prelude in which punishment seems the likelier outcome. Salvation could not come in more nip-and-tuck a fashion than this.

Although the sequence of events in which a celestial forearm handed down a towel from within a cumulus would seem to end with the jongleur on cloud nine, we are shown only that the mediation of the Virgin induces God or an angelic agent to spare him from perpetual torment. The hand is related to what is known technically as a *manus Dei* or *dextera Dei*. In Christian art, the motif of the divine (right) hand went back to late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. A full-length depiction of God as a human figure would have crossed the red line of the Second Commandment. Instead, the representation of a hand or hand and forearm symbolized the deity's intervention in human affairs. The hand reminds the viewer that in medieval theology, God performs all miracles.

The aphorism that "death is the great equalizer" has been in circulation since the mid-nineteenth century at the latest. Such thinking would have been utterly foreign in the Middle Ages. Existence then was a cliffhanger until the very end. The episode of *Our Lady's Tumbler* calls to mind scenes in art of the act that is called technically by the Greek compound *psychostasis*. Meaning "soul-weighing," this operation is a stock element in Christian eschatology. When Jesus Christ presides at the Last Judgment, the Archangel Saint Michael weighs out a soul's good and bad deeds on the pans of a scale to determine whether it will be damned or redeemed (see Fig. 3.22). In this endgame, Satan had anything but a take-no-prisoners outlook: he wanted all the hostages he could get. In iconography, such scenes often involve the spiritual part of a human being portrayed as a miniature body that is hotly contested by angels and demons. Vignettes of this sort record a last-minute (or just past the last minute) out-of-body experience. The immortal essences of lucky people are saved by the better angels of their natures—often, as in this case, with a little moonlighting by the Mother of God. Alongside all her other obligations, she has nearly unique powers to tip the balance in favor of those who have sinned. This capacity of hers explains why Mary is to die for. The tumbler has not yet evolved into the juggler he will become in the late nineteenth century, but she neutralizes gravity and renders him as weightless as any of the juggling clubs in his descendant's legerdemain: he floats to heaven, wafted by divine agents.

The motif of soul-weighing is alluded to once in a version of the story of the jongleur produced in 1906, on one folio side of a book that features pseudomedieval

artwork to accompany the text. It depicts the juggler as a monk, about to be borne aloft by attendant spirits who have his arms in a death grip. To the side, a demon, clutching the deceased's one-piece undergarment, gives us a black look (see Fig. 3.23). The tumbler is not automatically sanctified. To gain salvation, his soul still requires intercession by way of the Madonna. Only after her intervention can her proxies truly spirit him away, and only after it does even the sky cease to be the limit: he reaches the empyrean.

In a quintessential Marian miracle tale, the Virgin saves the day, or at least the sinner, during the grace period between death and heaven or hell. She intervenes, not a moment too soon, to enfranchise from the devil a wrongdoer who has committed either a specific or a repeating pattern of transgressions. She can do so by serving as an eleventh-hour character witness, but often she steps in even when the malefactor seems unsalvageable. The story of the jongleur differs from this typical formula more than a jot and tittle. Although Mary performs her customary soteriological function by sparing an individual after death, the real miracle take place when she arranges for the same evildoer to be comforted during his mortal life—and so the medieval painter fittingly chooses for the sole illumination of the poem the scene with the "towel." Our eyes are directed away from the celestial realm until the very end of the story. At that juncture, it intrudes epiphanically, so that we may not forget the afterworld to follow the present one, the hereafter to arrive after the here and now.

The protagonist of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is a secular who has not been deeply monkified. In fact, he secularizes the liturgy more than the abbey monasticizes him. He privatizes the customarily collective action of monks as they observe the canonical hours. In effect, he is an early adopter in embracing the practice of dedicating personal worship to Mary. In many miracle tales, individual devotion to the Virgin laicizes the regimen that was executed in the daily liturgical round of monks and many in the clergy. At each of the canonical hours, the devotee carries a special load for the Mother of God. This aping of monasticism by laypeople has come to be called the Little Office or the Hours of the Virgin. A story about a cleric of Pisa is the most famous one in which a worshiper sings the hours in private and in secret. After being browbeaten by his family into marrying, he is confronted in his wedding bed by Mary and motivated by her to return to her service. Such exclusive reverence, even more powerful when it took place before a Madonna, would become a potent feature of lay piety during the later Middle Ages.

We are never told of any specific act committed by the tumbler that would qualify as a major or even a minor sin—a delict or peccadillo. The jongleur seems instead to be the object of finger-pointing for the very nature of his premonastic profession and way of life. Another possible fly in the ointment would be his postmonastic inability to contribute to the abbey-wide team effort to express veneration in established ways of worship. In any case, his off-the-cuff liturgy turns out to outclass what the choir monks themselves manage to achieve. The similarities with other Marian miracle tales resume when *Our Lady's Tumbler* depicts the Virgin interceding on behalf of this



Fig. 3.22 The archangel Michael and the act of *psychostasis*. Mural, fifteenth century. Burgos, Iglesia de San Nicolás de Bari. Image courtesy of Ramón Muñoz. All rights reserved.



Fig. 3.23 The juggler is lifted up by angels, rescued from the clutches of a demon. Illustration by Henri Malatesta, 1906. Published in Anatole France, *Le jongleur de Notre-Dame* (Paris: F. Ferroud, 1906), 9.

humble stalwart against conventional institutional hierarchy and jurisdiction. The Mother of God is a populist, and the jongleur-become-lay-brother is one of her people.

The Latin-Less Lay Brother and Our Lady

> A young clergyman asks his bishop, "May I smoke while praying?" In response, he receives a definitive no. Later, the clergyman scolds an older colleague whom he observes puffing on a cigarette while praying. "You shouldn't smoke while praying! I asked the bishop, and he said I couldn't!" The older padre replied, "That's strange. When I asked the bishop if I could pray while smoking, he told me that it was fine to pray anytime!"

The story of the tumbler promotes holiness, but it hardly glorifies monks and clerics. If anything, it goes into rapture over a lay convert who outdoes the fully qualified brethren around him through his meek profession of piety. While they enact the refined rarefication of Latin chant in the choir above him, the layman engages in a complementary, or competing, physical performance in the crypt below them.

Our Lady's Tumbler confronts its audience with a state of play that would not have been conceivable before the twelfth century: a laic with no grasp of Latin or liturgy has the wherewithal to outrun the professional supplicants, that is, the monks. The unlettered man merits salvation through an act of reverence that is not only not Latin-based, but is indeed not even verbal at all. His performance is infralinguistic. After finding no suitable register for himself within the world of Latinity, he ventures outside to fashion a new one all his own. Not bilingual, he has the liability of being tongue-tied, but the edge of being anything but two-tongued. Despite lacking all access to diglossia and the learned language, in the end the jongleur is not rocked onto his spiritual back foot by lacking book knowledge. The tale is at once deeply pious and deeply seditious. It exalts monasteries, while concurrently privileging an illiterate and Latinless lay convert. It favors deed over word, the simplicity of complete silence over the subtlety of sign language. It can be construed as an encouragement to piety, with the message that no matter how nonintellectual and ill-respected a profession may be, its practitioner has a ray of hope for redemption through devotion to the Virgin. All the same, it can be taken equally well as impugning the hollowness of rituals or the meanness of those who subscribe to them. The lay brother becomes a lightning rod, but what comes out of the blue is not a thunderbolt that strikes him dead. The real issue may not be the aberrance of his worship in the crypt but the emptiness of the formal liturgy in the choir up above. Like grace, prayer seems not to happen by committee but in solitude.

Mary helped to open a fissure in the fracturing social system that is known as the three orders of society. In this tripartite schema, two groups counted for their salvation

on the rituals of the pray-ers, namely, the monks and clerics. These dependents were the laborers who produced food and the warriors who provided defense. The lay brothers fell into a gray area. They viewed their labor itself as a means both of glorification to honor God and, in turn, of salvation. They straddled the line between the prayers and the workers, in that their menial tasks became spiritual exercises. They created a new answer to the old question of what constitutes satisfactory veneration. In effect, they achieved a redefining moment of both work and worship, by making grunt work itself a form of piety. Yet in *Our Lady's Tumbler*, the convert is given direct access to his own redemption, without having to bank upon the praying class. He needs no mediation beyond what the Virgin furnishes.

By being written in medieval French, the poem could be parsed as reversing an antiquated hierarchy by preferring the vernacular over the learned language. Yet *Our Lady's Tumbler* takes its revolution beyond the merely linguistic by validating fictionally the movements of a layman's body over the entire semiotics, verbal and gestural, of monks. At the outset, the brother is handicapped by not coming up to scratch on either side of the monastic equation that balanced contemplation and action. The disequilibrium between the two pursuits was a sore point in the twelfth century, encapsulated in the Latin imperatives *ora*, or "pray," and *labora*, or "work." (In modern terms, the two commands lead in opposite directions: prayer is relationship-oriented, with the other party being divine; work is task-oriented.) The pairing of the two injunctions captures much about the spirit of Benedictinism, even though the phrase is nowhere to be found in the *Rule of Saint Benedict*. In fact, the pseudomotto has not been traced any earlier than a nineteenth-century book on Benedictine life. The lateness makes sense, since imposing the two endeavors upon the same class of individuals conflicted automatically with the so-called three orders of society.

In *Our Lady's Tumbler*, the jongleur must make his labor his toil and vice versa. The inextricability of the two activities of prayer and work is made clear coincidentally by a variation in the manuscripts for the text of one line. Three manuscripts present a reading that can be translated "as he did not know how to pray otherwise." Taking matters to the exact opposite pole, two others transmit wording that leads to the English "as he did not know how to work otherwise."

As a minstrel, the tumbler was bound by the very name of his occupation to the notion of serving. A person's art and service have always been closely related. The sticking point is that the tumbler is unfit for the new type of helping hand he hopes to lend—especially since the organ he would need most to ply as a monk would be his tongue. He does not control the language and words that are a prerequisite to the standard prayer and liturgy presumed by the monastic office, and the skills he commands are not regarded as appropriate substitutes for more typical forms of toil within a monastery. It is all very well to speak of the dignity of work, but do the exertions of the jongleurs truly constitute labor? Yet despite these shortfalls, by the end he has vindicated his idiosyncratic *tertium quid* of self-expression. In plain English,

he has staked out for himself a new middle course between two already known ways for expressing himself.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Mary reaches her peak, partly courtesy of her very accessibility through prayer. *Our Lady's Tumbler* is aligned more with popular religion than with formal theology, in that it presents the Mother of God not so much in her role as an intercessor as in her guise as a power in her own right. But the Madonna of the medieval French poem is, like all Madonnas, an artistic representation of Mary. The backdrop against which she is depicted is a Cistercian monastery and its church. This institution conjures up the hierarchy within organized religion at its most orthodox. Churches had been dedicated to the Blessed Virgin since the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore or "Saint Mary Major" in Rome, as early as 432. In much of Western Europe, the Mother of God underwent a surge of veneration in the Carolingian period. This was the time, preceding and succeeding Charlemagne, that prevailed from the mid-eighth century through the late tenth. For all of that, the cult of the Virgin experienced no efflorescence then on the level of the resurgence that held sway from the twelfth century on.

Among ecclesiastics, the monastic orders generally and the Cistercian monks particularly displayed undivided loyalty to the Mother of God during what is often called the long twelfth century. This chronological period extends from approximately as early as 1050 to as late as 1230. Of the many lay syndicates outside the Church that cultivated a relation of their own to the Virgin, professional entertainers, especially composers of song, stand out. An ardent courtly lover and love poet has one sort of relationship to a standoffish beloved lady; a Mary-fixated trouvère another to the Mother of God. It would be ill advised to draw facile likenesses between the two types of association. But for all that, it would be even more erroneous to disregard connections between the two roles. The tumbler has been wont to perform for large audiences, but he has also become familiar for a pas de deux in which he dances alone with an unseen Mary.

Our Lady's Tumbler is shot through with an oddly relevant tension between the communal, rule-based devotion of the choir monks, who chant in church within a monastery dedicated to the Virgin, and the personal, highly irregular obeisance to her of the jongleur. The differences between the liturgy of the monks and the leaps of the lay brother are instantly graspable. But what distinguishes the entertainer's love from a courtly lover's? A private love binds the gymnast to Mary, not to an earthbound mistress as a aristocratic love poet might celebrate. Furthermore, the performer's passion articulates itself not in courtly song but instead in a balletic billet doux. The dance is not as simple as it may seem at first blush. For one thing, it must be appreciated as an extension of the silence to which the laic so touchingly consigns himself, for want of articulateness in words or signs. Concomitantly, and contrapuntally, the bodily movement is a form of language. Indeed, it ties together a most physical act by

human beings with the loftiest principles of the universe, the cosmic dance of the stars, celestial objects, and time itself as viewed from a terrestrial perspective. In the eyes and ears of heaven, all the operations of the cosmos are a language enunciated and comprehended without any trace of babel. God understands what the juggler means by his every movement, the same as he does the complex moves and music of the sun, moon, and planets. The English journalist and playwright Frederic Vanson (see Fig. 3.24) condenses this cosmology as the concluding message in the heroic couplets of his 1978 *Our Lady's Tumbler*:

> The moral of this story? Let us say
> That Jesus also has his dancing day,
> Who dances in the heavens and the seasons,
> Who dances in the thoughts of proper reasons,
> Who, to prove us far more than husks of clay,
> Dances the sun itself on Easter Day?



Fig. 3.24 Frederic Vanson, age 70. Photograph by Kurt Mitherell, 2012. All rights reserved.

4. Reformation Endings: A Temporary Vanishing Act

What Makes a Story Popular?

Mind the gap.

—Warning phrase on the London Underground (1969–)

Our Lady's Tumbler has been described in ways that make its narrative seem anything but time-bound. Yet the timelessness has hardly been unqualified and unobstructed. As it turns out, the narrative has not been immune to the repercussions of cultural change. For as much as one half millennium, it apparently went unrepeated in any form—untold, unsung, unpainted, and unwritten. In all candor, the tale underwent a death and long interment, before the investigators of literary history exhumed it and reactivated it inside the Frankensteinian operating theater of philology. From there, artists, especially an author, a composer, and a diva, wheeled it out on its gurney for recuperation and rehabilitation so that it could reenter the world triumphantly once again, as a kind of medieval revenant. Never count this story out: each time the jongleur has pulled a vanishing act, he has popped up again—a humanized bolt from the blue, a loose cannon in the literary canon.

What makes a tale gain or lose popularity? Many storytellers, whether oral poets, dramatists, or screenplay writers, have wrestled with this question, and laid bets on the answer. Some have elected, or at least professed, not to care. In the case of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, we must wonder why a narrative would enjoy modest success for a couple of centuries from around 1200 before vanishing from sight for roughly five hundred years. Despite being anything but a hollow man, the gymnast went out not with a bang but with a whimper. In the late Middle Ages, he performed a centuries-long disappearing act.

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Terms and phrases such as "Our Lady's Tumbler" and "Jongleur de Notre Dame" may now be keyboarded into search engines. Algorithms enable nearly instantaneous trawls through corpora of digitized texts that encompass a restricted but still meaningful fraction of all writings published in English over the past two centuries. The quantity suffices for generating line graphs that track the relative frequency of both titles across time (see Figs. 4.1 and 4.2). The results show visually the diachronically rising and falling cultural impact of individual translations, literary and musical compositions, performers, and more. With the help of such graphic aids, we can correlate upward and downward spikes. We can map the increasing and decreasing effects of translations into modern languages and other artistic developments, such as Anatole France's adaptation, Jules Massenet's opera, and Mary Garden's arrogation of the leading role in the opera to herself. When comparable tools become available for data mining in earlier bodies of literary resources, what patterns will the ripple effects reveal to us? So far as is now known, only two versions of our story survive from the Middle Ages. The French one bears a different title in each of the five manuscripts. Our textual repository could swell slightly with the discovery of a new version or two, and I would not be surprised if someday a hitherto-unknown exemplum came to light. In the much-quoted words of Alexander Pope, hope springs eternal. Yet even in the most felicitous circumstances, we will never possess enough medieval evidence of *Our Lady's Tumbler* to permit credible statistical analysis. The margin of error is too high. Literature from long ago does not always even allow the geometric certainty that two points determine a line. Words may be made into big data, but in the end, poetry and story—like all art—defy datification.

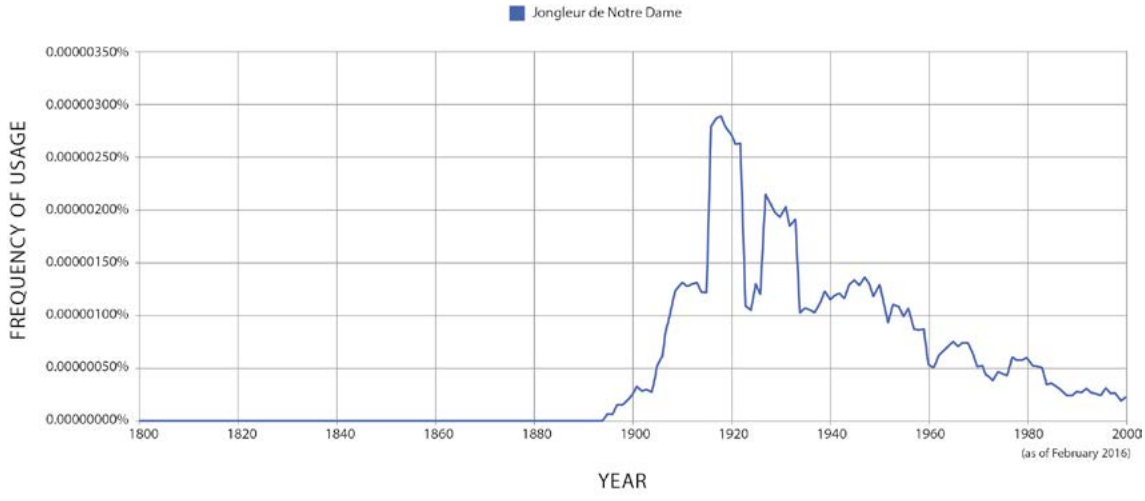


Fig. 4.1 Google Books Ngram data for "Jongleur de Notre-Dame," showing a sharp rise in the first decades of the twentieth century and then a steady decline. Vector art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.



Fig. 4.2 Google Books Ngram data for "Our Lady's Tumbler." As with "Jongleur de Notre-Dame," the phrase peaks before 1920; unlike "Jongleur," the decline is more fitful, dropping deepest only after 1980. Vector art by Melissa Tandysh, 2014. Image courtesy of Melissa Tandysh. All rights reserved.

The thin dribble of the narrative into written culture before the Reformation indicates much in its own right. Even before the first millennium, Marian miracles were established in Byzantium. These tales became archetypes on which subsequent adaptations were based in the West. The more different the versions in circulation, the less likely a story was to ebb away altogether, either permanently or temporarily, without being retrieved and reanimated. In contrast to the French poem, we have only two versions of our Latin narrative, the one in a very cursory exemplum. The exiguity of transmission made the survival of the story insecure.

Rather than seek vainly for information that pertains specifically to *Our Lady's Tumbler*, we would do better to probe by comparison and analogy what we can learn from the sizable medieval literature of Marian miracles. The distribution of this trove across regions, languages, and literary traditions may procure at least some enlightenment. We discover speedily that the impetus toward collecting miracles ran particularly strong in England in the twelfth century. Yet it did not evidence itself commensurately in the mother tongues. In fact, the meager residue of miracles of Our Lady in medieval English and Anglo-Norman pales alongside the multitude in Anglo-Latin versions and even alongside ones in other Western European vernaculars.

The outpouring of literature, at its most intense from the late twelfth through the thirteenth century, matched a devotion to Mary that cut across geographical, linguistic, and social boundaries. Around the time *Our Lady's Tumbler* was set down in writing, Louis IX ruled as king of France. His piety was legendary, and he was canonized in 1297. With good reason, he is commonly designated merely as Saint Louis. Every day he heard the offices of Our Lady. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, the Mass was dedicated to her. On the vigils of the four principal feasts of the Virgin, the king would

mortify his flesh. Two of the six times a year on which he took communion were feasts of Mary. Finally, he made pilgrimages to Marian shrines such as Chartres and Rocamadour.

The Middle Ages and early modernity overlap in multiple ways. The periodization that differentiates between them deserves to be tested and refined. In fact, it has been so sharply faulted that some would favor scrapping any hope of a meaningful division. All the same, the two periods still constitute distinct time zones in the evolution of European culture. Many systems rest on gradations that can be at variance, but even so we rely upon them. In this case, the separateness of the medieval and early modern worlds appears strongly in religion, not only in those regions where Protestantism threw down the gauntlet to Catholicism.

During the Reformation, the whole world of faith implied in *Our Lady's Tumbler* was desecrated and deserted, deteriorated passively from dereliction, endured active destruction, or underwent some composite of such sea changes. In England, one important aspect of the dismantling has become known formally as the dissolution of the monasteries. In the late 1530s, close to one thousand Catholic religious houses were disbanded at the instigation of King Henry VIII. Among the manifold consequences, much of medieval material and textual culture hung by a thread or was even lost. In many places, the iconoclasm of the switch in religions obliterated imagery that had accumulated for centuries. In architecture, the outcome was what Ralph Adams Cram, an early twentieth-century American apologist for the preceding medieval culture (and pre-Reformation Catholic religion), could describe as "the eviscerated, barren, and protestantized cathedrals." Thus, a reality wrought by Reformation and civil war prompted William Shakespeare to allude to "bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang." Throughout England, the churches of monasteries and abbeys were dispossessed and devastated in rapid-fire succession, with the disappearance of both the physical trappings of Catholic Christianity and the human presence of chanting monks.

True, the changes took hold to varying degrees in different locales. The baring and the ruining were not ubiquitous. In fact, the spectrum could be large within a country such as Germany where a geographical division emerged between Catholics and Protestants. For all that, in general Protestantism of the time acquired an anti-Marian accent. Concomitantly, the Reformation had the effect of diminishing the prominence of the Virgin in Christianity. Even in what remained a mainly Catholic region such as France, medieval culture came under a cloud. More than buildings were affected. In confronting the cult of the saints, the reformers felt bound to reshape or eradicate shrines, relics, images, and miracle tales. Protestants were anti-pilgrimage. A logical extension of the same compulsion was to obliterate the narratives underpinning them. Those who disavowed Catholicism had to confront and calumniate all these interrelated phenomena without granting a special dispensation for the worship of Mary. The Mother of God was not given a free pass in the sectarian violence—on the contrary.

Protestant zones, and Catholic hot spots located close to the battle lines between the factions, came to the boil. It became increasingly dangerous there to claim to have witnessed a Marian apparition. The wrath of the Inquisition could be threatened, and supposed visionaries were executed. At the same time, the cultures that came to be bracketed within the catchall designation of the Middle Ages became suspect too. Afterward, it took a long time to overcome the lingering reserve and even disdain for the period. By the seventeenth century, French highbrows could be found who expressed admiration for medieval times and affinity for its literature. But their attraction skewed toward knights and the major protagonists of heroic poetry, not toward monks and monasteries.

The most intemperate reformers in England, Germany, and elsewhere, such as Calvinists, were intent on extirpating from popular culture and discourse all saints, but foremost among them the Virgin. They challenged the extremely slender scriptural, and in fact primarily apocryphal, evidence undergirding some of the beliefs and worship that had burgeoned around Mary. They paid the mother of Jesus her due as the Mother of God, and recognized that she conceived as a virgin, but they emphasized more vehemently than the Catholics the preeminence of Christ, and they denied that the Virgin had escaped from original sin. To accord Mary more attention was Romanism, papism, and idolatry.

The Mother of God had been associated especially with lilies, but now the flower show was over. After being in full bloom in the late Middle Ages, the plants were fading fast. The second of the Ten Commandments enjoins the faithful from worshiping graven images. Out of antipathy to idols, the reformers systematically uprooted, tore asunder, and even incinerated the traditional cult and images of Mary like so many overgrown weeds.

This recrudescence of iconoclasm within Christianity deprived the faithful of the direct engagement that Madonnas facilitated with the characters and events of the New Testament. At the same time, it ruled out the danger of ignorant believers becoming confounded and regarding the objects themselves as inherently divine, rather than as stepping-stones toward the divine. Along with the Virgin, the rabble-rousing reformers got rid of monastic orders, many of which had cherished a special devotion to her. Where monasticism was outlawed, monasteries fell into abeyance and monks disappeared. Additionally, the reform movement contributed to the demise of jongleurs, not because of Mary but because the leaders of the Reformation harbored general reservations about entertainment and art of all sorts. The reformers were antitheatrical and therefore perforce antijongleur.

English Protestants, whose religion acquired the backing of the state, achieved success in their full-force and head-on assaults on the cult of the Virgin. England had bestowed upon the Mother of God a favor second only to that for Christ himself; in fact, the entire country had earned recognition as "Mary's dowry" in acknowledgment of its especial devotion to her. Two and a half centuries earlier, a bishop of Exeter had mandated that every church in his diocese should contain an image of the

Virgin, but now Madonnas incurred acute risk. Depictions of her and of other saints caused consternation because of their anthropomorphism. The importation of the Italian *madonna*, or "my lady," to designate a picture or statue of Mary is attested in England first in 1644, well after Protestantism had asserted a firm grasp there. By then such images were alien and foreign. They were talismanic, objects possessing extraordinary powers, whose veneration was dissonant with the anti-idolatrous and antisuperstitious tenets of Christianity.

In the fundamentalist process of editing the Virgin back to the rather faint contours she had in scripture, the iconoclast reformers felt obliged to wipe out the images of Mary around which para- and postbiblical traditions had ramified into a primordial jungle. Wooden figures of the Mother and Child, enclosed often in tabernacles, were a fixture of most English parish churches, as medieval inventories confirm. Of all these numberless Madonnas, only one from the early thirteenth century has survived. A particularly painful episode to contemplate is the iconophobic (or miso-iconic) vandalization of the Lady Chapel attached to Ely Cathedral (Fig. 4.3). Today the space is strikingly austere, its niches bald of statuary. The sole representation only accentuates both the neat-as-a-pin beauty and the unrelieved bareness. In 1541, reformers beheaded nearly all the dozens of brightly colored statues and smashed almost every single stained glass window that illustrated the biblical typology of the Mother of God and her life story. In 1643, William Dowsing, as commissioner with the charge of destroying "monuments of idolatry and superstition," carried out a further round of iconoclasm, with close attention to image of the Virgin Mary.



Fig. 4.3 Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral. Photograph by Max Gilead, 2010. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Maxgilead (2010), CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DSCF0563,_UK,_Ely,_Cathedral,_Lady_Chapel.jpg

Another notorious episode took place in England in 1538, when zealots effectively imprisoned cult statues of the Virgin in a large storage closet known as Thomas Cromwell's wardrobe of beds. Eventually, they put these images on trial. The reformers were not swayed by the defense mounted on behalf of the admittedly tight-lipped sculptures. Instead, they publicly executed them by burning. The punishment approached state-sanctioned murder. The objects of wood and stone themselves were almost living heretics. By having their statuesque feet put to the fire, they were treated with no more and perhaps even less respect than what was due to common criminals. The point was iconoclastic, to demolish the worship of idols. In that context, the effigies were lightning rods that took a hit for the whole Catholic Church.

Yet inadvertently this treatment of the images by the firebug fanatics perpetuated the very assumptions that it sought to end. In the process, it conceded to them the status of living beings: they were old flames in more than one sense. To the executioners, the broiling of the representations was retributive justice. To their impassioned devotees, the mass cremation must have seemed tantamount to martyrdom. Cult statues of the Virgin were hauled in from such sites as Cardigan, Caversham, Coventry, Doncaster, Ipswich, Lynn, Penrhys, Southwark, Willesden, and Worcester. Then this rogues' gallery was raked over the coals so that Mary could go out in a blaze. To take one out of alphabetical order, a final Madonna hailed from the most hallowed late medieval English shrine of Our Lady, Walsingham in north Norfolk. Along with her sanctuary, she deserves further discussion.

Walsingham, England's Nazareth

The demolition of the shrine and the dispersal of its contents at Walsingham was a singularly earth-shattering act of ruination. The Holy House and church surrounding it have been reconstructed from their image as transmitted in the wax seals of the medieval abbey. Despite all the care, in the replication the originals have been reduced to the merest façade of what they once were (see Fig. 4.4). Reappearances can be deceiving.

The chapel had an elaborate foundation legend. In the account as recorded much later, a Saxon noblewoman and widow experienced three times in 1061 a vision in which the Virgin first transported her mystically in a true flight of fancy to the Holy House of the Annunciation in Nazareth. Then, the Mother of God bade her to honor the announcement of the Incarnation by erecting in Walsingham an exact replica of the home. It would not be easy for her to determine the building site and achieve the construction. For her pains, the visionary was assured that when built, the shrine would enable all those who sought succor there from Mary to receive it. The prediction came true. Between the mid-twelfth century and 1538, Walsingham became one of the most heavily frequented sanctuaries to the Blessed Virgin in England and even in the Christian world. The connection with the unveiling of the birth of Jesus meant that

the Latin prayer known as the Hail Mary was held in special reverence at the chapel and later at the priory on the spot. Among many relics, the holy place was particularly renowned for a phial that allegedly contained milk from the Mother of God.



Fig. 4.4 The remains of Walsingham Priory, Norfolk. Photograph by John Armagh, 2011. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © JohnArmagh (2011), CC BY-SA 3.0, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WalsinghamPriory.jpg



Fig. 4.5 The Walsingham Virgin and Child. Seal (obverse), late twelfth to early thirteenth century. Cambridge, Archives of King's College. Image courtesy of King's College, Cambridge.

Most germane to the story of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is that the Holy House in Walsingham contained a wooden majesty, with Mary on a throne with the infant Jesus seated on her lap. The effigy may have been a Black Virgin or Black Madonna, so called because of its dark hue, an artistic application to the Mother of God of the "I am black but comely" image of the Bride in the biblical Song of Solomon—the closest that the Middle Ages came to the late twentieth-century trope of "black is beautiful." In any event, the carving was annihilated close to a half millennium ago. Yet despite its disappearance hundreds of years before now, we can still form a picture of the Walsingham statue thanks to a representation of it on a seal from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (see Fig. 4.5). Other portrayals are found on the badges of lead or pewter that were retailed as souvenirs to pilgrims. Such tokens could prove that a person had completed a pilgrimage to a given destination. In addition, they could convey the grace of the Virgin to those who encountered them. Other similar keepsakes included pewter flasks. These vessels contained water from the holy wells that were located not far from the shrine. In many regards, these objects functioned as amulets.

The foot traffic of pilgrims to what became the Augustinian priory grew extremely heavy in the late Middle Ages. Walsingham developed into the principal Marian destination in England. The growth in movement gave rise to a rat-a-tat drumbeat of criticism even before the Reformation. In 1356, the Archbishop of Armagh delivered a sermon in which he denounced worship by those who failed to distinguish between a Madonna and the Virgin Mary in heaven herself. By his lights, images of this sort included the representations of Saint Mary at Lincoln, Newarke in Leicester, and Walsingham. Further, he charged the custodians of such holy places with fomenting miracles so as to pad their own coffers. A chronicler described how the Lollard iconomachs slurred the Virgin of Walsingham by calling her in vernacular English "the Witch of Walsingham." These followers of John Wycliffe protested against the custom of referring to the cult image as "our dear Lady of Walsingham" rather than as "our dear lady of heaven." Likewise, they condemned it as "vain waste and idle to trot to Walsingham rather than to each other place where an image of Mary is." To such dissenters, an image is an image is an image: local images and relic cults have no point.

The Renaissance humanist Erasmus gives a detailed picture of Walsingham and his observations when he made a pilgrimage to the site in the summer of 1512, in appreciation of the success that the Church scored against the schismatic King Louis XII of France. The Dutchman's portrayal of his experience is far from altogether positive. He characterizes the community as depending wholly on revenue from pilgrims. His account of their moneymaking machine is acerbic and sharp-tongued, with flashes of hilarious comedy. His hard-edged description of the shrine gives vent to his distaste for the popular devotion of the late Middle Ages. In his finickiness, he shrank back from the physicality of the practices that the *canaille* pursued. Thus he conjures up vividly, and mostly not flatteringly, the lighting, smells, and even

tactile qualities of the objects and spaces involved in the expression of lay piety. In other words, he executes the mental process of sensory integration, by which he makes meaning from information collected by his senses. This is what common sense is all about. He describes the windowless chamber where the image was domiciled, probably with curtains or a canopy billowing around it. This separate space was the original Holy House, which by Erasmus's time had been encased in a far larger chapel. In it, the light of shimmery candles reflected from scores of gold and jewel objects, alongside masses of humbler oblations. Erasmus gives us to believe that despite all the blazing tapers, the inner sanctum offered to the spirit more heat than light.

As a pilgrimage site, Walsingham may be usefully compared with Loreto. The Italian town is by many accounts home to the Holy House. This structure purports to be the home in Nazareth in which Mary was born and raised, received the Annunciation, and lived during the childhood and after the ascension of Jesus. The little building has drawn pilgrims since at the latest the fourteenth century. It was transported, so the story goes, from the Virgin's hometown on the wings of angels to rescue it from infidels. The timing may not be purposeless. The movement began only three years after 1291. That date saw the toppling of Acre, the tail end of the crusader kingdoms in the Holy Land. The retreating campaigners could have transported with them from Nazareth stones from the edifice where the angel Gabriel broke the news to Mary that she would conceive and become the Mother of God. Alternatively, they could have brought back the trauma of having abandoned the house and other important sites to the Muslims. They could have assuaged at least partially the hurt of loss through wish-fulfillment, in the fantasy of the angelic levitation.

Whatever the historical realities of the building and its move, the Holy House offered within the bounds of the European landmass a destination for Christian pilgrims who could no longer venture safely into the Holy Land after the collapse of the crusader states. It became notable in the late fifteenth century. After the destruction of Walsingham, it had every basis on which to surge in popularity. At first, the Holy House was a simple edifice. The chief adornments were a statue of the Virgin beside an altar and a blue-painted ceiling spangled with golden stars. Eventually, the domicile was enclosed within a larger building, and the image of Mary shifted to a plush, jewel-lined niche. This Madonna is held to have been a Black Virgin. A holy card from 1899 illustrates the scene in tacky pastel colors, with a German legend, "Miraculous Transportation of the Holy House to Loreto" (see Fig. 4.6).

Despite undeniable parallels between Walsingham and Loreto, the two shrines diverged in major ways. For one, the scale of the Holy House of Nazareth in the Italian hilltown differed substantially from the one in England. In contrast, the dimensions of the Santa Casa (to use the Italian name for the stone building in Loreto) corresponded reasonably closely to those of the fourteenth-century Slipper Chapel in Walsingham (see Fig. 4.7). This other church, so called because it marked the point at which pilgrims removed their shoes to trudge in their stocking feet to the Holy House itself, was located about a mile south of Walsingham proper.



Fig. 4.6 Postcard depicting the miraculous transfer of the Holy House of Loreto (Milan, Italy: Tipografia Santa Lega Eucaristica, 1899).

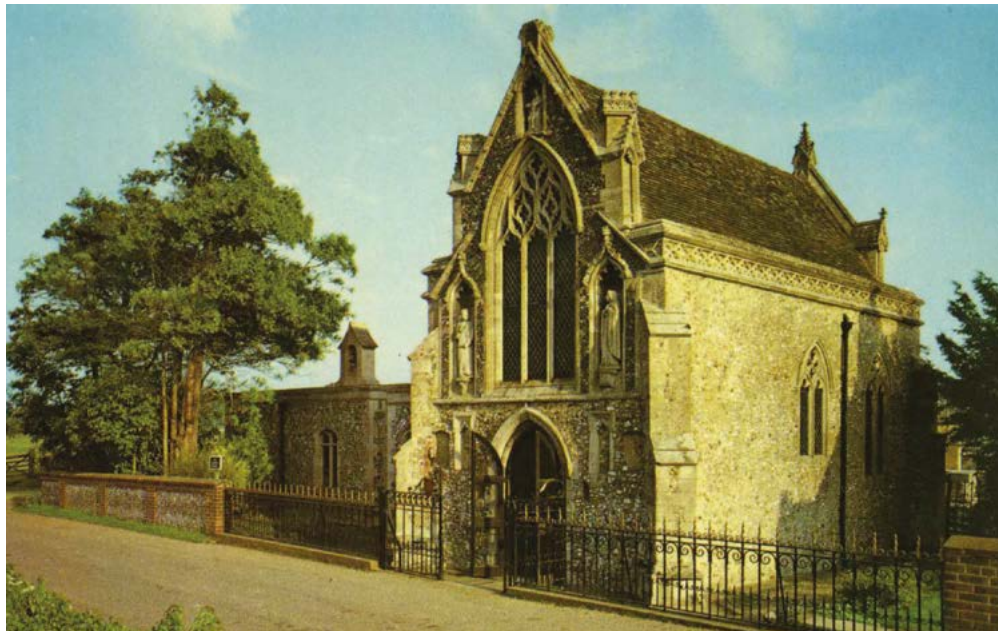


Fig. 4.7 Postcard depicting Slipper Chapel, Walsingham (Norwich, UK: Jarrold & Sons, early twentieth century). © Jarrold & Sons. All rights reserved.

The pilgrims to the settlement in Norfolk included royalty, who made sumptuous gifts for the maintenance of the staff as well as for the adornment of the sanctuary. As elsewhere, candle devotion was central to the cult of the Virgin at Walsingham. By no mere coincidence, the statue of Our Lady there was taken away to be consumed by fire in the aftermath of a royal injunction in 1538, "Forbidding the Placing of Candles before Images and Other Superstitious Practices." Tapers figured largely in the monarchs' generosity to the shrine. King Henry III, the first royal to come, paid at least thirteen visits, with the initial one in 1226. In 1240, for the feast of the Virgin's Conception, he ordered two thousand votives to be burned there and at Bury St. Edmunds. In 1246, he commissioned a golden crown to be placed upon the head of the Madonna at Walsingham. In 1251, he spent the feast of the Annunciation on pilgrimage there, and made the gift of both two silver candlesticks and a valuable chasuble of red samite. King Edward I betook himself to the shrine twice, the second time on Candlemas Day in 1296. The candlelight can be pictured easily that would have coruscated when the feast of this holiday was celebrated. King Henry VII came no fewer than four times. King Henry VIII of England, who was responsible for the demise of the statue and much else in the community, paced barefoot two miles to reach the site in 1511, made lavish donations there, and kindled a candle before the Madonna in March 1538.

The character Avarice in William Langland's late fourteenth-century personification allegory *Piers Plowman* takes a pledge that reflects the author's reprobation of the motivations that propelled pilgrims to make the trek to Walsingham. The mention of a peregrination there had a special cachet. Of course, worshipers also journeyed to other sites relating to the Virgin in England as well as on the continent. For example, rich documentation survives on Marian pilgrimage in late medieval and early modern Germany. Such voyages eventuated in an unalterable syllogism: pilgrimages led to shrines, and such holy places (above all, ones connected with Mary) centered upon images. For the reformers, the counter-syllogism was patent: to end such veneration, desacralize its objectives. The corollary was equally unmissable: to desecrate sanctuaries, destroy Madonnas. In the Reformation, modernizing meant de-Madonna-izing.

Toward the end of 1538, the reformist bishop of Worcester Hugh Latimer (see Fig. 4.8) notoriously decreed that the image of the Virgin in his diocese—and others, including the one at Walsingham—should be charred. Latimer addressed the letter in question to none other than to Thomas Cromwell, chief minister of King Henry VIII. The bishop's aspiration was soon fulfilled. The incineration of the carvings, and the shutting down of all shrines in England, were concomitants to the suppression and dissolution of the monasteries. Henry VIII ordered these draconian acts in 1536 and 1539, and Cromwell oversaw them as agitator-in-chief. The aftereffects included the abandonment and devastation of many abbeys. The figure of Our Lady of Walsingham was abducted to be put to the torch; the swank sanctuary was first despoiled of its

gold and silver ornaments and then dismantled; and the priory and its dependencies were largely razed and abandoned. The sites and image of Our Lady that can be seen today are anything but original. Rather, they have resulted from a Marian revival in Britain that has been supported by the papacy since the late nineteenth century.



Fig. 4.8 Unknown artist, *Hugh Latimer*, late sixteenth century. Oil on panel, 55.9 × 41.9 cm. London, National Portrait Gallery. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London. All rights reserved.

The Madonnas that have been enumerated were neither the first nor the only ones to suffer the fate of destruction. When the impetus to remake the fabric of the Church was taken very literally, many others were denuded of their garments, irreparably mangled, or even summarily destroyed in expressions of iconoclasm by the riffraff. In England, a hard-edged campaign was waged against what was regarded as Mariolatry, the according to Mary of worship due to God and God alone.

The first bout of statue-tory abuse extended to the removal in 1535 of an Our Lady's girdle, worn by expectant mothers to help them in their pregnancies and especially in childbirth. Often effigies suffered radical mastectomies in which their breasts were stabbed or hacked off. Their arms were severed and their faces defaced. The representations of the infant Jesus that they held were cut away. In 1581, for instance, the Virgin and Child along with other figures were subjected to what might be called holy (or unholy) vandalism wrought upon the Cheapside Cross in London. In a renovation, the Madonna was replaced by a semi-nude image of the Roman goddess Diana. Later, the Mary was reinstalled but after twelve nights she was de-crowned, beheaded, and shorn of her offspring. Another relatively late manifestation of the

iconoclasm came in 1578, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, nearly two decades after she succeeded her Catholic half sister Mary to the throne in 1559. While touring Norfolk near Thetford, the ruler made what was presented as being a chance discovery. In a hay house, she happened upon an image of Our Lady that she considered an idol, and she had it carbonized.

The sixteenth century lacked most of the devices that are for the taking today to record and document such barbarism visually. Yet around 1570, an unknown artist captured a scene of iconoclasm within a picture painted with oil paints. The panel depicts the young King Edward VI receiving the blessing of a bedridden Henry VIII and the Pope, who along with the monks to his right is being crushed by the Bible (see Fig. 4.9). Through a window, reformers are visible outside. The two nearest tug on ropes to tip and overthrow a statue of the Virgin and Child. Not only in England did what could be called Mariaphobia express itself in anti-Marian iconoclasm. In Germany, one excruciating act of such Madonna mayhem put in the crosshairs not a statue but a painting. An artwork of the Virgin and Child by the artist Hans Holbein the Elder suffered destruction in the cathedral in Augsburg in 1537. In some locations, images of Mary became the objects of literal tugs-of-war between opposing factions of Protestant reformers and Roman Catholics.

What have been nicknamed "cults of battered Marys" arose. All over Europe, Protestant hooligans would subject to misuse and mutilation Madonnas that would be rescued and sometimes repaired by Catholic handymen of holiness. Thus, specific representations of Our Lady endured abuse in Paris repeatedly, in Geneva, and in the English College Chapter of Valladolid (see Fig. 4.10). Mistreatment of a similar sort was supposedly meted out to depictions of the Virgin during conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in the nineteenth century in England. By the mid-seventeenth century, a census of images would have found their number and distribution pared back sharply because of iconoclastic reformers.

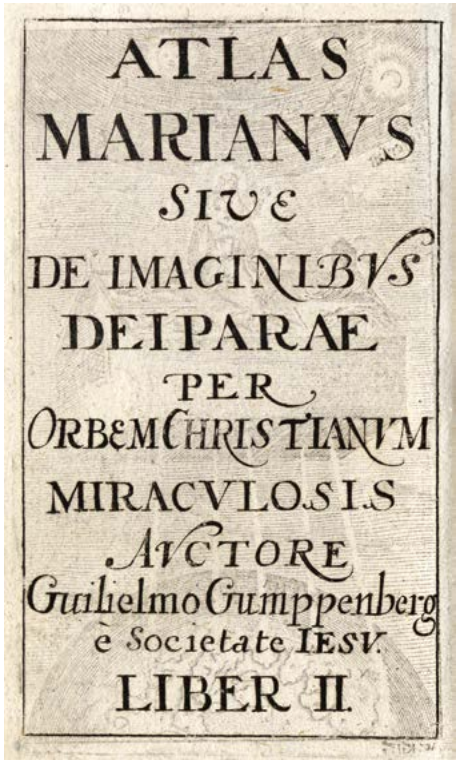
In the 1650s, a Jesuit tallied over one thousand Marian shrines, providing for each a brief history and an engraving of its Madonna (see Figs. 4.11 and 4.12). The four-digit headcount is remarkable. As a sequel, the author drew up a discrete index containing a subsection listing wounded Virgins, as well as taxonomies of weapons wielded against them, portions of the likenesses that suffered thuggery, types of damage, and kinds of action taken by Mary in response to the contusions. A roll call taken in the early nineteenth century in France would have tabulated another sharp drop, since the French Revolution brought about the destruction of the effigies and relics that had outlasted the Reformation. Across the ages, Madonnas that have demonstrated a special capacity to withstand persecution have become the objects of popular devotion, legends, and superstitions. We will see medieval images that demonstrated impressive skills as proto-survivalists, but for the present let us focus on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



Fig. 4.9 Unknown artist, *King Edward VI and the Pope*, ca. 1575. Oil on panel, 62.2 × 90.8 cm. London, National Portrait Gallery. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London. All rights reserved.



Fig. 4.10 Nuestra Señora de la Vulnerata. Statue, sixteenth century. Valladolid, Real Colegio de San Albano. Photograph by Rubén Ojeda, 2010. Image from Wikimedia Commons, © Rodelar (2010), CC BY-SA 4.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuestra_Señora_de_la_Vulnerata.jpg





Figs. 4.11 and 4.12 Title page and title illustration of Wilhelm Gumppenberg, *Atlas Marianus sive de imaginibus Deiparae per orbem christianum miraculosis*, vol. 1 (Ingolstadt, Germany: Haenlin, 1657), with Virgin and Child on the Holy House, and beams showing its westward movements.

Madonnas of the World Wars

A man is ready to leap to his death from a tall building. An Irish policeman barrels up and yells, "Don't do it! Think of your mother!" The man answers, "My mother's dead; I am going to do it." The cop says, "What about your father?" "He left when I was a baby." The cop goes down the list with no success until finally he shouts, "Don't jump! Remember the Blessed Virgin!" The would-be suicide asks, "Who is that?" The officer answers, "Jump, Protestant! You're blocking traffic!"

Mary is an obvious dividing line between Protestants and Catholics. After the Reformation, the disparity between the two branches of Christianity sharpened. Among other changes, different regions became distinguished by the absence or presence of the Virgin on street corners, in statues or paintings. To Protestants, the sight of such images grew to be unfamiliar in every respect, whereas to Catholics in many places, these representations were unexceptional and even humdrum in daily life. In 1859, Henry Adams commented upon the "old road-side saints, crucifixes and

Madonnas" that he encountered in the German region of Franconia, which he would never have seen in New England. During World War I, such sculptures and pictures belonged to the religious paraphernalia of Catholicism that took doughboys from the United States and their equivalents from other predominantly Protestant countries by surprise. Those soldiers who had been born and bred Catholic were more accustomed to the trappings of Marianism.

On both the front lines and the home front in France, Catholic Germany, and elsewhere, people were likelier in wartime to turn for comfort to the Mother of God than at any time since the years surrounding the Franco-Prussian war. Military conflict, political tension, and economic desperation have often furnished a powerful recipe for sightings of the Virgin and for miracles associated with her and with her representation in Madonnas. Our Lady of Fátima in Portugal was the foremost case in point. A cult arose there from appearances of Mary to three shepherd children that took place once a month over one half year in 1917. This manifestation of the Virgin was later made the basis for what became effectively a Marian Cold Warrior, since for the first few decades in the second half of the twentieth century the message of Fátima was construed as a denunciation of Communism and the Soviet Union.

Particularly awesome in the apocalyptic land- and cityscapes of World War I were postbellum representations of images that appeared to have been spared divinely from mangling or burning after bombardment. For instance, a statue miraculously unaffected by the fracas of warfare was the Mary of Igny, a thirteenth-century jewel in the crown, which came through without a scratch despite all the harm inflicted upon Reims cathedral by bombs and fire in September 1914 (see Fig. 4.13). Another such representation was a carving of Notre Dame of Lourdes that stood on the altar of the Holy Virgin in the church of Bouchoir in Picardy, which was shelled in the Battle of the Somme (see Fig. 4.14). On a postcard the caption explains: "The shrapnel exploded in the war and destroyed everything in front of the statue. The Virgin was touched by neither the shrapnel nor the stones that came loose all around her head."

A third survivor was a gilded Madonna, sometimes called the "Divine Shepherdess," that crowned the basilica of Notre-Dame de Brebières. This sizable house of God was built in the modest town of Albert in Picardy at the end of the nineteenth century to replace the parish church that had grown too cramped to accommodate pilgrims. The worshipers who descended upon the basilica were caught up in the Marian fervor connected with the sites of apparitions of the Mother of God at La Salette and Lourdes. This sanctuary became an objective because it housed the Black Virgin after which it was named. The Madonna in question is so called after the small community of Brebières. The noun, meaning "pastures," derives from the French *brebis*, or "sheep." The onomastic lore is not beside the point. After all, legend held that this representation of Notre Dame was unearthed in a field near the town by a shepherd whose flock kept returning to the same patch of tufts of verdant grass. When the herdsman clawed at the sod with a hoe, the tool banged upon a statue of the Virgin and Child that had been buried there.



Fig. 4.13 Postcard depicting a damaged thirteenth-century statue of the Virgin after the bombardment of Reims (Paris: H. George, 1914).



Fig. 4.14 Postcard depicting a ruined chapel of the church of Bouchoir, with the miraculously unharmed Virgin in the background (ca. 1915).

The sculpture atop the basilica was different and unusual, since it depicted Mary holding the infant Jesus aloft to God. The dome supporting it was struck in howitzer and mortar shelling by German artillery in 1914, during the Battle of the Somme (see Fig. 4.15). Despite being hit, the artwork was not destroyed. Nor did it plummet to the earth, but dropped more than ninety degrees to dangle slightly below parallel to the ground. From its posture it become world-famous as the Leaning or Golden Virgin of Albert (see Fig. 4.16). To many members of the military, the representation was part and parcel of their first exposure to Catholicism, whose beliefs, practices, and expressions seemed exotic and alien. The combatants developed many interpretations of the Madonna's circumstance. Apparently her stance could mean almost anything, except nothing. To one, she looked to be leaning down to snag the Child, like a fallen infantryman. To others, she was presenting him as a sacrifice or as a peace offering to expedite the close of the war. To saltier wits, the destabilized statue looked like a flunking phallus as it flopped flaccidly at less than half mast. Not accepting that sometimes a statue lolling below the horizontal is just a statue lolling below the horizontal, she was dubbed the "Lady of the Limp."

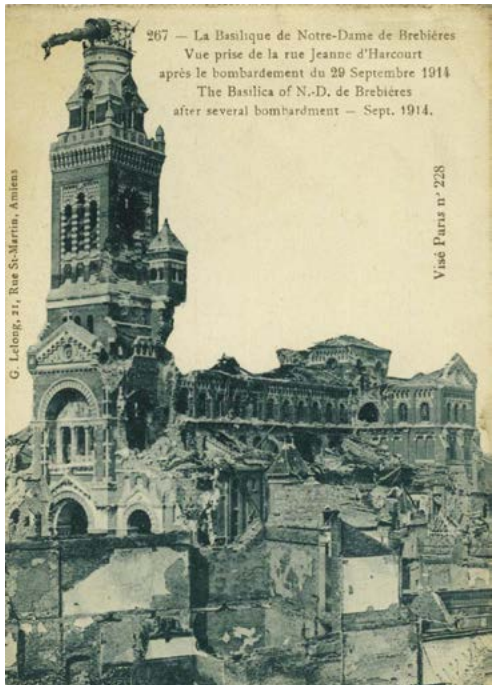


Fig. 4.15 Postcard depicting the "Golden Virgin of Albert" dangling atop the Basilique de Notre-Dame de Brebières (Amiens, France: G. Lelong, ca. 1914).



Fig. 4.16 Postcard depicting the "suspended Virgin of Albert Cathedral" (London: Pictorial Newspaper Co., ca. 1914).

Soldiers on both sides subscribed widely to two related conventions, too recent and too male to be termed old wives' tales. One was that the battle royale would end when the statue finally fell. The other held that the side to bring her down would lose in the conflict. Neither superstition was borne out. What was the upshot, so to speak? To begin with ballistics, the Virgin remained attached to the dome until annihilated by British heavy guns in 1918. The war stretched out for a little while, and the Allies carried the day. In the meantime, the mangled Madonna had not fifteen minutes of fame but four years of it. During that stretch, it became known worldwide through postcards dispatched from the battlefront to the home front. Many belligerents saw the statue in its partly unglued condition and shared the experience with far-off friends and family in their own countries by mailing images. Eventually a replica, no longer drooping, was put back in place when the basilica was reconstructed from 1927 to 1931.

World War I did not mark the end of miraculously preserved Marian images. In World War II, a thirteenth-century wooden Madonna in the nave of the parish church at La Gleize in Belgium was the only item in the war-scarred building to stay

unscathed when the town was leveled in 1944 during the bruising Battle of the Bulge (see Fig. 4.17). Nearly seventy years later, in October 2012, Hurricane Sandy struck the spit of land in Queens, New York, known as Breezy Point. Its gusting wind and storm surge left tremendous havoc in their wake. Torrential rains gave way to even worse. The windblown and waterborne disrepair was compounded by the conflagration that burned uncontrolled afterward. One house at the corner of Oceanside Avenue and Gotham Walk was among the more than one hundred homes fried to ashes. Even so, the site became a cause for hope. Amid all the rubbish from the destruction, a statue of the Virgin that had been placed in a niche in the garden was somehow left upright and intact (see Fig. 4.18). Whether by fluke or by miracle, the future will no doubt also have its share of Marys uninjured after catastrophes, and those images too will be made rallying points for survivors.



Fig. 4.17 Statue of the Virgin in the ruins of Le Gleize Church, Belgium, after the Battle of the Bulge. Photograph, 1945. Washington, D.C., Archives of American Art, Thomas Carr Howe papers, 1932–1984. Image courtesy of the Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.



Fig. 4.18 A Madonna statue among the wreckage of Hurricane Sandy in Breezy Point, New York. Photograph by Mark Lennihan, 2012. Image courtesy of the Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Literary Iconoclasm

To return to the Reformation: in those regions where effigies of the Virgin were destroyed, a commensurate effacement of stories about her would have taken place. Sometimes the clampdown probably took place through the handling or mishandling of manuscripts by the reformers. A 1535 letter to Thomas Cromwell from a royal commissioner lists among items seized from a monastic library during a visitation "a book of Our Lady's miracles, well able to match the Canterbury Tales; such a book of dreams as you never saw, which I found in the library." The only record of a Marian miracle text to be so confiscated, this missive to the Vicar General—despite its reference to Chaucer—leaves unclarified whether the volume is long or short, Latin or vernacular, prose or verse; nor do we come to know what fate it endured. The invocation of the *Canterbury Tales*, along with the categorization of the miracles as a dreambook, signal the letter writer's belief that legends of Mary are nothing more than vaporous fiction.

The disappearance of the tales may not be described as bonfires of virginities or even just of images. Unwritten or seldom written narratives are erased not by torches or sledgehammers, but through suppression and silence. All the same, tales that center on devotion to images will fare poorly in times of image-breaking. Theologians may draw fine distinctions between veneration rendered to images, known technically as iconodulia, and outright worship of images, or iconolatry, but others would not necessarily find much relevance in such casuistry. To them, the two practices look very similar, if not even synonymous. Furthermore, the goal of iconoclasm was not merely to rid churches of physical representations, but to rewire the devotional system within which they functioned. Nor did the assault on iconodulia and iconolatry stop there. The likenesses might be turned to cold cinders and smoldering embers; the liturgies associated with them might be discarded and outlawed—for all that, it took much longer and more sustained efforts to sear recollection and to scour mental images of them from minds.

An Elizabethan ballad concluded with two lugubrious stanzas of valediction to the Walsingham Madonna. The lines decried the satanic sin that moved in to occupy the spiritual space vacated by the destruction of the image. Still greater impact came from a ballad that recorded the story of the disappearance. The song places special emphasis on miracles of healing and revivification that the carving enabled. One of Cromwell's agents, Sir Roger Townsend, wrote to him about a woman whose chattiness about the sculpture brought unpleasant consequences down on her. She gossiped about what he regarded as a "false tale of a miracle done by the Image after it had been carried away." For this jabbering, she received the penalty of being placed in the stocks and then drawn around the marketplace in a cart with a paper hat on her head to identify her as a "reporter of false tales." Even so, the Lord Protector's henchman remained of two minds. Had he extirpated the memory of the Walsingham Madonna or not? "I cannot help but perceive that the aforesaid image is not yet out of some of their heads." One of the crania at issue belonged to another local lady who also was convinced,

even after the statue had been taken down and transported to London, that it had wrought a miracle. Like the above-mentioned teller of falsities, this poor Mariophile got more than a mere rap on the knuckles: she was put in the pillory on market day at Walsingham and then carted around to be pelted with snowballs.

Language was affected as well by the ruthless about-face. Obviously, the learned language of Latin would have been laundered of many features associated with the Catholic Church, but the vernacular did not escape untouched either. Any major alteration of a society requires modifications of speech and writing, both high and low. Reformers wished to scotch the invocation of saints, including the Mother of God, so as to train the sights of the faithful upon God and Christ. The commoners of the late Middle Ages prayed most often to the Virgin. To exemplify how improper and unbecoming such invocations could be, Erasmus derided the prayers of a mercenary who had impudently called upon Mary, "Blessed Virgin, give me rich spoils." In fact, the Dutch scholar went so far as to quote putative direct appeals from the Mother of God herself in a letter against the shameless and unprincipled entreaties lodged with her. Folks who invoked Mary aloud in prayer were reproved, and subtle changes were wrought in the psalter to constrict the powers ascribed to the Virgin. The eradication of saints from language would find its most telling confirmation in an exception to the rule. According to a widely accepted etymology, the slang expletive *bloody* is a minced oath that originated in the phrase "by Our Lady." From the measureless sea of saints' invocations, only this one dysphemism survived. It remained in existence only because its very meaning and provenance became unrecognizable, its vestiges of religiosity trumped by its coincidental blot of vulgarism.

On a narrative level, a similar bowdlerization may have played out in some stories by replacing Mary and other saints either with nothing at all or with figures sanitized to be presentable within a Protestant context. Mainly what happened was the expunction that results from censorship, both self-imposed and otherwise. The sorts of narratives that would once have commanded respect and awe came to be derided. The atmosphere would have brought Marian miracle tales at full tilt to oblivion. For example, the Protestant bishop John Bale heaps mockery upon a vision that was reputedly experienced in 1470 by the Dominican theologian Alanus de Rupe. Female virgin saints are often supposed to undergo mystical marriages, in which Christ appears to them and places a ring upon their fingers as a sign that he is taking them as mystical brides. That is all very well, but in this case Blessed Alanus claimed in writing to have received a house call from the Virgin, who placed a ring on his finger, encircled his neck with a necklace braided of her hair, and presented him with a rosary (see Fig. 4.19). Bale's restatement of the events puts a different, salacious, even tawdry spin on the symbiosis between the Roman Catholic theologian and a touchy-feely Mary. In the English churchman's interpretation of Alanus's account of the episode, the Mother of God came to the friar's cell and made her gifts to him so that they might plight their troth. Then the proceedings take a decidedly deviant turn. Alanus first fondles his visitor's breasts, then engages in sexualized breast-feeding, and finally progresses to actual coitus, all somehow without de-virginating the Virgin.



Fig. 4.19 Guido Reni, *Madonna col Bambino in gloria e i santi Petronio, Francesco, Ignazio, Francesco Saverio, Procolo e Floriano*, 1631–1632. Oil on silk, 390 × 220 cm. Bologna, Pinacoteca nazionale di Bologna. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Guido_Reni_057.jpg

In Protestant theology, saints, among whom Mary was foremost, lost their stature as mediators between God and people. Since Christ alone fulfilled that function, the Mother of God was decentered as the object of special devotion. In the Middle Ages, the Virgin stood supreme as mediator above all others. By the thirteenth century, her ascendancy made her almost a fourth person of the Trinity. For centuries afterward, she retained this lofty status, to the abiding scandal of non-Catholics. Even in the mid-nineteenth century, a Protestant magazine in England reported on an Irish immigrant who allegedly considered Mary to be a member of the Trinity.

This same elevated status was reflected in the reverence the Mother of God received throughout the later Middle Ages in her images, Madonnas. Protestant reformers condemned the cult of the Blessed Virgin as a form of respect gone too far—as adoration that verged on adulation and idolatry. In Catholic theology, the Ecumenical Council of Trent, which extended from 1545 to 1563, brought reform. Most relevantly, it reaffirmed the importance of the veneration of saints, particularly the cult of Mary. At the same time, the Council laid great emphasis on the legitimate use of images, including those of the Virgin. It emphasized that honor shown to the representations is referred to the prototypes represented by them. The faithful do not worship, petition, or trust the Madonna itself, but rather the Mother of God represented by it. Even in northern Europe Mary was never altogether ousted among Catholics as happened to a great degree in Protestantism. Yet despite the Trentine reform, she was nonetheless sometimes shunted aside in favor of a Christocentric viewpoint.

Some jongleurs would have suffered the same diminishment, if not demise, as befell the Virgin, Madonnas, and texts about her. The reason is not far to see. The performers would have been linked with the pilgrims and preachers who teamed up to spread her cult. In effect, the entertainers belonged to the whole, vast pilgrimage industry that reformers were keen to exterminate. This is why around 1546, the English clerk William Thomas fawns upon King Henry VIII for having investigated the many malfeasances of the friars, whom Thomas calls jugglers. The tumbler and his like had been popular at certain times because the Virgin and he had been believed in tandem. Now the equal and opposite came true. He became unpopular as Marian miracles fell into disbelief and as Mary herself faded from the ubiquity she had achieved between the twelfth century and the late Middle Ages.

Among Protestants, Mary held an ambiguous position. Her cult was roundly castigated. As an object of study and devotion, English writers strikingly avoided her for hundreds of years after the Reformation. The publication in 1827 of John Keble's *Christian Year* marks the commencement of the Marian revival in nineteenth-century England. To look at the situation somewhat differently, in many places the Virgin was largely excluded from the transition that led from manuscript to print culture. Miracle tales dropped out of vogue just as the presses began to bring forth torrents of books. Yet even within Protestantism, the Mother of God was not universally thrust aside as almost all other saints were cast away. A cleavage is perceptible between Lutheranism, in its defense of Mary, and Calvinism, in its assaults on her. Martin Luther, who himself owned an image of the Virgin and Child, argued that iconoclasts should spare Madonnas, since they could serve as devotional aids. At the same time, the German reformer commented with disapproval on images that depicted the lactation of Bernard of Clairvaux, in which the so-called Marian Doctor is represented receiving a spurt of milk from the Virgin's breast. Thanks to Luther's generally supportive outlook, Marian images continued to be fabricated and displayed in some places. Even so, they came with the caveat, explicit in inscriptions or implicit in doctrine, that the Mother of God was to be honored but not worshiped. The emphasis on reverencing her was codified in Luther's writing. In a commentary he opined at length about the type of veneration and lauds to be given to the Virgin. She is cherished most truly by honoring the Almighty. If esteem and praise are accorded to her, the objective is to attain God through it.

For all the support that the reformer offered, Lutherans have retained their discomfort with freestanding statues of Mary as potentially idolatrous. The lingering worry about the verisimilitude of this three-dimensional form of Madonna may help to explain why in the one recent retelling of our tumbler's story for children by a Swedish artist and author, the carving is replaced by a painting. For that matter, in its title the book makes no mention of the Mother of God, the Virgin, or a Madonna, and the illustrations on its dust jacket avoid representing any of them as well. These omissions need not be driven explicitly by religion, but by general cultural context. Sweden has been predominantly Lutheran since the sixteenth century. Outside a

denominational context, the self-serving inconsistency of Christian views on idolatry has long attracted remark within the framework of world religions: "We sneer when we read of some Indian spinning tops before his child god Krishna, but we weep over the story of the jongleur de Notre Dame and await with sympathy the Madonna's approval of his pathetic juggling."

Marian Apparitions

The tale of *Our Lady's Tumbler* belongs to a vast complex of medieval narratives and images connected with the intervention of heaven upon earth through appearances of Mary. In fact, it falls within the far larger category of Marian apparitions. At the latest tally, counted down to the present day, more than 2,500 have been reported. Visions, shrines, relics, and images of the Virgin interact with each other in constantly varying but often intersecting ways. If Mary and Madonnas have been shrouded in clouds of misgivings within a large part of Christianity since the Reformation, so too have been attitudes toward phantasms of the Virgin. Direct physical experiences of her, such as seeing her, hearing her, and being touched by her, were everywhere in the medieval period, as for example at Loreto and Walsingham, but they have been primarily a Catholic phenomenon since then. The basics of an official policy emerged only long after the Middle Ages in the writings of the future Pope Benedict XIV (see Fig. 4.20).



Fig. 4.20 Pierre Subleyras, *Benedictus XIV*, eighteenth century. Oil on canvas. Palace of Versailles. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benoit_XIV.jpg

Marian apparitions remain objects of fascination and perplexity, as much within the Catholic Church as without. What passes muster as an apparition? A definition, probably unhelpfully short, would be that it is a private revelation. A longer version would hold it to be a type of vision in which someone claims to see a person, being, or object that would not normally be apprehensible to the visionary. The degree to which

such sightings are corporeal or incorporeal can be hard to gauge. When manifestations of this kind are not documentably physical and leave no material traces, they may be differentiated from statues that move or crybaby paintings that shed a monsoon of tears or blood.

Many iterations of the story of the jongleur are unusually elliptical about the relationship between the Madonna, which is an image, and the Virgin herself. The ambiguity only increases because we are left in limbo as to whether the performer himself or just the onlooking monks witnesses the apparition, whether either the animation of the image or the appearance of Mary has happened before, or whether the miracle (or is it two?) has been performed to teach a lesson to the monk-voyeurs.

The overwhelming majority of Marian apparitions have become unwanted stepchildren of the Church. Even so, the most successful ones resulted in the foundation of sanctuaries that are magnets for pilgrimage. An early instance would be the showing of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico (see Figs. 4.21 and 4.22). (The location in the New World has significance, since it places the miracles far from the friction between Catholics and Protestants in Europe. The natives who were converted because of it knew nothing of iconoclasm within Christianity, only of Christian militancy against the idols of pre-Christian religions—heathenism.) According to official accounts, a maiden appeared on the morning of December 9, 1531 to Juan Diego. The Virgin directed this native American convert to Christianity to collect blossoms from the top of the nearby eminence. Despite the wintry season, he found Castilian roses flowering there. At least since the Middle Ages these beauties have been associated with Mary, as have lilies. Both blooms have insinuated themselves, sometimes with *sub rosa* stealth, into many versions of the narrative about the juggler of Our Lady.



Fig. 4.21 Juan Diego's image of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, 1531. Mexico City, Nueva Basílica de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Virgen_de_guadalupe1.jpg



Fig. 4.22 Postcard depicting Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Zurich: Kunzli Hermanos y Cias, early twentieth century).

The Mother of God arranged the colorful harvest in Juan Diego's *tilma*, or "cloak." When he opened the mantle before the archbishop, the petals fell out. What is more, the fabric of the garment was discovered to bear the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The miraculous pictorial representation on the cloth has been revered ever since in the Chapel of the Virgin Mary in Tepeyac, which was constructed for mounting and displaying it. The depiction relates intriguingly to the so-called Black Virgins of earlier centuries, since the complexion of this Madonna is dark, often brought home in mass-produced images through the addition of black eyelashes. The Virgin of Guadalupe is sometimes designated affectionately among Spanish speakers as *La Morenita*, literally "the Little Moor," to suggest by extension "the Little Dark One."

After the Virgin of Guadalupe, a gap of a few centuries ensues in high-profile Marian apparitions. A later example is Our Lady of Lourdes in France, connected especially with the showing of Mary on February 11, 1858 to Bernadette Soubirous. A third case is that of Our Lady of Fátima in Portugal, as noted above, based on appearances of the Mother of God to three shepherd children, with the central visionary being a ten-year-old shepherdess. Their sightings took place on the thirteenth day of six sequential months, beginning on May 13 and ending on October 13, 1917 (see Figs. 4.23, 4.24 and 4.25). This vision exhorted the young ones who saw her to be conscientious in reciting their rosaries, and even called herself Our Lady of the Rosary. Each of these pilgrimage sites attracts millions of visitors per annum. A tale containing the germ of

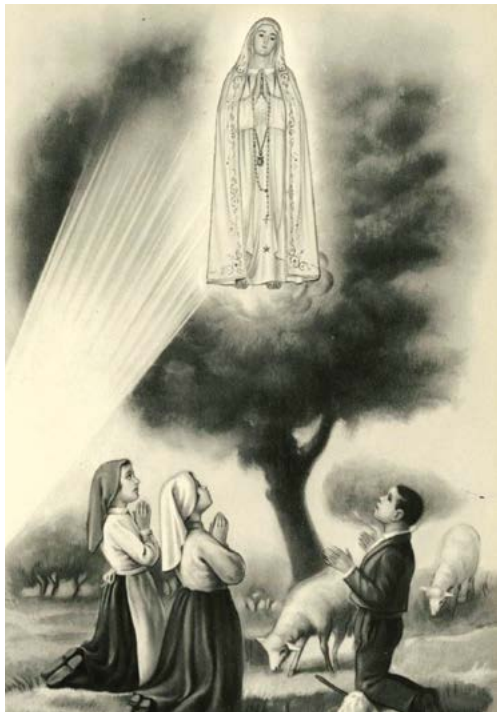


Fig. 4.23 Postcard depicting Our Lady of Fátima appearing before shepherd children (Porto, Portugal: V. Matos Trigo, 1960s).



Fig. 4.24 Postcard depicting Our Lady of Fátima (Porto, Portugal, 1967).



Fig. 4.25 Postcard depicting Our Lady of Fátima (Zurich: Hermanos S. A., early twentieth century).

this pattern, with a Madonna and an apparition, as does *Our Lady's Tumbler*, would have been by its very nature out of bounds within Evangelical denominations.
If it is painless to see why *Our Lady's Tumbler* could not survive in Protestant regions, the explanation for why the story dropped out of vogue in Catholic regions may seem harder to fathom. Then again, consider a paradox that makes the tale profoundly unsettling. *Our Lady's Tumbler* could not be more deeply imbued with organized religion. After all, the events take place within a monastery and all its chief characters save one are monks. At the same time, that one exceptional individual, not just a mere layman but even the humblest sort of one, attains direct contact with the sacred. Furthermore, his interaction is unmediated by a priest or any other representative of the Church—apart, of course, from the mediation of the mediator par excellence, the Virgin Mary herself. If we make the improbable leap of drawing an analogy based on present-day corporations, we could put the dilemma into the tracery of an organizational chart. By the vow of obedience, a monk, even a lay brother, in a matrix structure would report formally to the abbot as manager, but also to God and through God to others such as Mary. The tumbler's relationship with Mary would be a solid line, that with the man who heads his abbey dotted. The ecclesiastical hierarchy stipulated the reverse.

Our Lady's Tumbler is about prayer, devotion, and worship. Simultaneously, it illustrates how those acts do not require learning, Latin, or priests. In contradistinction, it implies that praying has the objective of transcending mere linguistic signification and verbal pronouncement so as to achieve silent communion. In rallying words to conjure up the movements of an acrobatic dancer, the poem has enormous graphic power. Yet in its content and outcome, it subverts its own potential as a text by flatly denying or at least depreciating the very importance of writing and even language more broadly. Ultimately, the narrative's message is that to be saved, the only necessity is to curry favor with the Mother of God, whose intercession can accomplish anything. As a rule, the Virgin never forsakes a votary. Obeisance done to her is done at the same time to the Child, through whom grace and salvation come, since Mary's prayers to her son carry a special weight. The infant Jesus is not mentioned in the medieval French poem, nor even Mary's status as mother. All the same, they are both singularly important. They are left unsaid only because they are givens.

The tumbler does not know his catechism, or at least not his monastery's Latin one. What is more, he has the insouciance to reach out directly in worship to the Virgin, by performing a trifling act, the only form of devotion feasible for him. Yet his personalized trivial pursuit turns out to succeed far better than all the elaborate liturgy of his fellow monks. He undergoes a deeply personal conversion, and he expresses his reverence through a faith based on experience. His sincerity is deemed meet and proper by Mary, who bestows her renowned clemency on him. The lesson is a typically Protestant one: when everything is taken into account, what matters is inner spirit rather than outer formalism. In the words of an American historian who

studied life in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, "the story implies that the interior spiritual disposition of the believer, more even than his external behavior, defined the character of true holiness." Thus, *Our Lady's Tumbler* anticipates later pietist movements within Christianity that focus on the efforts of lay people to achieve individual sanctity by leading a consistent Christian life. So far, so good, except for two provisos. The first is that we are accorded almost no insight into the tumbler's innermost thoughts and feelings; the second is that the validation of this ground rule comes after a supremely un-Protestant miracle involving an image. For these reasons and others, the story may have been superficially too Catholic for a Reformation era but too latently Protestant, or at a minimum too popular in its underlying religious presuppositions, for a Counter-Reformation. It ran the risk of serving neither the reformers nor the counter-reformers. To round off the problems that the narrative posed, both groups would have clucked their tongues over the salience within it of such a questionable activity as dance.

Such inferences would clarify not only why this of all tales wilted away but also why, in general, apparitions of the Virgin would have failed to win backing from the Church in the centuries immediately following the Reformation. The showings that have become entrenched in Catholicism came much later, such as those at Lourdes in 1858, Fátima in 1917. By the same token, sites that had been suppressed were revived during the same period: Walsingham has been rebuilt only since the Catholic revival of the nineteenth century. To remain in Britain, it has been observed that in the nineteenth century, just a few Catholic churches there possessed a Madonna before Victoria became queen. Representations of Mary returned only under the influence of the Gothic revival, spearheaded by the English architect and tastemaker Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (often confused or conflated with his similarly named pro-Pugin-ators).

One other point merits mention. *Our Lady's Tumbler* is deeply preoccupied with the nature of offering. In other words, the tale is concerned with the type of gift that can win acceptance. It transmits at least two messages about giving. First, an offer is a private matter between individual Christians and their God. Second, it has nothing to do with physical property or financial instruments. The story makes sense for use by churchmen to incentivize prayer, to encourage conversion to lay monasticism, and to achieve various other ends. If, on the other hand, eliciting donations is a priority, this exemplum is not necessarily the logical first choice.

In the short run (although we are discussing a centuries-long stretch) Mary, Madonnas, and exempla about apparitions of her were displaced or suppressed. No facile invocation of the aphorism "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" can explain away the few hundred years that present neither a text nor even a citation, reference, or allusion to fan hope that *Our Lady's Tumbler* was known to anyone at all. In literature, unpopularity in its most hard-baked form can lead to ostracism so complete that the exclusion is tantamount to extinction. But a door remained open at

least a crack for the prospective later return of Mary, Marian images, and masterpieces about her apparitions and miracles. Gothic as an architectural style and tales from the original Gothic era (not that they were yet "Gothic tales") did not die out altogether in the early sixteenth century. Rather, they hid in open view, awaiting archaeological rediscovery and excavation. The story may have all but died. Then again, no text preserved in manuscripts ever is eliminated entirely. Works of literature seldom vanish into thin air.

In 1873, the tumbler was discovered in the cryogenic vat of a manuscript, a one-man iceblock but still capable of being brought back to life. Since that time the big names on the medical team that took charge of his case have been, with surprising frequency, unbelievers, Catholics lapsed into libertinism, Protestants without a solid background in Marianism, and even Jews. Yet at the same time, many others who helped to keep the tumbler in good trim and the juggler on his way were practicing adherents of Roman Catholicism, who sometimes had the special zeal that comes from recent conversion. Thus, the tumbler was revitalized in the late nineteenth century and later benefited in equal measure from the faithful and the faithless. To understand, we will need to observe microscopically those who raised him from the dead (or unliving, to be more precise) and how they accomplished it.

5. A Troupe of Sources and Analogues

> It would be interesting, from the point of view of the folklorist, to try to find parallels to the chief *motif* on which this legend is founded—namely, the notion that Heaven regards with favour the most trivial and lowly offerings, nay, even such as may appear abject and sinful to men on earth.

The poet of the original *Our Lady's Tumbler* may have encountered the quiddity of the tale and recycled it from stories in oral circulation, including exempla. We will never pin down to everyone's liking even roughly how many such narratives he had heard or read. Yet we would be guilty of a serious infelicity if we refrained from speculating about what the author may have owed to literary traditions behind and around him. We would do well to consider Christian and especially Cistercian accounts that could have inspired him. At the same time, it would be idiocy to undervalue the possible contribution of the writer's own imagination. After all, he drew on not only oral and written literature, but also on life experiences and informed perspectives that he had gained in the school of hard knocks. Thus, we have a dilemma in evaluating the degree of originality in the anonymous poet. The human capacity to imagine is boundless. Nonetheless, many themes that at first appear unique to a specific individual or culture turn out upon close examination to have occurred independently to others.

For a periscope that grants views into what the poet could have felt or seen, we could do far worse than to look at other reports, both fictitious and not, of comparable behavior from other cultures. We would serve our interests well by seeking out accounts of episodes in which individuals act in ways that cry out to be compared with the tumbler. Such records can help us with the challenge of such questions as: Did a tumbler ever actually exist who performed before a Madonna? Did the poet hear a story of a real man like the acrobat? Did he invent him? Or did he tap into a true-seeming fiction created by an earlier author about a performer like the gymnast?

The scrapbook of possible sources and analogues to follow makes no claim to be encyclopedic. The clippings in it, gathered in from the Hebrew scripture, New Testament, and medieval legends and miracles, constitute only part of the panorama.

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They supplement the real-life histories that have already been provided of actual individuals, from antiquity to the present day, who have elected to express through their performance arts their devotion to God. They anticipate tales to come that are tied to Christmas in Christian tradition as well as to the high holy days in Jewish tradition. Indubitably, the basis of comparison could be multiplied by thorough trolling for oral and written literature from other parts of the world, such as South and East Asia. Whatever the omissions, the comparative scaffolding established here represents at least a start.

King David's Dancing

> She liked the story of David, who danced before the Lord, and uncovered himself exultingly. Why should he uncover himself to Michal, a common woman? He uncovered himself to the Lord.
>
> —D. H. Lawrence

David, of slingshot fame, was second king over Israel and Judah, thanks in part to his having proved his mettle in hand-to-hand combat and his moral fiber in other capacities. He was also a poet, singer, and musician of the first order (see Fig. 5.1). Almost half of the Psalms in the Bible have been transmitted with an ascription to him. His attainments as a performer were familiar in the Middle Ages and were associated with the figure of the jongleur. At the same time, he was recognized also as a dancer. The medieval tumbler's gymnastics before the image of the Virgin show parallels to the prancing of King David in his linens before the ark of the covenant in Holy Writ. Features of the single extant miniature that accompanies the text of *Our Lady's Tumbler* in one manuscript have helped to bring home the resemblances: in both cases, men in possibly inappropriate clothing behave before altars in surprising ways, not fully accepted by close members of their communities. Both the posture and dress or undress of the gymnast in the illustration call to mind David.

The ark was a chest that contained the two stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. It had been taken from a battlefield by the Philistines, and its return to Jerusalem delighted David. In the vignette before the ark, three verses pertain suggestively to the story of the tumbler, and bottle the kinetic energy of the king's performance. They bring home his near-nakedness as well as his athleticism and sheer joy in whirling. The context makes crystal clear that although he is among others, his ecstatic dance is solo. The passage also records how David's wife, Michal, turns up her nose at his exhibition. She is the female onlooker. When she scolds him for his dancing, the king replies: "I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done, and I will be little in my own eyes, and with the handmaids of whom thou speakest, I shall appear more glorious." In punishment for her chiding about his sacred dance, she is rendered sterile.

All the physical features in David's dance were sometimes conjured up in medieval visual images of the scene, particularly in manuscript art. In one representation from the first half of the twelfth century, the sovereign is presented arched backward in a circle. This stance is designated technically as a bridge, and jongleurs were commonly depicted in such a pose. A moralized Bible emphasizes the contrast between the prophet, whose kingliness is signified by his crown, and his spouse, who averts her gaze and makes a sweepingly dismissive gesture with her left arm (see Fig. 5.2).



Fig. 5.1 King David the harpist. Miniature, fourteenth century. Dublin, Trinity College, MS 53, fol. 151r. Image courtesy of Trinity College, Dublin. All rights reserved.



Fig. 5.2 King David dancing. Miniature. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Vindobonensis 2554, fol. 44r.

The whole episode of David's dancing is too thorny to be reduced to a dichotomy between a regal king (and what else could one be?) and his derisive consort. On the contrary, it acquired various kinds of charge. In the first half of the eleventh century, one monk overlaid the actual performances of real-life entertainers in his day upon the biblical ruler. He describes how the seer "sounds the lyre before the ark of the Lord, dances naked, plays, and walks about upside-down." A century later, the Cistercian preacher Bernard of Clairvaux calls upon the auditors of a sermon to heed the spirit of joy and wisdom in which the monarch performs his two actions of dancing and rebuking. In one tercet in the *Divine Comedy*, Dante singles out David's humility for emphasis. The leader's humbling of himself would have seemed all

the more extraordinary to medieval readers or viewers, since by frisking around in scanty clothing he put himself on a level with jongleurs and other socially marginal performers.

Politically, the transportation of the ark to Jerusalem signaled the union of the northern and southern tribes under the single kingship or monarchy of David. This circumstance explains why the potentate is customarily represented wearing his crown prominently, no matter how hyperkinetic he is depicted as being. On the Christological plane, the regal status was particularly relevant to medieval Christians. Allegorically, the taking of the ark can be likened to the capture of Jesus by the Jews. Most frequently, the special chest was aligned with the Virgin. Its triumphal entry into David's earthly city came to be regarded as prefiguring Mary's entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem or as foretelling the advent of Christ into the earthly one before the Passion. A retelling of *The Juggler of Our Lady* on a little more than a single page in a heavily illustrated and highly religious weekly for Catholic children from 1949 follows loosely the story as it was spun in an early twentieth-century opera. It describes the jongleur as being primarily a fiddle player (see Fig. 5.3) but as dancing in the crucial scene, "like David before the ark of the covenant—do we not so call the Virgin Mary?"

In the Middle Ages the episode of David's dancing was assimilated fast and furious to the motif of the jongleur of God. In a Spanish text written or at least overseen by King Sancho IV the Brave of Castile, who ruled from 1284 to 1295, an exemplum draws on the Bible to recount how the prophet bounded around the ark like an entertainer, with a cithara in hand. When his wife inveighs against him for comporting himself in this manner before his servants, he responds that he feels no stigma. As a jongleur of God, he depreciates himself in the presence of his creator. A metrical paraphrase of Psalm 44, known after the first word in the Latin as *Eructavit*, exists in medieval French. This poem presents the biblical ruler not merely as a jongleur but even as a wise one. When we consider attitudes in the Middle Ages, attaching that epithet to such a professional almost risked being an oxymoron.

Translating Greek that means more precisely "he uncovers himself like one of the naked dance performers," the Latin of the Vulgate for the final phrase of 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 20 could be translated into English as "one of the buffoons" or even "one of the jongleurs." Was David then taken to be a prototype of Saint Francis as a jongleur of God? Later expositors had to decide whether by virtue of being Davidic the dancing constituted legitimate spiritual jubilation, or whether it deviated wildly and distracted from genuine godliness. Religious dance is so widespread as to seem almost universal, and yet dancing, especially within or in proximity to churches, has often been demeaned within Christianity as being inherently immodest, overly sexual, and unsuited to worship.

In the very beginning of the twentieth century, Maurice Léna, who devised the libretto for Massenet's opera *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*, drew an immediate connection between the biblical prophet David and the medieval jongleur Jean. When the

LE JONGLEUR DE NOTRE-DAME

Au temps jadis, quand il y avait encore des princes et des seigneurs, des ménestrels ou troubadours allaient de château en château pour faire entendre leurs chansons qu'ils accompagnaient de la vielle. Non seulement ils chantaient, mais faisaient mille tours d'adresse pour distraire leur noble auditoire. C'est pourquoi on les nommait aussi baladins ou jongleurs.

L'un d'entre eux se trompa et frappa à la porte d'un couvent. Il y fut bien accueilli, car les moines, très hospitaliers, voient en chaque voyageur une image de Jésus parcourant les chemins de la Judée.

Pour les remercier, le jongleur offrit de chanter les poèmes de gloire et d'amour dont il régalait ordinairement les seigneurs et les dames des cours seigneuriales.

— Mon fils, lui dit alors le Prieur du Couvent, je vous remercie de votre bonne intention. Mais votre art, si remarquable qu'il soit, ne peut cependant égayer des moines qui ont renoncé à tous les plaisirs du monde. Les chants de guerre ne conviennent pas aux serviteurs du Dieu de paix. Quant aux poèmes d'amour, nous ne voulons entendre que ceux qui chantent les beautés de Notre-Dame Marie, Mère de Jésus, qu'on ne célèbre pas avec des paroles profanes. Reposez-vous donc parmi nous, et quand vous aurez repris vos forces vous pourrez poursuivre votre route.

★ ★ ★

Ces paroles paternelles et sages touchèrent l'âme du jongleur. Il pensa que les moines qui chantaient chaque jour, et même la nuit, les louanges du Seigneur Jésus et de Madame Marie, consacraient leur vie à des maîtres bien plus grands que ceux auxquels lui-même s'adressait. Il se sentit pressé par la force intérieure de la grâce à faire comme eux. Aussi, après avoir vécu quelques jours dans ce couvent, alla-t-il se prosterner aux pieds du Père Prieur, lui demandant la faveur d'être reçu au noviciat.

On lui fit subir un temps d'essai. Il était pieux et docile, et, bien qu'il eût beaucoup de peine, n'étant plus assez jeune, pour apprendre le latin, il fut admis dans la communauté. Il fit son noviciat et prononça ses vœux, promettant solennellement de vivre dans la pauvreté, la pureté et l'obéissance, d'observer la Règle de l'Ordre et la constitution du monastère.

Mais il comprenait toujours fort mal le latin des hymnes et des psaumes, et il en souffrait cruellement, craignant, le pauvre homme, que sa prière ne fût agréable à Dieu.

Il s'humiliait successivement devant tous les frères qui, de la cuisine au jardin, s'exerçaient, chacun selon son talent, à bien servir Dieu en servant leurs frères.

★ ★ ★

— Mon frère, lui disait le cuisinier, ne vous désolez pas. Moi non plus, je ne sais pas le latin. Je fais cuire les légumes et les macaronis : ce n'est pas difficile, mais c'est tout ce que je sais faire. Chacun doit faire ce qu'il peut à la place où Dieu l'a mis. Moi, frère Boniface, j'ai été chargé par mon Supérieur de cette humble tâche et je mets tout mon amour à l'accomplir. Ainsi mes frères sont déchar-



gés du souci de savoir ce qu'ils mangeront et peuvent, sans autre préoccupation, chanter au bon Dieu de beaux chants en latin, pour eux, pour moi, pour tout le monde.

Pareillement lui parlait frère Eusèbe, le jardinier qui ne savait que planter ses choux, frère Hilarion qui soignait la porcherie et la basse-cour, frère Crépin qui ressemelait les souliers, frère Ange qui cousait les vêtements, et tous, et tous, heureux de servir à quelque chose et humbles de ne servir qu'à cela.

★ ★ ★

— Chacun fait ce qu'il sait, se répétait l'ancien jongleur. Mais moi je ne sais rien faire. Du moins rien d'utile...

Il pensa à sa vielle, suspendue au grenier, couverte de poussière. Grelottant de fièvre, car il était malade, il alla la chercher, se rendit à l'église.

— Pour Madame Marie, songeait-il, je vais chanter les chants qui égayaient jadis les dames des châteaux.

Fig. 5.3 "Le jongleur de Notre Dame." Printed in *Le Croisé: Organe belge de la croisade eucharistique* 23.5 (October 1949): 76.

entertainer dances, the Prior quotes from scripture the verse "Unto his vomit, the dog has turned again." We have transitioned from eructation to emesis. In other words, he accuses the erstwhile performer of backsliding to his old ways—a gag reflex, in multiple senses. The other monks rant at the newcomer's impiety and sacrilege for dancing, and call out for him to be anathematized, expelled, or executed. Only Brother Boniface, the bon-vivant chef at the monastery who befriends and protects Jean, leaps to the defense of his fellow lay brother. The potbellied cook, salt of the earth as befits his profession, does so in part by invoking none other than King David.

More than a half century later, and probably independently of Massenet, Duke Ellington revealed similar intuitions in the program note for the *Concert of Sacred Music*. This was the first of three full-evening jazz suites that he composed for a big band, complemented by a full choir, vocal soloists, and dancers. His cogitation in this *First Sacred Concert* pertains directly to his own creativity and devotion. As nearly the last of its parts, it contains a piece for full band, choir, and solo tap dancer entitled "David Danced before the Lord with All His Might." In his comments, the jazz musician connected first the juggler of our story with the biblical prophet, and then the act of juggling with drumming, instrumentalism, dancing, and other nonverbal expressions of a person's temperament during worship. The performance of this song featured dancing by a tap master, visible in the film. The distinctive rat-a-tat of tap dance, like a solo of scat singing performed by feet shod with metal-plated soles, is plainly audible in the sound track. The *Third Sacred Concert* contains the track "Every Man Prays in His Own Language." Ellington once expanded upon these words by adding, "and there is no language that God does not understand." Close associates of the composer have reported that he was inspired by the *Juggler of Notre Dame* in both the overall series of sacred concerts and in this particular piece.

The dance of King David before the ark may underlie a motif concerning the girlhood of Mary in the late fourth-century *Protevangelium of James*. This "first Gospel," to break down the first word of the title into its two Greek elements, is an extraordinarily influential apocryphon. Among other things, the Protogospel helps considerably to flesh out the extremely sparse treatment of the Mother of God in the New Testament. In turn, the text was expanded in later accretions to these books of the Christian Bible. Its most notable successor would be the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, probably datable to the first quarter of the seventh century. This Latin paraphrase tells of the Virgin's parents, birth, and life. Such accounts developed to plug many gaps in the canonical Bible and thus to satisfy the otherwise unfulfilled curiosity of believers. The *Protevangelium* is devoted in the main to Mary's biography, including her infancy, and family relations before the Nativity. The apocryphal account is ascribed to a certain James, who was probably meant to be Jesus's half-brother, the son of his father Joseph by a former marriage. Despite this ascription, the composition probably took shape—or at least began to do so—in the second half of the second century. The earliest manuscript is of the early fourth century, but it was not rediscovered and made accessible in the West until long afterward.

The seventh chapter of *Pseudo-Matthew* describes how at the age of three Mary was taken by her parents Joachim and Anna to be presented in the temple in Jerusalem. By devoting her to God, her father and mother rendered thanks for the blessing of parenthood. Upon being placed on the third step of the altar, the little girl felt impelled by the same sort of sacred ecstasy or holy high spirits that had overcome David before the ark. Like a sacralized Shirley Temple, she performed a little shimmy. Then (the jig was up) she scampered up the rest of the fifteen steps on her own without any unusual behavior. The future Mother of God remained as a temple virgin until she was twelve. Both the dance on the staircase and the service in the sanctuary corroborate the inference that she descended directly from the lineage of David. Whereas Michal greeted David's prancing with derision, all those present to witness Mary's fancy footwork take delight and show wonder in it. Although a relatively low-stakes element in the story, the little dance would have been mentioned occasionally when commemorating the Presentation of the Virgin in the temple. But evidence that the girl's jaunty hopping had any broad impact is elusive. The scene was represented seldom in art, if at all. Among the few images that depict the Mother of God's ascent of the steps, only a fresco in the Duomo at Prato may make even a faint gesture at alluding to the episode—and not even by showing her dancing but by showing her at the point in the ascent where she could have stopped to do so (see Fig. 5.4). In this composition, her back foot is about to leave the third step as she races up the stairway toward the priest.



Fig. 5.4 Paolo Uccello, *Presentazione di Maria al Tempio*, ca. 1435. Fresco. Prato, Duomo di Prato. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Paolo_uccello,_presentazione_di_maria_al_tempio.jpg

The situational parallels between King David's nimble-footed exultation before the ark and the agile performance of the humble tumbler before the statue of the Virgin have struck various readers independently over the centuries. Despite any similarities, *Our Lady's Tumbler* is by no stretch of the imagination merely a calque upon one scene in the Bible. Even the specific moment when the tumbler enacts his routine is not necessarily modeled upon the prophet's wild prancing. Rather, it has about it an archetypal quality that ties it to stories from cultures elsewhere in the world and time. In fact, the stark chasm in social stature between a lofty biblical king and a lowly medieval performer argues against a cozy association between them.

The Widow's Mites

Underlying all these stories, a common spirit affirms that God will receive with appreciation even the humblest gift from the humblest person. The only codicil is that the pittance be proffered with sincerity. The distillate of this idea can be found in the New Testament account of the widow's mites. Jesus witnesses the incident when it happens in the Temple in Jerusalem, and expounds upon it (see Fig. 5.5). Mites are little coins of the least valuable denomination, minted of a base metal such as bronze or copper. The woman's pair of two such coppers, although minute in comparison with the presents of others, gains scope when measured against her net wealth: they are all she possesses. By tendering just two pieces of small change, the exceedingly poor widow utterly bankrupts herself. As a consequence, the proportionate value of her donation to God tops by far the large amounts of money contributed by richer folk.



Fig. 5.5 Alexandre Bida, *The Widow's Mite*, 1874. Etching. Published in Edward Eggleston, *Christ in Art; or, The Gospel Life of Jesus: With the Bida Illustrations* (New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1874), 293.

Our Lady's Tumbler sets within the framework of dance, gymnastics, and juggling the same issues that are embedded in both biblical episodes, first of David's dance and later of the widow's mites. The resemblance between the medieval tale and the incident in the Gospels, although limited to their shared spirit rather than extending to the motif of dancing, appears to have struck at least one later interpreter. In 1918, the Irish writer Bernard Duffy published a coming-of-age novel entitled *Oriel*. Among other things, the book describes a priest, Dean James Joseph MacMahon. The fourth chapter, set in the novelist's hometown, is narrated by an altar boy. References to *Our Lady's Tumbler* neatly frame this section. Near the beginning of the chapter, the Dean subjects the youth to sweet-natured raillery about his dreams for the future. In the process, MacMahon admits that in his own adolescent days he had cherished an ambition to be a traveling entertainer who specialized in gymnastics. Somewhat earlier the good cleric had asked what the boy intended to be when he grew up. The young man had given two answers that in their antitheticality had made the priest double up in gales of laughter: "I think I'll be a bishop" and "I think—I think a clown in a circus." In the incident that caps the chapter, Oriel, who has been tasked with manning the collection box, feels shamefaced at having no coins to drop in. Instead of pocket money, he thinks himself virtuous for contributing an enameled button. The Dean, not knowing who made this deposit, admonishes the congregation sternly. After the boy confesses, the ecclesiastic responds by telling the story of *Our Lady's Tumbler*, which he finds apt for both of them because of their youthful aspirations. As the chapter closes, the older churchman concludes that "the value of an offering is to be gauged only by the spirit in which it is offered."

Such expressions of devotion may well up from many different drives within individuals, including dancers. Not all acts of dancing as performances of faith need to have had a text or ritual as provocation or inspiration. After all, they can arise from nearly universal human impulses. Thus, in a work of scholarship printed in 1923, an academic author on dance vouched for "the literal truth" of two related anecdotes, in which small children performed rhythmic steps or simple gymnastics before God or Jesus. Many physical performances have the aim of showing off, not solely for the Virgin. With complex anachronism, a volume of literary history brought out in 1948 referenced the jongleur of Notre Dame in describing an escaped French prisoner of war during the Napoleonic Wars. With his companions, the fugitive staged a performance of athletic feats, including jumping hurdles: "It's the story of the jongleur of Notre Dame. The episode is one of the prettiest. The war then had these oases, or these pauses."

Beyond reflexes that may occur to this or that type of person almost irrespective of the century or culture, we cannot rule out the specificity of local traditions. Christian qualms about dance were severe. Despite them, regional folklore and folkways retained their resilience. For all the gnawing doubts, this form of expression may have been accorded a place in quasi-religious rituals outside formal worship or even in the liturgy itself. Such customs can be onerous to recover from ancient and medieval times, since the literate who could set them down in writing were often either condescendingly

uninterested in or actively antipathetic to them. On the whole, the ecclesiastical authorities managed to keep the practice out of churches and liturgical contexts, or to squelch it if it had somehow insinuated itself there anyway. Yet the suppression was never complete, especially outside houses of worship. Spain and Spanish-speaking America have a celebration called the Festival of the Crosses or May Cross in which dance often plays a role. A Spanish print from around 1875 captures a couple dancing in a courtyard before seated onlookers (see Fig. 5.6). In 1920, a researcher made an aside that referred to many Spanish children disporting themselves before the May altars in their own homes, in a ritual loosely comparable to a Maypole dance. How far back such rituals reach is at this point, and will abide forevermore, a matter of wide-open guesswork rather than absolute historical certainty.



Fig. 5.6 Dancers celebrate *Cruz de Mayo* in Spain. Albumen print. Illustration by J. Turina, 1875.

The medieval tale demonstrates dash and daring in depicting dance positively, as the object of reward from the Virgin herself. In contrast, in the Middle Ages, dancing was often presented by churchmen as a profane pastime, and was condemned for its deleterious character. Stephen of Bourbon, French Dominican of the thirteenth century, declared, "The devil is the inventor of carolers and dancers." The best-known and longest-lived of anti-balletic exempla tells of the cursed dancers of Kölbigk. On Christmas Eve of 1017 or thereabouts, these women and men allegedly violated an interdiction against dance within church space during a service. To be specific, they made a racket as they danced in the round and sang in the churchyard. In so doing, they disturbed the Mass in their small town. When the parish priest shushed them, they turned a deaf ear (see Fig. 5.7). Ignored by the merrymakers, the minister eventually called upon God, pronounced a malediction, and execrated them. Through the pox he put on them, the miscreants were given a kind of homeopathic punishment for their profanity. For transgressing the sanctity of the space and ignoring the good father, they were prevented for an entire year from leaving the yard and from ceasing



Fig. 5.7 The cursed dancers of Kölbigk. Etching, 1674. Artist unknown. Published in Johann Ludwig Gottfried, *Historische Chronick oder Beschreibung der Merckwürdigsten Geschichte*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt, Germany: Merian, 1674), 505. Image courtesy of Universitätsbibliothek Düsseldorf.

to sing and dance. After this living purgatory, the legend maintained that they were permitted to return to normal life. The tale is sometimes held to relate to ecclesiastical anxiety as ballads and carols spread at full bore. Christian ambivalence about dance appears nowhere more remarkably than in a short story by the Swiss author of poetry and fiction, Gottfried Keller (see Figs. 5.8 and 5.9). Entitled "The Little Legend of Dance," the tale is the last of his *Seven Legends* from 1872. All of these accounts have settings in early Christianity. This narrative, based on one preserved in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, recounts an episode in the life of Saint Musa. As a young lady, the future holy woman was reputed to have had only one fallibility: she suffered from an intractable mania for dance (see Figs. 5.10 and 5.11). She indulged her passion everywhere, even when walking to the altar or before the church door. Keller reports that once "when she found herself alone in the church, she could not refrain from executing some balletic moves before the altar, and, so to speak, dancing a pretty prayer to the Virgin Mary."

At this juncture an elderly gentleman appeared, and she took a long and elaborate whirl with him. At the end, he introduced himself as King David himself, and he pledged her eternal bliss in cavorting (see Fig. 5.12). His only rider to the agreement was that for the rest of her life in the material world she renounce her hedonism, including dancing, and that she give herself over instead to penance and devotion. Musa consented to this stipulation, returned home, and took up an anchoritic existence in which she forwent all pleasures, most especially the balletic ones. Before too long, the girl fell ill and died, whereupon she enjoyed the delights of gamboling that the prophet had promised her (see Fig. 5.13).



Fig. 5.8 Gottfried Keller, age 54. Photograph by Jean Gut, 1873.



Fig. 5.9 Gottfried Keller. Photograph, before 1929. Photographer unknown.



Fig. 5.10 Title page of Gottfried Keller, *Das Tanzlegendchen* (Berlin-Charlottenburg, Germany: Axel Juncker, 1919).



Fig. 5.11 Musa dancing. Drawing by Hannes M. Avenarius, 1919. Published in G. Keller, *Das Tanzlegendchen*, 9.



Fig. 5.12 Musa speaks with King David. Drawing by Hannes M. Avenarius, 1919. Published in Gottfried Keller, *Das Tanzlegendchen* (Berlin-Charlottenburg, Germany: Axel Juncker, 1919), 13.



Fig. 5.13 Musa dances in heaven. Drawing by G. Traub, 1921. Published in Gottfried Keller, *Sieben Legenden* (Munich, Germany: Franz Hanfstaengl, 1921), 139.

The Virgin's Miraculous Images and Apparitions

The Gospels do not brim with details of Mary's life history, beyond the facts that she was a maiden who married Joseph, accompanied him to Bethlehem, and bore Jesus after conceiving miraculously. For her role in this procreation, the Virgin was hailed at the Council of Ephesus in 431 CE by the Greek epithet *Theotokos*, meaning literally "God-Bearer" but interpreted often as "Mother of God." This edict helped to ramp up Marian devotion. In addition, it led eventually to recognition of Constantinople as the Theotokoupolis, or "City of the God-Bearer." Legends and miracles gradually arose that documented subsequent interventions of the Virgin in the lives of human beings. The Mother of God steps on stage as the mediator of God's mercifulness and as the surest advocate for uneasy souls. She proves able and willing to work miracles to spare almost any sinner who resorts to her. Narratives of miracles wrought by Mary are not unknown in the earlier Middle Ages in Western Europe, and in fact the contribution of what is now France to the stockpile of Marian miracle tales began early, in the writings of Gregory of Tours. But they metamorphosed into a major literary phenomenon only in the twelfth century and later, extant first in Latin prose and later in Latin verse and vernacular verse. Once again, the French-speaking region contributed in an outsized fashion.

The making of a miracle literature required extensive efforts. Monks, clerics, and performers gathered stories. In the process, they sometimes conducted the medieval equivalents of oral history or news interviews. Occasionally they may have spun the tales largely out of their own fancies. In any case, they were not aided in their work by recording devices beyond stylus and wax tablet, pen and parchment, or other such tools for note-taking. Since the wonders were often preserved and transmitted at first separately, others later bundled them into more or less coherent groupings. Later still, vernacular poets translated or adapted written collections from Latin or from unwritten intermediaries. In Marian miracles, both the quality and quantity of the prose and verse generated in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries rate as nothing short of astounding. This holds true of texts in both the learned language and the vernaculars.

The wonders of most saints, set down posthumously, were attached to specific, physical shrines. The written accounts were customarily presented as historical documents, serving primarily to shore up the case for officially canonizing the martyr or virgin responsible for them. In contrast, the miracles of the Virgin were unhampered by the cumbersome dictates of papal canonization, since her sainthood was already unequivocal. Instead, they were generally literary compositions not tied to a single place. As the genre surpassed most other forms of hagiography, the Marian collection soaked up miracles that had been associated previously not with the Mother of God but with other saints.

Suppliants sometimes sought to be healed through the intercession of Mary—they could read and hear of many therapeutic miracles. All the same, her wonders tend much less to emphasize remission and recovery from physical ailments than salvation from what could be styled spiritual dilemmas. Finally, considerably fewer relics of the Virgin existed than of many other major saints, since her body had been taken into heaven at the Assumption. Although nail trimmings and hair ringlets are to be found, remains of direct contact with her generally came through relatively paltry pieces of clothing and drops of milk. Counteracting that scantiness, the Mother of God barged into the real world long after death through frequent apparitions. Many sightings took place thanks to images, either icon-like paintings on panels or representations in the round—that is, statuary standing free with all sides shown.

The assemblages of miracles that are known best today are in the spoken languages. To list only three examples, our thoughts turn first to the *Miracles of Our Lady* in medieval French verse, from about 1220, by the Benedictine monk Gautier de Coinci. A second would be the *Miracles of Our Lady* in Castilian verse, from about 1230, by Gonzalo de Berceo, secular priest of Rioja. He has just title to being the first Spanish poet known by name. His poem was based on a Latin text that may have been of Cistercian origin. A third would be *Songs of Saint Mary* in Galician-Portuguese, from about 1250, by King Alfonso X the Wise of Castile and León. This is to say nothing of various anonymous collections. These compendia amass hundreds upon hundreds of legends—for instance, King Alfonso the Wise's anthology alone comprehends 360.

Compounding the impressive bulk of narrative is the effort invested sometimes in making the manuscripts vehicles for all the media that were capable of being recorded at the time. Thus, the most luxurious of the extant codices of the *Songs* has folio sides that are segmented into six panels, each of which exhibits a snippet of text accompanied by an illustration. A substantial proportion of the total word count, and number of the illuminations in the manuscript, is devoted to miracles that revolve around living images of the Virgin. The representations were icons and statues that somehow or other become animate. Further supplementing and enhancing wordcraft and artwork is musical notation. Yet even this kind of accounting evokes only a small corner of the picture. To cite the old aphorism, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts in these collections. Beyond being encyclopedias of the miraculous, the texts express passionate love for Mary. Furthermore, none of them merely translates a Latin source word for word. Rather, they interject commentary, both explicit and implicit, that delves into social issues that would not have occurred to or been relevant to the churchmen who wrote in the learned language. They reached audiences across the societal spectrum. Thus, the *Songs* may well have been intended for a courtly audience, whereas the *Miracles* may have been designed for performance before pilgrims as they partook of the hospitality of a monastery.

The Jongleur of Rocamadour

Analogues that manifest a near kinship, both chronologically and culturally, with *Our Lady's Tumbler* can be detected in other Marian exempla and miracles. The earliest is probably a twelfth-century occurrence recorded first in the anonymous Latin prose *Miracles of Saint Mary of Rocamadour*. This narrative offers evidence for the importance of literature in writing down miracles and thereby promoting pilgrimage to specific locales. Later this specific shrine wonder relating to the Virgin received treatment in Old French verse by Gautier de Coinci. At the outset of his own version, the vernacular poet acknowledged his intimate familiarity with the prose in the learned language. Last but not least, the account was rendered into Galician-Portuguese by (or under) King Alfonso the Wise (see Fig. 5.14). The tale recounts an episode that is alleged to have befallen a jongleur from the German Rhineland community of Sieglar. According to the story, this Peter Iverni made music on his *vielle* in praise of the Virgin before the miracle-working statue of her in the sanctuary at the basilica of Saint Mary in Rocamadour in France. The element *roc-* in the place name, akin to English "rock," refers to a crag. Considerable speculation has been made about the exact identity of the Amadour or Madour whose cognomen completes the toponym. He is often taken to have been an early Christian hermit who was ostensibly a retainer in the household of the Virgin, and was dispatched later across the seas from the Holy Land to the Alzou gorge, as a missionary to Gaul.

On this occasion Peter prayed to the Mother of God that, if gratified by his production of songs and melodies, she should reward him with either a consecrated taper from among those that combusted around her statue, or a piece of wax from it. That is to say, he petitioned for the turnaround of the usual pattern in which a devotee of the Virgin would bestow a votive candle upon her. In a trice, the petitioner's wish came true. In repayment for the service done her, Mary prompted a taper to levitate and descend upon his musical instrument. In wonderment, an overflow crowd of pilgrims witnessed the airborne wax with its lighted wick. The episode filled them with hope. Like Peter, the worshipers performed pilgrimage and veneration. In him, they had a role model for the success of such performances in eliciting miracles.

At this point the story is still far from over. The official in control of caring for the church was a monk. Upon noticing the marvelous event, this Gerard grew irritated. Taking the fiddler unjustly to be a sorcerer, the testy sexton flounced over to the musician, seized the taper, and replaced it near the statue. Both the levitation and the confiscation were repeated, which made the official only more fed up: he had a meltdown. When the Mother of God caused the burning wick with its wax to boomerang and to alight on the musical instrument a third time, the miracle was proven definitively to be legitimate and celebration ensued. The bystanders who witnessed the wonder exclaimed in a lovefest for God (see Fig. 5.15). The jongleur, crying for joy, restored the votive. Every year thereafter, so long as Peter lived, he

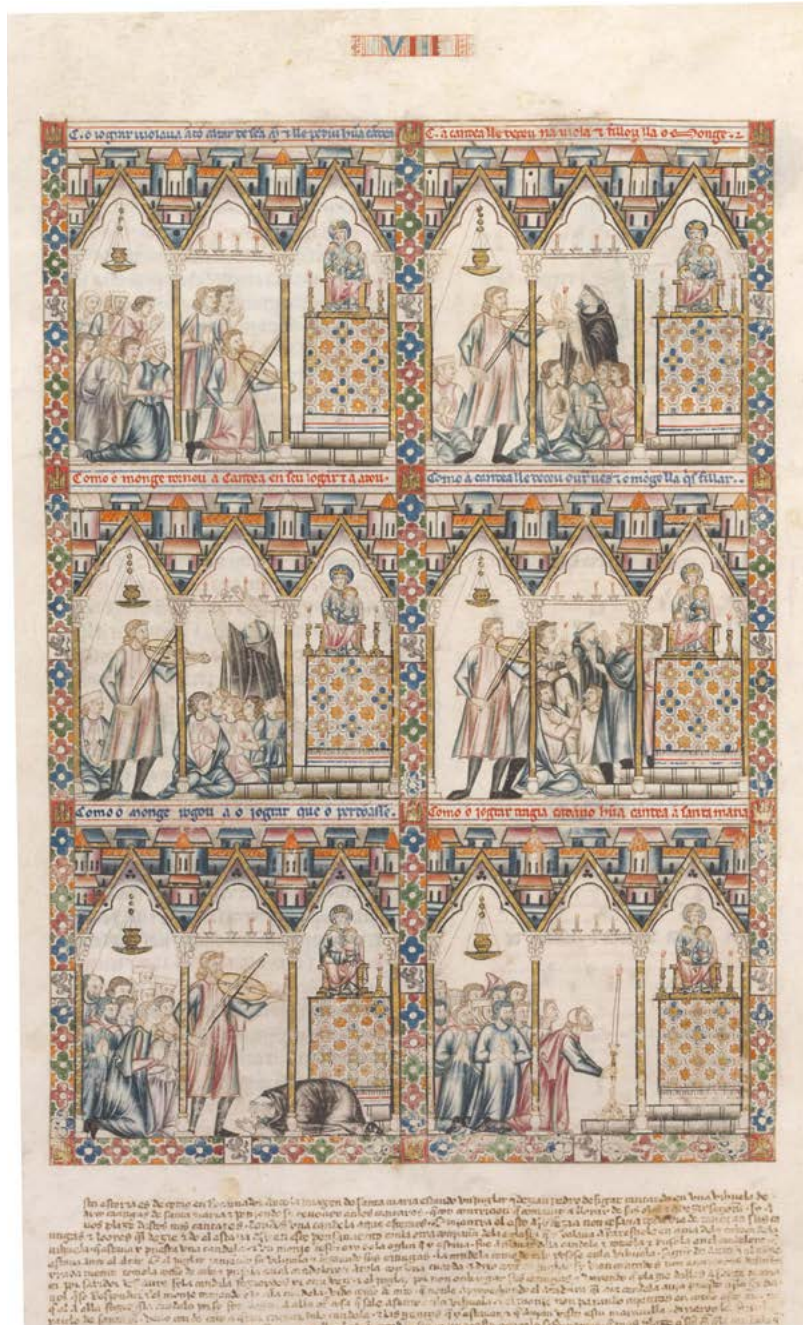


Fig. 5.14 Musical performers before the Virgin, as depicted in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (Codice Rico). Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, MS T.I.1., fol. 14v. Image courtesy of Real Biblioteca del Escorial, Madrid.

returned to the site of the original miracle to offer the Virgin a candle weight of more than a pound. The moralization that follows the narrative emphasizes that the monks and clerics tasked with singing would do well to emulate the red-blooded devotion of the jongleur in praying to God and his mother, in thanking them, and in extolling them.

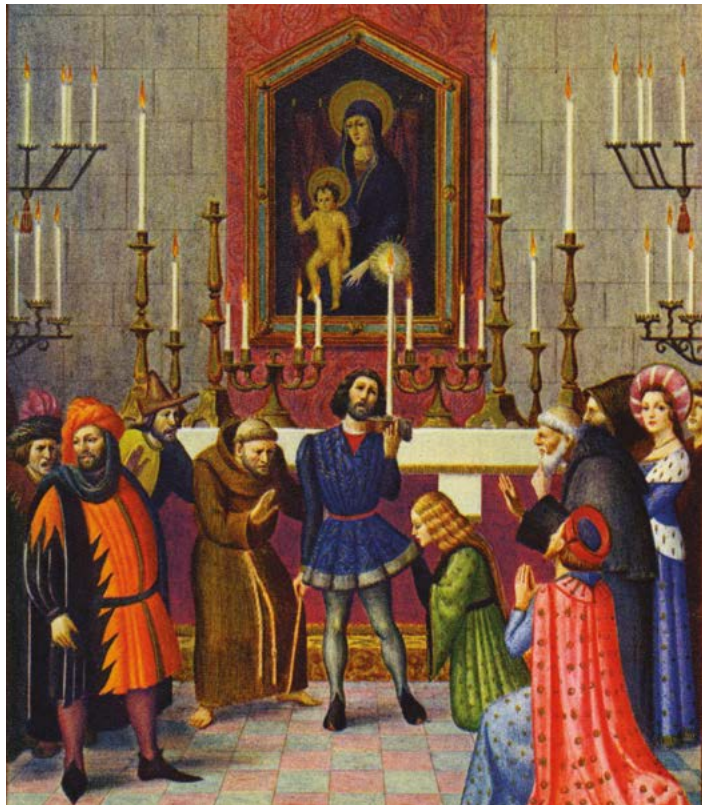


Fig. 5.15 A taper miraculously alights upon a jongleur's *vielle*, prompting wonder from bystanders. Illustration by Pio Santini, 1946. Published in Jérôme and Jean Tharaud, *Les contes de la Vierge* (Paris: Société d'éditions littéraires françaises, 1946), between pp. 130 and 131.

Reports of miracles entailing candles were not uncommon. The chapels and images that drew pilgrims, petitioners, and performers would have often been illuminated by the light of tapers. The flickering could readily have produced the impression of movement, and witnesses could easily have included individuals capable of singing, narrating, miming, or writing what was supposed to have happened. Sometimes it takes little imagination to guess how a press of wonder-hungry onlookers could have construed a normal occurrence as being miraculous. Take, for example, the monastery of Jesse, where a carpenter saw a statue of the Virgin and Child come to life. One night, the votive placed before the image relit itself twice and did not cease to burn after the beadle had doused it.

The location of the miracle at Rocamadour is apropos, since in the second half of the twelfth century and the early thirteenth century this site became a famed pilgrimage destination. If their health permitted, pilgrims were meant to proceed on their knees during the homestretch, the final steep ascent from the thoroughfare up to the shrine. In 1170, King Henry II of England made the trek there in search of cures for physical maladies and political misfortunes. Of relevance for our literary purposes, Caesarius of Heisterbach, the Cistercian author of exempla, was moved to enter his cloister as part of a conversion process that involved a pilgrimage to this sanctuary in 1199. At the same time, it bears note that the jongleur in this miracle manifests no desire to enter the monastery in the locale. Rather, he remains from beginning to end a layman. In a further difference from *Our Lady's Tumbler*, he is not a dancer or gymnast but an instrumentalist and singer. Additionally, he both requests and observes the miracle that takes place.

The Virgin herself is not reputed to have made any appearances at Rocamadour, although the shrine possessed a sample of her treasured milk. All the same, her image in the house of worship there elicited particularly strong attachment and (as we have seen) was ascribed miraculous powers (see Fig. 5.16). The Madonna at Sainte-Marie of Rocamadour is a wooden image of the Virgin and Child. The composition is not unusual for the period, since it depicts Mary supporting the infant Jesus on her left knee. This type of statue, with its very formal posture, is known as a *maiestas*, or "majesty." An alternative name for the Mother of God in the same pose is "throne of wisdom."



Fig. 5.16 Postcard depicting Rocamadour's "Chapelle miraculeuse" (Saint-Céré, France: J. Vertuel, 1977).

If the Rocamadour Madonna's austere composition conforms to the compositional norms of its day, it displays a relatively rare feature in its coloration. As the statue now exists, Mary is portrayed as having swarthy skin (see Fig. 5.17). For obvious reasons, a representation of this sort is known as a Black Virgin or Madonna. Such dark-hued images in the round are customarily treated as distinct phenomena from ones that are not black. Although paintings in which the Mother of God has a blackened hue may also be designated likewise as Black Madonnas, it makes sense to examine the pictural and sculptural media separately. The best known of such paintings would be an icon, that is, a depiction on wood. The original was supposedly made of wax mingled with the ashes of martyred Christians. This artwork was preserved in a Marian shrine located in the section of Constantinople, modern Istanbul, that was called Blachernae. From its location the depiction became known technically as the Blachernitissa. In Byzantine coins issued between 1055 and 1057, a representation of the Virgin has an inscription identifying her by this designation. The difficulty lies in ascertaining whether the numismatic type corresponds with the famous image or with another icon or some other sort of decoration in the church of Blachernae (see Fig. 5.18).

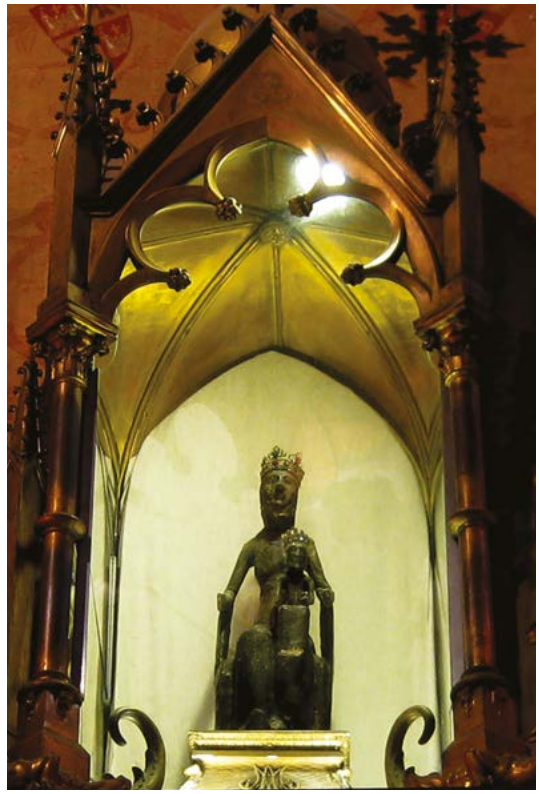


Fig. 5.17 The Black Madonna of Rocamadour. Photograph by Martin Irvine, no date. Image courtesy of Martin Irvine. All rights reserved.



Fig. 5.18 Mary as *Blachernitissa* on Byzantine coinage. Coin (obverse), two-thirds *miliaresion* of Constantine IX Monomachos, 1075–1077. Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection. Image courtesy of Joe Mills. All rights reserved.

Mysterious in their misty origins and murky meanings, the Black Virgins have exercised a special fascination since the Middle Ages. The color coding that Western societies have often imposed upon their citizens has been extended to their statuary. Among the caveats in order, one is that the demographics of such Madonnas have changed. Not all representations categorized as having this color today were dark at all or as black when they were first created or earlier mentioned. The chromatic change has taken place in the opposite direction as well: the Church has sometimes replaced, without ado, older Black Virgins with newer white ones. Then again, older does not mean original: what has darkened may have once been lighter. Candle soot and other grime, natural and unnatural aging of paint and other materials, additional layers of varnish, and replacement of lighter with darker images have all produced modifications. In any event, for a millennium the most important of these dusky Madonnas as a pilgrimage destination has been the Black Virgin at Santa Maria de Montserrat. Located less than fifty miles from Barcelona as the crow flies, the Benedictine abbey was founded there in 1025. The site's jagged-edged topography gave rise to the name "sawed mountain" of both mount and monastery in the language of the region, Catalan. Various hypotheses have been advanced to explain the coloration of these Madonnas. For example, what could be called the "holy smoke" theory holds that these images could have grown discolored inadvertently. They could have been fumigated by the acrid fumes of candles and lamps in ordinary worship, or by pungent fire when churches burned. (If so, the carvings have become hidden behind a permanent smoke screen.) Since many legends surrounding them claim that they were unearthed mysteriously by animals or shepherds in the wild, their color could have resulted from exposure to the elements or burial. Alternatively, they could have been intended to be black from their creation, to acknowledge the swarthiness of women who were familiar where they were originally carved. In some cases, they could have been fabricated from material that was naturally dusky from the beginning, while in others, they could have been made of wood that darkened as it aged. Whatever the reason for the blackness, the Black Virgin of Rocamadour was

made the totem of the site. The figure was recorded first in the seal of the Benedictine priory and later in the special lead token that pilgrims sewed as a badge onto clothing and hats (see Fig. 5.19).



Fig. 5.19 A pilgrim's badge depicting the Black Madonna and child. Metal badge, late twelfth to early thirteenth century.

Although the parallelism is inexact, the miracle of Rocamadour shows many parallels to *Our Lady's Tumbler*. In both stories a lay entertainer merits the special favor of the Virgin by putting on a show before a Madonna within a famous institution dedicated to her, the Mother of God accepts the service, and an insentient object moves miraculously to signal her amiable disposition toward him. Also, in both narratives the professional has an antagonist from the religious establishment where he delivers his performance, in one case a sacristan and in the other a monk. In the last stage, the performer is vindicated. Both tales signal that ecclesiastics have no monopoly on the quality of veneration. With her discernment, Mary may grant her favor to the sincerity of a layman over the soul-destroying professionalism of a monk or cleric. Iconographically, representations of the jongleur can form eye-catching tableaux. The fiddler cradling his instrument can echo the Madonna dandling the Child.

Small wonder that in one of the five manuscripts of the medieval French *Our Lady's Tumbler*, our poem follows immediately upon a version of this Rocamadour miracle tale by an anonymous poet. The analogies between the tales of Peter Iverni and the nameless tumbler are strong. In fact, during the early twentieth-century heyday of *Our Lady's Tumbler*—when literary, operatic, and even cinematic re-creations of the story were ubiquitous—a French daily cultural newspaper ran an account of the Rocamadour miracle on its front page, under the headline "The Jongleur of Our Lady: The True Legend." In the English-speaking world, an early

volume of translations from medieval French contains *Our Lady's Tumbler* as well as Gautier de Coinci's version of the Rocamadour tale. But why stop dead with just this one parallel? Another close analogue is to be found. Set within an even larger framework, Gautier's miracle and *Our Lady's Tumbler* can be seen to flank another spellbinding narrative that belongs very much in the same company, the miracle of the Holy Candle of Arras. If nothing until now has kindled your interest, this scintillating version should make the sparks fly.

The Holy Candle of Arras

It is better to light a candle than
curse the darkness.



Fig. 5.20 Holy card depicting the miracle at Arras (Bruges, Belgium, ca. 1890).

Above all, in the motif of the taper and in the character of the jongleur, the story about the miracle of the performer before the Madonna of Rocamadour relates loosely but intriguingly to the Marian miracle of the Holy Candle of Arras (see Fig. 5.20). This other wonder set up a ménage à trois that triangulated the Virgin and two entertainers. The events recounted in the legend reputedly took place in the opening years of the twelfth century, but they are not documented in extant texts until more than a half century later. The action in the story centers upon the northern French city within

the bosom of a region called the Artois. In both the municipality and the region, the Picard dialect prevailed. The general backdrop is a citizenry beleaguered by a plague of ergotism. This poisoning, with cramps, spasms, and gangrene as its chief symptoms, is recognized now to result from consumption of rye and other cereals contaminated by ergot. In the Middle Ages, what caused this fungal disease stayed in doubt. The populace felt even more at a loss about workable medical treatments than it did about the causes. As a result, many concluded that the pestilence inflicted divine retribution for sin: sweet justice. They believed that one of the best remedies lay in appealing to Mary for mercy through her intercession with Christ.

The chief characters in the miraculous tale are two jongleurs. They became implacable enemies after the one, Pierre (but often called by the stage name Norman), slew the brother of the other, Itier (see Fig. 5.21). The Virgin, a beauty dressed in white, manifested herself to them in separate but simultaneous visions, instructing them to betake themselves to Arras, which was ravaged by ergotism (see Figs. 5.22 and 5.23). They were to find Bishop Lambert in her church there, iron out their differences before him, and keep vigil on Saturday. At midnight, a woman was to appear and give them a taper, which became known as the Holy Candle. The cylinder, alight with heavenly fire, would drool wax. In a kind of homeopathic medicine, when diluted in water the drippings could be drunk or drizzled to heal those burning from ergot poisoning.

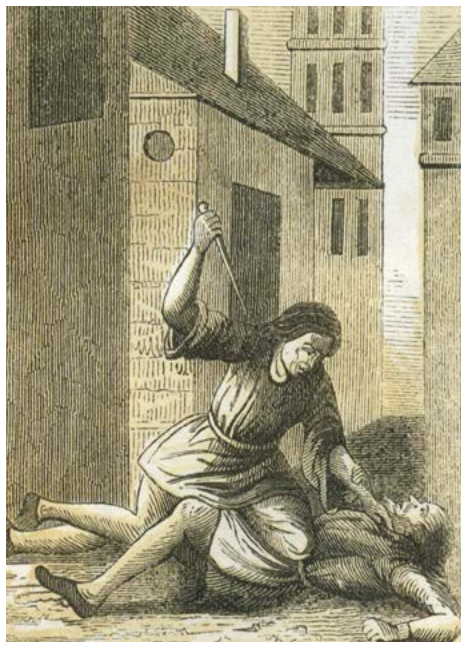


Fig. 5.21 "Normand kills Itier's brother in a quarrel." Illustration, 1853. Published in Auguste Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras…* (Arras, France: A. Brissy, 1853), 111.



Fig. 5.22 "In a vision, Itier receives the order to go to Arras." Illustration, 1853. Published in A. Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras…*, 111.



Fig. 5.23 "Normand receives the same order." Illustration, 1853. Published in A. Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras…*, 111.

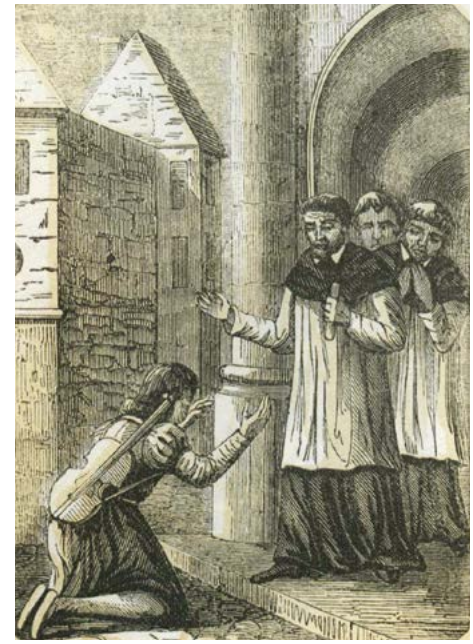


Fig. 5.24 "Normand makes his prayer at the door of the cathedral." Illustration, 1853. Published in A. Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras…*, 111.



Fig. 5.25 "The Bishop Lambert reconciles Itier with Normand." Illustration, 1853. Published in A. Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras…*, 113.

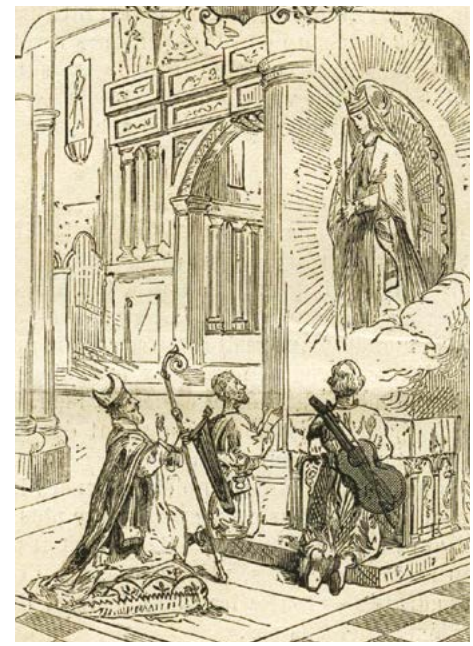


Fig. 5.26 Mary appears to the bishop and jugglers. Illustration, 1876. Published in *Le Monde illustré* (1876), 356.

On the following day, both men made a beeline as bidden to the Artesian cathedral of Notre-Dame. Norman arrived first (see Fig. 5.24). Upon hearing his claim, the prelate believed that the fellow was being true to his trade. Since jongleur is cognate with joker, Norman must have been jesting. Then Itier showed up and explained his identical experience and mission. Even so, Lambert remained leery. In his view, the two entertainers were colluding in a prank. Itier, who had not known that Norman had undergone the same vision, made clear that he would not be in the least inclined to pair up with his colleague. In fact, he exclaimed acrimoniously that he would like to run Norman through with a sword for having killed his sibling. At this juncture, the two foes were poised to settle their differences of opinion through physical violence. Happily, Lambert soon had them holding out olive branches: what threatened to become mano a mano became instead a handshake (see Fig. 5.25).

What happens next flies in the face of the old adage "The lights are on, but no one is at home." As all three men prayed in the church, Mary wafted down from the heights of the choir, cradling in her hand a candle flaming with heavenly fire (see Figs. 5.26 and 5.27). She gave the cylinder to them. With water in which they had dripped drops from the taper (see Fig. 5.28), the three began at once zealously to cure the infirm (see Figs. 5.29 and 5.30). The legend of this thriller held that on the first night, with excitement truly at a fever pitch, 144 of the afflicted were healed. In this account, the jongleurs do not play or perform to achieve the miracle, and the Virgin's intercession comes about in a vision rather than by moving through the go-between of an image.



Fig. 5.27 "The Holy Virgin brings the miraculous candle." Illustration, 1853. A. Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras*…, 113.



Fig. 5.28 "The bishop blesses the water where the drops of the candle fall." Illustration, 1853. A. Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras*…, 113.



Fig. 5.29 "Healing the sick." Illustration, 1853. Published in A. Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras…*, 113.

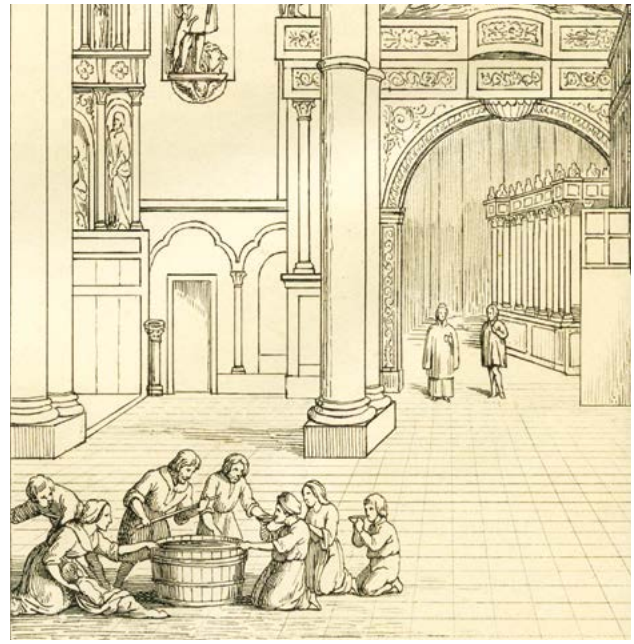


Fig. 5.30 Interior view of the Cathédrale d'Arras. Drawing, 1853. Published in A. Terninck, *Essai historique et monographique sur l'ancienne Cathédrale d'Arras* (Paris and Arras, France: La Société de Saint-Victor, à Plancy [Aube], 1853), between pp. 42 and 43.

After the curative miracle, Itier and Norman allegedly started a society. Called the Brotherhood of the Holy Candle, this lay religious guild was instituted so that its members could serve as watchmen for the waxy relic. They also commemorated the miracle, which of necessity entailed honoring the Virgin (see Fig. 5.31). The confraternity of jongleurs existed from around 1175 until 1792. Without going into the particulars of this group, it is worth pointing out that guilds for minstrels took firm shape only long after the twelfth century. Gradually, such performers became more settled through attachment to royal courts and to the households of other notables. As they became less transient, they gained regular incomes and took to wearing distinctive livery. Such costumes remain with us in popular images of clowns and jesters. To house the candle, the members of this fraternal organization eventually constructed the chapel of Notre Dame des Ardents. In the Latin form of her name, this Mary is likewise Our Lady of the Fevered. She is customarily portrayed with a taper. The Latin designation of the group is written out so as to emphasize in its final two letters VM, the initials of Virgin Mary (see Fig. 5.32). Alongside the chapel stood a distinctive stone tower, which became popular as a pilgrimage site (see Fig. 5.33). The medieval structure was built to have the aptly tapered cylindrical form of a candle. The construction survived until pulled down by a mob during the iconoclastic upheaval of the French Revolution.



Fig. 5.31 The Holy Candle. Miniature, fourteenth century. Private collection. Reproduced in Auguste Terninck, *Notre-Dame du Joyel, ou Histoire légendaire et numismatique de la chandelle d'Arras* (Arras, France: A. Brissy, 1853), 99.



Fig. 5.32 "Domina Nostra Ardentium." Illustration, 1910. Published in Cavrois de Saternault, *Histoire du Saint-Cierge d'Arras et de la Confrérie de Notre-Dame des Ardents*, 3rd ed. (Arras, France: La Société du Pas-de-Calais, 1910), frontispiece.



Fig. 5.33 "Vue perspective d'une partie de la petite place d'Arras, vis à vis l'hôtel-de-ville." Drawing by Joseph Victor David, 1773. Reproduced in Cavrois de Saternault, *Histoire du Saint-Cierge d'Arras et de la Confrérie de Notre-Dame des Ardents*, 3rd ed. (Arras, France: La Société du Pas-de-Calais, 1910), 41.

For what it is worth, there would not be much challenge in formulating a Freudian interpretation here. The large actual candles, the reliquary, and the lapidary tower from the Middle Ages are all phalliform. Furthermore, the language of Marian miracles and Marian devotion is hardly destitute of amatory elements to connect male devotees with a highly feminine Mary. But sometimes, to ring a change upon the famous saying ascribed again and again to Sigmund Freud, a candle is just a candle. Or, to take the thought as formulated by the American horror novelist Stephen King, "Sometimes a cigar is just a smoke and a story's just a story."

The confraternity has a neatly twofold nexus with *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Both the professional occupation of the performers who made up the guild and the Marian nature of the miracle at the root of their foundation legend make unsurprising that the Festival of Our Lady of the Fevered is conflated to this day with the "jongleurs de Notre Dame." What further relevance does the foundation legend for the confraternity of jongleurs at Arras have for *Our Lady's Tumbler*? When the poem was composed, such entertainers still lacked any formal organization or institution to support them collectively—they were cats waiting to be herded. In early medieval society they had been marginalized and often cast out. They belonged to a seamy underbelly

that encompassed beggars, ladies of the night, and petty criminals. In the fullness of time, jongleurs turned sedentary, professionalized, and concentrated on skills that qualified them as minstrels—a term that they would have had good reason to prefer when describing themselves. Simultaneously, they moved by degrees toward being able to establish group identities along the lines of other craftsmen. In so doing, they naturally modeled their new professional unions on those found in existing crafts. In other words, they formed guilds. In their case, they were devoted to the shared pursuit of waxing poetic. In the transitional period between peripheralization and institutionalization, the jongleurs still had no mechanism for achieving individual stability within a collective. This lacking may explain why so many performers of this type entered monasteries, first especially Cistercian ones and later Franciscan friaries. Such groups afforded them a field day, their only means of belonging to a fixed collectivity. The tale of Norman and Itier may be untangled not only as a Marian miracle, but equally as a social parable that urges overcoming individual differences for the common good. The explication could even be stretched to produce a reading of the story as a foundation myth for what would be considered today unionization.

The jongleurs in the tale of Arras are musicians, who could find overlapping interests and bond together to protect them. By comparison, the physical performers remained poor pariahs. Within the monasteries too, former entertainers faced condemnation if they could not segue from bodily movement to voice and instruments in their performances. One lesson latent in *Our Lady's Tumbler* is the mistrust of physical self-expression and entertainment. The Virgin showed herself far more understanding than did the monks about the antics of the converted tumbler. Medieval churches, especially cathedrals, witnessed many forms of conduct that would appear decidedly incongruous and indecorous today. Particularly where pilgrims congregated, much behavior that nowadays would be permissible only on the streets played out instead within places of worship. But the dividing line between the acceptable and unacceptable may have run between music—even instrumental music—and dance.

The Pious Sweat of Monks and Lay Brothers

Genius is one percent inspiration,
ninety-nine percent perspiration.

—Thomas Alva Edison (1903)

Beyond the miracle of Peter Iverni or that of the holy legend of Arras, other exempla and legends relate to *Our Lady's Tumbler* not by having as the central character a professional entertainer but by involving a specific narrative motif. For instance, an exemplum attested in no fewer than five different versions shows Mary as she comforts those who are sweating. We have seen how the legendary Veronica sought to take the edge off the suffering of Jesus when he was en route to the crucifixion and came away with a miraculous memento that became the main motif of the episode.

Here, the wonder is the Virgin's activity in succoring monastic devotees as they ooze sweat or sniffle tears from the relevant glands. Where miracles induced by perspiration enter the picture, medieval authors and audiences imposed no compulsion to take the proverbial grain of salt.

One form tells of a twelfth-century brother of Clairvaux. This Rainald would watch admiringly as his fellow Cistercians toiled in the fields. Even brethren of noble birth pitched themselves into the task. Once he had a vision in which the Virgin, her cousin Elizabeth, and the follower of Jesus named Mary Magdalene paid a visit to the brothers as they labored in the meadows. Another version of the same story relates that the miracle took place while the white monks of Clairvaux were reaping in the valley. The Virgin, her mother Anne, and Mary Magdalene swooped down in a great flood of light (here the meaning of the toponym Clairvaux in French merits mention: "Bright Valley" or "Valley of Light"). After making their free-fall, the three women wiped the sweat from the brows of the harvesting brethren and fanned them with the arms of their garments. In a much later telling, a long-in-the-tooth knight who had become a brother at Clairvaux saw one of the three, a beautiful young woman, greet each brother, give him a kiss and hug, and sopped the sweat from his sautéed brow with a linen cloth. In the thirteenth century, a monk of Villers in Brabant witnessed the Virgin, in the company of Mary Magdalene, fan the toiling brethren and pat away their perspiration with her sleeve.

At the Cistercian abbey of Heisterbach near Cologne in the Rhineland, Caesarius claims to have been so deeply moved upon first hearing this exemplum that in response he entered the monastery. In his account, the Virgin Mary visited with Anne as the monks of the abbey worked in the fields. The two saintly women daubed the men's brows and dispatched a breeze to cool them. Between 1219 and 1223 Caesarius served as master of novices. During this stretch he composed his own collection of miracles, chock-full of exempla (746 of them). The twelve books, entitled "Great Dialogue of Visions and Miracles," are presented as a dialogue between a probationer and the author himself, in his magisterial capacity (see Fig. 3.12). Through the illustrative stories, the writer aimed ultimately to contribute to the training and formation of monks, with all due attention to the special circumstances of lay brothers too. He devoted the seventh book to tales relating to Mary. Ample room existed for strong overlap between the exempla incorporated into such collections and records of apparitions of the Virgin to Cistercians. Eight such apparitions are known to have befallen the brethren of Clairvaux alone in the second half of the twelfth century. The Mother of God visited the "bright valley" continually.

Beyond the five interrelated exempla, in other cases the Virgin also undertakes an antiperspirant role. One appears in the medieval French verse of Gautier de Coinci. His voluminous *Miracles of the Virgin* extends over roughly 30,000 verses. In this poem he tells of one miracle involving a Carthusian brother which exhibits many striking similarities to *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The poet relates this tale very briefly. With

the omission of the moralizing coda, it totals a mere sixty-five verses. To date, the exact relationship between the two miracles has not been unsnarled, although Gautier seems likely to have known and been inspired by some form of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Probably he read or heard a version along the lines of what has survived. Then again, he may have encountered an iteration of it that was never written down. In this case, the meager synopsis in the Latin exemplum could well be only the tip of an iceberg of tellings and retellings, and writings and rewritings, that has melted out of our grasp. The author himself claims at the outset to have read a version of the miracle about the Carthusian, but if a text existed, it too has evaporated.

In Gautier's miracle, a monk of the order in question remains in church after all the daily and nightly offices. There he devotes himself with intensity and persistence to mortifications of prayer and devotion. In each session he prostrates himself on bared knees fifty to a hundred times as he prays before an image of the Virgin. Despite having peeled off the leggings that would have shielded his joints, he exerts himself so much that runnels of sweat stream from him. One of the brethren spies on him one night to see what he does in the chapel after the office. At the end of the ritual, his fellow monk sees Mary dismount from heaven to stroke with a snow-white veil the perspiring face of the devout Carthusian. After revealing to the prior and to his devout comrade the miracle that he witnessed, the brother dies. A second episode is recorded in the *Song of the Knight and the Squire*, by Jehan de Saint-Quentin. The poet, a self-described clerk, composed songs in Picard that deal with many topics, but especially frequently with Marian miracles. He seems often to have followed oral or at least otherwise unattested sources. In the poem under consideration, a castellan, the commander of the castle, looks on unperceived at a poignant scene. The Virgin dries with her kerchief the teardrops welling from the eyes of a repentant knight while he gets down on his knees before her. A related third form of the legend is transmitted by Gautier de Coinci. This one pertains to the icon of Our Lady of Saydnaya, a city in the mountains near Damascus in Syria. The convent to which the icon belonged supported a cult that was a going concern in the late twelfth century. The miracle tells of a Carthusian whose extreme devotion elicits a similar display of compassion from the Virgin. In this case, the monk kneels so long in prayer on bare knees before the Madonna that wetness courses down from his brow. At this, Mary comes down from heaven to dry his face with her soft, snow-white hand towel.

These many other miracles of the Virgin add both inevitability and mystery to the successful formula of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Probably loosely under the influence of the Veronica legend, the idea arose that the Mother of God might concern herself with assuaging the toils—or, more particularly, the sweat and tears—of mere mortal monks as they executed either fieldwork or choir devotions. Her governing principle appears to have been "no sweat." On a higher plane, another component in the story was sheer love. The sheerness refers partly to fabric, while the affection derives its exceptionality from being directed to a statue.

The Love of Statuesque Beauty

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

In *Our Lady's Tumbler* the protagonist conducts the strangest of charm offensives. He strips down to the lowest and most intimate layer of clothing as he exerts himself to the utmost to be obsequious to the woman he adores. The proverbial saying "worse for wear" seems here to find its inverse in the concept of being "better for not wearing." The scene, when described in this bare-bones way, brings to mind other acts between lovers.

The incident is also curiously reminiscent of another famous Marian miracle, recounted by Gautier de Coinci and others. In it a youth, seeking a secure place for his engagement ring before engaging in an athletic event, deposits it on the finger of a statue of the Virgin. He finds the image "so fresh and beautiful… a thousand times more beautiful than she who gave this ring" that he plights his troth of lifelong service. He is soon set to renege upon his pledge. On the night after he has uttered his official "till death do us part," the Virgin intervenes as an animate anti-aphrodisiac and interposes herself between him and his bride. The double-cross does not aim for Mary to consummate the wedding in place of the newlywed woman—in other words, the substitution is not the motif known as the bed trick. Rather, it amounts to a means of preserving chastity. The story ends with the young man joining the monastery, as he had pledged. In this tale, an adolescent takes the habit after an encounter with a Madonna, who turns out to be both seducing and sedating. The sequence of events conforms to a narrative line used much earlier by similar accounts in which fabric and sweat are not always key components. Ultimately, the Marian tale appropriates elements from these other accounts, which have the boy becoming affianced to a sculpture of Venus. Many versions of the Venereal tale, including some that transmogrify earlier ones, have been told over the centuries. The most famous may be the 1837 short story "The Venus of Ille" by Prosper Mérimée (see Fig. 5.34). Eventually, the miracle has loose analogues in reality. In some cases, a young man would make an oath of celibacy by donning a ring and putting an identical one on a carving of the Virgin.

The still bigger picture is stories, such as the legend of Pygmalion, in which a man falls in love with a sculpture. Loosely related too are equal and opposite tales, in which to beguile her beloved a woman assumes the guise of an effigy. The archetype here would be the myth of Pasiphaë, a daughter of the sun god Helios, who is hexed to fall in love with a bull. To copulate with the beast, she enters a wooden cow that her beloved bovine mounts. The cross-species coupling and very real insemination achieved by the ploy of this decoy leads to the birthing of a monstrous hybrid, the Minotaur.

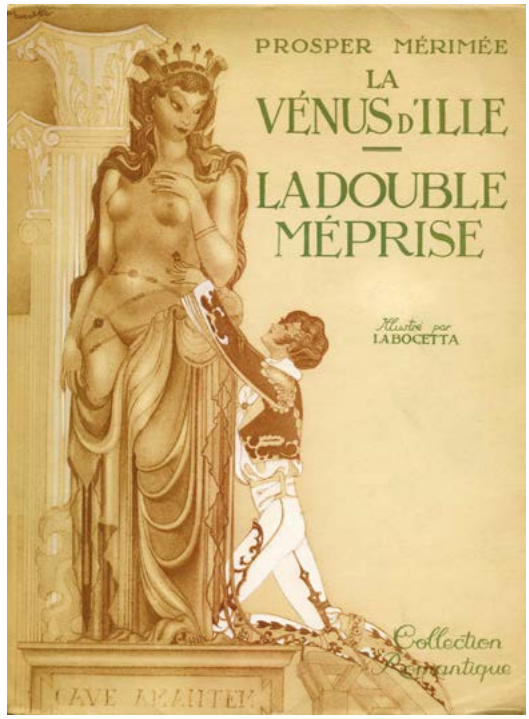


Fig. 5.34 Front cover of Prosper Mérimée, *La Vénus d'Ille* / *La double méprise* / *Les âmes du purgatoire*, illus. Mario Labocetta (Paris: Nilsson, 1930).



Fig. 5.35 Postcard depicting the Volto Santo in the church of St. Martin, Lucca (Milan, Italy: Cesare Capello, early twentieth century).

Love of manmade representations remains with us. The ability of individual sculptors to hew marble into lifelike form may have dwindled from the glory days of ancient Greece and Rome, but machines enable the mass manufacture of ever more realistic and even hyperreal three-dimensional replicas. Stories of inflatable dolls, mannequins, and robots proliferate, to say nothing of narratives in which disembodied simulations of human characters play leading roles. Yet these other tales of images evidence only superficial overlap with medieval Western ones. Our investigations need to turn elsewhere for further analogues to *Our Lady's Tumbler*.

The Holy Face of Christ and Virgin Saints

If we venture beyond miracles attributed specifically to the Virgin Mary, or rather to thaumaturgic images of her, the most relevant parallel emerges in a wonder ascribed to the Holy Face. This statue hangs upon a crucifix at the church of Saint Martin in Lucca (see Fig. 5.35). It became the object of the first cult devoted to a carving of Jesus on the rood. This wooden pictorialization shows the crucified Christ triumphant, wearing an ankle-length tunic, This specific representation of him standing against the cross became popularly renowned, being mentioned already as the habitual oath ("by the Face at Lucca") of King William Rufus in the late eleventh century. Three hundred years later it is still assumed to be common knowledge. At one point in Dante's *Commedia*, demons cry out to a sinner from the sculpture's adoptive hometown: "This is no place for the Holy Face!" Piers Plowman, the eponymous pilgrim in William Langland's late fourteenth-century alliterative poem, vows by it that at least metaphorically his pilgrimage consists in plowing. As such mentions certify, the image was widely revered throughout Western Europe. Among other things, the Lucchese artifact is attested over a large area on pilgrims' badges of lead.

Medieval legend maintained that the statue's countenance was crafted by an angel, whereas all the rest was sculpted by Nicodemus. The story merits being put into an easily assimilated recapitulation. According to the Gospel of John, this Pharisee became a disciple of Jesus. After the crucifixion, he assisted Joseph of Arimathea in deposing Christ from the cross and laying him in the tomb. Thereafter he set out, at the urging of God, to shape an image of the Christian savior on the crucifix. While the would-be sculptor slept, a divine emissary completed the face. Nicodemus hid the precious sculpture in a cave, where it remained closeted for centuries. The larger than life-size effigy of cedar was miraculous not merely in its creation but also in its subsequent transportation. It reputedly arrived in Lucca in the eighth century thanks to the enterprise of two Italian bishops (see Fig. 5.36). A procession known as the Illumination of the Holy Cross still takes place annually. In it, participants carry lighted candles through the streets to the church.

The rich dossier of miracles about the Holy Face contains one highly relevant to *Our Lady's Tumbler*. This legend originated in the twelfth century, to judge by its style and content. In the key Latin form, a poor young man from Gaul stops on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to see the carving in Lucca. Praying and weeping amid the great huddle of

pilgrims as they make offerings, he thinks that he will confer on her his only good in a no-charge performance: he will sing hymns to the Holy Rood while accompanying himself on the musical instrument, a fiddle, he has on his arm. As a sign of favor to the suppliant, God demonstrates his appreciation by causing the figure of the Holy Face to look down at the musician and to let fall a silver slipper from its right foot into his lap. After leaving the chapel with the footwear, the unnamed young man returns with it, but the miracle is confirmed by the circumstance that it will no longer fit on the foot of the image. The plight is a near opposite of the pivotal episode in Cinderella.



Fig. 5.36 Postcard reproduction of Vincenzo Barsotti's *L'arrivo a Lucca del Volto Santo* (Lucca, Italy: Archivio di Stato, early twentieth century).

The unique medieval French telling of this miracle appears in a large mishmash of verse texts that was probably compiled by a monk of the Benedictine monastery of Saint Bertin in France. The date of composition has been disputed. The crucial personage in the account is a minstrel often named Jenois, who plays in vain to earn his sustenance. Although seven hundred people pass by him, no one treats him to even one coin. Then, he enters the church where the Holy Face had only recently arrived. After finding out that the image represents Jesus Christ, he begins to sing to the accompaniment of his string instrument, the *vielle* (see Fig. 5.37). The poem remains reticent about the controversy over the playing of musical instruments of any sort within the church. Whether fiddles or organs, everything beyond the human voice (and even at times it too) has been suspect. In any case, the performance sets in motion a miracle. First, the sculpture, inspired by the Holy Ghost, becomes animate.



Fig. 5.37 Jenois before the Holy Face. Miniature, fifteenth century. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Palatinus Latinus 1988, fol. 1r.

Then, it loosens one of its feet from the nails holding it to the cross, stretches it out, and kicks the shoe, encased in silver and gold and encrusted in precious stones, to the jongleur. When the young man goes off to eat, the bishop enjoins him to return, but tells him that he may keep the trove if the miracle is repeated. At this point, the image fills with spite, loses its temper, takes back the foot covering, and orders that it not be taken from the jongleur unless with substantial reparation, which is provided. Jenois is now able to dine and offers a repast to the poor of the city, to whom he also allocates the wealth he has acquired. Afterward follows what qualifies as a celebratory outcome only in the unusual confines of medieval hagiography. The performer resumes his pilgrimage, but is captured by pagans, tortured, and decapitated. His body is subsequently venerated in Rome.

In all its forms, the story has encoded within it an argument to validate largesse to entertainers in recompense for their performances, at least when they sing on pious topics. This dimension of the tale is discussed unreservedly in the medieval French *Aliscans*. This long "song of heroic deeds" from the second half of the twelfth century tells of the pitched battle and bloodletting from which it takes its name. At one point in the narrative, an itinerant jongleur endeavors to elicit generosity from his audience by singing an editorial. He exhorts noblemen not to listen to entertainers of his sort unless they stand ready to open their wallets. To prove his point, he cites the beneficence of the Holy Face of Lucca. All ought to cherish performers for the joy they seek and their love of singing. A wayfaring professional could also take the episode to heart as betokening the miracles that God could deign to perform for even the humblest spectators.

Not everyone was willing to take the miracle tale on faith and deem it plausible. Overt incredulity is recorded at the latest by the beginning of the thirteenth century. The nagging doubts are likely only to have been magnified when the story underwent a still stranger transmogrification at a later stage. However improbable the sex change may seem, the person crucified was alleged to have been a king's daughter. To avoid a forced marriage that would necessitate her violating the vow of chastity she had taken, the nubile girl prayed for help from heaven. Whether she was dysphoric at her physiological sex or not, we cannot know. Yet she was horrified by the prospect of married life. She spared herself from a wedding by undergoing extemporaneously a partial transgender transformation. In what is known clinically as hirsutism, the damsel suddenly sprouted such scruffy and unkempt facial hair that she became unmarriageable. Her condition made her the medieval anticipation of the later standard in two-bit sideshows, the bearded lady. At this point the would-be suitor soured on the idea of monogamy (at least with her) and withdrew his proposal. The father flew into a rage and put his own daughter to the cross. The account goes on to merge with that of the Holy Face, with a further miracle involving a jongleur and the shoe from the image of the martyred (and bearded) virgin. The jury is still out on the reasons for which these disparate motifs would have originated and amalgamated. Face up to it: if ever a case called for a close shave by Occam's razor, this would be

the one. Of the many accounts, the most representative one may be the most famous. In 1812 the Brothers Grimm incorporated a version into the first edition of their so-called fairy tales, drawing upon a collection of exempla from 1700. In this version, the woman in question is called Saint Kummernis, meaning "care" or "anxiety" (see Fig. 5.38). Among sundry other names that have been attached to the mostly female leading character, Wilgefortis supposedly derives from the Latin signifying "strong maiden." The tale is widely attested between the mid-fourteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries: approximately one thousand records of it survive in texts and images. The best-known representation may be a 1507 woodcut produced in Augsburg by Hans Burgkmair the Elder. The artwork juxtaposes a narrative in text and an image that shows the fiddler kneeling before the Holy Face, identified as "The Image at Lucca" (see Fig. 5.39). The legend continued to be illustrated for centuries in art, even folk art. A last major expression of the tale was literary, in an 1816 ballad. Here, the poet assigned to Saint Cecilia the place formerly spoken for by Kummernis. In the poem, an impecunious violinist moves an image of Cecilia so deeply that the saint tosses him her golden shoe. Although this gesture leads to his being sentenced to death, he is saved from execution when she also bestows upon him the matching item of footwear (see Fig. 5.40).



Fig. 5.38 Unknown artist, *St. Kümmernis*, 1678. Oil on panel. Museum im Prediger, Schwäbisch Gmünd. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kuemmernis_museum_schwaebischgmuend.JPG



Fig. 5.39 St. Kümmernis. Woodcut by Hans Burgkmair, 1507. Augsburg. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Burgkmair_Kuemmernis.JPG

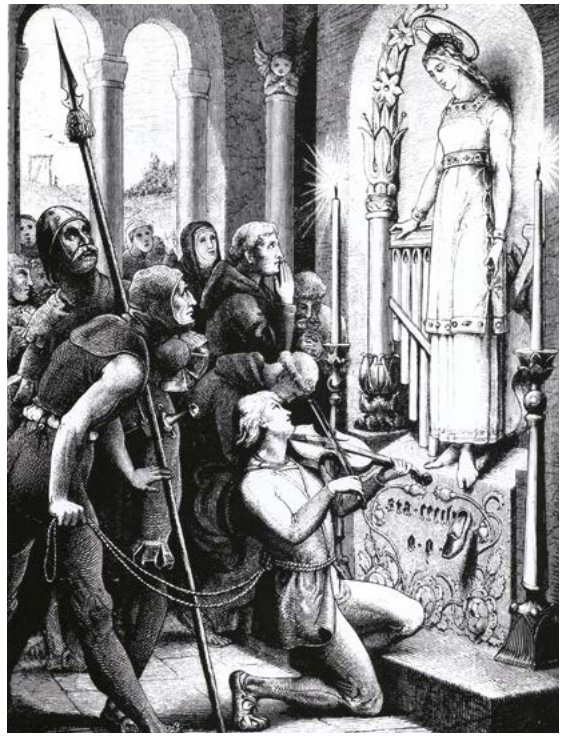


Fig. 5.40 A fiddler plays before the Virgin, with a crowd assembled. Drawing by Herman Kanckfuss, 1871.

Loosely related to the story of Kummernis is an 1884 painting by the Swiss symbolist painter Arnold Böcklin (see Fig. 5.41). Called *The Hermit* or *The Fiddling Hermit*, the painting depicts an old solitary playing the fiddle before a simple Madonna, as little angels who look on applaud him and chuckle. More closely connected is a text entitled "The Miracle" that was published in a German newspaper in 1899. The author leaves muzzy whether the piece is a folktale, legend, or fiction. He sets the action in an indeterminate but presumably Italian locale. The young protagonist is a lazy Pietro, with a sister named Manuela. Otherwise unaccomplished, the good-for-naught young man could turn somersaults, stand on his head, and walk on his hands. As the result of a romantic unhappiness, his sibling took her own life. Lacking the wherewithal to pay for her burial, her do-nothing brother was at his wit's end. He resorted to a Madonna, whom he propitiated by making the only offering he could: he walked on his hands. In return he received the miracle of hearing a gold coin clink upon the church floor stones. When the pastor became aware that the Virgin had authorized (or even authored) this wonder, he was persuaded to bury Manuela even though she had sinned by committing suicide. The story, if in any of its elements not entirely fictitious, offers a noteworthy example of a legend in the making.

The chances of conflation between the miracle of the slipper and the tale of *Our Lady's Tumbler* have been compounded in German. In that language, the two narratives have been name-twins. Sometimes the miracle of the slipper is called simply by the noun equivalent to *The Minstrel* or *The Jongleur* (see Fig. 5.42). More misleadingly, the title *The Dancer of Our Lady* has been used to designate both legends. Consider the case of Friedrich Hedler, who made a specialty of Marian and related material in his theatrical oeuvre after World War II. One of his plays, printed in 1950, was titled thus (see Fig. 5.43), which might awaken a reasonable expectation that it would deal with the story of *Our Lady's Tumbler*. Such is not the case. Instead, the text tells of a young man whose playing of a flute persuades a statue to give him its golden shoes so that he can purchase a wedding band.

In 1954, the story of the golden footwear, under a different title, is found once again in a German collection called *The Miracle of the Golden Shoes and Other Legends*. The volume also includes a tale with the title "The Minnesinger of Our Dear Lady." Unexpectedly and confusingly, this is a lightly fictionalized account of episodes from the life of the eleventh-century poet, Hermann the Cripple of Reichenau, well known for having composed the Marian prayer "Loving Mother of the Savior." In the same year, the well-shod narrative surfaces in the United States in a basic German reader entitled *Tell Me Something!* The story, here called "The Minstrel of Our Dear Lady," is presented as having originated in the Rhine River valley in the Middle Ages. To be specific, the tale is set in Mainz, Germany. This locale points ultimately to the poem "The Poor Minstrel" by Guido Görres, first brought out in 1836, entitled "The Poor Minstrel." Its whose action takes place in the same Rhineland city. Yet we cannot be sure whether the anthologist knew the nineteenth-century poem, for he acknowledged nothing about his source or sources. Despite the book's title, we are left wishing in vain to be told something more.

The essential contours of the miracle narrative about the golden shoes remain impressively constant across the ages. A minstrel who has fallen on hard times performs on his violin in a little chapel before a statue of the Virgin and Child. The Mother of God cracks a smile, her son beckons to her with both arms outstretched, and to satisfy him Mary lets the golden shoe on her left foot drop before the minstrel. When the entertainer takes it to a goldsmith, he is suspected of larceny. The judge condemns him to death by hanging. On the way to the gallows, the performer asks as his last wish to play the fiddle before the sculpture. By doing so, he manages to cheat the hangman in an unconventionally happy ending. All happens exactly as before, except that this time the shoe falls from the Madonna's right foot. The convicted man



Fig. 5.41 Arnold Böcklin, *Der Einsiedler*, 1884. Painting. Berlin, Museum Alte Nationalgalerie. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Böcklin_Einsiedler.jpg

is now recognized as blameless, is led away triumphantly in a throng, succeeds in his performing thereafter, and is granted a little house of his own.

The path of *Our Lady's Tumbler* is a major highway in comparison with the minor byways of the many other stories we have encountered thus far. Although hold-ups can stop or slow motion to a crawl, and the types of conveyance can change, we at least have an easier time determining who were the first travelers, and what arteries they followed as they made their passage. The moment has come to bob ahead past the bottleneck of early modern times to the early 1870s, when the medieval tale was rediscovered and brought back to life. All the central agents of the resuscitation can be identified—in the first instance, they were the literary scholars known as philologists.



Fig. 5.42 "Der Spielmann." Illustration by Wilhelm Schäfer, 1925. Published in Fritz Schloß, ed., *Legenden: Alte Erzählungen in der Dichtung unserer Zeit* (Sannerz, Germany: Eberhard Arnold, 1925), 35.



Fig. 5.43 Front cover of Friedrich Hedler, *Der Tänzer unserer Lieben Frau: Ein Spiel nach altfranzösischen und altdeutschen Motiven*, illus. P. J. Paffenholz (Munich, Germany: Buchner, 1950).

Notes

Art and beauty and poetry. E. K. R[and], "Editor's Preface," *Speculum* 1 (1926): 3–4, at 4.

Notes to Preface

Overture

unattributed joke. The incidentals (the regional origins of the two musicians, the specific cathedrals where they played, etc.) vary in different texts, but the most common form has the particulars as retold here. The earliest versions date to the summer of 2011.

the Virgin. Our Lady of the Assumption.

The Story of a Story

In the introduction. Arthur Långfors, review of E. Lommatzsch and M. L. Wagner, eds., *Del Tumbeor Nostre Dame*, in *Romania* 48 (1922): 288–90, at 290.

reflexes of the Italian Renaissance. W. D. Robson-Scott, *The Literary Background of the Gothic Revival in Germany: A Chapter in the History of Taste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 3–17; Thomas Cocke, "The Wheel of Fortune: The Appreciation of Gothic since the Middle Ages," in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, ed. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (London: Royal Academy of Arts, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987), 183–91.

my godmother. Mary Koenig Weigand. I use the word *godmother* figuratively, not literally.

reception. Reception here signifies the ways in which later periods have received and re-created a literary work. Earlier generations might have spoken instead of sources and influences. Such was their means of charting the cosmic chain of being that leads down to the latest copy from the earliest, whether we are fortunate enough or not to possess the original.

flight attendant. Bette Nash, whose likely status as the world's oldest flight attendant, with sixty years of service, has been discussed in various media, including newspapers, magazines, television, and online resources.

Erich Segal. "Rencontre avec Erich Segal," *L'Express*, March 29, 1971.

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From *Our Lady's Tumbler* to *The Jongleur of Notre Dame*

from the French. *Le jongleur de Notre Dame*.

writing mania. I refer to the fugue state called *furor scribendi* in Latin.

medievalism. In analyzing medievalism in French literature, Janine Dakyns stops at 1870: see Dakyns, *The Middle Ages in French Literature 1851–1900* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). In English historiography, the same year is also frequently a dividing line, e.g., R. C. K. Ensor, ed., *England, 1870–1914*, Oxford History of England, vol. 14 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936). It is presented as a decisive demarcation in David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2015).

movements in art and culture. See, for example, John Steegman, *Victorian Taste: A Study of the Arts and Architecture from 1830 to 1870* (London: Nelson, 1970); Walter Edwards Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870* (New Haven, CT: Published for Wellesley College by Yale University Press, 1957).

conventional scheme. Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste* (London: Constable, 1928), 214.

Notes to Chapter 1

back to the twelfth century. Henry Adams, Letter to Charles M. Gaskell, Paris, October 9, 1899, in *LHA* 5: 41–43, at 42.

The French Poem

Our Lady's Tumbler. *Del Tumbeor Nostre Dame*, in the original medieval French (literally, *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady*).

from the Middle Ages. Pierre Kunstmann, ed. and trans., *Vierge et merveille: Les miracles de Notre-Dame narratifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1981), 11–12.

quintessentially medieval puzzles. The most comprehensive presentation is in Paul Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, Traductions des classiques du Moyen Âge, vol. 64 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003), which provides a translation into modern French, a text of the Old French, and a commentary, as well as the text of Anatole France's story. A scholarly translation into English with the original *en face* can be found in Everett C. Wilkie Jr., trans., "Our Lady's Tumbler," *Allegorica: A Journal of Medieval & Renaissance Literature* 4 (1979): 81–120.

stand-alone moralizing piece. Adrian P. Tudor, "Preaching, Storytelling, and the Performance of Short Pious Narratives," in *Performing Medieval Narrative*, ed. Evelyn Birge Vitz et al. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 141–53, at 141.

the friars, too. David Jones, trans., *Friars' Tales: Thirteenth-Century* Exempla *from the British Isles* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2011).

arts of preaching. The Latin for these manuals is *artes praedicandi*.

songs of heroic deeds. In French, *chansons de geste*.

comedies. In Latin, *comoediae*.

exempla. G. T. Shepherd, "The Emancipation of Story in the Twelfth Century," in *Medieval Narrative: A Symposium*, ed. Hans Bekker-Nielsen et al. (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1979), 4–57.

physical. For two inspirational guides to this vast topic, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, Lectures on the History of Religions, New Series, vol. 13 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336*, Lectures on the History of Religions, New Series, vol. 15 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

underclothes. A light *cotelle* or tunic.

acrobatics. Lines 135–36: "they serve by chanting, and I will serve by tumbling."

The sequence culminates. Lines 163–67.

vida. See *The Vidas of the Troubadours*, trans. Margarita Egan, Garland Library of Medieval Literature, Series B, vol. 6 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984).

miracles about Mary. Guy Philippart, "Le récit miraculaire marial dans l'Occident medieval," in *Marie: Le culte de la Vierge dans la société médiévale*, ed. Dominique Iogna-Prat et al. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996), 563–90, at 574.

The Manuscripts

No mass-produced items of this sort exist. The closest would be manuscripts produced by the pecia system. Yet our derivative *piecemeal* speaks to the difference between it and machine-age manufacture.

five codices. Hermann Wächter, "Der Springer unserer lieben Frau," *Romanische Forschungen* 11.1 (1901): 223–88, at 299. The five manuscripts are Chantilly, Musée Condé (formerly Bibliothèque et archives du Château), MS 475 (previously 1578), fols. 190–196; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal MS 3516, fols. 127ra–128vb; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal MS 3518, fols. 89r–93r; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1807, fols. 142–146; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouvelles acquisitions françaises 4276, fols. 78v–.

a form of French. Charles Théodore Gossen, "Considérations sur le franco-picard, langue littéraire du Moyen Âge," *Les dialectes belgo-romans* 13 (1956): 97–121.

langue d'oïl. The French could be translated "the language of *oui*." Most often it is contrasted to *langue d'oc*, "the language of *oc*." In both cases, the words in the native language were the common way of expressing the affirmative "yes."

common errors. For the broader intellectual consequences of this focus on error, see Seth Lerer, *Error and the Academic Self: The Scholarly Imagination, Medieval to Modern* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

Arsenal library. Since 1934, the Arsenal collection has belonged to the National Library of France in Paris. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal MS 3516, fols. 127ra–128rb.

major errors. On the errors in the archetype *a*, see Wächter, "Der Springer unserer lieben Frau," 226–29.

Gautier de Coinci and Anonymity

miracles of the Virgin. The standard early description of the manuscript and its contents is Henry Martin, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, 9 vols. (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, 1885–1895), 3: 395–405, at 399. The closest study of this one codex is Claudia Guggenbühl, *Recherches sur la composition et la structure du ms. Arsenal 3516* (Basel, Switzerland: A. Francke, 1998), 270, on fols. 127ra–139rc. Guggenbühl's invaluable study touches upon *Our Lady's Tumbler* repeatedly, especially at pp. 122 (on the table of contents), 131, 225, 354, 371.

unequivocally but wrongly. The error has continued to be made even recently: see Christophe Ghristi and Mathias Auclair, *La belle époque de Massenet* (Montreuil, France: Gourcuff Gradenigo Editions, 2011), 160.

translated and read. For one prominent case, see Erhard Lommatzsch, "Anatole France und Gautier de Coincy," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 58 (1938): 670–83, repr. in idem, *Kleinere Schriften zur romanischen Philologie* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1954), 126–38.

Coinci-L'Abbaye. The place of Gautier's birth, and the spelling of its name, have been debated: see Louis Allen, "The Birthplace of Gautier de Coincy," *Modern Philology* 33 (1936): 239–42.

dedicated to Mary. As far as the association with the Mother of God is concerned, the name of Notre Dame ("Our Lady") says it all.

slipper. Anne L. Clark, "Guardians of the Sacred: The Nuns of Soissons and the Slipper of the Virgin Mary," *Church History* 76 (2007): 724–49.

Hugh Farsit. Hugo Farsitus, *Libellus de miraculis beatae Mariae virginis in urbe Suessionensi*, in *PL* 179: 1777–800. For analysis, see Gabriela Signori, *Maria zwischen Kathedrale, Kloster und Welt: Hagiographische und historiographische Annäherungen an eine hochmittelalterliche Wunderpredigt* (Sigmaringen, Germany: Jan Thorbecke, 1995), 125–51.

discomfort. It is known technically as burning dysesthesia.

books of verse Marian miracles. *Miracles de Nostre Dame*. They encompass fifty-eight narratives, of which thirty-five are in book 1, twenty-three in book 2. In addition, the miracle collection contains two sermons, eighteen songs, and five prayers. The whole amounts to a total of roughly 35,500 octosyllabic lines.

language and rhetoric. On the language and rhetoric, see Tony Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes: The Writing of Gautier de Coinci*, Gallica, vol. 8 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007).

images of the Mother of God. Jean-Marie Sansterre, "La Vierge Marie et ses images chez Gautier de Coinci et Césaire de Heisterbach," *Viator (English and Multilingual Edition)* 41.1 (2010): 147–78, at 150–51.

representations as characters. Anna Russakoff, "The Role of the Image in an Illustrated Manuscript of *Les Miracles de Notre-Dame* by Gautier de Coinci: Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale 551," *Manuscripta* 47.1 (2004): 135–44, at 138.

subgenre. Philippart, "Le récit miraculaire marial," 566–67.

extant manuscripts. Kathryn A. Duys, assisted by Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones, "Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*: Manuscript List," in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music, and Manuscripts*, ed. Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, vol. 13 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 345–66.

musical notation. Gautier de Coinci, *Les chansons à la Vierge*, ed. Jacques Chailley, Publications de la Société française de musicologie, First Series, vol. 15 (Paris: Heugel, 1959); Kathryn Duys, "Manuscripts that Preserve the Songs of Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame* (Listed by Date and Siglum)," in Krause and Stones, *Gautier de Coinci*, 367–68.

Likenesses of Madonnas. See, for example, Christine Lapostolle, "Images et apparitions: Illustrations des *Miracles de Nostre Dame*," *Médiévales* 2 (1982): 47–66; Russakoff, "Role of the Image," 135–44; Sansterre, "La Vierge Marie et ses images"; Nancy Blake, "Images of the Virgin Mary in the Soissons Manuscript (Paris, BNF, nouv. acq. fr. 25451)," in Krause and Stones, *Gautier de Coinci*, 253–77; Alison Stones, "Notes on the Artistic Context of Some Gautier de Coinci Manuscripts," "Appendix III: Illustrated *Miracles de Nostre Dame* Manuscripts Listed by Sigla," and "Appendix IV," in Krause and Stones, *Gautier de Coinci*, 65–98, 369–96.

genuflection. An act designated in Greek as *proskunesis* (also prostration or bowing).

describing himself. 1 Miracle 11, 2315–17, cited by Hunt, *Miraculous Rhymes*, 49: "Car troveres ne sui je mie / Fors de ma dame et de m'amie / Ne menestrex ne sui je pas."

vielle. Also often *viele*, with a single *l*.

parchment. The parchment here is a bifolium, which in a manuscript signifies the equivalent of two sheets, side by side, that have not been cut—the equivalent of four pages in a printed book.

minstrelsy and monasticism. See Kathryn A. Duys, "Minstrel's Mantle and Monk's Hood: The Authorial Persona of Gautier de Coinci in His Poetry and Illuminations," in Krause and Stones, *Gautier de Coinci*, 37–63.

does not suffice. For example, the wrong ascription has been made by Sheldon Christian, *Our Lady's Tumbler: A Modern Miracle Play* (Portland, ME: Anthoensen Press, 1948), viii; Henri Marmier, *Le bateleur de Notre-Dame (d'après Gautier de Coincy)* (Paris: H. Piazza, 1951), 9–14.

has been described. Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972).

gain some sense of him. Female poets existed, but they were greatly outnumbered by male ones. Furthermore, the details of monastic life suggest strongly that the person who wrote the poem was a man.

Picardy

dialect that became modern French. See especially Bernard Cerquiglini, *Une langue orpheline* (Paris: Minuit, 2007).

1268. In scholarly parlance, that year represents the *terminus ante quem*, signifying the date before which the composition of a work must be situated.

around 1200. In fact, the year of 1200 was emblazoned confidently on the cover of the 1920 standard edition. For the most reliable and succinct details about the text and its constitution, see Erhard Lommatzsch and Max Leopold Wagner, eds., *Del tumbeor Nostre Dame: Altfranzösische Marien-legende (um 1200)*, Romanische Texte zum Gebrauch für Vorlesungen und Übungen, vol. 1 (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1920).

thoroughgoing analysis. The study in question was produced by an American scholar of medieval French language and literature who brought out his dissertation five years later in 1925. See Louis Allen, *De l'hermite et del jougleour: A Thirteenth Century "Conte Pieux." Text, with Introduction and Notes, Including a Study of the Poem's Relationship to "Del Tumbeor Nostre Dame" and "Del Chevalier au Barisel"* (Paris: Joseph Solsone, 1925), 53 (between 1223 and 1233). See also Louis Karl, "La légende de l'Ermite et le Jongleur," *Revue des langues romanes* 63 (1925): 110–41. Few of Allen's contemporaries took note of the case that he built: for one exception, see the slightly skeptical stance of Joseph Morawski, "Mélanges de littérature pieuse, III: Les miracles de Notre-Dame en vers français," *Romania* 64 (1938): 454–88, at 457. Among later scholars, one who acknowledged Allen's reasoning was Wilkie, "Our Lady's Tumbler," 83. For having brought home—nearly nine decades later—its validity, much credit is due to Earl Jeffrey Richards, "La devotion mariale et la politique à deux temps: *Le Tumbeor Nostre Dame* et *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame* d'Anatole France," in *La Vierge Marie dans la littérature française: Entre foi et littérature / Actes du colloque international Université de Bretagne-Sud, Lorient, 31 mai–1er juin*

2013, ed. Jean-Louis Benoît (Lyon, France: Jacques André éditeur, 2014), 233–42, at 238. I leave aside the resemblances between *Our Lady's Tumbler* and the sermons of William of Auvergne that have been posited by Richards, "La devotion marial," 239. On William, Richards points to Pierre Boglioni, "Peuple et culture populaire chez Guillaume d'Auvergne," in *Mensch und Objekt im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit: Leben, Alltag, Kultur. Internationaler Kongress, Krems an der Donau, 27. bis 30. September 1988*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Sitzungsberichte: Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 568, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit, vol. 13 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990), 193–222.

retreat from the world. The desirability of retreat from the world is mentioned at lines 13, 16, 275–78, 510, while Ponthieu is named at 620. See Allen, *De l'hermite et del jougleour*, 54.

The Identity of the Poet

likely a brother himself. Maurice Léna, "Massenet (1842–1912)," *Le Ménestrel*, no. 4422, 83.4 (January 28, 1921): 33–34, at 33.

Could the poet. If so, he would have been a real-life antecedent for the Franciscan friar William of Baskerville in Umberto Eco's 1980 novel and the 1986 film *The Name of the Rose*, or for the Welsh Benedictine detective, Brother Cadfael, in the mystery novels written between 1977 and 1994 by Ellis Peters, and in the subsequent television series starring that character. Such a man would not have been unique.

The Knight of the Barrel. The original titles are respectively *Le chevalier au barisel* and *De l'hermite et del jougleour*. Brian Levy, "L'ironie des métiers, ou le récit chiasmique: A propos du conte pieux de *l'Ermite et du Jongleur*," *Reinardus: Yearbook of the International Reynard Society / Annuaire de la Société internationale renardienne* 5 (1992): 85–107.

pendant. Allen, *De l'hermite et del jougleour*, followed by Tudor, "Preaching, Storytelling," 151.

repentance. The theme of penitence has been seen also to connect *Our Lady's Tumbler* (for mutual illumination rather than because of any putative shared authorship) with another anonymous text, *Robert le Diable*. For a comparison, see Élisabeth Gaucher, "Le 'jeu' de la pénitence au XIIIe siècle: Robert le Diable et le Jongleur de Notre-Dame," in *Regards étonnés de l'expression de l'altérité à la construction de l'identité: Mélanges offerts au professeur Gaël Milin* (Brest, France: Amis de Gaël Milin, 2003), 261–71.

Only tears will be weighed. Emile M. Cioran, *Tears and Saints*, trans. Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6.

this tale. For the text, see Félix Lecoy, ed., *Le chevalier au barisel*: *Conte pieux du XIIIe siècle. Édité d'après tous les manuscrits connus*, Les classiques français du Moyen Âge, vol. 82 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1955). The poem has been translated into modern French, Italian, Spanish, and English. For the French, see *Le chevalier au barisel*: *Conte pieux du XIIIe siècle*, trans. Annette Brasseur, Traductions des classiques français du Moyen Âge, vol. 23 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1976); Italian, *Il cavaliere e l'eremita*, ed. and trans. Franco Romanelli, Biblioteca medievale, vol. 4 (Parma, Italy: Pratiche, 1987); and Spanish, *Le chevalier au barisel de anonimo*, ed. and trans. Miguel Ángel García Peinado and Ricardo Redoli Morales, Analecta Malacitana Anejo, vol. 46 (Malaga, Spain: University of Malaga, 2003).

Both it and the other text have been translated at least once into English, together with "The Tumbler of Our Lady," but in a virtually inaccessible book that was printed in a run of only twenty-six copies: Wilson Lysle Frescoln (1912–1997), trans., *Old French Contes Dévots* (Wallingford, PA: Press of the Cheerful Snail, 1962), no page numbers.

For interpretation, see Jean-Charles Payen, "Structure et sens du *Chevalier au Barisel*," *Le Moyen Âge* 77 (1971): 239–62, and Franco Romanelli, "Le Chevalier au Barisel: L'acculturazione dei cavalieri tra lo spazio dell'aventure e il tempo della confessione," *Medioevo romanzo* 11.1 (1986): 27–54.

two additional versions. One was composed from approximately 1216 to 1218 by Jean de Blois, also known as Jean de La Chapelle. The other, *Conte du Baril* or "The Tale of the Barrel," is closely related to two later reflexes. One is a Latin exemplum in the "Mirror of Laymen": see no. 121, in *Le speculum laicorum*: *Édition d'une collection d'exempla, composée en Angleterre à la fin du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Jean-Thiébaut Welter (Paris: A. Picard, 1914), 27. The other comprises later French versions that descend directly or indirectly from *Life of the Fathers*: see "Del halt home qui empli le barrillet d'une lerme" [Baril], 19 [18], ed. Félix Lecoy, *La Vie de Pères*, 3 vols. (Paris: Société des anciens textes français: A. et J. Picard, 1987–1999), 1: 288–300. For details and analysis, see Lecoy, *Le Chevalier au Barisel*, XVII–XXII; Jean-Charles Payen, "Y a-t-il un repentir cistercien dans la littérature française médiévale?" *Citeaux* 12 (1961): 120–32, at 126–31.

held to be a Cistercian. More than eighty years ago Jean de Blois was identified by his editor as a monk of Blois. See *Le conte dou barril, poème du XIIIe siècle par Jouham de la Chapele de Blois*, ed. Robert Chapman Bates, Yale Romanic Studies, vol. 4 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1932). This identification was contested by Louise W. Stone, "Sur le *Conte du Baril* de Jean de Blois," *Romania* 59 (1933): 24–40, at 25–35. Bates reaffirmed his stand in "*Le Conte dou Barril* par Jean de Blois et *le Tournoiement d'Enfer*," *Romania* 62 (1936): 359–75, at 361n3.

afterlife in exempla. For references, see Elisabeth Pinto-Mathieu, *La Vie des Pères*: *Genèse des contes religieux du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009), 830, no. 19.

source and influence. Karl, "La légende de l'Ermite et le Jongleur," 123: "En vitis patrum un haut livre / Qui les bons essample nous livre / Nous raconte d'un saint hermite…" ("In the *Vitas patrum*, a lofty book that furnishes us good exempla, we are told of a saintly hermit").

paradise. The account related in *The Hermit and the Jongleur* resembles another story, that of the provost of Aquileia, composed in the mid-fifteenth century by Jean Miélot. This other narrative is attested in two medieval French forms. The one in *Life of the Fathers* (pp. 13724–14177) tells of an ascetic who after many years of fasting and prayer in solitude yields to the sin of pride. He prays to learn from God who is his peer in piety. It raises his hackles to be told that his equal on earth is not a recluse but rather the provost of Aquileia, whom he then resolves to see with his own eyes. Upon arriving at the Italian city, he crosses paths with this very man who is on his way out (see Fig. n.1). From him, he receives a ring to present to the official's wife, who is to treat him exactly as she would her own husband. From this moment, the hermit is shown how the dutiful laic resists earthly temptations. At table, everyone but the provost's spouse and the hermit is served the finest food and drink. She and he share a bed. She attempts twice to seduce him, but on each occasion insists that he plunge into an ice-cold bath. In the final accounting, the solitary realizes that to live abstemiously in the world measures up fully to an existence as a religious. He returns to his hermitage, implores forgiveness, and earns heaven for his soul when he dies.

the cycle of brotherhood. Karl, "La légende de l'Ermite et le Jongleur," 110.



Fig. n.1 The Hermit and the Provost. Miniature, fourteenth century. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 25440, fol. 54v. Image courtesy of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. All rights reserved.

The Bas-de-Page Miniature: Of Marginal Interest

sliced out. Alison Stones, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1260–1320*, 2 vols. in 4 (London: Harvey Miller, 2013–2014), 2: 501–5, at 501–3 for the excised miniatures.

placement. The miniature is found in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 3516, folio 127r (dated 1268). It has been discussed in two fine studies by Johann-Christian J. A. Klamt, *Een gebaar van deemoed*: *De interpretatie van een middeleeuwse miniatuur* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Faculteit der Letteren, Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 1988), and "'Le tumbeor de NotreDame'–Gaukler in Demut," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 60 (1997): 289–307. The highest-quality color reproduction of it to date has been in Sylvie Barnay, *Le ciel sur la terre*: *Les apparitions de la Vierge au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 54. It has also been reproduced as the frontispiece of Agata Sobczyk, *Les jongleurs de Dieu*: *Sainte simplicité dans la littérature religieuse de la France médiévale* (Łask, Poland: Oficyna Wydawnicza Leksem, 2012).

stylistic separateness. Stones, *Gothic Manuscripts*, 2: 503.

created in Arras. Alison Stones, "The Illustrated Chrétien Manuscripts and Their Artistic Context," in *Les manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes / The Manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Keith Busby et al., 2 vols., Faux titre, vols. 71–72 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 2: 227–322, at 241.

iconographic hierarchy. For a concise overview, see Jan Svanberg, "Acrobata," in *Enciclopedia dell'arte medievale*, 12 vols. (Rome: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991–2002), 1: 126–30. On the frequency of acrobatic jongleurs in French art of the twelfth century, Svanberg relied on Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIIe siècle en France*: *Étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Âge* (Paris: A. Colin, 1922), translated as *Religious Art in France, the Twelfth Century*: *A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography*, Bollingen Series 90.1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), and Henri Focillon, "Sculpture romane: Apôtres et jongleurs (études de mouvement)," *La revue de l'art ancien et moderne* 55 (1929): 13–28. In older scholarship, particular note should be taken of Arthur Watson, "Tumblers," *The Reliquary and Illustrated Archaeologist*: *A Quarterly Journal and Review Devoted to the Study of Early Pagan and Christian Antiquities of Great Britain*, 9 (1903): 186–202. Svanberg's own book remains the fullest presentation of information: Jan Svanberg, *Gycklarmotiv i romansk konst och en tolkning av portalrelieferna på Härja kyrka*, Kungl. Vitterhets-, historie och antikvitets akademien: Antikvariskt arkiv, vol. 41 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970).

nineteenth-century interpreter. Louis Petit de Julleville, *Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française des origines à 1900*, 8 vols. (Paris: A. Colin, 1896–1899), 1: 40.

exemplum that compares a sinner with a jongleur. Stephen of Bourbon, *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*, ed. Jacques Berlioz, 3 vols., Corpus Christanorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, vols. 124–124B (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2002–2015), 1: 335 (book 1.8, lines 692–95), 532–33 (bibliography).

freak show. The most convenient repertory remains Lilian M. C. Randall, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts*, California Studies in the History of Art, vol. 4 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 134, 135 (jongleur, juggling). The most provocative study, in all senses of the adjective, is Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge*: *The Margins of Medieval Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For reviews of the scholarship, see Lucy Freeman Sandler, "The Study of Marginal Imagery: Past, Present, and Future," *Studies in Iconography* 18 (1997): 1–49; Anja Grebe, "The Art of the Edge: Frames and Page-Design in Manuscripts of the Ghent-Bruges-School," in *The Metamorphosis of Marginal Images*: *From Antiquity to Present Time*, ed. Nurith Kenaan-Kedar and Asher Ovadiah (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, The Yolanda and David Katz Faculty of the Arts, Dept. of Art History, 2001), 93–102; Laura Kendrick, "Making Sense of Marginalized Images in Manuscripts and Religious Architecture," in *A Companion to Medieval Art*: *Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 274–94.

One common form. The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, MS 78 D 40, fol. 108r; Lausanne, Bibliothèque cantonale et universitaire, MS U 964 (Biblia Porta), fol. 343v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 264, fol. 90r (ca. 1338–1344).

sculpted limestone pilaster. Dated ca. 1150–1170, from the Lyonnais in France.

mobility. In a sense I extend the contention that jongleurs in Romanesque sculpture represent movement in contrast to the rigidity surrounding them: see Walter Cahn, "Focillon's Jongleur," *Art History* 18.3 (1995): 345–62.

Metamorphoses. 1.84.

stand erect. Hans Walther, ed., *Proverbia sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi: Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sentenzen des Mittelalters in alphabetischer Anordnung*, 6 vols., Carmina Medii Aevi posterioris Latina, vol. 2.1–6 (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963–1969), nos. 22635 (3: 988), 20438a (3: 674).

monstrous races. John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 2nd ed. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999), 301 (with listings passim).

Queen of Heaven. On Mary as Queen, see Gabriel M. Roschini, "Royauté de Marie," in *Maria: Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, ed. Hubert Du Manoir de Juaye, 7 vols. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1949–1964), 1: 603–18.

a figure with a nimbus. In both Jewish and Christian art from late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the injunction against idolatry meant that God was seldom depicted as a full human figure. Yet divine intervention or approval could be signified, with the compromise of only partial aniconicity, through the synecdoche of a detached right hand. In Christian theology, all miracles are the work of God, and the hand of God (*manus Dei*, in Latin) reminds the viewer of this silent partner in thaumaturgy.

towellike cloth. Anatole France, *Abeille, Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame, Les Pains noirs*, ed. R. L Græme Ritchie, illus. Henry Morin (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1928), 133.

extending the thumb. In reference to the Western tradition this gesture is known formally as "the Latin benediction" (*benedictio Latina*): see Betty J. Bäuml and Franz H. Bäuml, eds., *A Dictionary of Worldwide Gestures*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 143–45. The name for the gesticulation can be a misnomer, since nearly the same position of the fingers is conventional in Eastern Orthodoxy too (see Fig. n.2).

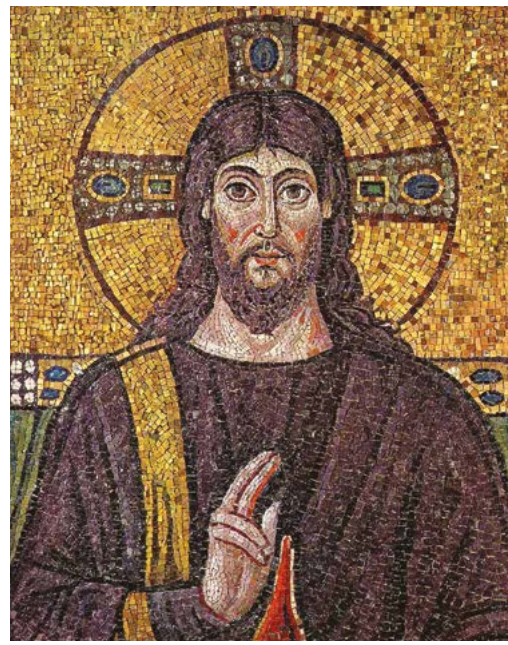


Fig. n.2 Christ Pantokrator, sixth century. Mosaic. Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna. Image from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christus_Ravenna_Mosaic.jpg

another sort. On the norms in other representations of Madonnas who become animate, see Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 233—but compare Russakoff, "Role of the Image," 140–42, 144.

star-cross. Chr. Konstantinides, "Le sens théologique du signe 'croix-étoile' sur le front de la Vierge des images byzantines," in *Akten des XI. internationalen Byzantinistenkongresses, München, 1958*, ed. Franz Dölger and Hans-Georg Beck (Munich, Germany: C. H. Beck, 1960), 254–66.

fresco. Ca. 1305.

similar-sounding noun in German. In English, *jig*; in modern French *gigue*, Italian and Spanish *giga*. The German is *Geige*.

green tiles. In medieval color symbolism, green was sometimes associated with the devil. See D. W. Robertson, "Why the Devil Wears Green," *Modern Language Notes* 69.7 (1954): 470–72.

viol. It was known in Italian as *viola* (whence the modern-day violin), spelled also *viuola* and in numerous similar ways, and in German as *Fidel* (fiddle). For basic information, see Nigel Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer*, Chaucer Studies, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 150–51.

Manesse Codex. Made in Zurich, ca. 1300–1340, also known as the "large Heidelberg Lieder Manuscript."

Frauenlob. Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Codex Palatinus Germanicus 848, fol. 399r. The poet's nickname, meaning "praise of Our Lady" or "praise of women" in German, designates Heinrich von Meißen (Eng., Henry of Meissen), born in Meißen and educated in the cathedral school there.

Virgin herself. Barbara Newman, *Frauenlob's Song of Songs: A Medieval German Poet and His Masterpiece* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

reproduced repeatedly. Alice Kemp-Welch, *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady & Other Miracles Now Translated from the Middle French* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), reprinted a year later in the series King's Classics (London: Chatto & Windus, 1909). It was then published with omission of the first word, *Of*, from the title and without indication of translator or date (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Songs The Knickerbocker Press, [n.d.]). Later, the whole folio side was reproduced in Maurice Vloberg, *La légende dorée de Notre Dame: Huit contes pieux du Moyen Âge* (Paris: D.-A. Longuet, 1921), between pp. 192–93, and printed fifty years later in Henri-Paul Eydoux, *Saint Louis et son temps* (Paris: Larousse, 1971), 156, from which it was reprinted twice by Klamt, first in *Een gebaar van deemoed*, plate 1, and later in "'Le tumbeor," fig. 1 (p. 291). In the old reproductions, the miniature is better preserved than in the latest digitization obtained from the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.

modern illustrations. The most recent illustrator who sought out the manuscript itself appears to have been Barbara Cooney, in preparation for her 1961 picture book, *The Little Juggler*. In her research, she collected photographs of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal MS 3516, fols. 127ra–128rb. She had the lower portion of the first folio side reproduced on the back of the dustcover.

minstrel's routine. Without reference to *Our Lady's Tumbler*, see Isabelle Marchesin, "Les jongleurs dans les psautiers du haut Moyen Âge: Nouvelles hypothèses sur la symbolique de l'histrion médiéval," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 41.162 (1998): 127–39.

pair of carvings. Both are corbels carved ca. 1311–1326, in the time of Bishop Stapledon, on the vaulting shafts of the great piers that face each other in the crossing and east bay of the nave. They still carry two layers of medieval paint, which gives a sense of their original polychromy. The extremely useful cathedral website indicates that the two corbels are among "the most intricately painted sculptures in the Cathedral. The first painting had the tumbler in scarlet, and the minstrel's fiddle off-white including the peg-box which was outlined in black; the red strings stopped short of it, the tail-piece and bow were green and the hairs of the bow black. In the repainting, the tumbler became a deep blue, with elaborate embroideries. The tumbler has particoloured shoes and stockings. His belt is gold. The minstrel has a similar loose garment (note the slit dividing the front): it is white, edged with gold, and embroidered. His fiddle has four painted cross-shaped sound holes."

supporting projections. In the system of letters and numbers that has been conventional for more than a century to designate keystones and carvings in the cathedral, these two corbels are K and K′ respectively. The designation system dates back to E. K. Prideaux and G. R. Holt Shafto, *Bosses & Corbels of Exeter Cathedral: An Illustrated Study in Decorative & Symbolic Design* (Exeter, UK: Commin; London: Chatto & Windus, 1910), who discuss these corbels at 197–200 and 219–20.

translation. By P. H. Wicksteed.

allusion. A medieval wall-painting in the sacristy of the Finnish town of Hattula has been interpreted as a juggler juggling for Mary. True, the performer is attired in a small smock, as may well be the case in *Our Lady's Tumbler*. The stumbling block is that the figure in the wall-painting is indeed juggling, whereas the jongleur in the medieval French poem is described as performing a dance or gymnastic routine, but not as juggling. So far as we can deduce from existing evidence, a juggler did not become part of the story until it was reworked in modern French literature, first as a poem and then as a short story in the last decade of the nineteenth century. See Helena Edgren, *Mercy and Justice: Miracles of the Virgin Mary in Finnish Medieval Wall-Paintings*, Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistyksen aikakauskirja, vol. 100 (Helsinki: Suomen Muinaismuistoyhdistys, 1993), 109–15, 204–5.

New York City. Saint Thomas Parish at Fifth Avenue and 53rd Street is the fourth church to be built on the site. It was designed by the architectural firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson.

church of Saint Thomas. The panel is located in the front tier of the choir stalls at the altar end of the kneeling rail on the north side: see *Saint Thomas Church* (New York: The Church, 1965), 34; J. Robert Wright, *Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 161. This woodwork was fabricated across the Atlantic by the Boston firm of Irving and Casson, after designs by none other than Bertram Goodhue.

The Genre: Long Story Short

it is to be read. *Legenda* or *legendum est*.

feast-days of given saints. Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), 8.

pious tale. In French, *conte dévot* or *conte pieux*. For succinct definitions, see J. A. Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 5th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 154; Urban T. Holmes, "Conte dévot," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Roland Greene, 4th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 302. The poem is thus classed by Walter Morris Hart, *The Short-Story, Medieval and Modern: Syllabus and Bibliography*, University of California Syllabus Series, vol. 57 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1915), 6.

fabliau. For example, Léon Gautier, *Les épopées françaises: Étude sur les origines et l'histoire de la littérature nationale*, 2nd ed., 4 vols. (Paris: Societé génerale de librairie catholique / H. Welter, 1878–1892), 2: 222 ("fableau"); Louis Bethléem et al., *Les opéras, les opéras-comiques et les opérettes* (Paris: Revue des Lectures, 1926), 332–36, at 332 ("fableau"); André Lagarde and Laurent Michard, *Moyen Âge: Les grands auteurs français du programme*, Collection Textes et littérature, vol. 1 (Paris: Bordas, 1962), 108–10, at 108.

pious fabliau. *Fabliau pieux*: Otakar Novák, *La littérature française des origines à la fin du XVIIIe siècle*, Opera Universitatis Purkynianae Brunensis, Facultas philosophica, vol. 195 (Brno, Czech Republic: Universita J. E. Purkyne, 1974), 28.

comic. Adrian P. Tudor, "*Nos rions de vostre bien:* The Comic Potential of Pious Tales," in *Grant risee? The Medieval Comic Presence / La Présence comique médiévale. Essays in Memory of Brian J. Levy*, ed. idem and Alan Hindley, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, vol. 11 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 131–50, at 132.

laughable. Edmond Faral, *Les jongleurs en France au Moyen Âge*, Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études, 4e section, Sciences historiques et philologiques, vol. 187 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1910), 157n2.

exemplum. For definitions and overviews, see Claude Bremond and Jacques Le Goff, *L'"exemplum,"* Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental, vol. 40 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1982); Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, eds., *Les exempla médiévaux: Nouvelles perspectives*, Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, vol. 47 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1998).

expanded and dramatized. Jacques Monfrin, "*L'exemplum* médiéval: Du latin aux langues vulgaires," in Berlioz and Polo de Beaulieu, *Les exempla médiévaux*, 243–65, at 264.

mentalities. The term *mentality* refers to an approach that is associated with the theory and practice of medieval French historical studies in France in the 1970s and 1980s. For a convenient introduction, see Aaron J. Gurevich, "Medieval Culture and Mentality according to the New French Historiography," *European Journal of Sociology / Archives européennes de sociologie / Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie* 24.1 (1983): 167–95.

many rhetorical devices. It has even been speculated that the exemplum was a fertile source for the later novella. See Salvatore Battaglia, "Dall'esempio alla novella," *Filologia romanza* 7 (1960): 21–84. Like the pious tales, exempla could be intimately related to fabliaux. See Brian J. Levy, "Le fabliau et l'exemple: Etude sur les recueils moralisants anglo-normands," in *Epopée animale, fable, fabliau: Actes du IV Colloque de la Societé Internationale renardienne, Evreux, 7–11 septembre 1981*, ed. Gabriel Bianciotto and Michel Salvat (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984), 311–21.

preamble. "In the lives of the ancient fathers, / the contents of which are good, / we are told a little exemplum. / I do not say that people have not heard / equally nice ones many times, / but this one is not so flawed / that it does not do good to tell it. / So I want to speak to you and to tell / of a minstrel, what happened to him."

little example. The medieval French diminutive derives from Latin *exemplum* "exemplum, moral example, anecdote, illustration."

Clairvaux. Brian Patrick McGuire, "The Cistercians and the Rise of the Exemplum in Early Thirteenth Century France: A Reevaluation of *Paris BN MS lat. 15912*," *Classica et mediaevalia: Revue danoise de philologie et d'histoire* 34 (1983): 211–67, at 225–26, 230–32, 257, repr. in idem, *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Women, and Their Stories, 1100–1250*, Variorum Collected Studies Series, vol. 742 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2002), no. 5.

Cistercian literature. On the Cistercians and exempla, see James France, *Separate but Equal: Cistercian Lay Brothers, 1120–1350*, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 246 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), xix–xxiv, 199–230, 325–32. On Clairvaux as a center of Cistercian exemplum production, see Stefano Mula, "Geography and the Early Cistercian *Exempla* Collections," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 46 (2011): 27–41.

authorial sermon. Lines 293–314.

The *Table of Exempla*, in Alphabetical Order

Table of Exempla. Latin title, *Tabula exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti*. The full title is often given as *Tabula exemplorum adaptacionum secundum ordinem alphabeti ordinata*: see Jean-Thiébaut Welter, ed., *La Tabula exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti: Recueil d'exempla compilé en France à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Occitania, 1926). For concise information, see Jean-Thiébaut Welter, *L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Âge* (Paris: E. H. Guitard, 1927), 294–97; Isabelle Rava-Cordier, "Tabula exemplorum," *EdM*, 13: 139–43. The *Table of Exempla* enjoyed a robust transmission of more than twenty manuscripts from its time of composition into the fifteenth century.

reference work. On such alphabetical reference-books, see H. G. Pfander, "The Mediaeval Friars and Some Alphabetical Reference-Books for Sermons," *Medium Aevum* 3 (1934), 19–29.

about 1277. Definitely between 1261 and 1292, possibly specifically around 1277. This resource as it survives is considered today to be the abridged form of the older *Book of Likenesses and Exempla* (Latin title, *Liber de similitudinibus et exemplis*). See Lynn Thorndike, "Liber de Similitudinibus et Exemplis (MS. Berne 293, Fols. 1r–75v)," *Speculum* 32 (1957): 780–91.

151 headings. The collection has keywords from the Latin *accidia* ("sloth") to *Xristus* (Christ). The chief source is *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus*, compiled in the mid-thirteenth century by the French Dominican inquisitor, Stephen of Bourbon. A concatenation of more than three thousand exempla that remained unfinished at Stephen's death, the *Tractatus* was the first systematic collection of exempla, arranged according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

alphabetization. Lloyd W. Daly, *Contributions to a History of Alphabetization in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Collection Latomus, vol. 90 (Brussels: Latomus, 1967).

tables of contents. Tables of contents were closely related to subject indexes: on the evolution of both, see Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia and Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland*, Studies and Texts, vol. 47 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1979), 11–23.

Franciscanism. Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Recueils franciscains d'*exempla* et perfectionnement des techniques intellectuelles du XIIIe au XVe siècle," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 135 (1977): 5–21.

gestures at reenactment. Tudor, "Preaching, Storytelling," 152.

preachers from any order. In closing, I will disclose a frustrating riddle. For this tale, the anonymous author of the *Table of Exempla* was claimed by its nineteenth-century editor to have drawn upon Stephen of Bourbon: see Welter, *La Tabula exemplorum*, xxxii (see xxix–xxx for explanation of the abbreviations). From his own tally of exempla in the manuscript at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (MS lat. 15970), Welter assigned the number 1649 to this exemplum as it appears in Stephen's *Tractatus de diversis materiis predicabilibus*. But the exemplum has not been printed in the *Tractatus* volumes that have appeared to date in Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 124–125B (ed. Jacques Berlioz et Jean-Luc Eichenlaub [Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2002, 2006]), and Jacques Berlioz assures me that he has found nothing similar to the tale of the jongleur even in the as-yet unpublished portion of the *Tractatus*.

The Latin Exemplum

still unknown. Anonymous, "Chronique," review of Hermann Wächter, *Der Springer unserer lieben Frau*, in *Romania* 29 (1900): 159.

Joy. In Latin, *Gaudium*. The exemplum is classified in Frederic C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, Folklore Fellows Communications, vol. 204 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia / Academia scientiarum fennica, 1981), 219, no. 2780, "Jester, dancing during chants." It is omitted from the tables in *Les exempla médiévaux: Introduction à la recherche. Suivie des tables critiques de l'"Index exemplorum" de Frederic C. Tubach*, ed. Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (Carcassonne, France: GARAE/Hesiode, 1992), 175–80.

entertainer. In Latin, *ioculator*.

he did not know his letters. This observation means not merely that the erstwhile jongleur was analphabetic and hence illiterate, but also that he was ignorant of Latin and Latin texts.

as I know how. My transcription (and translation): "Quidam ioculator seculum relinquens intrauit religionem et cum uideret socios suos psallere, quia litteras ignorabat, cogitauit qualiter [*Welter* quomodo] posset cum aliis laudare Deum. Unde, aliis psallentibus, incepit bal[l]are [et] tripudiare et cum [*Welter omits* cum] inquisitus fuisse cur talia faceret, respondit: 'Video unumquemque de suo [officio] seruire Deo, ideo de meo sicut scio uolo Deum festiuare.'" See *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols. (London: Printed by Order of the Trustees, 1883–1910), vols. 1–2, ed. H. L. D. Ward, and vol. 3, ed. J. A. Herbert, at 3: 417, which summarizes, on the basis of London, British Library, MS Additional 18351, *Liber exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti*, chapter 49 (no. 28), "Gaudium." The Latin is also quoted in *Tabula exemplorum secundum ordinem alphabeti*, no. 87, in Welter, *La Tabula exemplorum*, 27–28, and later in Morawski, "Mélanges de littérature pieuse. I," 456–57.

American folklorist. Thomas Frederick Crane, "Mediaeval Story-Books," *Modern Philology* 9 (1911): 225–37, at 231. On Crane's career, see Jack Zipes, "Introduction, Thomas F. Crane: The Uncanny Career of a Folklorist," in Thomas Frederick Crane, *Italian Popular Tales* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001), ix–xxiii.

the compilers. On miracle collecting in England during this period, see Rachel Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 4, 112–38.

minstrel manuscript. The most widespread original term was the French *manuscrits de jongleurs*, qualified as *volumes à l'usage des jongleurs*. The corresponding German is *Jongleurhandschriften*.

The Song of Roland. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 23, known as the Oxford *Roland*.

dictation. Andrew Taylor, "The Myth of the Minstrel Manuscript," *Speculum* 66 (1991): 43–73.

tapped by friars. McGuire, "Cistercians and the Rise of the Exemplum." For more recent investigations, see Victoria Smirnova et al., eds., *The Art of Cistercian Persuasion in the Middle Ages and Beyond: Caesarius of Heisterbach's "Dialogue on Miracles" and Its Reception*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, vol. 196 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 161–210.

earlier friars and Cistercians. Schmitt, "Recueils franciscains d'*exempla*," 11.

The *Life of the Fathers*

More than any other literary genre. Michel Stanesco, "Le bruit de la source: Les contes chrétiens et la resonance d'éternité," in *Translatio litterarum ad penates / Das Mittelalter Übersetzen: Ergebnisse der Tagung von Mai 2004 an der Université de Lausanne / Traduire le Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque de l'Université de Lausanne (mai 2004)*, ed. Alain Corbellari and Catherine Drittenbass (Lausanne, Switzerland: Centre de traduction littéraire, 2005), 331–44, at 333.

drawn from a respected work. Vloberg, *La légende dorée*, 234.

both miracles and pious tales. Allen, *De l'hermite et del jougleour*, 11–12.

overlap substantially. Adrian P. Tudor, "Telling the Same Tale? Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame* and the First *Vie des Pères*," in Krause and Stones, *Gautier de Coinci*, 301–30, at 304–7.

Latin collection. The collection is often associated with the name Heribert Rosweyde, whose printing of it was reprinted in *PL* 73–74. The predictable nominative form of this title would be *Vitae patrum*, but it is commonly known by the Vulgar Latin form *Vitas patrum*, which has the same meaning, but with the first word in a different morphological state—the accusative plural of the first-declension Latin noun *vita*, "life," instead of the nominative plural.

useful tales. Respectively, the Greek διηγήσεις ψυχωφελείς (often with the words in reverse order), the Latin *narrationes animae utiles*. For an index of these tales, see John Wortley, "A Repertoire of Byzantine 'Beneficial Tales,'" http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~wortley/. For a concise discussion of the genre, see John Wortley, "Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell in Byzantine 'Beneficial Tales,'" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 53–69, at 53–54.

late fourth century. In the Greek *History of the Monks in Egypt*. The customary title is the Latin *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*.

chronological spectrum. A kind of midway point would be the *Pratum spirituale* (Spiritual Meadow) by the Byzantine monk and ascetic John Moschus, whose edifying stories include some in which the Virgin plays a decisive role, and others in which holy fools are the central figures. See Henry Chadwick, "John Moschus and His Friend Sophronius the Sophist," *Journal of Theological Studies* n.s. 25 (1974): 41–74, at 65–66, 71–72.

centuries afterward. In the Greek East the genre reached its terminus in the eleventh century, in the massive dossier known as the *Synagoge* (Assembly) by Paul Euergetinos.

Rule of Saint Benedict. *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. and trans. Bruce L. Venarde, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, vol. 6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 144–45 (chap. 42.3–4).

desert fathers. Terryl N. Kinder, *Cistercian Europe: Architecture of Contemplation*, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 191 (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 135.

versions. For example, an anonymous Anglo-Norman version in verse was dedicated to the Templar Henri d'Arci. Later, Wauchier de Denain and an anonymus of Champagne wrote versions in prose.

Life of the Fathers. In French, *Vie des Pères*.

agglomeration. It comprehends seventy-four pious tales, for a total of more than thirty thousand octosyllabic verses. For a short introduction to the collection and the unjust disregard it has suffered, see Adrian P. Tudor, "'The One That Got Away': The Case of the Old French *Vie des Pères*," *French Studies Bulletin* 16.55 (1995): 11–15.

related Latin compositions. Such as the *Verba seniorum* (Words of the elders).

laymen may overshadow monks. I see the poem as taking a stand more robustly in favor of the laity than Jean Charles Payen considers typical for miracles and exempla: see his *Le motif du repentir dans la littérature française medieval*, Publications romanes et françaises, vol. 98 (Geneva: Droz, 1967), 556.

1220s or thereabouts. Another date mentioned is 1241.

lay brothers. Paul Bretel, *Les ermites et les moines dans la littérature française du Moyen Âge (1150–1250)*, Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, vol. 32 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1995), 56.

reflex of the legend. The claim to have *Vie des Pères* as source is common to at least five thirteenth-century French poems, only one of which in fact has an established relationship with a tale in the collection: see Allen, *De l'hermite et del jougleour*, 11. Allen's detailed arguments to support his view that the three poems he discusses had the same author have not been assessed over the past eighty years, so far as I can judge. On *Vie des Pères*, the classic study remains, much more than a century later, Edouard Schwan, "La Vie des Anciens Pères," *Romania* 13 (1884): 233–63. For the most recent research (especially the forty-one tales of the first series, from around the 1220s), see Adrian P. Tudor, *Tales of Vice and Virtue: The First Old French "Vie des Pères,"* Faux titre, vol. 253 (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005). On its authorship, see Adrian P. Tudor, "Past and Present: The Voice of an Anonymous Medieval Author," *Mediaevalia* 24 (2003): 19–44.

short titles. Gaston Paris gave them their names in a note to Schwan, "La *Vie des anciens pères*," 240.

the story. Lines 11884–12231, in Lecoy, *La Vie des Pères*, 2: 60–72. The episode is recapitulated and analyzed by Tudor, *Tales of Vice and Virtue*, 226–27, 229–36. Pinto-Mathieu, *La Vie des Pères*, 831, no. 26, notes that Stephen of Bourbon offers a distant parallel: see Albert Lecoy de la Marche, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues, tirés du recueil inédit d'Étienne de Bourbon, dominicain du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, H. Loones, successeur, 1877), 448–49.

spurious source. I compiled a list of parallels before becoming aware of Tudor, *Tales of Vice and Virtue*, 236, who comments simply upon "an interesting analogy to be drawn with the *Tumbeor Nostre Dame*."

feet up to his head. Lines 234–36.

Miserere. Verses 2743–3116. For a glossed edition of this episode, see Claudio Galderisi, *Diegesis: Études sur la poétique des motifs narratifs au Moyen Âge, de la* Vie des Pères *aux lettres modernes* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 181–94.

a miracle in Gautier de Coinci. 1 Miracle 18, "De un provoir qui toz jors chanoit *Salve*, la messe de Nostre Dame." See Tudor, "Telling the Same Tale?," 307.

Rule of Saint Benedict. Venarde, *Rule of Saint Benedict*, 150–51 (chap. 44.1–8).

self-depiction. Called *Historia Anglorum* (History of the English), produced at the Benedictine abbey of Saint Albans between 1250 and 1259 by Matthew of Paris, who was a monk there.

framed drawing. London, British Library, MS Royal 14. C. VII, fol. 6.

redemption through humility. On conversion as a theme in *Vie des Pères*, see Michel Zink, *Poésie et conversion au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2003), 203–50.

True Story: Why the Story Succeeded

less attractive to us. A twentieth-century scholar who devoted much of his career to the study of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin arts of poetry came out forthrightly in hypothesizing that the best Old French poems would have been devalued if they had been put into the high-brow rhetoric that scholastic practices favored. He faulted pedants who would not leave well enough alone, and who would ruin vernacular French texts by embellishing them, dilating them, and making them static. Charles Sears Baldwin, "Cicero on Parnassus," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 42 (1927): 106–12, at 112: "These pedagogues would have recommended embellishing the eloquence of *Aucassin and Nicolete* at the expense of the story, dilating the *Tumbeor de Notre Dame*, and making the *Châtelaine de Vergi* static."

sermons. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, ed., *The Sermon*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental, vols. 81–83 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000).

the application of exempla. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Prêcher d'exemples: Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Stock, 1985).

collecting and employing exempla. Stefano Mula, "Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Cistercian Exempla Collections: Role, Diffusion, and Evolution," *History Compass* 8.8 (2010): 903–12.

rivalry. Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, "The Preacher Facing a Reluctant Audience according to the Testimony of Exempla," *Medieval Sermon Studies* 57.1 (2013): 16–28, at 26–28.

familiar with each other's techniques and practices. Maria Dobozy, *Re-Membering the Present: The Medieval German Poet-Minstrel in Cultural Context*, Disputatio, vol. 6 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005), 120–42.

William of Malmesbury. William of Malmesbury, *The Deeds of the Bishops of England (Gesta Pontificum Anglorum)*, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2002), 227–28; idem, *De gestis pontificum Anglorum*, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton (London: Great Britain Public Record Office, 1870), 336: "Denique commemorat Elfredus, carmen triviale, quod adhuc vulgo cantitatur, Aldelmum fecisse; aditiens causam qua probet rationabiliter tantum virum his qua videantur frivola institisse. Populum eo tempore semibarbarum, parum divinis sermonibus intentum, statim, cantatis missis, domos cursitare solitum. Ideo sanctum virum, super pontem qui rura et urbem cantinuat, abeuntibus se opposuisse obicem, quasi artem cantitandi professum. Eo plusquam semel facto, plebis favorem et concursum emeritum. Hoc commento sensim inter ludicra verbis Scripturarum insertis, cives ad sanitatem reduxisse; qui si severe et cum excommunicatione agendum putasset, profecto profecisset nichil."

Ecclesiastic History of the English People. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (*Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*), ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 414–21 (book 4, chap. 23 [22]). On the episode, see John D. Niles, "Bede's Cædmon, 'The Man Who Had No Story' (Irish Tale-Type 2412B)," *Folklore* 117.2 (2006): 141–55; Joaquin Martínez Pizarro, "Poetry as Rumination: The Model for Bede's Caedmon," *Neophilologus* 89.3 (2005): 469–72.

Christian song in Old English. A nine-line Old English poem, conventionally entitled "Cædmon's Hymn," survives. For detailed information, see *Cædmon's Hymn: A Multimedia Study, Archive and Edition*, ed. Daniel Paul O'Donnell, Series A, vol. 7 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, in association with SEENET and the Medieval Academy, 2005). It may preserve the very lines recited by the herdsman to Abbess Hilda.

a Latin letter written in 797. *Epistolae Karolini aevi* 2, ed. Ernst Dümmler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolae, vol. 4 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 183 (no. 124): "Verba Dei legantur in sacerdotali convivio: ibi decet lectorem audiri, non citharistam, sermones patrum, non carmina gentilium. Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?" On this passage, see Donald A. Bullough, "What Has Ingeld To Do with Lindisfarne?" *Anglo-Saxon England* 22 (1993): 93–125, at 124 for the translation quoted here. Hinield (or Ingeld) is familiar from mentions in both the heroic epic *Beowulf* and another Old English poem that deals with Germanic heroes, *Widsith*.

Notes to Chapter 2

Now a God dances in me. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (Part 1:7).

discourses. This designation, one of the most ill-defined in current critical terminology, refers to the conceptual frameworks that underlie and surround social practices, customs, and institutions.

The Tumbler

Of the Tumbler of Our Lady. The titles in French are to be found in Wächter, "Der Springer unserer lieben Frau," 223–24: "Del tumbeor nostre dame," "C'est du tumeeur nostre dame," "Le conte dou jugleur," "D'un menestrer qui se rendi moynes a qui nostre dame fit grace," and "D'un menestrel qui servoit nostre dame de son propre mestier."

tombeur. Within the poem itself, the Old French noun *tumeor* is employed once to mean "dancer," while the verb *tumer* "to dance," from which it derives, is used repeatedly. The two words (with and without "b") are *tumer* and *tumber*/*tomber*. Despite having distinct etymologies, they were soon conflated and became transposable. Their crossed destinies are apparent in the equivalence of *tombeor* in the title and *tumeor* in the text. They are roughly synonymous with other verbs of heterogeneous etymology in Old French to which the poet resorts in describing rhythmic or artful movement: *saillir*, from Latin *salire* "leap, spring, jump"; *baler*, most immediately from Late Latin *ballare* "to dance," but ultimately from Greek *ballein* "to throw"; *espringuier*, from Old Frankish *springen* "to spring"; *treper*, deriving from Germanic **trippôn*, related to Old English *treppan* "to tread, trample," Middle Dutch *trippen* "to skip, hop," and modern English "to trip." The verb *espringuier* generated the noun *espringeor*, closely related in meaning to *tombeor*. On the lexicon relating to dance, see Fritz Aeppli, *Die wichtigsten Ausdrücke für das Tanzen in den romanischen Sprachen*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie, vol. 75 (Halle, Germany: Max Niemeyer, 1925), with specific reference to *Our Lady's Tumbler* at pp. 50, 68, 70.

The medieval verb. It may be compared with the Old English *tumbian*, attested only twice, in both instances to describe the dance of Salomé in the New Testament episode recounted in the Gospel of Mark. See Eric Stanley, "Dance, Dancers and Dancing in Anglo-Saxon England," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 9.2 (Autumn 1991): 18–31, at 19, 25 (on the West Saxon and Kentish Gospels), 30n17. The verb may emphasize somehow the acrobatic nature of the dance.

The relation between the Old French and the Old English forms remains murky, despite their suggestive similarity. On the French, see Walther von Wartburg, ed. *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch: Eine Darstellung des galloromanischen Sprachschatzes* (Bonn, Germany: Schroeder, 1922–2003), 13.2: 403–9, 17: 384–86.

a tumbler or performer of tumbles. Émile Abry, Charles Audic, and Paul Crouzet, *Histoire illustrée de la littérature française, précis méthodique* (Paris: H. Didier, 1912), 33: "Un tombeur ou faiseur de tours."

Notre Dame. The last two words are now and again hyphenated, since purists in French have sometimes designated the Virgin Mary as Notre Dame, but called churches and other institutions dedicated in her honor Notre-Dame (such as the cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris). Despite the straightforwardness of the theory, practice has often been inconsistent.

Notre Dame versus Saint Mary

universal in the Romance languages. Paule Bétérous, "Quels noms pour Marie dans les collections romanes de miracles de la Vierge au XIIIe siècle," in *La Vierge dans la tradition cistercienne: Communications présentées à la 54e session de la Société française d'études mariales, abbaye Notre-Dame d'Orval, 1998*, ed. Bernard-Joseph Samain and Jean Longère (Paris: Médiaspaul, 1999), 175–92. For a paragraph on the most general context across languages, see Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976), 153–54.

her relation to Christ. The theology of Jesus's nature and person is known as Christology.

accepted her role. See Luke 1:38.

siege of the Byzantine capital. The episode has been reinterpreted most radically by Bissera V. Pentcheva, "The Supernatural Protector of Constantinople: The Virgin and Her Icons in the Tradition of the Avar Siege," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 26.1 (2002): 1–41.

to violate the Cathedral. Maurice Landrieux, *The Cathedral of Reims: The Story of a German Crime*, trans. Ernest E. Williams (London: Kegan Paul Trench, Trubner, 1920), 109–10 (with change of "outrage" to "violate" twice at the end).

The Equivocal Status of Jongleurs

Not all those who wander. "All That Is Gold Does Not Glitter," a poem in J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, vol. 1, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, book 1, chap. 10; book 2, chap. 2.

protean character. The best general source on the definition and classification of jongleurs remains Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 1–24, 66–86.

wear many hats. Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 1. For a later exploration of the issue, see Tito Saffioti, *I giullari in Italia: Lo spettacolo, il pubblico, i testi* (Milan, Italy: Xenia Edizioni, 1990), 11–19.

artists of the word. Juan Paredes Núñez, "El juglador contador de cuentos," in *La juglaresca: Actas del I Congreso Internacional sobre la juglaresca*, ed. Manuel Criado de Val, Historia de la literatura hispánica desde sus fuentes, vol. 7 (Madrid: EDI-6, 1986), 115–21.

buffoons, clowns, fools, and jesters. Heather Arden, *Fools' Plays: A Study of Satire in the Sottie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 16–18.

wandering minstrels. A standard monograph on medieval jongleurs remains Faral, *Les jongleurs*, which touches in passing on our story (p. 157n2) and on the diversity of performing skills among jongleurs (p. 1). Another discussion of jongleurs that refers to "The Tumbler of Our Lady" can be found in G. K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923), 77–80 (chap. 5, "Le jongleur de Dieu").

discreditable places and activities. *Decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council* 16, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. and trans. Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1: 243, 243*. As a decree of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 held, "Clerics should not practice callings or business of a secular nature, especially those that are dishonourable. They should not watch mimes, entertainers and actors. Let them avoid taverns altogether,

unless by chance they are obliged by necessity on a journey. They should not play at games of chance or of dice, nor be present at such games."

climb on (the) bench!. *Monta in banco!* The noun can be correlated with the French *saltimbanque* or Italian *saltimbanco*, from the imperative "leap on (the) bench!" (*salta in banco!*).

one of these compositions. The relevant snippet from the poem *Fadet joglar* is quoted and translated into French by Edmond Vander Straeten, *La musique au Pays-Bas avant le XIXe siècle: Documents inédits et annotés*, 8 vols. (Brussels: G.-A. van Trigt, 1867–1888), 4: 236–37. The standard editions of the passage are Wilhelm Keller, "Das Sirventes *Fadet joglar* des Guiraut von Calanso: Versuch eines kritischen Textes," *Romanische Forschungen* 22 (1905): 99–238, at 144–47, and François Pirot, *Recherches sur les connaissances littéraires des troubadours occitans et catalans des XIIe et XIIIe siècles: Les "sirventes—ensenhamens" de Guerau de Cabrera, Guiraut de Calanson et Bertrand de Paris*, Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona, vol. 14 (Barcelona: Real Academia de Buenas Letras, 1972).

etymology of jongleur. The Old Occitan (or Provençal) is *joglar*, Old French *jogleor* and *joculer*, modern French *jongleur*, Spanish *juglar*, Galician *jogral*, Italian *giullare* and *gioculare*, Old English *gēogelere, jugelere*, and *jogler*, Old High German *gougalāri*, Middle Dutch *gokelaer*. The German word *Spielmann*, meaning literally "game-man," was calqued on the Latin and its derivatives in Romance languages.

The English word "joke". *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1: 1059.

contaminated. For the catchy assertion that "*jongleur* is the scion of a haplologic cross-breeding with *jangler*," see Raphael Levy, "The Etymology of Franco-Italian: Çubler," *Italica* 29.1 (1952): 49–52, at 49.

jangler. In medieval orthography, *janglere* or *jangleeur*. Alan Hindley et al., *Old French-English Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 375 (for "jangleor"). On the presumed interference, see Oscar Bloch and Walther von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française*, 5th ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1968), 351: "jongleur." *Joglerre* is the subjective or nominative case and *jogleor* is the objective or oblique case in Old French. For concise information on the development of the word, see Bloch and Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 351. For a more searching examination, see Raleigh Morgan Jr., "Old French *jogleor* and Kindred Terms: Studies in Mediaeval Romance Lexicology," *Romance Philology* 7 (1953–1954): 279–325.

verbal, musical, and physical skills. The Medieval Latin *ioculator* meant, both broadly and loosely, "entertainer; musician, minstrel, actor, mime, buffoon, conjurer, jester, juggler": see *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. R. E. Latham, 17 vols. (London: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 1975–2013), 1503.

sprawling Medieval Latin nomenclature. To give a modest selection, other terms were (to offer in alphabetical order a lexical smorgasbord) *fabulator*, *goliardus*, *histrio*, *mimus*, *ministrellus*, *saltator*, and *scurra*. In Old French, corresponding words are *jogleor* and *menestrel* (later modified into *menestrier*, with a suffix that aligns it advantageously with the names of other professions), in Middle High German *spilman*.

eventually displaced them. The comparable jacks-of-all-trades *histrio*, *mimus*, and *scurra* lost much ground in the medieval period to the benefit of the jongleur and minstrel.

sometimes conflated. On differentiating between jongleur and minstrel in French, see Silvère Menegaldo, *Le jongleur dans la littérature narrative des XIIème et XIIIème siècles: Du personnage au masque*, Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, vol. 74 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005), 15–17, 219–28.

minor court official. Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 114–15, 123; John Southworth, *The English Medieval Minstrel* (Woodbridge, UK and Wolfeboro, NH: Boydell, 1989), 3.

ministerium. Latin *ministerialis*, from *minister* (attendant or servant), Old French *menestrel* or *menestrier*, Modern French *ménétrier*. Bloch and Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 402, indicate that the word *minstrel* acquired pejorative associations in the Middle Ages as a result of having been applied to poets and musicians, that it dropped out of use before the sixteenth century, and that it was revived in the nineteenth.

minstrel. Old French *menestrel*.

jongleurs and trouvères. For a critical analysis of the distinction, see Giuseppe Noto, *Il giullare e il trovatore nelle liriche e nelle biografie provenzali*, Scrittura e scrittori, vol. 13 (Alessandria, Italy: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1998). For a description in English that was particularly influential in America of the 1950s and 1960s, see Will Durant, *The Age of Faith*, The Story of Civilization, vol. 4 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), 1054–55.

language of southern France. This language is Old Occitan, persistently still called Provençal, to the frustration of those who explain that the language was not confined to the geographical extent of present-day Provence.

rightly challenged. L. M. Wright, "Misconceptions concerning the Troubadours, Trouvères and Minstrels," *Music & Letters* 48 (1967): 35–39. More recently, see Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl, "Performance and Performers," in *Medieval Oral Literature,* ed. Karl Reichl (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 141–202, at 180–81.

abandoned the rootless itinerancy. Eventually they became associated with music. For another perspective, see Constance Bullock-Davies, *Menestrelorum multitudo: Minstrels at a Royal Feast* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978).

poem of supplication. *Declaratio*, lines 168–91. See Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, "La *Supplica* di Guiraut Riquier e la risposta di Alfonso X di Castiglia," *Studi mediolatini e volgari* 14 (1966): 9–135; Joseph Linskill, *Les epîtres de Guiraut Riquier, troubadour du XIIIe siècle*, Association internationale d'études occitanes, vol. 1 (London: AIEO, 1985), 167–245, at 225–26, with notes on 235–37, 243. For broad context, see Miriam Cabré, *Cerveri de Girona and His Poetic Traditions*, Colección Támesis, Serie A, Monografías, vol. 169 (London: Tamesis, 1999), 55–59, and, in Catalan, *Cerverí de Girona: Un trobador al servei de Pere el Gran*, Blaquerna, vol. 7 (Barcelona: Publicacions i edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2011), 88–91.

instrumentalists, imitators, troubadours. He writes *joglars*, *remendadors*, *segriers*, and *cazuros*.

jongleurs. For jongleurs, he writes *joglars*.

existed at the fringes. John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970), 1: 198–204.

characters in fiction. On such fictions, see Menegaldo, *Le jongleur dans la littérature narrative*.

devotion to the Virgin. For examination of the jongleur in connection with this issue, see Viviane Cunha, "O *topos* do jogral no acervo mariano medieval," *Revista do CESP* 31.45 (January–June 2011): 167–87.

Thomas of Chobham. The toponymical element in his name is known alternately as Chabham, Cobham, and Cabham. On his life, see Joseph Goering, "Chobham, Thomas of (*d*. 1233x6)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), s.n.; online edition, May 2005, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5007

vade mecum of practical theology. On the influence of his treatise, see Helen F. Rubel, "Chabham's Penitential and Its Influence in the Thirteenth Century," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 40 (1925): 225–39.

three classes of performers. Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield, Analecta mediaevalia Namurcensia, vol. 25 (Leuven, Belgium: Nauwelaerts, 1968), 291–92 (6.4 [Distinctio 4, "De officiis penitentium"] Questio 2a ["De histrionibus"]): "When prostitutes and performers come to confession, penance must not be given to them unless they abandon such practices altogether, because otherwise they cannot be saved… . But it is to be observed that there are three sorts of performers. For some distort and transfigure their bodies through indecent acrobatics or coarse gestures, or by laying bare their bodies indecently, or by putting on frightful costumes or masks, and all are worthy of damnation unless they abandon their trades. There are also other performers who work not at all but curiously meddle (2 Thessalonians 3:11), not having a fixed abode, but they gad about the courts of grandees and speak slander and vileness about those who are not present. Such people are worthy of damnation, because the Apostle forbids 'with such a one to eat' (1 Corinthians 5:11). And such people are called vagabond men-about-town, inasmuch as they are useful for nothing but devouring and slandering. There is also a third type of performers who have musical instruments to delight people, but there are two types of them. For some frequent public drinking fests and lusty gatherings to sing lusty songs there, to stir men to lust, and such people are worthy of damnation just as the others are. But there are also others who are called jongleurs who sing chansons de geste and lives of the saints and bring solace to men either in sickness or distress and do not engage in undue crudeness as do male and female acrobats and others who play in unseemly masks and cause themselves to seem as if they are apparitions through enchantments or in some other way. If however they do not engage in such conduct but sing to the accompaniment of their instruments chansons de geste and other useful topics to bring solace to men as has been said, such performers can well be tolerated, as Pope Alexander [III] said when a certain jongleur asked of him whether he could save his soul while in his profession. The pontiff asked him if he knew how to earn his living in another manner. Upon receiving a negative reply from the jongleur, he allowed him to live from his trade, so long as he abstained from all lustiness and scandalousness."

Discussed by Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 67n1; Jacques Le Goff, "Métiers licites et métiers illicites dans l'occident médiéval," in idem, *Pour un autre Moyen Âge* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 89–126, at 101; Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 65. Both Thomas of Chobham and Peter the Chanter, *Summa de sacramentis et animae consiliis* (*Summa on the Sacraments and Counsels of the*

Soul, from ca. 1191 or 92–1197), ed. Dugauquier, 3 (2a): 177, are examined by John W. Baldwin, "The Image of the Jongleur in Northern France around 1200," *Speculum* 72 (1997): 635–63, at 644.

physical comedy or burlesque. *Summa confessorum*, 6.4.2a, ed. Broomfield, 291: "Quidam enim transformant et transfigurant corpora sua per turpes saltus vel per turpes gestus, vel denudando corpora turpiter, vel induendo horribiles loricas vel larvas, et omnes tales damnabiles sunt nisi reliquerint officia sua" ("Certain ones transform and transfigure their bodies through shameful jumps or gestures, or in shamefully stripping naked or donning frightful masks; and all such ones deserve damnation, if they do not abandon their practices"). Quoted in Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 67n1.

lustfulness and turpitude. In his criticism, Thomas followed Peter the Chanter, who is conjectured to have been his teacher. See Peter, *Summa de sacramentis et animae consiliis*, ed. Jean-Albert Dugauquier, 5 vols. in 3, Analecta mediaevalia namurcensia 4, 7, 11, 16, 21 (Leuven, Belgium: Nauwelaerts, 1954–1967), part 3, 2a: 177 (§ 211, lines 140–41): "Quidam enim cum ludibrio et turpitudine sui corporis acquirunt necessaria, et deformant ymaginem Dei" ("For certain ones obtain the necessities with mockery and debasement of their body, and they disfigure the image of God").

excepts from condemnation. *Summa confessorum*, 6.4.2a, ed. Broomfield, 292: "Sunt autem alii qui dicuntur ioculatores qui cantant gestas principium [sic] et vitas sanctorum et faciunt solatia hominibus vel in egritudinibus suis vel in angustiis suis et non faciunt nimias turpitudines sicut faciunt saltatores et saltatrices et alii qui ludunt in imaginibus inhonestis et faciunt videri quasi quedam phantasmata per incantationes vel alio modo." By *gestas principium* is presumably meant *chansons de geste*. Quoted in Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 67n1. For a study of such interdictions, see Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, "L'interdizione del giullare nel vocabolario clericale del XII e del XIII secolo," in *Il Teatro medievale*, ed. Johann Drumbl (Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino, 1989), 317–68.

Romance of Flamenca. *The Romance of Flamenca: A Provençal Poem of the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Mario E. Porter, trans. Merton Jeome Hubert (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), 58–59 (lines 612–17): "While one with mannequins contrives / Good sport, another juggles knives. / One tumbles, while another leaps / And somersaults, yet nimbly keeps / His feet. Some dive through hoops. Each man / Performs his stunt as best he can."

we are told explicitly. Verses 25–28.

Debate poems. The standard reference remains Théodor Batiouchkof, "Le débat de l'âme et du corps," *Romania* 20 (1891): 1–55, 513–78. Batiouchkof's categorization of the genre has been disputed by Michel-André Bossy, "Medieval Debates of Body and Soul," *Comparative Literature* (1976): 144–63.

Canticles of Saint Mary. *Cantigas de Santa María*.

Daurel and Beton. Paul Meyer, ed., *Daurel et Beton: Chanson de geste provençale*, Société des anciens textes français (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1880), 41 (section 32, lines 1208–10); Janet Shirley, trans., *Daurel and Beton: A Twelfth-Century Adventure Story* (Felinfach, UK: Llanerch, 1997), 58: "Next he took his harp and played two lays, then entertained them on the viol, and gave a display of leaping and tumbling ('Sauta e tomba')." Compare Arthur S. Kimmel, ed., *A Critical Edition of the Old Provençal Epic Daurel et Beton*, University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, vol. 10 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

instead gives him a boot camp. Meyer, *Daurel et Beton*, 48; trans. Shirley, section 37, lines 1419–21: "At seven years old Beton could play the viol well, also the citole, and was a fine harpist." This discrepancy between the two passages was remarked upon by Glunnis M. Cropp, "The Disguise of 'Jongleur,'" *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 65.1 (1986): 36–47.

thirteenth-century poem. See Kurt Lewent, "Old Provençal *Saig* 'Hangman' and Two Poems on Jongleurs by Cerveri de Girona," *Modern Language Quarterly* 7 (1946): 411–44, at 421 (interpretation), 434–36 (text and translation of *Sirventes*, incipit "Juglar, prec vos, ans que mortz vos aucia"; here, stanza 5, lines 25–30), and 442–44 (commentary): "I am blaming you, brethren, for no other reason than that I should like you to give up that false brotherhood and praise Saint Mary; for it is she that [sic] defends and watches and guides the world and all of us, and by singing songs in her praise one could exorcise the one who, without her, would easily lead us astray."

stabilitas loci. The phrase *stabilitas loci* is untapped in the *Rule*, but *stabilitas* and the corresponding adjective *stabilis* appear repeatedly: Venarde, *Rule of Saint Benedict*, 18–19 (chap. 1.11), 36–37 (chap. 4.78), 186–89 (chap. 58.9, 17), 194–95 (chap. 60.9), 196–97 (chap. 61.5).

pilgrim and pilgrimage. The Latin terms are *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio*. See Gerhart B. Ladner, "Homo Viator: Mediaeval Ideas on Alienation and Order," *Speculum* 42 (1967): 233–59.

gyrovague. On *gyro-* and *vagus*, see J. Kevin Newman, "Gyrovagues in Dante and St. Benedict," *American Benedictine Review* 54 (2003): 414–19.

vagrant. The Latin word is *vagans*.

he could epitomize instability. Paul Zumthor, *La lettre et la voix de la "littérature" médiévale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), 72: "Au cœur d'un monde stable, le 'jongleur' signifie une instabilité radicale; la fragilité de son insertion dans l'ordre féodal ou urbain ne lui laisse qu'une modalité d'intégration sociale: celle qui s'opère par le jeu." In primary texts, see Pseudo-Hugh of Fouilloy, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, in *PL* 177, 13–56 (book 1, chap. 45), at 46B: "Hujusmodi homines vix possunt stabiles" ("People of this sort can scarcely be stable").

He led a vagabond life. Lines 10–12.

prone to recidivism. Pseudo-Hugh of Fouilloy, *De bestiis et aliis rebus*, 46D: "Sed et joculatores, ante conversionem leves, cum ad conversionem veniunt, saepius usi levitate, leviter recedunt" ("Jongleurs are frivolous people before they are converted. If they are ever made to repent, they often fall back into the easy-going life they are used to"). Both this and the preceding quotation from Pseudo-Hugh are cited by Wolfgang Kemp, *The Narratives of Gothic Stained Glass*, trans. Caroline Dobson Saltzwedel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 138.

intermediaries. Martine Clouzot, "Un intermédiaire culturel au XIIIe siècle: Le jongleur," *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre | BUCEMA* Hors-série 2 (2008), https://cem.revues.org/4312

body movements and gestures. The study of such expression is called kinesics.

the real nature of the drill. Since the Cistercians have been connected with ring dancing, it would be tempting to speculate that the sequence followed a circular pattern. See Annette Kehnel and Mirjam Mencej, "Representing Eternity: Circular Movement in the Cloister, Round Dancing, Winding-Staircases and Dancing Angels," in *Self-Representation of Medieval Religious*

Communities: The British Isles in Context, ed. Anne Müller and Karen Stöber, Vita regularis. Abhandlungen, vol. 40 (Berlin: Lit, 2009), 67–97.

Chauny. For discussion passim, see Georges Lecocq, *Histoire du théâtre en Picardie depuis son origine jusqu'à la fin du XVIe siècle* (Paris: H. Menu, 1880). The key evidence is Rabelais, *Gargantua*, 1.24, where the character Gargantua and his tutor "went to see the jugglers, conjurers, and sellers of quack remedies, and noted their antics, their tricks, their somersaults, and their smooth words, attending especially to those from Chauny in Picardy, for they are great babblers by nature, and fine reciters of stories on the subject of green monkeys." Trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1955), 93.

systematic exposition. The text is *Elucidarium* (in English, "Elucidator"). It is so called because "it *elucidates* the obscurity of various things." For the text, see Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium*, in *PL* 172, 1148CD (2.188): "[Discipulus: Habent spem joculatores? Magister:] Nullam: tota namque intentione sunt ministri Satanae, de his dicitur: deum non cognoverunt; ideo Deus sprevit eos, et Dominus subsannabit eos, quia derisores deridentur" ("None. For by their entire application they are the ministers of Satan, of whom it has been said: They knew not God; therefore God has despised them and God shall deride them"). At the close of the Master's response, the most relevant biblical quotation is Psalms 2:4.

lecher and ribald. Willem Noomen, *Le jongleur par lui-même: Choix de dits et de fabliaux*, Ktemata, vol. 17 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2003), 5–6. The definitions of the two Old French words are from Hindley et al., *Old French-English Dictionary*, 390 (*lecheor* "debauchee, glutton, rake"), 533 (*ribaut* "rogue, scoundrel").

relationship of the jongleurs with the clergy. Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, "Clercs et jongleurs dans la société médiévale," *Annales: Histoires, sciences sociales* 34.5 (1979): 913–28.

their standing shot up. Baldwin, "Image of the Jongleur"; Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 44–60; Christopher Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France (1100–1300)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 19–33.

property and wealth. On the spectrum, see Gretchen Peters, "Urban Minstrels in Late Medieval Southern France: Opportunities, Status and Professional Relationships," *Early Music History* 19 (2000): 201–35. On the marginality, see Wolfgang Hartung, *Die Spielleute: Eine Randgruppe in der Gesellschaft des Mittelalters*, Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte: Beihefte, vol. 72 (Wiesbaden, Germany: Franz Steiner, 1982), with coverage at p. 13 of *Our Lady's Tumbler*.

professional buffoon. The last-mentioned character was attested as "clown" first in English after the Middle Ages in the mid-sixteenth century and only subsequently in French and other Western European languages.

mime of Christ. Hermann Reich, *Der König mit der Dornenkrone* (Leipzig, Germany: B. G. Teubner, 1905), 31 (*mimus Christi*).

imitation of Christ. In Latin, *imitatio Christi*.

itinerant sermonizers. Kunstmann, *Vierge et merveille*, 31, translating a passage in the coda to one of Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles*.

anti-Catholic. A major flashpoint in discussion of such satire has been discussed in Tracey Sedinger, "'And yet woll I stiell saye that I am I': Jake Juggler, the Lord's Supper, and Disguise," *English Literary History* 74.1 (2007): 239–69; Beatrice Groves, "'One Man at One Time May Be in Two Placys': Jack Juggler, Proverbial Wisdom, and Eucharistic Satire," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 27 (2014): 40–57. Have no fear, fellow scholars: the quotation within the title is [sic].

the devil's jugglers. Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 126 ("the divels iugglers").

Trance Dance

he became a dancer to God. T. S. Eliot, "The Death of Saint Narcissus," in idem, *Poems Written in Early Youth* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967), 34–35 (text), 42–43 (note).

prayer books of many denominations. Here I transfer to Christianity observations made about Judaism by Lawrence A. Hoffman, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 71.

Theodosius banned such pagan cults. In 393.

disposed to condemn dancing. See Louis Gougaud, "Danse," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* (Paris: Letouzey, 1920), 4.1: 248–58; E. Louis Backman, *Religious Dances in the Christian Church and in Popular Medicine*, trans. E. Classen (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), 154–61; Yvonne Rokseth, "Danses cléricales du XIIIe siècle," in *Melanges 1945*, vol. 3: *Etudes historiques*, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de Strasbourg (Paris: Société d'édition Les Belles Lettres, 1947), 93–126: Gianfranco D'Aronco, *Storia della danza popolare e d'arte, con particolare riferimento all'Italia* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1962), especially 113–37; J. G. Davies, *Liturgical Dance: An Historical, Theological, and Practical Handbook* (London: SCM Press, 1984), 19–28; Jeannine Horowitz, "Les danses cléricales dans les églises au Moyen Âge," *Le Moyen-Âge* 95.2 (1989): 279–92.

texts concerned with penance. Particularly penitentials, texts that listed sins and prescribed penances for them.

extirpate dance. In general, see Alessandro Arcangeli, "Dance and Punishment," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 10.2 (1992): 30–42. On prohibitions, see Louis Gougaud, "La danse dans les églises," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 15 (1914): 5–22, 229–45; Horowitz, "Les danses cléricales," 279; Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*, 6 vols., 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–1958), C 51.1.5 "Tabu: Dancing in Churchyard." With specific regard to the medieval French poem, see Jessica Van Oort, "The Minstrel Dances in Good Company: *Del tumbeor nostre dame*," *Dance Chronicle* 34 (2011): 239–75.

even priests engage in ritual dances. Davies, *Liturgical Dance*, 36–57.

ecstasy. Erika Bourguignon, "Trance Dance," in *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, ed. Selma Jeanne Cohen et al., 6 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 6: 184–88; Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt, 2006), 5–6.

Dionysus. Dionysus was equivalent to the Roman Bacchus. The followers of Dionysus included bacchantes and maenads.

penitential pain. France, *Separate but Equal*, 182–84.

with gritted teeth. Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 37–38, 41, 145, emphasizes the body as a means of redemption, and as a cause of exaltation and exultation. Sobczyk, *Les jongleurs de Dieu*, 126–28, rejects this emphasis. Along similar lines, see also Gaucher, "Le 'jeu' de la pénitence," 261–71.

flagellantism. On flagellants, see Backman, *Religious Dances*, 161–70.

mass hysteria. Known variously as choreomania, danseomania, or dancing mania, plague, or rage; epidemic dancing; Saint Vitus's or Saint John's dance; or Tarantism.

solo act of an individual. On the choreography of medieval solo dance, see Walter Salmen, "Zur Choreographie von Solotänzen in Spielen des Mittelalters," in *Mein ganzer Körper ist Gesicht: Groteske Darstellungen in der europäischen Kunst und Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Katrin Kröll and Hugo Steger, Rombach Wissenschaft: Reihe Litterae, vol. 26 (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Rombach, 1994), 343–55. On the iconography, see Gabriele Busch-Salmen, *Ikonographische Studien zum Solotanz im Mittelalter*, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft, vol. 7 (Innsbruck, Austria: Musikverlag Helbling, 1982), esp. 16, on *Our Lady's Tumbler*.

dances himself into oblivion. The motif of an individual who dances to death is found in Hans Christian Andersen's "The Red Shoes" (made into a strong underlying element in a 1948 film), but there the compulsion is diabolic: a woman is cursed to dance by the red shoes she dons.

aligns. The story resembles time as it operated in the Middle Ages, as an intersection of the iterative and the one-time, the diurnal round and the special, the immovable and the movable feast.

dancing mania. J. F. C. Hecker, *The Dancing Mania of the Middle Ages*, trans. B. G. Babington, Burt Franklin Research and Source Works Series, vol. 540 / Selected Essays in History, Economics, and Social Science, vol. 169 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), 1.

Giselle, or The Wilis. *Giselle, ou Les Wilis*, two acts with music by Adolphe Adam, choreography by Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot, first performed in Paris in 1841. The libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Théophile Gautier rested upon a legend recounted by the German poet Heinrich Heine. The Wilis are themselves drawn from Slavic tradition.

The Wilis. In Slavic and especially South Slavic mythology that is attested already in medieval sources, the *vily* are beautiful nymphlike spirits who have the power of flight. Associated with the mountains and waters, they overlap with the female water spirits known as *rusalki*, who amused themselves on land sometimes and who tickled to death or drowned their victims.

Shakers. They are known more fully as the Shaking Quakers.

sang and danced. Edward Deming Andrews, *The Gift to Be Simple: Songs, Dances and Rituals of the American Shakers* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1940); Robert P. Emlen, "The Shaker Dance Prints," *Imprint: Journal of the American Historical Print Collectors Society* 17.2 (Autumn 1992): 14–26.

praise dance. See Karen Clemente, "Dance as Sacred Expression," *Journal of Dance Education* 8.2 (2008): 37–38; Avis Hatcher-Puzzo, "Popular to Proficient: Cultivating a Contextual Appreciation of Dance on a Rural Historically Black College Campus," *Journal of Dance Education* 14.2 (2014): 67–70.

dervishes. Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 20, 73, 74.

collective delusions. Hecker, *Dancing Mania of the Middle Ages*, 2.

Jongleurs of God

captured the theologians' attention. Kemp, *Narratives of Gothic Stained Glass*, 137.

murmurs of approval. Compare Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 25–43, 44–60; Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars* (London: Constable, 1927), Appendix E, "Councils relating to the 'clericus vagus' or 'ioculator'"; and J. D. A. Ogilvy, "'Mimi, scurrae, histriones': Entertainers of the Early Middle Ages," *Speculum* 38 (1963): 603–19.

God's jesters. John Saward, *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 58–79 ("God's Jesters: The Cistercians").

ditties and suave melodies. *Apologia Berengarii Pictavensis contra Sanctum Bernardum Claraevallensem abbatem et alios qui condemnaverunt Petrum Abaelardum*, in Rodney M. Thomson, "The Satirical Works of Berengar of Poitiers: An Edition with Introduction," *Mediaeval Studies* 42 (1980): 89–138, at 111: "quem audiuimus a primis fere adulescentiae rudimentis cantiunculas mimicas et urbanos modulos fictitasse."

acrobat of God. *Saltator domini*: see Jean Leclercq, "Le thème de la jonglerie chez S. Bernard et ses contemporains," *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité* 48 (1972): 385–400; Jean Leclercq, "Le thème de la jonglerie dans les relations entre saint Bernard, Abélard et Pierre le Vénérable," in *Pierre Abélard—Pierre le Vénérable: Les courants philosophiques, littéraires et artistiques en Occident au milieu du XIIe siècle. Abbaye de Cluny, 2 au 9 juillet 1972*, ed. René Louis et al., Actes et mémoires des colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, vol. 546 (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975), 671–84; Zink, *Poésie et conversion*, 161–78.

letter dated around 1140. Letter 87, ad Ogerium §12, in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Opera*, ed. J. Leclerq et al., 8 vols. in 9 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–1977), 7: 224–31, at 231, lines 111–18 (= *PL* 182, 217): "Nam revera quid aliud saecularibus quam ludere videmur, cum, quod ipsi appetunt in hoc saeculo, nos per contrarium fugimus, et quod ipsi fugiunt, nos appetimus, more scilicet ioculatorum et saltatorum, qui, capite misso deorsum pedibusque sursum erectis, praeter

humanum usum stant manibus vel incedunt, et sic in se omnium oculos defigunt. Non est hic ludus puerilis, non est de theatro, qui femineis foedisque anfractibus provocet libidinem, actus sordidos repraesentet, sed est ludus iucundus, honestus, gravis, spectabilis, qui caelestium spectatorum delectare possit aspectus" ("For in fact what else do we seem to worldly people to do than to play, when what they desire in this world, we on the contrary flee, and what they flee we strive for, like jongleurs and tumblers, who contrary to human usage stand or proceed on their hands with head downward and feet raised upward, and thus rivet upon themselves everyone's eyes. This is not a childlike game, not from the stage, to elicit lust with shameful, womanly contortions and to represent vile activities. On the contrary, it is a joyful game, decent, serious, and admirable, which can delight the sight of heavenly onlookers"). The letter was addressed to a canon regular named Ogier of Mont Saint-Éloi (and unrelated to his fellow Cistercian Ogier of Locedio). For another translation, see Letter 90, "To Oger, a Canon Regular," in Bruno Scott James, trans., *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1998), 129–35, at 135. The passage has been quoted often, notably by Jean Leclercq, "'Joculator et saltator': Saint Bernard et l'image du jongleur dans les manuscrits," in *Translatio studii: Manuscript and Library Studies Honoring Oliver L. Kapsner*, ed. J. G. Plante (Collegeville, MN: St. John's University Press, 1973), 124–48; Meyer Schapiro, *Romanesque Art* (New York: George Braziller, 1977), 9; Camille, *Image on the Edge*, 59.

attested first in English. Earliest use at least according to the citations in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

hopping and dancing of tumblers. "Hoppynge & daunceynge of tumblers and herlotis, and oþer spectakils."

sacred play. The Latin word *ludus* that is employed here could encompass an immense ambit. If a book can be considered a passage, the locus classicus is Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1949).

jongleurs of God and of the holy angels. Caesarius, *Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. Joseph Strange, 2 vols. (Cologne: J. M. Heberle, 1851), 1: 360 (distinctio 6, capitulum 8); for an English translation of which, see *The Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. H. Von Essen Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland, 2 vols. (London: G. Routledge, 1929), 1: 414, with the word *jester(s)* changed to *jongleur(s)*: "Simplex quandoque mimo vel ioculatori comparatur. Sicut illorum [illius] verba vel opera in eius [libri eorum] ore vel manibus, qui ioculator non est, saepe displicent, et poena digna [digni] sunt apud homines; quae tamen ab eis dicta vel facta, placent: ita est de simplicibus. Ut sic dicam, ioculatores Dei sunt sanctorumque angelorum simplices. Quorum opera, si hi qui simplices non sunt, quandoque facerent, haud dubium quin Deum offenderent, qui in eis, dum per simplices fiunt, delectatur" ("The simple man is often compared to an actor or jongleur, for as their words or actions would often be displeasing in the mouth or hands of one who is not a jongleur, and would be worthy of punishment, yet when the same things are said or done by jongleurs they give pleasure; and so it is with the simple-minded. If I may put it in such a way, the simple-minded are the jongleurs of God and the holy angels. But if their deeds are sometimes done by those who are not simple-minded there is no doubt that they are displeasing to God who delights in them when they are done by the simple").

humility, ordinariness, and inexperience. Chrysogonus Waddell, "Simplicity and Ordinariness: The Climate of Early Cistercian Hagiography," in *Simplicity and Ordinariness*, ed. John R. Sommerfeldt, Studies in Medieval Cistercian History, vol. 4 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 1–47, at 8–9.

minstrels of the Lord. *Ioculatores domini* is not documented before its use in *Legenda Perusina* of 1320–1312. On the expression, see Raoul S. Manselli, *Francesco d'Assisi* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980), 145–53. The degree to which the phrase has become associated with Francis may be gauged from its use in titles. For example, the most famous film about the saint is undoubtedly "Francesco, giullare di Dio" (1950, known in English as "The Flowers of Saint Francis," "Francis, God's Fool," and "Francis, God's Jester"), directed by Roberto Rossellini, screenplay by Federico Fellini (1920–1993). At least two books flaunt the phrase in their titles: André Séailles, *François d'Assise ou le jongleur de Dieu* (Brussels: Desclée De Brouwer, 1971) and Henri Queffélec, *François d'Assise: Le Jongleur de Dieu* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1982). G. K. Chesterton's fifth chapter is entitled "Le Jongleur de Dieu" in his *St. Francis of Assisi*.

Brother Juniper. Fra Ginepro, in Italian. On him, see Aviad Kleinberg, *Flesh Made Word: Saints' Stories and the Western Imagination*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 225–38.

defied social norms. Described repeatedly in *Fioretti di san Francesco* (Little flowers of Saint Francis) and *Vita di frate Ginepro* (Life of Brother Juniper): see *La Vita di frate Ginepro (testo latino e volgarizzamento)*, ed. Giorgio Petrocchi, Scelta di curiosità letterarie inedite o rare dal secolo XIII al XIX, vol. 256 (Bologna, Italy: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1960).

two classes of artists. Berceo uses the terms *trovador* and *joglar*. For his guise as *joglar* of Saint Dominic, see *Vida de Santo Domingo de Silos* (The Life of Saint Dominic of Silos), book 2, stanza 289: "Querémosvos un otro libriello començar, / e de los sus milagros algunos renunçar, / los que Dios en su vida quiso por él mostrar, / cuyos joglares somos, él nos deñe guiar" ("We want to begin another little book, / and make known to you some of his miracles, / those God willed to show through him while he lived; / may He whose minstrels we are deign to guide us"): compare book 3, 759. The translation can be found in *The Collected Works of Gonzalo de Berceo in English Translation*, trans. Jeannie K. Bartha et al., Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 327 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 259, 314.

sermon collections. Sermon on All Saints' Day (incipit "Laudate Dominum in sanctis eius"), Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 13953, folio 145r: "Ioculatores, id est confessores qui Dominum et sanctos mouent ad risum et leticiam optimis uerbis et factis suis, quorum unus legit in ecclesia, alter cantat, alter romanizat, id est 'enromiante' id est exponendo latinum in romano laicis scilicet predicando" ("Jongleurs, these are confessors who occasion laughter and joy from God and the saints by the excellence of their words and actions. One does the reading at church, another sings, another speaks in vernacular, which is to say that what is in Latin, he sets forth in vernacular for the laity in his preaching"). Quoted and cited by Nicole Bériou, "Introduction," in *Prédication et liturgie au Moyen Âge: Études réunies*, ed. idem and Franco Morenzoni, Bibliothèque d'histoire culturelle du Moyen Âge, vol. 5 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008), 7–22, at 13n24.

Blessed John Buoni. From Romagna, he is also known as Johannes Bonus, Giovanni Bono, Giambono, Zanibono, and Zannebono. His feast day falls on October 23: see *Acta Sanctorum*, October, "Dies 22," 9: 698–99. For a more approachable account, see "October," ed. Peter Doyle, in *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, ed. David Hugh Farmer and Paul Burns, 12 vols. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995–2000), 160–61. For the relevant texts and Italian translations, see *Vita di Giovanni Bono*, ed. Mario Mattei, Vite dei santi dell'Emilia Romagna, vol. 5 (Cesena, Italy: Il ponte vecchio, 2004).

Holy Fools

fools for Christ's sake. Paul the Apostle, in 1 Corinthians 4:10. Compare 1:18, 23, 25.

fool of God. On the fool of God, see Saward, *Perfect Fools*; Thomas Lederer, "Fools and Saints: Derision and Regenerative Laughter," *Comitatus* 37 (2006): 111–45.

fool for Christ. Alexander Y. Syrkin, "On the Behavior of the 'Fool for Christ's Sake,'" *History of Religions* 22 (1982): 150–71 and Youval Rotman, *Insanity and Sanctity in Byzantium: The Ambiguity of Religious Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

Symeon of Emesa. Symeon flourished sometime between the middle and end of the sixth century. Emesa is the modern-day Homs, in Syria. He is known from a brief account in the sixth-century Evagrius Scholasticus and a detailed one in the seventh-century Leontios of Neapolis. For the English of the latter, see Derek Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool: Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage, vol. 25 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996). Leontius was the first to use the phrase "fool for Christ." For further information, see Vsevolod Rocheau, "Saint Siméon Salos: Ermite palestinien et prototype des 'Fous-pour-le-Christ,'" *Proche-Orient chrétien* 28 (1978): 209–19.

Lausiac History. The *Lausiac History* was named after Lausus (or Lausos), who commissioned it. This eunuch became the imperial chamberlain at the court of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450).

(un)intentional absurdism. E. Poulakou-Rebelakou et al., "Holy Fools: A Religious Phenomenon of Extreme Behaviour," *Journal of Religion and Health* 53.1 (2014): 95–104. This article offers in condensed form comprehensive information on different traditions of holy fools.

Saint Francis of Assisi. *The Assisi Compilation (1244–1260)* 18, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong et al., 3 vols. (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1999–2001), 2: 118–230, at 132–33, relates Francis's claim at the chapter of Mats (dated often to 1221): "God has called me by the way of simplicity and showed me the way of simplicity… . He wanted me to be a new fool in the world." Francis's status as a fool of God has become deeply entrenched in modern biographies of him, cf. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi*, 106: "It was a solid objective fact, like the stones in the road, that he had made a fool of himself. And as he stared at the word 'fool' written in luminous letters before him, the word itself began to shine and change"; 107–8: "When Francis came forth from his cave of vision, he was wearing the same word 'fool' as a feather in his cap; as a crest or even a crown. He would go on being a fool; he would become more and more of a fool; he would be the court fool of the King of Paradise."

fools to the world. Literally, the Latin *mundi moriones* means "fools of the world." Erasmus, "The Rich Beggars" ("Ptokhoplousioi"), in *Opera omnia* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1969–<2017>), Ordo 1, 3 "Colloquia" (ed. L.-E. Halkin, F. Bierlaire, and R. Hoven [1972]), 389–402, at 397.

individuals whose holiness goes undetected. Lennart Rydén, "The Holy Fool," in *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham, 14th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, ed. Sergei Hackel, Studies Supplement to *Sobornost*, vol. 5 (San Bernardino, CA: Borgo, 1983), 106–13; Derek Krueger, "Tales of Holy Fools," in *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice*, ed. Richard Valantasis (Princeton,

NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 177–86; Bernard Flusin, "Le serviteur caché ou le saint sans existence," in *Les vies des saints à Byzance: Genre littéraire ou biographie historique. Actes du IIe colloque international "Hermeneia," Paris, 6–7–8 juin 2002*, ed. Paolo Odorico and Panagiotis A. Agapitos, Dossiers byzantins, vol. 4 (Paris: Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes, E.H.S.S., 2004), 59–71.

Scetis. Modern-day Wadi al-Natrun, then a monastic center, in the desert of the northwestern Nile Delta.

Mark the Fool. In Greek σαλός (transliterated *salos* or *salós*), with the accent on the final syllable.

pretends to be demented. The story, entitled *De Marco salo* (On […] Mark), is no. 3 in "Vie et récits de l'Abbé Daniel de Scété," ed. Léon Clugnet, *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 5 (1900): 49–73, 370–91, at 60–62; no. 2 in *Saint Daniel of Sketis: A Group of Hagiographic Texts*, ed. and trans. Britt Dahlman, Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia, vol. 10 (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 2007); trans. Krueger, "Tales of Holy Fools." The story has been classified as no. 2255 in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, ed. François Halkin, 3rd ed., Subsidia Hagiographica, vol. 8a (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1957), and as no. 2099z (compare nos. 2254–55) in *Novum auctarium Bibliothecae Hagiographicae Graecae*, ed. idem, Subsidia Hagiographica, vol. 65 (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1984), which correspond to Wortley, "Repertoire,'" W468. Transliterated by a purist with fidelity to best practice, *Scetis* would be *Skētis*.

Another example. The story, entitled *De virgine quae ebrietatem simulabat*, is no. 7 in Clugnet, "Vie et récits," 69–70. The same tale has been subsumed in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, no. 2101, and Wortley, "Repertoire," W461. See also Sergei Arkad'evich Ivanov, "From 'Secret Servants of God' to 'Fools for Christ's Sake' in Byzantine Hagiography," in *The Holy Fool in Byzantium and Russia*, ed. Ingunn Lunde (Bergen, Norway: [Universitetet i Bergen, Russisk institutt], 1995), 5–17, at 10–11; idem, *Holy Fools in Byzantium and Beyond*, trans. Simon Franklin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

other tales in the genre. Ivanov, "From 'Secret Servants of God,'" 188–89.

Maximos. [Kausokalybites ("of the burning hut")] of Mount Athos, whose biography is recorded in four saints' lives: see Halkin, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, nos. 1236z, 1237, 1237c, 1237f. Two of these are included in *Holy Men of Mount Athos*, ed. Richard P. H. Greenfield and Alice-Mary Talbot, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, vol. 40 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 369–439 (by Niphon), 441–567 (by Theophanes).

church of Saint Mary of Blachernae. As its name predisposes us to believe, this great church was associated with the Virgin. It was located in the northwestern section of Constantinople, in the suburb known as Blachernae.

holy fools. The key Russian term is *iurodivyi*.

stock characters. Ewa M. Thompson, *Understanding Russia: The Holy Fool in Russian Culture* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).

Fool. Tale 10, in *Fou, dixième conte de la Vie des pères: Conte pieux du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Jacques Chaurand, Publications romanes et françaises, vol. 117 (Geneva: Droz, 1971).

Gautier de Coinci wrote a miracle. Gautier de Coinci, *Les miracles de Notre Dame*, ed. V. Frédéric Koenig, 4 vols., Textes littéraires français, vols. 64, 95, 131, 165 (Geneve: Droz, 1955–), 3: 74–106 (book 1, miracle 37 [D. 39: "D'un escommené"]; *Le miracle d'un excommunié*, trans. Annette Llinarès Garnier, Traductions des classiques du Moyen Âge, vol. 92 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2013). For analysis, see Huguette Legros, "Les fous de Dieu," in *"Si a parlé par moult ruiste vertu": Mélanges de littérature médiévale offerts à Jean Subrenat*, ed. Jean Dufournet, Colloques, congress et conferences sur le Moyen Âge, vol. 1 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2000), 339–53. She returns to the topic in her recent book, idem, *La folie dans la littérature médiévale: Étude des représentations de la folie dans la littérature des XIIe, XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Rennes, France: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013).

Gottfried Keller composed a poem. The original episode was recorded in the sixteenth-century family chronicle known as the *Zimmern Chronicle* (1519–1566).

The Fool of Count von Zimmern. Gottfried Keller, "Der Narr des Grafen von Zimmern," in *Sämtliche Werke in sieben Bänden*, ed. Thomas Böning and Gerhard Kaiser, 7 vols., Bibliothek deutscher Klassiker, vol. 3 (Frankfurt, Germany: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985–1996), 1: 718–19. For interpretation, see Gerhard Kaiser, "Inkarnation und Altarsakrament: Ein nichtchristliches Gedicht über die Mese und was es Christliches sagt. Zu Gottfried Kellers 'Der Narr des Grafen von Zimmern,'" *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 94 (1997): 253–62.

large lidded flagon. The cup is known as a ciborium. For the source, see *Zimmerische Chronik*, ed. Karl August Barack, 4 vols. (Tübingen, Germany: Litterarische Verein in Stuttgart, 1869), 2: 585 (in 1528): the fool is identified as Michele, serving Count Johannes Werner von Zimmern.

The Holy Jester Francis. *Lu santo jullàre Françesco*, ed. Franca Rame (Turin, Italy: Einaudi, 1999), 33–37 (Italian and dialect, in facing-page format).

immersed himself. Antonio Scuderi, "Dario Fo and Oral Tradition: Creating a Thematic Context," *Oral Tradition* 15 (2000): 26–38.

holy jester. Antonio Scuderi, "Unmasking the Holy Jester Dario Fo," *Theatre Journal* 55.2 (2003): 275–90.

jonglery. The Italian for jongleur is *giullare*, for jonglery is *giullarata*. The most obvious evidence would be pieces such as Dario Fo, *La giullarata con Concetta Pina e Cicciu Busacca* (Verona, Italy: Bertani, 1975), and *Mistero buffo: Giullarata popolare* (Turin, Italy: Einaudi, 2003). See Scuderi, "Unmasking." On Fo as a medievalizer, see Louise D'Arcens, "Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo* and the Left-Modernist Reclamation of Medieval Popular Culture," in *Medieval Afterlives in Popular Culture*, ed. Gail Ashton and Daniel T. Kline (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 57–70; idem, *Comic Medievalism: Laughing at the Middle Ages*, Medievalism, vol. 4 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2014), 68–87.

arrogated or effaced. The framework he assumes derives from Antonio Gramsci and Mikhail Bakhtin, among others, and it posits subaltern masses of lower classes, which are oppressed by hegemonic elites.

the most successful and significant. Conrad Greenia, "The Laybrother Vocation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Cistercian Studies* 16 (1981): 38–45, at 43.

Fact or Fiction?

Truth is stranger than fiction. Mark Twain, *Following the Equator* (1897), chap. 15.

The City of God. *De civitate Dei*.

On Superstition. *De superstitione*.

performs daily. "A leading pantomime actor of great experience, grown old and decrepit, used to put on his act every day on the Capitol, as if the gods still took pleasure in his performance now that human beings had abandoned him." For a translation of the passage, see Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1972), 250.

The parallel to *De civitate Dei* 6.10 was first drawn in Francesco Novati, "L'*archimimus* di Seneca ed il *tombeor Nostre Dame*," *Romania* 25 (1896): 591, and later reexamined by G. Šamšalović, "Del tumbeor Nostre Dame," Živa antika / Antiquité vivante 10 (1960): 320. In the retelling of the Old French by the latter, the jongleur dies at the end of performing and supplicating. A monk witnesses the death and brings the abbot, who explains that the dancer's activity pleased God more than any other.

the show must go on. A similar impulse may explain another historical anecdote. In 211, a mime play is interrupted when the alarm is sounded of an approaching enemy. The crowd first rushes to arms and later returns to the performance, where the spectators find that in their absence the mime has continued dancing to the accompaniment of a flute player. See Sextus Pompeius Festus, *De verborum significatione*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, in *Glossaria latina*, 5 vols. (Paris: Société anonyme d'Édition "Les Belles lettres," 1926–1931), 4: 93–506, at 419 (item 436), "Salva res <est; saltat> senex," discussed by Paul Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1976), 392, 499–500 (n58).

cases from western Christendom. The odds are good that if we wished to track down instances from other traditions, they could be found readily. For Muslim examples, see Fritz Meier, *Abū Sa'īd-i Abū l-Hayr (357–440/967–1049): Wirklichkeit und Legende*, Acta Iranica, vol. 11 (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1976), 256–59.

Dancers are the athletes of God. This saying is often identified, without any source, as a quotation from Albert Einstein.

sixteenth-century friar. Known as Pascual Bailón in Spanish, often called "The Saint of the Eucharist," he is sometimes designated simply by a diminutive of his first name, Pascualito. His feast day is May 17. For concise and reliable biographical information, see Niccolò Del Re, "Pasquale Baylón," in *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, 13 vols. (Rome: Istituto Giovanni XXIII nella Pontificia Università lateranense, 1961–1970), 10: 358–63. His life story was written by his fellow Franciscan and superior, Father Juan Ximenez. See Juan Ximenez (Jiménez), *Chronica del B. Fray Pasqual Baylon* (Valencia, Spain: Iuan Crysostomo Gariz, 1601). The abbreviated Latin translation of the original Spanish *vita* by Father Ximenez can be found in *Acta Sanctorum* (May 4, 1866): 48–132; the episode to follow is at p. 53A, section 17. For uncritical biographies (all three of them often reprinted), see Louis-Antoine de Porrentruy, *The Saint of the Eucharist: Saint Paschal Baylon, Patron of Eucharistic Associations*, trans. Oswald Staniforth (London: R. & T. Washbourne, 1908); Autbert Groeteken, *Paschalis Baylon: Heiligenbild aus Spaniens goldenem Jahrhundert* (Cincinnati, OH: Verlag des "Sendbote," 1912); Innocenzo Russo, *Vita di s. Pasquale Baylon francescano* (Naples, Italy: Federico & Ardia, 1931).

attachment to the Eucharist. This aspect is symbolized by the ostensory and the chalice.

King of the Graveyard. In Spanish, San Pascualito, also known as San Pascualito Muerte (Saint Paschal Death) and El Rey San Pascual (King Saint Paschal). As the "King of the Graveyard," Paschal is represented as a skeleton with a crown, cape, or both.

known for dancing. Ivan Innerst, *Saints for Today: Reflections on Lesser Saints* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 18. On the conventional iconography, see Maria Chiara Celletti, in *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, 10: 363–64.

blessed the saint. "El pastor de Torrehermosa," section 68, "La danza de los gitanos," in *San Pascual: Boletín informativo de las obras del templo* 17.168 (July-August 1965). The episode is recounted in Ximenez, *Chronica*.

broke into a jubilant jig. The caption reads: "Then, full of joy, he sang and danced like a madman…." The voice bubble exclaims, in reference to the Eucharist with the veneration of which Paschal became celebrated: "Let all mortals eat fruit by which they will live, which is God underneath the bread."

Baylon. The name has been construed as having in its first syllable a stem that derives from the Spanish verb *bailar* "to dance." Its second syllable is the augmentative –ón, with an affective meaning—expressing a liking. See Eric O'Brien, "Omer Englebert's *The Last of the Conquistadors, Junípero Serra*: A Critical Appraisal," *The Americas* 13 (1956): 175–85, at 179.

Obando. In the province of Bulacan, on the island of Luzon in the Philippines.

church dedicated to him. The church is first documented in 1754 as being called Iglesia de San Pascual Baylon del Pueblo de Ovando.

Our Lady of Salambao. Our Lady of Salambao is an image of the Virgin (now in the church of San Paschal) that was reportedly found by two brothers inside their fishing net (*salambao*) in 1793.

the dancing saint. Both traits may be investigated by searching for Pascual Baylon and "the dancing saint." This association seems to be endemic in the Philippines.

a second jongleur de Notre-Dame. *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, ed. Herbert J. Thurston and Donald Attwater, 4 vols. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), 2: 335.

Saint John Bosco. In Italian, Giovanni Melchiorre Bosco.

say the rosary and attend Mass. John Bosco, *Memoirs of the Oratory of Saint Francis de Sales from 1815 to 1855: The Autobiography of Saint John Bosco*, trans. Daniel Lyons, with notes and commentary by Eugenio Ceria et al. (New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Publications, 1989), chap. 3 ("The Young Acrobat"), 27–29, 29–31 (notes). An Italian biography by Eugenio Pilla is entitled *Il piccolo giocoliere*, 4th ed., Fiori di cielo, vol. 38 (Bari, Italy: Paoline, 1967).

lay brothers. The lay brothers are known as coadjutors.

dance as a spiritual medium. Ruth St. Denis, *An Unfinished Life: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), 57: "But without any question I was at that time a kind of dancing ritualist. The intensities of my spiritual life had found a focus of action in exactly the same way that another earnest young person would enter the church." She has become indelibly associated with dance as an expression of religion. For example, an account of her life story

by Suzanne Shelton is entitled *Divine Dancer: A Biography of Ruth St. Denis* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981); a book by Janet Lynn Roseman that studies her art is called *Dance Was Her Religion: The Sacred Choreography of Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis and Martha Graham* (Prescott, AZ: Hohm Press, 2004); and a documentary on her (a Mentor-St. Ives production, produced by Edmund Penney and Gertrude Marks, directed by Edmund Penney, written by Edmund Penney and Charles Curran) bears the title *The Dancing Prophet* (Derry, NH: Chip Taylor Communications, 1999).

founded a Society of Spiritual Arts. Jane Sherman and Christena Schlundt, "Who's St. Denis? What Is She?," *Dance Chronicle* 10.3 (1987): 305–29, at 318.

made a specialty of dances on Christian themes. Suzanne Shelton, "St. Denis, Ruth," in Cohen et al., *International Encyclopedia of Dance*, 5: 490–98, at 497; Shelton, *Divine Dancer*, 241–43 (on a possible connection through Norman Bel Geddes with Max Reinhardt's *The Miracle*); Sandra Meinzenbach, *"Tanz ist eine Sprache und eine Schrift des Göttlichen": Kunst und Leben der Ruth St. Denis*, Beiträge zur Tanzkultur, vol. 8 (Wilhelmshaven, Germany: Florian Noetzel, 2013), 200–5.

The dancer was introduced. The introduction came after an organ prelude and Gospel readings.

the incarnation of femininity and creative love. St. Denis, *Unfinished Life*, 365: "The White Madonna is the total being of woman, passive, waiting, hidden behind the heavy veil of time. She is the being of creative love." For interpretation, see Kimerer L. La Mothe, "Passionate Madonna: The Christian Turn of American Dancer Ruth St. Denis," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66.4 (1998): 747–69.

Madonnas were the passion of her last years. Shelton, *Divine Dancer*, 268. Quoted by La Mothe, "Passionate Madonna," 748.

One Sunday in 1935. February 25, 1935.

religious dance. A rhythmic interpretation of the Psalms, it was entitled *When I Meditate on Thee in the Night-Watches*. Soignée in a white, black, and red outfit, she proceeded through motions that she stated symbolized "the gradual ascent of man's soul from the moment he acknowledges his need of spiritual light to the final radiation." See "Ruth St. Denis Dances before Church Altar" (Associated Press), *The Stamford Daily* 87.5, February 25, 1935.

Manhattan church. The church was Central Presbyterian, which had been constructed in Gothic revival style between 1920 and 1922 at the corner of 64th Street and Park Avenue, on the Upper East Side.

scorching controversy. Rachel K. McDowell, "Dance by Ruth St. Denis in Church Stirs Up a Presbyterian Row: Denominational Leader Presses for Disciplinary Action against Those Responsible for Her Appearance at Service in Park Avenue Chancel," *The New York Times*, February 28, 1935, 21.

huffing and puffing. In "Dancing Before the Lord," *The Morning Oregonian*, February 26, 1935, 8, a journalist opined against the rush to condemn: "An ingrained and lingering puritanism, not yet completely exorcised by our liberal and irreverent times, induces us to look askance on the dance as an aid to religion."

one writer. "Dancing Before the Lord," *The Morning Oregonian*, February 26, 1935, 8. On the puritanical reaction to the dance, see Shelton, *Divine Dancer*, 244.

Mireille Nègre. Her story can be read most fully in Mireille Nègre, with Mireille Taub, *Une vie entre ciel et terre* (Paris: Balland, 1990). Accounts can be found also in Jean-Roger Bourrec, *Mireille Nègre, "alliance"* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1984); Mireille Nègre and Michel Cool, *Je danserai pour toi* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1984); Mireille Nègre, *Danser sur les étoiles* (Paris: Balland, 1993).

achieved ever greater success. Eventually she danced in the corps de ballet, and ultimately she became the first dancer.

Carmelites. Known in full as the Order of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, this religious society owe its name to having been founded on Mount Carmel in the Holy Lands during the Crusades. Since the thirteenth century its members have been recognized within the Church as having a distinctively Marian devotion, under the Virgin's special protection in her capacity as the Mother of God or God-Bearer. See Christopher O'Donnell, "Maria nel Carmelo," in *Dizionario carmelitano*, ed. Emanuele Boaga and Luigi Borriello (Rome: Città Nuova, 2008), 539–46.

holidays associated with Mary. James Boyce, "Maria nella liturgia carmelitana," in Boaga and Borriello, *Dizionario carmelitano*, 546–49.

many a long tale. My translation of *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede*, lines 48–49, in John Scattergood, "*Pierce the Ploughman's Crede:* Lollardy and Texts," in *Lollardy and the Gentry in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Margaret Aston and Colin Richmond (Stroud, UK: Sutton, 1997), 77–94, at 87: "Thei maketh hem Maries men (so thei men tellen), / and lieth on our Ladie many a longe tale."

striking a balletic pose. The pose in question was an arabesque, in which the dancer balances on one leg with the other unbent at the knee and extended back.

the passion for dance. Her narrative of the time is replete with pronouncements of devotion to both God and dance. Nègre, *Une vie*, 119: "I kept alive over a long period the secret of dance, and if I had to sign in my own hand a love letter to God, my words would be: 'Your dancer, forever.'… God would speak to me of dance: 'Our God is lord of the dance, he whose spirit hovers over the waters.'" Nègre's devotion to dance as a devotional outlet calls to mind a much earlier female mystic, Mechthild of Magdeburg, who made dance a metaphor in her appeals to God, with the most striking concision in a poem that has been entitled "I Cannot Dance": "I cannot dance, Lord, unless you lead me. / If you want me to leap with abandon, / You must intone the song. / Then I shall leap into love, / From love into knowledge, / From knowledge into enjoyment, / And from enjoyment beyond all human sensations. / There I want to remain, yet want also to circle higher still." Mechthild of Magdeburg, *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*, ed. Hans Neumann, 2 vols., Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters, vols. 100, 101 (Munich, Germany: Artemis Verlag, 1990), 1: 28–29 (book 1, section 44); *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. Frank Tobin, Classics of Western Spirituality, vol. 92 (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 59.

I will dance for you, Lord. Nègre, *Une vie*, 84: "Je danserai pour Toi, Seigneur, tant que je dure."

exasperated at not being able to pray for God. Nègre, *Une vie*, 114–15.

painful sacrifices. Nègre, *Une vie*, 148: "I had renounced dance, made an abstraction of my body, tolerated the worst sufferings that a dancer could know: in the name of God, I had accepted silence."

protracted tribulations. Nègre, *Une vie*, 85.

Order of the Visitation. It was founded in 1610.

dedication to Him of her body as a dancer. Nègre, *Une vie*, 159, 179: "Dance always has a purpose; mine is to offer myself to Him."

God was the lord of the dance. Nègre, *Une vie*, 167.

consecrated as a sister. Nègre, *Une vie*, 123 (the chapter is entitled "A virgin, consecrated to dance"), 177.

choreographed the words of the liturgy. Nègre, *Une vie*, 133 (cf. 147).

ballet in linguistic terms. Nègre, *Une vie*, 184: "Classical dance is a wonderful tool for expressing Christian spirituality, for making of one's body a language for understanding and dialogue… . Dance is also a school of tolerance, since its language is universal and can be understood by everyone, whatever their creed or origins."

jongleur on the façade of Notre-Dame. Nègre, *Une vie*, 98. It is hard to know which sculpture Nègre has in mind.

transcendence of mere art. It should come as no wonder that the cataract of publications by Nègre includes a coauthored volume on the relationship between art and life. See Mireille Nègre and Éric de Rus, *L'art et la vie* (Toulouse: Carmel, 2009). A recent book by her is a meditation upon the Gospels entitled *Dance with Jesus*. See Mireille Nègre, with Michel Cool, *Danse avec Jésus: Mireille Nègre médite et illustre l'Évangile* (Paris: Salvator, 2014).

I dance for God. Her convictions regarding dance are summarized simply but nicely in a French weekly for children, *Fripounet* 52, December 28, 1983–January 4, 1984, 28–29.

Nick Weber. Nick Weber, *The Circus That Ran Away with a Jesuit Priest: Memoir of a Delible Character* (Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear Publishing, 2012).

sacred comedy. M. Conrad Hyers, *The Comic Vision and the Christian Faith: A Celebration of Life and Laughter* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1981).

I Dance with God. Anna Nobili, with the assistance of Carolina Mercurio, *Io ballo con Dio: La suora che prega danzando* (Milan, Italy: Mondadori, 2013).

Worker-Sisters of the Holy House of Nazareth. In Italian, Suore Operaie della Santa Casa di Nazareth.

imbroglio. Nick Squires, "Lap Dancer Turned Nun Angers Pope," *The Telegraph*, 26 May 2011, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/8536052/Lap-dancer-turned-nun-angers-Pope.html

If it is not true, it is well conceived. Proverbial at least since the sixteenth century, it is best put in Italian: *Se non è vero, è ben trovato*, and by authors as famous as Giordano Bruno, *Gli eroici furori* (book 2). For further information, see Michael Cole, "*Se Non è Vero, è Ben Trovato*," *Intellectual History Review* 24.3 (2014): 429–39.

Notes to Chapter 3

He who labors as he prays. "Qui orat laborat, cor levat ad Deum cum manibus," in pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, *Ad sororem de modo bene vivendi*.

The Order of Cîteaux

Vox clamantis in deserto. These words are drawn from the Vulgate Latin translation of the Gospel of Mark 1:1–3 and of the Gospel of John 1:22–23 in reference to John the Baptist, which in turn quotes Isaiah 40:3.

remunerated in kind. Clothing and horses were frequent tokens of largesse from wealthy patrons. Poets mention them often as coveted perquisites.

plenty of vilification. David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 662–78; David Neil Bell, ed. and trans., "*De grisis monachis*: A Goliardic Invective against the Cistercians in London, B. L., Cotton Vespasian A.XIX," *Studia monastica: Commentarium ad rem monasticam investigandam* 41 (1999): 243–59. The attackers included clerics such as Gerald of Wales and Walter Map.

the founder. The founder was Abbot Robert of the Benedictine abbey of Molesmes in Burgundy, who was persuaded to undertake this innovation by two fellow monks, Alberic and Stephen Harding.

cistern. The Latin place name *Cistercium* is related to the noun *cistellum*. The English word "cistern" belongs to the same family of words.

paludal and fluvial. Kinder, *Cistercian Europe*, 81–88. There were obvious exceptions: we will encounter more than once a monk named Helinand of Froidmont. The place name means "cold mountain."

Bernard loved the valleys. "Bernardus valles, colles [alternately, montes] Benedictus amabat, / Franciscus vicos [alt., "Moenia Franciscus" or "Franciscus oppida"], magnas [alt., magnus, celebres] Ignatius [Dominicus] urbes" (Bernard loved valleys, Benedict hills, Francis villages, and Ignatius the big cities). See Anselme Dimier, *Stones Laid before the Lord: A History of Monastic Architecture*, trans. Gilchrist Lavigne, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 152 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 51–52. The maxim merits comparison with the saying of Confucius that "The wise delight in water; the humane delight in mountains": *Analects*, trans. Annping Chin (New York: Penguin, 2014), book 6.23.

desert. *Exordium parvum*, 3, in Chrysogonus Waddell, ed., *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux* (Brecht, Belgium: Cîteaux commentarii cistercienses, 1999), 421 (*eremum*). See Benedicta Ward, "The Desert Myth: Reflections on the Desert Ideal in Early Cistercian Monasticism," in *One Yet Two: Monastic Tradition East and West. Orthodox-Cistercian Symposium, Oxford University, 28 August–1 September, 1973*, ed. M. Basil Pennington, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 29 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1976), 183–99.

alone. *Mónakhos*, from *monos.*

individualism with communitarianism. Two strands of scholarship have credited the long twelfth century with an unprecedented appreciation of individuality. One has emphasized the quality

as it appears in literature, the other as it comes to the fore in religious sensibilities. The poem about the tumbler straddles both categories: in this literary work, he creates a paradoxically solo community within a monastery. It bears recalling that his individuality has nothing to do with personality in a modern sense, of which he puts on display none. On the scholarship, see Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980), 1–17, reprinted in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), 82–109.

The term abbot. The word has reached us by way of first Greek and then Latin.

Jesus and Paul. The three instances are in Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, and Galatians 4:6.

the oldest communities. Other monasteries in this category are La Ferté, Morimond, and Pontigny.

convers. Jean Batany, "Les convers chez quelques moralistes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles," *Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses* 20 (1969): 241–59, at 242.

eulogies on Clairvaux. William of Saint Thierry, *Vita sancti Bernardi* (also known as *Vita prima*), book 1, chap. 8, 35, in *PL* 185, 225–68, at 247C–248B.

convert monk. The Latin terms are *monachus conversus* and *monachus laicus* or *illitteratus*, respectively. See Constance H. Berman, "Distinguishing between the Humble Peasant Lay Brother and Sister, and the Converted Knight in Medieval Southern France," in *Religious and Laity in Western Europe, 1000–1400: Interaction, Negotiation, and Power*, ed. Emilia Jamroziak and Janet Burton, Europa Sacra, vol. 2 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 263–83.

to the monastic way of life. *Ad conversionem.*

metaphor. For the larger context, see Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha," in idem, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–141.

Lectio divina. Duncan Robertson, *Lectio divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading*, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 238 (Trappist, KY: Cistercian Publications, 2011).

separate spaces. Dimier, *Stones Laid before the Lord*, 45.

a sermon. *Exordium magnum Cisterciense, sive, Narratio de initio Cisterciensis Ordinis*, ed. Bruno Griesser, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, vol. 138 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1994), 255–57 (4.13) (in 1961 edition, 238–39).

Cistercians and the Virgin

hyperdulia. *Huper* and *douleia*, respectively.

point person for their whole order. Gabriela Signori, "'Totius ordinis nostri patrona et advocata': Maria als Haus und Ordensheilige der Zisterzienser," in *Maria in der Welt: Marienverehrung im Kontext der Sozialgeschichte 10.–18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Claudia Opitz et al., Clio Lucernensis, vol. 2 (Zurich: Chronos, 1993), 253–73.

service of the Virgin. Pierre-André Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale, XIe–XIIe siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1985), 107–15.

Marianism. For a concise introduction, bibliography, and anthology in translation, see Luigi Gambero, *Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of Medieval Latin Theologians*, trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 131–41.

Cistercian writers. Albert van Iterson, "L'ordre de Cîteaux et le Cœur de Marie," *Collectanea ordinis cisterciensium reformatorum* 20 (1958): 219–312; 21 (1959): 97–120; Norbert Mussbacher, "Die Marienverehrung der Cistercienser," in *Die Cistercienser: Geschichte–Geist–Kunst*, ed. Ambrosius Schneider et al. (Cologne, Germany: Wienand, 1977), 165–82.

Divine Comedy. *Paradiso*, 31.100–102: "E la regina del Cielo, ond'ïo ardo / tutto d'amor, ne farà ogne grazia, / però ch'i' sono il suo fedel Bernardo" ("And the queen of Heaven, for whom I burn / All from love, will grant us every grace, / Because I am her faithful Bernard"). To Bernard, Dante also assigns the culminating prayer to the Virgin in the final canto of the same concluding canticle, *Paradiso* (33.1–39), in his masterpiece.

Bernard, among others. On Bernard of Clairvaux and Mary, see Jean Leclercq, "Saint Bernard et la dévotion médiévale envers Marie," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 30 (1954): 361–75. On Mary's humility, see Bernard of Clairvaux, "Dominica infra octavam Assumptionis B. V. Mariae sermo," in *PL* 183, 429–38, at 435A, and the German monk (and bishop of Eichstätt) Philip of Rathsamhausen, *Expositio super Magnificat*, ed. Andreas Bauch, *Das theologisch-aszetische Schrifttum des Eichstätter Bischofs Philipp von Rathsamhausen (1306–1322)* (Eichstätt, Germany: Verlag der Katholischen Kirche in Bayern, 1948), 178–250, at 214.

unvoiced grief. Donna Spivey Ellington, *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 197–201.

Humility, chastity, and silence. France, *Separate but Equal*, 164–66, 200–207 (humility); 211–15 (silence); Edmond Mikkers, "L'idéal religieux des frères convers dans l'ordre de Citeaux aux 12e et 13e siècles," *Collectanea ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum* 24 (1962): 113–29, at 127–28 (humility).

fealty to the Virgin. See a monk of Sept-Fons, "Cîteaux et Notre Dame," Jean-Baptiste Auniord, "Cîteaux et Notre Dame," and Robert Thomas, "Autres Cisterciens," in *Maria: Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, ed. Hubert Du Manoir de Juaye, 7 vols. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1949–1964), 2: 579–83, 583–613, 614–24; Stephan Beissel, *Geschichte der Verehrung Marias in Deutschland während des Mittelalters: Ein Beitrag zur Religionswissenschaft und Kunstgeschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Herder, 1909), 195–213; Janet Burton and Julie Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2011), 127–33; Howard Haeseler Lewis, "The Cistercian Order and the Virgin in the Twelfth Century" (AB Honors thesis, Harvard University, 1956). For an anthology of texts relating to Mary in English translation, see E. Rozanne Elder, ed. and trans., *Mary Most Holy: Meditating with the Early Cistercians* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2003).

Peter Abelard. Letter 10, in *Letters of Peter Abelard, beyond the Personal*, trans. Jan M. Ziolkowski (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 85–98, at 94.

seals. Pierre Bony, "An Introduction to the Study of Cistercian Seals: The Virgin as Mediatrix, Then Protectrix on the Seals of Cistercian Abbeys," in *Studies in Cistercian Art and Architecture*, vol. 3, ed. Meredith Parsons Lillich, Cistercian Studies, vol. 89 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian

Publications, 1987), 201–40. The tendency was made obligatory in 1335 by a ruling of Pope Benedict XII: see Joseph-Marie Canivez, ed., *Statuta capitulorum generalium ordinis Cisterciensis ab anno 1116 ad annum 1786*, 8 vols., Bibliothèque de la Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, vol. 9 (Louvain, Belgium: Bureaux de la Revue, 1933–1941), 3: 411 (for 1335, 2).

every Cistercian church and cloister. On cloisters, see *Exordium Cistercii et Summa Cartae caritatis* (The beginning of Cîteaux and the summa of the Charter of Charity), chap. 9, "On the Dedication of the Cloister," in *Les plus anciens textes de Cîteaux: Sources, textes et notes historiques*, ed. Jean de la Croix Bouton and Jean Baptiste Van Damme, Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses: Studia et documenta, vol. 2 (Achel, Belgium: Abbaye cistercienne, 1974), 121 ("in honore reginae coeli et terrae"). On churches, see the Cistercian statutes "of 1134" that were compiled shortly before the mid-twelfth century, in Canivez, *Statuta*, 1: 17 (Statuta ord. cisterciensis 1134,18 "in memoria eiusdem caeli et terrae reginae sanctae Mariae"), and Waddell, *Narrative and Legislative Texts*, 463 (*Instituta generalis capituli* 18 "Quod omnia monasteria in honore beatae Marie dedicentur": "in memoria eiusdem caeli et terrae reginae sanctae Mariae").

liturgies of the Cistercians. The monks lavished care upon the celebration of the four Marian holidays then in existence: the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin or Candlemas, on February 2; the Feast of the Annunciation, on March 25; the Assumption of Mary, on August 15 (and the Octave of the Assumption, on August 22); and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on September 8: see Goffredo Viti and Malachia Falletti, "La devozione a Maria nell'Ordine Cistercense," *Marianum: Ephemerides Mariologiae* 54.1–2, no. 143 (1992): 287–348.

daily offices. On the offices, note the prescription of the *Commemoratio beatae Mariae* and the *Horae beatae Mariae virginis*: Viti and Falletti, "La devozione a Maria," 305–9. See also Burton and Kerr, *Cistercians in the Middle Ages*, 127.

Hail, Holy Queen. Latin "Salve, regina": Viti and Falletti, "La devozione a Maria," 296, 311–14.

they explained the color. Adam of Perseigne, "102 Sermo V. in Assumptione B. Mariae," in *PL* 211, 733C–744B, at 739D: "O quantus debet esse in meis candor cordium, et morum puritas, (20) qui et candore habitus et titulo nominis virginalis lilii albedinem imitantur! Albi nimirum monachi dicuntur, non modo quod albedine vestium fulgeant, sed quod candoris virginei ministri spirituales existant."

Saint Alberic. Feast day, January 26. *Acta sanctorum*.

Marian Doctor. Latin *Doctor Marianus* or *Doctor Marialis*.

missionaries of Marianism. For this characterization of Bernard, see Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 121. On Doctor Marianus, see Dorothee Lauffs, "Bernhard von Clairvaux," in *Marienlexikon*, ed. Remigius Bäumer and Leo Scheffczyk, 6 vols. (St. Ottilien, Germany: EOS, 1988–1994), 1: 445–50, at 445. On Doctor Marialis, see Henri Barré, "Saint Bernard, docteur marial," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 9 (1953): 92–113. For the Cistercians, see Walter Delius, *Geschichte der Marienverehrung* (Munich, Germany: E. Reinhardt, 1963), 157–58.

The angel Gabriel was sent. Luke 1:26, in Latin, *Missus est angelus Gabriel*.

On the Praises of the Virgin Mother. Latin *De laudibus virginis matris.*

dynamics of courtly love. Hilda C. Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, 2 vols. (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1990), 1: 235–41.

Hail, Star of the Sea. Latin *Ave, maris stella*. It is actually the work of the eighth-century Ambrosius Autpertus. For the definitive study of the hymn, see Heinrich Lausberg, *Der Hymnus Ave maris stella*, Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, vol. 61 (Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1976).

Memorare. The title is an imperative in the learned language for "Remember!": *The Catholic Prayerbook: From Downside Abbey*, ed. David Foster (Edinburgh, UK: T & T Clark, 2001), 153: "Remember, O most merciful Virgin Mary, that it has never been heard that anyone who ran to your protection, entreated your help, and sought your intercession has been abandoned. Heartened with this faith, I run to you O Virgin of Virgins, Mother, I come to you, I stand as a grieving sinner before you. Mother of the Word, do not spurn my words; but hear and hearken to me favorably. Amen." The translation is mine.

Greetings, Bernard. *Salve, Bernarde*.

Mother's Milk

nursing Madonna. Mary in this guise can be designated in Latinate terminology as the *Madonna* or *Virgo Lactans*, in Greek as *panagia galaktotrophousa*. This is not the place to examine the broadest implications of the motif, which has strong relevance to female spirituality. In this connection, the milk could be tied to the blood of Christ in the Eucharist as well as to the motif of the gore that comes forth when his side is lanced during the crucifixion. On the parallel between milk and blood, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 270–71.

the saint prays before a Madonna. Purportedly in the church of Saint Vorles at Châtillon-sur-Seine, involving a statue known as Notre-Dame du Château. The event was celebrated annually on January 29. See Patrick Arabeyre, "La lactation de saint Bernard à Châtillon-sur-Seine: Données et problèmes," in *Vies et légendes de saint Bernard de Clairvaux: Création, diffusion, réception (XIXe-XXe siècles). Actes des Rencontres de Dijon, 7–8 juin 1991*, ed. idem et al. (Cîteaux, France: *Commentarii Cistercienses* "Présence Cistercienne," 1993), 173–97.

no statue exists. Bernd Nicolai, "Die Entdeckung des Bildwerks: Frühe Marienbilder und Altarretabel unter dem Aspekt zisterziensischer Frömmigkeit," in *Studien zur Geschichte der europäischen Skulptur im 12.–13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Herbert Beck and Kerstin Hengevoss-Dürkop (Frankfurt, Germany: Henrich, 1994), 29–43.

show herself as a mother. The imperative *monstra te esse matrum* (show yourself to be a mother) quotes verbatim a verse in *Ave maris stella*, the aforementioned hymn to Mary that is from the ninth century or earlier. For the text and translation, see Peter G. Walsh, with Christopher Husch, *One Hundred Latin Hymns: Ambrose to Aquinas*, Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, vol. 18 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 200–203 (at stanza 4.1).

projecting a jet of milk. The development of the legend and its iconography have been treated together in Léon Dewez and Albert van Iterson, "La lactation de saint Bernard: Légende et iconographie," *Cîteaux in de Nederlanden* 7 (1956): 165–89; Jacques Berlioz, "La lactation de saint Bernard dans un 'exemplum' et une miniature du *Ci nous dit* (début du XIVe siècle)," *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cistercienses* 39.3–4 (1988): 270–84; Brian Patrick McGuire, "Bernard and

Mary's Milk: A Northern Contribution," in idem, *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and His Tradition*, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 126 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 189–225; Cécile Dupeux, "La lactation de saint Bernard de Clairvaux: Genèse et évolution d'une image," in *L'Image et la production du sacré: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg, 20–21 janvier 1988, organisé par le Centre d'historique des religions de l'Université de Strasbourg II, Groupe "Théorie et pratique de l'image cultuelle,"* ed. Françoise Dunand et al. (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1991), 165–93; idem, "Saint Bernard dans l'iconographie médiévale: L'exemple de la lactation," in Arabeyre et al., *Vies et légendes de saint Bernard de Clairvaux*, 152–66; James France, "The Heritage of Saint Bernard in Medieval Arts," in *A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 305–46, at 329–35. For an archive of 119 images, see James France, *Medieval Images of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 210 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2007), CD/ROM "Lactatio."

Saint Bernard alone. For a broad overview, see Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 192–205; for a synoptic list of examples, see Dewez and Iterson, "La lactation de saint Bernard," 168.

this legendary episode. The most important early record of the story, in which the woman is Pero and her father Cimon, appears in Valerius Maximus, *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium.*

assorted miracle tales. Barnay, *Le ciel sur la terre*, 35.

nursing mother. Mary in the manifestation of nursing mother is often styled in Latin as *mater lactans*.

Mary's Head-Coverings

sermons for Marian feasts. On Helinand's Marian sermons, see Rubin, *Mother of God*, 154–57; Beverly Kienzle, "Mary Speaks against Heresy: An Unedited Sermon of Hélinand for the Purification, Paris, B.N. ms. Lat. 14591," *Sacris erudiri* 32 (1991): 291–308; more generally, on the special devotion of the Cistercians to Mary, see Rubin, *Mother of God*, 149–57.

everlasting service to her. "Sermo II, I in Natali Domini," in *PL* 212, 486–96, at 495C: "magnae huic Dominae faciunt homagium, et ejus servitutem perpetuam profitentur." Another white monk addressed his brother as, "You, monk of the Mother of God, who have arrived in the lot of the Order of Mary." See Ogier of Locedio (Oglerius de Tridino), *Tractatus in laudibus sancte Dei genetricis*, in *Beati Oglerii de Tridino Abbatis Monasterii Locediensis ord. Cist. in divec. Vercell: Opera quae supersunt*, ed. Giovan Battista Adriani (Turin, Italy: Augustae Taurinorum, 1873), 46: "Tu monache Matris Domini qui in sorte Ordinis Mariae venisti." For a full translation, see Ogier of Locedio, *In Praise of God's Holy Mother: On Our Lord's Words to His Disciples at the Last Supper*, trans. D. Martin Jenni, Cistercian Fathers Series, vol. 70 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2006).

subverted by her maternal power. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 154–59.

Our Lady of Mercy. Alternatively, Our Lady of Pity. The corresponding Latin is *Mater Misericordiae*; the French, *Vierge de Misericorde*; the German, *Schutzmantelmadonna.* The classic reference is Paul Perdrizet, *La Vierge de Miséricorde: Étude d'un thème iconographique*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, vol. 101 (Paris: A. Fontemoing, 1908). For recent reappraisals, see Christa Belting-Ihm, *"Sub matris tutela": Untersuchungen zur Vorgeschichte der Schutzmantelmadonna*, Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Jahrgang 1976, vol. 3 (Heidelberg, Germany: Carl Winter,

1976), 131–46; Sylvie Barnay, "Une apparition pour protéger: Le manteau de la Vierge au XIIIe siècle," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 8 (2001): 13–22; Sonja Reisner, "Sub tuum praesidium confugimus': Zur Instrumentalisierung von Visionen und Wunderberichten in der dominikanischen Ordenshistoriographie am Beispiel der Schutzmantelmadonna," *Acta Antiqua* 43.3 (2003): 393–405.

beneath her mantle. For the motif in general (often designated by the German *Schutzmantelmaria*), see Perdrizet, *La Vierge de Miséricorde*; Alois Thomas, "Schutzmantelmaria," in *Die Gottesmutter: Marienbild in Rheinland und in Westfalen*, ed. Leonhard Küppers (Recklinghausen, Germany: Bongers, 1974), 227–42; Barnay, "Une apparition pour protéger," 13–22. For the Byzantine backdrop, see Belting-Ihm, "*Sub matris tutela*."

Constantinople. Bissera V. Pentcheva, "The Virgin of Constantinople: Power and Belief," in *Byzantine Women and Their World*, ed. Ioli Kalavrezou (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2003), 112–38, at 115.

white-hooded monks. James France, "Cistercians under Our Lady's Mantle," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 37.4 (2002): 393–414.

an episode in the Dialogue on Miracles. On the origins of this tradition, see McGuire, "Cistercians and the Rise of the Exemplum," 227–29. The first telling of it as an exemplum is in *Dialogus miraculorum* 7.59 (ed. Strange, 2: 79–80): see Reisner, "'Sub tuum praesidium confugimus.'"

anonymous collection. Johannes Maior, ed., *Magnum speculum exemplorum* (Douay, France, 1611), an expanded version of the anonymous *Speculum exemplorum* that was printed first in 1481.

dries the sweat. Maior, *Magnum speculum exemplorum*, 285–86 ("Dives 1").

ventilates them. Maior, *Magnum speculum exemplorum*, 84–85 ("Bona injuste acquisita 8").

white towel. *Une touaille blance.*

medieval vernacular noun. Harri Meier, "Fortschritt und Rückschritt in der etymologischen Forschung: Als Beispiel: die Herkunft der romanischen Familie von ital. *tovaglia*," in *Italic and Romance Linguistic Studies in Honor of Ernst Pulgram*, ed. Herbert J. Izzo, Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series 4, Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, vol. 18 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1980), 103–11. The corresponding term in Latin was *mappa*. It was an ancient lexical import from Punic, a language that went extinct in late antiquity. It likewise meant "napkin" (a derivative of it) or "towel," but eventually also denoted a cloth dropped into an arena to mark the start of games. Later it became a term for "map," which also derives from it.

table napkin. *Tovaglia* and *tovagliolo.*

personal cleanliness. Françoise Piponnier, "Linge de maison et linge de corps au Moyen Âge: D'après les inventaires bourguignons," *Ethnologie française* 16 (1986): 239–48.

Mary had an up-close-and-personal connection. See *Libri de natiuitate Mariae: Pseudo-Matthaei Euangelium (Gospel according to Pseudo-Matthew)*, ed. Jan Gijsel, Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum, vol. 9 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1997), 333 (chap. 6.1).

overspreads the head and chest. Barnay, *Le ciel sur la terre*, 202–5.

head cover. The French phrase is *couvre chef* or *cuerchief.*

cloth towels. Unfortunately, neither lexical development nor the premodern cultural history even in the English-speaking world receive any attention in Helen Gustafson, *Hanky Panky: An Intimate History of the Handkerchief* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2002).

The Virgin's textile. For the fullest information, see Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Threads of Authority: The Virgin Mary's Veil in the Middle Ages," in *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 59–93.

made stellar. Konstantinides, "Le sens théologique"; George Galavaris, "The Stars of the Virgin: An Ekphrasis of an Ikon of the Mother of God," *Eastern Churches Review* 1 (1966–1967): 364–67.

Assumption. The Assumption of the Virgin corresponds to the Dormition of the Theotokos in the Greek Orthodox Church.

transferred. Norman H. Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, ed. R. A. Humphreys and A. D. Momigliano (London: Athlone Press, 1955): 240–48 ("The Finding of the Virgin's Robe").

Constantinople. John Wortley, "The Marian Relics at Constantinople," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 45 (2005): 171–87; Stephen J. Shoemaker, "The Cult of Fashion: The Earliest 'Life of the Virgin' and Constantinople's Marian Relics," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 62 (2008): 53–74.

tidal wave. On Byzantine influence as a tidal wave, see Wilhelm Koehler, "Byzantine Art in the West," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 1 (Dumbarton Oaks Inaugural Lectures, November 2nd and 3rd, 1940) (1941): 62–87, at 79, 86.

chemisettes. *Chemisette* now refers to a distinct article of women's clothing that was common in the late Victorian era. Similar to a dickey, it covered the lower neck and upper chest, when worn over a bodice that would otherwise have left those areas exposed.

pilgrims to Chartres. E. Jane Burns, "Saracen Silk and the Virgin's *Chemise*: Cultural Crossings in Cloth," *Speculum* 81 (2006): 365–97, at 366–68, 374–75, 391–95, which corresponds roughly to idem, *Sea of Silk: A Textile Geography of Women's Work in Medieval French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 156–84; Brian Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* (London: Stationery Office, 1998), 225–27.

Mary's veil. Carr, "Threads of Authority," 59–93.

brouhaha at Chartres. Marcel Joseph Bulteau, *Monographie de la cathédrale de Chartres*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Chartres, France: R. Selleret, 1887–1892), 1: 105–8.

spotless towel. For instance, it is pictured in the background of a famous painting on wood behind an altar: see Margaret B. Freeman, "The Iconography of the Merode Altarpiece," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 16 (December 1957): 130–39, at 132. More broadly, see George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 182.

during her pregnancy. Carr, "Threads of Authority."

Cistercian Lay Brothers

No one can serve two masters. Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13.

wordplay. On the wordplay, see Batany, "Les convers," 246–48; France, *Separate but Equal*, 269–71.

heroic age of the Cistercians. James France, "The Cistercian Community," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, ed. Mette Birkedal Bruun (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 80–86, at 85.

lay brothers. Latin *fratres laici.*

members of the institution. See Jacques Dubois, "The Laybrothers' Life in the Twelfth Century," *Cistercian Studies* 7 (1972): 161–213; France, *Separate but Equal*. The bibliography of scholarship in other languages leading up to these two is extensive, with notable resources being Othon Ducourneau, "De l'institution et des us des convers dans l'Ordre de Cîteaux (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)," in *Saint Bernard et son temps*, 2 vols. (Dijon, France: Association bourguignonne des sociétés savantes, 1929), 2: 139–201; Jean Leclercq, "Comment vivaient les frères convers," in *I Laici nella "Societas Christiana" dei secoli XI et XII: Atti della terza Settimana internazionale di studio, Mendola, 21–27 agosto 1965*, Pubblicazioni dell'Università: Contributi Serie 3/varia 5, Miscellaea del Centro di studi medioevali, vol. 5 (Milan, Italy: Società editrice vita e pensiero, 1965), 183–261; Jean A. Lefèvre, "L'évolution des *Usus conversorum* de Cîteaux," *Collectanea ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum* 17.2 (1955): 66–96.

custom of silence. Chrysogonus Waddell, "The Place and Meaning of the Work of God in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Life," *Cistercian Studies* 23.1 (1988): 25–44, at 33–39.

good reason. Leclercq, "Comment vivaient les frères convers," 170.

bore such a garment. Line 137.

facial hair. For portrayals of medieval Cistercian lay brothers with their beards, see James France, *The Cistercians in Medieval Art*, Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 170 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1998), 122–38, figs. 77–99. On the specific nature of the facial hair, see France, *Separate but Equal*, 76–84.

bearded brothers. In Latin, *fratres barbati.*

cannot chant, read, or understand Latin. Line 155.

illiteracy. On their illiteracy, see France, *Separate but Equal*, 57–75.

simpleminded morons. *Usus conversorum*, ed. Lefèvre, "L'évolution des *Usus conversorum*," 65–97, with the edition 84–97, here at 86. See Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 110. On the educational level and culture of the lay brothers, see Clemens Van Dijk, "L'instruction et la culture des frères convers dans les premiers siècles de l'ordre de Cîteaux," *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorum* 24 (1962): 243–58.

simplicity of lay brothers. On the simplicity of the lay brothers, see France, *Separate but Equal*, 3; Mikkers, "L'idéal religieux des frères convers," 125–27; and especially Sobczyk, *Les jongleurs de Dieu*, who takes under consideration repeatedly the medieval poem of interest to us here.

snobbery. In the Latin, see *Usus conversorum*, Prologue 3, in Chrysogonus Waddell, *Cistercian Lay Brothers: Twelfth-Century Usages with Related Texts*, Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses: Studia et Documenta, vol. 10 (Brecht, Belgium: Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses, 2000), ed. 56, trans. 164: "Some [of our abbots] hold them [the lay brothers] in contempt because of their innate simplicity." In the French, *Us des convers*, prologue: "S'il sunt simple et sans clergie, tant ont il plus besoig de no cure de no porveance." See Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 107.

the monks in his charge. Brian Patrick McGuire, "Taking Responsibility: Medieval Cistercian Abbots and Monks as Their Brother's Keepers," *Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses* 39.3–4 (1988): 249–68, repr. in idem, *Friendship and Faith*, no. 6.

convert. Bretel, *Les ermites et les moines*, 32–54. The category of convert is bound up with those of layman, illiterate, and more, and overlaps at times with lay brother: see Leclercq, "Comment vivaient les frères convers."

the Latin equivalent. Bretel, *Les ermites et les moines*, 54–67.

second-class citizen. *Del tumbeor Nostre Dame*, lines 54, 65, 391.

exploited for physical labor. Berman, "Distinguishing between the Humble Cistercian Lay Brother and Sister, and the Converted Knight in Southern France," 263–83.

fidelity to Mary. For an illustration of a lay brother kneeling before Mary in an early thirteenth-century manuscript, see France, *Cistercians in Medieval Art*, 137, fig. 88.

the Virgin intervened. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 319.

last rites. France, *Separate but Equal*, 154–58. The representation of the death ritual in the medieval poem matches approximately what is documented for Benedictine monks: see Frederic S. Paxton, *The Death Ritual at Cluny in the Central Middle Ages / Le rituel de la mort à Cluny au Moyen Âge central*, Disciplina monastica, vol. 9 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013). For Cistercian practices, see Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and Their Meanings: Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries*, Medieval Church Studies, vol. 1 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001), 228–32.

The Great Beginning of Cîteaux. *Exordium magnum Cisterciense*, ed. Griesser.

One anecdote. *Exordium magnum Cisterciense*, ed. Griesser, 255–57 (4.13); Anthelmette Piébourg, trans., *Le grand exorde de Cîteaux, ou Récit des débuts de l'Ordre cistercien*, Cîteaux: Studia et documenta, vol. 7 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1997), 236–38; E. Rozanne Elder, ed., and Paul Savage and Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Great Beginning of Cîteaux: A Narrative of the Beginning of the Cistercian Order*; *The* Exordium Magnum *of Conrad of Eberbach*, Cistercian Fathers Series, vol. 72 (Trappist, KY: Cistercian Publications, 2012), 344–47.

Our Father. *Pater noster.*

Apostles' Creed. *Credo in Deum* (I believe in God), etc.

Psalm 51. *Usus conversorum*, chap. 11. Alternately, Psalm 50, beginning *Miserere mei, Deus* (Have mercy on me, O God).

Our Lady's Tumbler. See line 32.

Hail, Mary. *Ave Maria.*

salutation to Mary. Recorded in Luke 1:28.

stuff of higher learning. Lines 57–67.

exemplum. Caesarius of Heisterbach recounts this celebrated anecdote twice.

Dialogue on Miracles. *Dialogus miraculorum.*

written and oral sources. Brian Patrick McGuire, "Written Sources and Cistercian Inspiration in Caesarius of Heisterbach," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 35 (1979): 227–82; and "Friends and Tales in the Cloister: Oral Sources in Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Miraculorum*," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 36 (1980): 167–247, repr. in idem, *Friendship and Faith*, nos. 1, 2.

medieval miracle stories. The text known previously as *Liber visionum et miraculorum* (Book of visions and miracles) was assembled at Clairvaux between 1171 and 1179: see Olivier Legendre, ed., *Le Liber visionum et miraculorum: Édition du manuscrit de Troyes (Bibl. mun. ms. 946)* (thesis, École des Chartes, 2000). Its title has now been emended: see idem, ed., *Collectaneum exemplorum et visionum Clarevallense e codice Trecensi 946*, Exempla medii aevi, vol. 2/Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, vol. 208 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005). For discussion, Brian Patrick McGuire, "A Lost Clairvaux Exemplum Collection Found: The 'Liber Visionum et Miraculorum' Compiled under Prior John of Clairvaux," *Analecta Cisterciensia* 39 (1983): 26–62, repr. in idem, *Friendship and Faith*, no. 4.

scores of tales. There are eighty-three chapters in all.

book. Caesarius, *Dialogus miraculorum*, Distinctio 7, "De sancta Maria," ed. Strange, 2: 1–80; idem, *Dialogue on Miracles*, trans. Scott and Bland, 1: 453–546.

sightings of Mary. Caesarius, *Dialogus miraculorum*, Distinctio 7, Capitula 12–13, ed. Strange, 2: 15, trans. Scott and Bland, 1: 469–70.

Conversion Therapy

portrayals of jongleurs. The first to point out this phenomenon and to cite examples was Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 157n2.

final years. Anselme Dimier, "Mourir à Clairvaux!" *Collectanea ordinis Cisterciensium reformatorum* 17 (1955): 272–85.

Lives of the Fathers. *Vitae Patrum*, in *PL*, 73: 1170.

such an entertainer. Named Gondran or Goderan, he is the supposed founder of Saint-Gilles in Septimania. See Hubert Silvestre, "Goderan, le fondateur de l'abbaye liégeoise de St-Gilles, était-il un jongleur provençal?" *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 55 (1960): 122–29. Silvestre rejects the foundation for the legend, while paying attention in passing to the credence given it in the Middle Ages and later.

an abbey in Liège. See Gaston Paris, "Introduction," in *La vie de saint Gilles par Guillaume de Berneville: Poème du XIIe siècle d'aprés le manuscrit unique de Florence*, ed. idem and Alphonse Bos (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1881), lxxiv.

The Monk of Montaudon. This text supplies nuggets that may be combined with other oddments of biographical information to be gleaned from the monk's poetry. On *Lo Monges de Montaudon*, a *vida* in Old Occitan, see Egan, *Vidas of the Troubadours*, 69–71. The poet himself is now identified as Pèire de Vic from Auvergne, a troubadour of noble birth. On him and his poems, see Michael J. Routledge, ed. and trans., *Les poésies du moine de Montaudon* (Montpellier, France: Centre d'études occitanes de l'Université Paul Valéry, 1977); Jean-Lucien Gandois, *Le troubadour Pierre de Vic: Moine de Montaudon, XIIe-XIIIe s. La vie, l'homme et l'œuvre*, Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Clermont-Ferrand 2nd series, vol. 61 (Clermont-Ferrand, France: Académie des sciences, belles lettres et arts de Clermont-Ferrand, 2003).

what he earns. As prize for his poetry, the monk is awarded a sparrow hawk.

no relation to the Virgin. Rather, the name corresponds to the Latin Marius, a male saint.

Folquet of Marseille. On his conversion, see Nicole M. Schulman, *Where Troubadours Were Bishops: The Occitania of Folc of Marseille (1150–1231)* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 37–62.

Folquet's conversion. See Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, 149–50; Stephen of Bourbon, *Tractatus de diversis materiis praedicabilibus*, ed. Berlioz, 71.

other troubadours. Jean de la Croix Bouton, "Cîteaux," in Robert Bossuat et al., *Le Moyen Âge*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Michel Zink (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 300–307, at 304, on Bertran d'Alamanon, Bernart de Ventadorn, Bertran de Born, Perdigon, and Gausbert de Puycibot; M.-Jérôme du Halgouet, "Poètes oubliés," *Collectanea Ordinis Cisterciensium Reformatorum* 20 (1958): 128–44, 227–42.

Guiot de Provins. Despite his conventional name, Guiot may have been from the relatively small region then known as France, which occupied only a north-central portion of what is now the country by the same name.

Bible Guiot. For more information, see Jean Batany, "Les moines blancs dans les États du Monde (XIIIe–XIVe siècles)," *Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses* 15 (1964): 5–25; idem, "Les convers," 241–59.

Helinand of Froidmont. Jenny Lind Porter, ed. and trans., *The Verses on Death of Helinand of Froidmont*, Cistercian Fathers Series, vol. 61 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999).

finished his days in an abbey. This possibility rests on a disputed interpretation of the final two lines: see Jean Renart, *Le Roman de la Rose, ou, de Guillaume de Dole*, ed. Félix Lecoy, trans. Jean Dufournet, Champion Classiques. Moyen Âge, vol. 24 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2008), 414–15 (lines 5654–5655). Jean Renart's text is entitled *Le Roman de La Rose*, but it is called by the other title to forestall confusion with the more famous *Romance of the Rose* by Jean de Meun and Guillaume de Lorris.

Adam of Lexington. "The Chronicle of Melrose," in *The Church Historian of England*, 4.1, ed. and trans. Joseph Stevenson (London, 1854), repr. in *Medieval Chronicles of Scotland: The Chronicles of Melrose and Holyrood*, Llanerch facsimile (Felinfach, UK: Llanerch, 1988), 7–124, at 96.

he would take a seat. Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 36n38.

monks who composed poetry. William D. Paden, "*De monachis rithmos facientibus*: Hélinant de Froidmont, Bertran de Born, and the Cistercian General Chapter of 1199," *Speculum* 55 (1980): 669–85.

statement against versifying. Jean Leclercq, "Les divertissements poétiques d'Itier de Vassy," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 12 (1956): 296–304, at 304: "Flere decet monachum, non fabricare metrum" ("It suits a monk to weep, not to craft verse").

The Language of Silence

schooling. Evelyn B. Vitz, "Liturgy as Education in the Middle Ages," *Medieval Education* 20.16 (2005): 7–20.

system of hand signs. On this language, see Walter Jarecki, "Die *Ars signorum Cisterciensium* im Rahmen der metrischen Signa-Listen," *Revue Bénédictine* 93 (1988): 329–99; idem, "Die zisterziensische Zeichensprache unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Loccumer Quellen," *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für Niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 88 (1990): 27–40; Scott G. Bruce, "The Origins of Cistercian Sign Language," *Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses* 52 (2001): 193–209; idem, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism: The Cluniac Tradition c. 900–1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 144–48.

monastic silence. On monastic silence, see Paul F. Gehl, "Competens silentium: Varieties of Monastic Silence in the Medieval West," *Viator* 18 (1987): 125–60. For the overall Christian context, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence: A Christian History* (New York: Viking, 2013).

crying and caterwauling, moaning and mewling. Lines 73–75. Like Bretel in his commentary, Sobczyk, *Les jongleurs de Dieu*, 127n19, construes the lamentation in lines 211–212 as meaning not that the tumbler's sole form of prayer was weeping, but rather that he was moved to tears by his recognition that his sole form of prayer was dancing.

the importance of quiet. On silence, see *Rule of Saint Benedict*, chaps. 6, 38.5–7 (and on signs in preference to words), 42, 48.5, 52.2 (ed. and trans. Venarde, 42–43, 134–35, 144–45, 160–61, and 170–71).

signs of speaking. Latin *signa loquendi*.

even to lay brothers. Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language*, 162–65; Wim Verbaal (and is this a case of nomen omen?), "*Oleum de saxo durissimo*: Bernard of Clairvaux's Poetics of Silence," in *Understanding Monastic Practices of Oral Communication*, ed. Steven Vanderputten, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, vol. 21 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 319–35. The silence of lay brothers is presented as virtuous by Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, ed. Strange 2: 95, trans. Scott and Bland, 2: 18–19 (Distinctio 8, Capitulum 17). For broad background (but without consideration of *Our Lady's Tumbler*), see Uwe Ruberg, *Beredtes Schweigen: In lehrhafter und erzählender deutscher Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich, Germany: Fink, 1978); pages 93–118 provide information on Greco-Roman, biblical, and Christian traditions of silence.

signals were to be practiced. Gregor Müller, "Die Zeichensprache in den Klöstern," *Cistercienser Chronik* 21 (1909): 243–46; Bruce, "Origins," 203–4. The urgency of controlling signing is apparent not only in Cistercian customaries and other such texts, but also in their exempla collections. For instance, Caesarius of Heisterbach relates a tale of a monk who as punishment for overindulging in signs and speech suffered the horrors of hell, only to be revitalized so that he could admonish his brethren (Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Libri VIII Miraculorum* 2.32, "De converso de Dus, qui a mortuis suscitatus, que in penis viderat, declaravit"): Alfons Hilka, ed., *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach*, 3 vols., Publikationen der Gesellschaft für rheinische Geschichtskunde, vol. 43 (Bonn, Germany: P. Hanstein, 1933–1937), 3: 115–16.

daily cycle of monastic offices. See Venarde, *Rule of Saint Benedict*, 164 (chap. 16.5, on Psalm 118/119).

acedia. First conveyed in English by the now obsolete word *accidie*.

characteristic of modern existence. For example, see Aldous Huxley, "Accidie," in *Essays New and Old* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), 47–53.

clinical depression. Siegfried Wenzel, *The Sin of Sloth: Acedia in Medieval Thought and Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967); Stanley W. Jackson, "Acedia the Sin and Its Relationship to Sorrow and Melancholia," in *Culture and Depression: Studies in the Anthropology and Cross-Cultural Psychiatry of Affect and Disorder*, ed. Arthur Kleinman and Byron Good (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 43–62.

not being permitted to participate. I am indebted to Megan Cassidy, "*Non conversi sed perversi*: The Use and Marginalisation of the Cistercian Lay Brother," in *Deviance and Textual Control: New Perspectives in Medieval Studies*, ed. Megan Cassidy et al., Melbourne University Conference Series 2 (Parkville, Australia: History Dept., University of Melbourne, 1997), 34–55, at 45 and 55n84. This article was revised and incorporated in Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces*, 191.

strictly limited. Leclercq, "Comment vivaient les frères convers," 171n120.

A third exemplum. Cassidy, "*Non conversi sed perversi*," 46 and 55n86; Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces*, 190–91.

way of negation. *Via negativa* or *via negationis*.

against sculptural art. Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's Apologia and the Medieval Attitude toward Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

Gym Clothes

little coat. The French words used are *cotele* in line 140 (diminutive of the source of English *coat*), *chemise* in line 142 (from which English *chemise*).

principal names. Batany, "Les moines blancs," 17–18.

De nugis curialium. Walter Map, *De nugis curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, rev. C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 100–103 (Distinctio 1, Capitulum 25).

the order's policy on underclothing for lay brothers. The most comprehensive treatment of the clothing worn by lay brothers is France, *Separate but Equal*, 84–87. Lay brothers wore a very basic outfit of a robe with capuce, belt, socks, and footwear. Brothers who had special duties as smiths or herdsmen were authorized additional extra garments. Nothing is said about underclothing.

cloaks. A classic study is Therese Latzke, "Der Topos Mantelgedicht," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 6 (1970): 109–31.

such items. On the clothing of jongleurs, see Noomen, *Le jongleur par lui-même*, 11–12.

only his undergarment. John 19:23.

pornographic. For the most extreme development of this equation, see Bill Burgwinkle and Cary Howie, *Sanctity and Pornography in Medieval Culture: On the Verge* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010).

medieval culture. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask, Bollingen Series, vol. 36 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 433–35.

difference in status. On implications of naked jongleurs in art to questions of gender relations and social status, see Elizabeth Moore Hunt, "The Naked Jongleur in the Margins: Manuscript Contexts for Social Meanings," in *The Meanings of Nudity in Medieval Art*, ed. Sherry C. M. Lindquist (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 85–102 and ix (list of illustrations).

medieval commentary tradition. A very useful overview of terminology and metaphors remains D. W. Robertson, Jr., "Some Medieval Literary Terminology, with Special Reference to Chrétien de Troyes," *Studies in Philology* 48 (1951): 669–92, repr. in idem, *Essays in Medieval Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 51–72. A thorough treatment in German is offered by Hennig Brinkmann, *Mittelalterliche Hermeneutik* (Tübingen, Germany: Niemeyer, 1980), 169–98.

Latin terms. *Integumentum* and *involucrum*: see Marie-Dominique Chenu, "Involucrum: Le mythe selon les théologiens médiévaux," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 22 (1955): 75–79; Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century: The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 36–48; Brian Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 49–62.

coordinates. Lines 225–226.

new moves. Line 217.

sweat-slicked. Lines 234–236.

Goswin of Bossut. Martha G. Newman, "Disciplining the Body, Disciplining the Will: Hypocrisy and Asceticism in Cistercian Monasticism," in *Asceticism and Its Critics: Historical Accounts and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Oliver Freiberger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 91–115, at 91–92, especially at n2. A key passage is Goswin of Bossut, *Vita Arnulfi*, book 1, chaps. 2–6 (10–21), in *Acta sanctorum*, June, vol. 7, 606–31 (Antwerp), 558–79 (Paris); in English, Goswin of

Bossut, *Send Me God: The Lives of Ida the Compassionate of Nivelles, Nun of La Ramée, Arnulf, Lay Brother of Villers, and Abundus, Monk of Villers*, trans. Martinus Cawley, Medieval Women, vol. 6 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003), 125–205, at 132–40.

one of the desert fathers. *Gesta Sanctorum Villariensium* 26, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores* 25, ed. Georg Waitz (Hannover, Germany: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1880), 234, lines 43–44 ("Hic carnem suam adeo castigavit, quod qui videret eum Arsenium se vidisse putare potuit vel unum ex antiquis heremi cultoribus"), cited by Newman, "Disciplining the Body," at 107n61.

dribbles down. Lines 400–402.

Sweat Cloth

come to life. On stories from the Middle Ages about statues of the Virgin that come to life, the locus classicus is Paull [*sic*] Franklin Baum, "The Young Man Betrothed to a Statue," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 34 (1919): 523–79. The motif has been explored further in its medieval context by Berthold Hinz, "Statuenliebe: Antiker Skandal und mittelalterliches Trauma," *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 22 (1989): 135–42; Camille, *Gothic Idol*, 220–41, 383–85 (notes).

sudarium. A *sudarium*, also mentioned in the Gospel of John (see below), was seen in Jerusalem about 680 by Arculf, whose report on it appears in Adomnán, *De locis sanctis*, 9, ed. Denis Meehan, Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, vol. 3 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958), 52–55.

Gospel of John. John 20:6–7.

alleged. Others are held in Compiègne and Cadouin, both in France.

hybrid form. It joins together *vera* and *icon*.

this very item. Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, translated by Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 215–24.

one of Christ's contemporaries. The contemporary was Ananias, also known as Hannan. See Andrea Nicolotti, *From the Mandylion of Edessa to the Shroud of Turin: The Metamorphosis and Manipulation of a Legend*, Art and Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe, vol. 1 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014).

not handmade. *Acheiropoeieton.*

towel. The Latin is *toella*, cognate with French *touaille*.

a holy cloth. See Jannic Durand and Marie-Pierre Lafitte, eds., *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2001), 37, 71.

identical with the mandylion. See Nicolotti, *From the Mandylion*, 191–93.

The Weighing of Souls

angels and demons. For orientation, see Rosa Giorgi, *Angels and Demons in Art*, ed. Stefano Zuffi, trans. Rosanna M. Giammanco Frongia (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005), 217–19; Laura Rodríguez Peinado, "La Psicostasis," *Revista digital de iconografía medieval* 4.7 (2012): 11–20. For specifics, see Leopold Kretzenbacher, *Die Seelenwaage: Zur religiösen Idee vom Jenseitsgericht auf der Schicksalswaage in Hochreligion, Bildkunst und Volksglaube*, Buchreihe des Landesmuseums für Kärnten, vol. 4 (Klagenfurt, Austria: Verlag des Landesmuseums für Kärnten, 1958). For careful analysis of the Marian psychostasis, see Catherine Oakes, *Ora pro nobis: The Virgin as Intercessor in Medieval Art and Devotion* (London: Harvey Miller, 2008), 129–66.

a cleric of Pisa. Kati Ihnat, "Marian Miracles and Marian Liturgies in the Benedictine Tradition of Post-Conquest England," in *Contextualizing Miracles in the Christian West, 1100–1500: New Historical Approaches*, ed. Matthew M. Mesley and Louise E. Wilson, Medium Aevum Monographs, vol. 32 (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 2014), 63–97, at 78–79.

against conventional institutional hierarchy. David A. Flory, "The Social Uses of Religious Literature: Challenging Authority in the Thirteenth-Century Marian Miracle Tale," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 13 (1996): 61–69.

The Latin-Less Lay Brother and Our Lady

tripartite schema. In Latin, the three classes are, respectively, *laboratores*, *bellatores*, and *oratores*. This distinctively medieval expression of the trifunctional framework familiar from various other Indo-European cultures has been traced back most notably to Adalbero of Laon, *Poème au roi Robert*, ed. Claude Carozzi, Les Classiques de l'histoire de France au Moyen Âge, vol. 32 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1979). In modern scholarship, the essential reference is Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

nineteenth-century book. By Maurus Wolter, the German abbot of a Benedictine monastery: see M. D. Meeuws, "Ora et Labora: Devise bénédictine?," *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 54 (1992): 193–214.

one line. At line 212, the three manuscripts with "Que ne sot orer altrement" are A, D, and E; the two with "Que ne sot ovrer altrement," B and C. See Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 85 (note on text of line 212), 126.

reaches her peak. In the boundless literature on medieval Marianism, a very accessible treatment that has deservedly won the status of a classic is Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*. Among more recent general studies, another book that has been paid widespread attention is Rubin, *Mother of God*.

long twelfth century. See John D. Cotts, *Europe's Long Twelfth Century: Order, Anxiety and Adaptation, 1095–1229* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

cosmic dance. James L. Miller, *Measures of Wisdom: The Cosmic Dance in Classical and Christian Antiquity*, Visio: Studies in the Relations of Art and Literature, vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

Notes to Chapter 4

What Makes a Story Popular?

anything but time-bound. For example, "Some stories are so worthwhile that they belong to every age and every generation." Vincent Arthur Yzermans, *Our Lady's Juggler* (St. Paul, MN: North Central, 1974), 1.

archetypes. Philippart, "Le récit miraculaire marial," 569.

other Western European vernaculars. For dual-language versions of medieval English miracles with facing modern English translations, see Adrienne Williams Boyarin, ed. and trans., *Miracles of the Virgin* (Peterborough, Ontario, Canada: Broadview, 2015). For a late but important version in English, see Peter Whiteford, ed., *The Myracles of Oure Lady: Ed. from Wynkyn de Worde's Edition* (Heidelberg, Germany: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1990). For an overview of what survives in Middle English, see Thomas D. Cooke, "Tales," in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1500*, ed. Albert E. Hartung, 11 vols. (New Haven, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1993), 9: 3177–258, 3501–51. One of the most beautiful and best known Middle English versions is Geoffrey Chaucer's tale of the Prioress in the *Canterbury Tales*. Latin authors from England included Dominic of Evesham, Anselm of Bury, William of Malmesbury, the Canterbury monk known often as Nigel de Longchamps or Nigel Wireker, Roger of Ford, and John of Garland. See R. W. Southern, "The English Origins of the Miracles of the Virgin," *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958): 176–216; A. G. Rigg, *History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066–1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 35, 104, 172. The successors in the vernaculars came first in France and later in Spain, where substantial collections took shape.

The Latin digests of miracle tales tend to be labeled simply *Mariale* ("Marian"), a Latin neuter adjective. In titles of Latin works the masculine form is sometimes used instead, assuming the noun *liber* "book" as the unexpressed substantive.

feasts of Mary. The Assumption and the Purification.

pilgrimages. See Nicholas Vincent, "King Henry III and the Blessed Virgin Mary," in *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R. N. Swanson, Studies in Church History, vol. 39 (Woodbridge, UK and Rochester, NY: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2004), 126–46, at 126.

some would favor. Most voluminous is Brian Cummings and James Simpson, eds., *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). More recent is Ronald Hutton, ed., *Medieval or Early Modern: The Value of a Traditional Historic Division* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2015). Most approachable is the essayistic Jacques Le Goff, *Must We Divide History into Periods?*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015). An old classic that well repays reading is Wallace K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1948).

protestantized cathedrals. Ralph Adams Cram, *My Life in Architecture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1936), 130. The damage experienced by English cathedrals during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the evolution in their constitution and financing as institutions are examined in two magisterial books by Stanford E. Lehmberg: *The Reformation of Cathedrals: Cathedrals in*

English Society, 1485–1603 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), and *Cathedrals under Siege: Cathedrals in English Society, 1600–1700* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

bare ruin'd choirs. Sonnet 73.

Catholics and Protestants. Bridget Heal, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Early Modern Germany: Protestant and Catholic Piety, 1500–1648* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

worship of Mary. Alain Joblin, "Les Protestants, Marie et le culte marial," in *La dévotion mariale de l'an mil à nos jours*, ed. Bruno Béthouart and Alain Lottin (Arras, France: Artois Presses Université, 2005), 323–36.

supposed visionaries were executed. Diarmaid MacCulloch, "Mary and Sixteenth-Century Protestants," in *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R. N. Swanson, Studies in Church History, vol. 39 (Woodbridge, UK and Rochester, NY: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2004), 191–217; Barnay, *Le ciel sur la terre*, 172–73.

knights. Nathan Edelman, *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France toward the Middle Ages* (New York: King's Crown, 1946), 85–276, devotes close to two hundred pages to knights and other heroes, especially Charlemagne, Saint Louis, and Jeanne d'Arc, but only two (191–93) to religious subjects.

Ten Commandments. Exodus 20.

second only to that for Christ himself. Edmund Waterton, *Pietas Mariana Britannica: A History of English Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of God. With a Catalogue of Shrines, Sanctuaries, Offerings, Bequests, and Other Memorials of the Piety of Our Forefathers*, 2 vols. (London: St. Joseph's Catholic Library, 1879). Waterton is particularly good on destroyed Madonnas.

Mary's dowry. The Latin epithet used was *dos Mariae*.

image of the Virgin. Bishop Peter Quinel (or Quivel) of Exeter, Synodal Statutes for the Diocese of Exeter, April 16, 1287, 12, "De ecclesiarum ornamentis et eorum custodia": see F. M. Powicke and C. R. Cheney, eds., *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, 2 vols. in 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 2.2: 982–1059, at 1006 ("ymago beate virginis").

first in 1644. *The Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Madonna 2.b.

one from the early thirteenth century. From Langham Church in Essex: see Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, eds., *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1300–1400* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), 303, no. 249.

beheaded. Gary Waller, *The Virgin Mary in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Literature and Popular Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12. See also Anne Stanton, "On the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral" (MA thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1987).

mass cremation. Some of these lost Madonnas have been studied individually. One very close study is Stanley Smith, *The Madonna of Ipswich* (Ipswich, UK: East Anglian Magazine, 1980).

Walsingham. Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995), 204–5.

Walsingham, England's Nazareth

foundation legend. H. M. Gillett, *Walsingham: The History of a Famous Shrine*, 2nd ed. (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1950), is a helpful guide. The most recent general overview is *Walsingham: Pilgrimage and History. Papers Presented at the Centenary Historical Conference, 23rd–27th March 1998* (Walsingham, UK: R. C. National Shrine, 1999). The fullest premodern account is in a ballad (op. cit., 82–85).

noblewoman and widow. Named Richeldis of Faverches.

Holy House. By the designation Holy House was meant the home of the Holy Family where Mary had been when she received the visit from God's messenger, the angel Gabriel.

mid-twelfth century. On the dating of the shrine at Walsingham, see Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 139–41.

Hail Mary. In Latin, *Ave Maria*.

milk. Sixty-nine holy places throughout Europe claimed to possess such relics, with samples of this precious liquid or of stones impregnated with it. None of these sites was more famous than the English. See Paule-Vincenette Bétérous, "A propos d'une des légendes mariales les plus répandues: Le 'lait de la Vierge,'" *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, 4th ser., 3 (1975): 403–11, at 405. On the stone galactite, see F. de Mély, "Les reliques du lait de la Vierge et la galactite," *Revue archéologique* 15 (January–June 1890): 103–16.

Song of Solomon. 1:5.

seal. See, for example, Ean Begg, *The Cult of the Black Virgin*, 2nd ed. (London: Arkana, 1996), 165–66.

flasks. The flasks are known technically as *ampullae*. For further information, see Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*, 135–48; Scilla Landale, "A Pilgrim's Progress to Walsingham," in *Walsingham*, 13–37, at 27–28.

Archbishop of Armagh. Richard Fitzralph.

failed to distinguish. G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People* (Cambridge: University Press, 1933), 141, at n2, citing London, British Library, Landsdowne MS 393, fols. 105v–106.

pad their own coffers. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 141, at n3. Both passages are treated by William R. Jones, "Lollards and Images: The Defense of Religious Art in Later Medieval England," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34 (1973): 27–50, at 29.

chronicler. Henry Knighton, *Chronica de eventibus Angliæ a tempore regis Edgari usque mortem regis Ricardi Secundi*, in *Henry Knighton's Chronicle, 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 292–99, at 296–97.

our dear lady of heaven. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 145.

vain waste and idle. Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, ed. Churchill Babington, Rolls Series, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1860), 1: 194. Both this and the preceding are cited by Jones, "Lollards and Images," 35, at nn42–43.

Erasmus. For translations of the text (one of his famous *Colloquies*, composed between 1523 and 1526 while he was studying in Cambridge, and published in 1526), see Erasmus, *Peregrinatio religionis ergo* (A pilgrimage for religion's sake), in *Pilgrimages to Saint Mary of Walsingham and Saint Thomas of Canterbury*, trans. John Gough Nichols (Westminster, UK: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1849), 11–43; idem, *Colloquies*, trans. Craig R. Thompson, 2 vols., Collected Works of Erasmus, vols. 39–40 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 619–50 (translation), 650–74 (notes). For discussion, see Gary Waller, *Walsingham and the English Imagination* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 65–85.

pilgrimage. Thanks to the account that he left of his expedition, we have the texts of the Latin prayer that he pronounced while kneeling at the shrine. Likewise, we can peruse the Greek ode he had inscribed on a plaque as a votive offering, despite his grave doubts that the canons on site would have the linguistic wherewithal to appreciate what he wrote. See Gillett, *Walsingham*, 46–48; Landale, "Pilgrim's Progress," 18.

Loreto. In the Marche region of Italy, not far from Ancona. The town takes its name from the clump of laurel trees into which an entire home is supposed to have been miraculously transferred from afar.

Holy House. In Italian, *Santa Casa*, known alternatively as the House of the Angelic Salutation.

transported. It was supposedly carried first to Tersatto in Dalmatia on March 10, 1293, later to a forest in Recanati on December 10, 1294, and, finally, to its present location in Loreto in December of 1295.

larger building. *Sanctuario della Santa Casa*, the Sanctuary of the Holy House.

Black Virgin. Begg, *Cult of the Black Virgin*, 242.

Slipper Chapel. Landale, "Pilgrim's Progress," 82–83.

Superstitious Practices. Landale, "Pilgrim's Progress," 33.

Henry III. Vincent, "King Henry III," 133–34, mentions ten, while Landale, "Pilgrim's Progress," 17, writes of "about 13 visits."

Candlemas Day. Gillett, *Walsingham*, 30–31.

four times. In 1487, 1489, 1498, and 1506: see J. P. Dickinson, *The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 41–42.

demise of the statue. John Phillips, *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535–1660* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 74–75; Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 205.

Piers Plowman. William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, ed. Walter W. Skeat, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1886), 1: 148–49 (B. Passus 5.230–31; compare A. Passus 5.144–45): "But wenden

to Walsyngham, and my wyf als, / And bidde the rode of Bromholme brynge me out of dette"); trans. J. F. Goodridge (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1959), 67: "And I'll make a pilgrimage to Walsingham, with my wife as well, and pray to the Rood of Bromholm to get me out of debt." The Rood of Bromholm, at the Cluniac priory of Saint Andrew near Norfolk, was reputedly made from fragments of the True Cross. Pilgrims would stop at the Priory to worship it.

Marian pilgrimage. Ludwig Hüttl, *Marianische Wallfahrten im süddeutschösterreichischen Raum: Analysen von der Reformations- bis zur Aufklärungsepoche* (Cologne, Germany: Böhlau, 1985).

bishop of Worcester. First Catholic and then Anglican.

decreed. *Sermons and Remains of Hugh Latimer, Sometime Bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, ed. George Elwes Corrie, Parker Society, vol. 19 (Cambridge: University Press, 1845), 393–395 (Letter 31), at 395: "She hath been the Devil's instrument to bring many (I fear) to eternal fire: now she herself, with her old sister of Walsingham, her younger sister of Ipswich, with their other two sisters of Doncaster and Penrice, would make a jolly muster in Smithfield; they would not be all day in burning." Contrast text in Gillett, *Walsingham*, 64.

Marian revival. Sean Gill, "Marian Revivalism in Modern English Christianity: The Example of Walsingham," in *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and the 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. R. N. Swanson, Studies in Church History, vol. 3 (Woodbridge, UK and Rochester, NY: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2004), 349–57.

iconoclasm. Phillips, *Reformation of Images*. See Leopold Kretzenbacher, "Das verletzte Kultbild: Voraussetzungen, Zeitschichten und Aussagewandel eines abendländischen Legendentypus," *Sitzungsberichte, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse*, 1977, Heft 1 (Munich, Germany: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, in Kommission bei C. H. Beck, 1977).

removal in 1535. Charles Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors, from A.D. 1485 to 1559*, ed. William Douglas Hamilton, 2 vols., Camden Society Publications 11, 20 (Westminster, UK: Printed for the Camden Society, 1875–1877), 1: 31.

cut away. Waller, *Virgin Mary*, 14.

shorn of her offspring. Phillips, *Reformation of Images*, 144.

Elizabeth I. Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 318; Patrick Collinson, "Pulling the Strings: Religion and Politics in the Progress of 1578," in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. Jayne Elisabeth Archer et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 122–41, at 129–30.

Hans Holbein. Heal, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 119.

Paris. In 1528, 1545, and 1551.

Geneva. In 1532.

Valladolid. In 1600. The Valladolid image had been relabeled Nuestra Señora de la Vulnerata or Santa Maria Vulnerata (Wounded Saint Mary) after having been victimized during the English

raid on Cadiz in 1596. For the information in this paragraph, see MacCulloch, "Mary and Sixteenth-Century Protestants," 198–99.

conflicts between Catholics and Protestants. John Singleton, "The Virgin Mary and Religious Conflict in Victorian Britain," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 43.1 (1992): 16–34, at 25.

Jesuit. Wilhelm Gumppenberg, *Atlas Marianus sive de imaginibus Deiparae per orbem christianum miraculosis*, 1st ed., 2 vols. (Ingolstadt, Germany: Haenlin, 1657); 2nd ed., 2 vols., *Atlas Marianus quo Sanctae Dei Genitricis Mariae imaginum miraculosarum origines duodecim historiarum centuriis explicantur* (Munich: Johannes Jaecklin, 1672).

four-digit headcount. One noteworthy dimension of the total is the paucity of overlap with Madonnas that are touched upon anywhere in the present book.

discrete index. *Idea Atlantis Mariani* (Trent, Italy: Ex typog. Caroli Zanetti, 1655), 31–36 (chap. 3, index 5).

Madonnas. Joan Carroll, *Miraculous Images of Our Lady: 100 Famous Catholic Portraits and Statues* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, 1993).

Madonnas of the World Wars

street corners. Edward Muir, "The Virgin on the Street Corner: The Place of the Sacred in Italian Cities," in *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Steven E. Ozment, Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, vol. 11 (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1989), 25–40.

Henry Adams. Henry Adams, Letter to Charles F. Adams Jr., Nürnberg, July 3, 1859, in *LHA* 1: 49–52, at 51.

Bouchoir. The caption has the name of the municipality misprinted as Bouchois.

Divine Shepherdess. *La Divine Bergère*.

Notre-Dame de Brebières. *Black Virgin*. Begg, *Cult of the Black Virgin*, 167.

statue. The sculpture became the object of devotion for Saint Colette, who won exaltation from prostrating herself before the altar of Notre-Dame de Brebières, and of pilgrimage for others, as well as the basis for the foundation of a confraternity.

mortar shelling. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 131–35. On the destruction, see Alphonse Gosset, *Une glorieuse mutilée: Notre-Dame de Brebières, Albert (Somme)* (Paris: Blanchard, 1919), repr. as *Notre-Dame de Brebières, à Albert* (Inval-Boiron, France: Vague verte, 2011); Pierre Laboureyras, *La destruction d'une cité picarde et d'une basilique mariale: La ville d'Albert avant et pendant la guerre, 1914–1915* (Amiens, France: Grau, 1916; repr. Paris: Le Livre d'histoire-Lotisse, 2012).

Lady of the Limp. Fussell, *Great War*, 44.

La Gleize. Robert M. Edsel, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (New York: Center Street, 2009), 173–76, 214–19.

Literary Iconoclasm

letter to Thomas Cromwell. Dr. Richard Layton, in G. H. Cook, *Letters to Cromwell and Others on the Suppression of the Monasteries* (London: J. Baker, 1965), 38. This letter, written August 7, is found in the Cromwell Correspondence (Public Records Office), xx: "a bowke of or lades miracles well able to mache the canterberie tailles. Such a bowke of dremes as ye never saw wich I fownde in the librarie."

lugubrious stanzas. Gillett, *Walsingham*, 86–87, at 87: "Weep, weep, O Walsingham, / Whose dayes are nightes, / Blessings turned to blasphemies, / Holy deedes to dispites. / Sinne is where our Ladye sate, / Heaven turned is to helle; / Sathan sitte where our Lord did swaye, / Walsingham, oh, farewell!"

a ballad. Printed in 1496 by Richard Pynson, the twenty-one verses have come to be known in recognition of him as the Pynson Ballad.

out of some of their heads. Waller, *Virgin Mary*, 3; Gillett, *Walsingham*, 65–66; Aston, *England's Iconoclasts*, 29. The original text reads "I cannot perceive butt the seyd Image is not yet out of sum of their heddes."

pelted with snowballs. The National Archives, State Papers 1/157, fol. 67, in *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, 21 vols. in 37 (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1862–1932; rept. Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1965), 15: 28, no. 86, cited by G. W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability before the Break with Rome* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 147.

God and Christ. Heal, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 53–54.

most often to the Virgin. Eamon Duffy, *Faith of Our Fathers: Reflections on Catholic Tradition* (London: Continuum, 2004), 101 (apparently an error for 110, cited by Waller, *Virgin Mary*, 31).

rich spoils. Erasmus, *Colloquies*, trans. Thompson, 289–90. I have changed "booty" to "rich spoils."

subtle changes. See Thomas S. Freeman, "Offending God: John Foxe and English Protestant Reactions to the Cult of the Virgin Mary," *Studies in Church History* 39 (2005): 228–38, at 228–32.

bloody. In the distended bibliography, a relatively recent and thorough treatment is by Stefania Biscetti, "The Diachronic Development of *Bloody*: A Case Study in Historical Pragmatics," in *English Historical Linguistics 2006: Selected Papers from the Fourteenth International Conference on English Historical Linguistics*, 3 vols., vol. 2: *Lexical and Semantic Change*, ed. Maurizio Gotti et al., Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series 4, Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, vols. 295–97 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2008), 53–74.

John Bale. With no specific reference to the present context, see Cathy Shrank, "John Bale and Reconfiguring the 'Medieval' in Reformation England," in *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, ed. Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 179–92.

presented him with a rosary. John Bale, *Scriptorvm illustriu[m] maioris Brytannie, quam nunc Angliam & Scotiam uocant: Catalogus* (Basel, Switzerland: apud I. Oporinum, 1557–1559), 624–25: "The Blessed Virgin entered the cell of Alanus although it was shut and, fashioning a ring out of her

hair for him, betrothed herself to the friar, that she kissed him, and gave him her breasts to be fondled and milked and, finally, that she gave herself to him as familiarly as a wife customarily does to her husband." See Freeman, "Offending God," 233–34 (with information on other accounts of the same episode).

mediator. Mary Vincentine Gripkey, *The Blessed Virgin Mary as Mediatrix in the Latin and Old French Legend Prior to the Fourteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1938).

Irish immigrant. Sheridan Gilley, "Protestant London, No-Popery and the Irish Poor, II: 1850–1860," *Recusant History* 11 (1971–1972): 21–46, at 43.

Madonnas. Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 425, 772; trans. Gareth Evan Gollard (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 335, 632.

cult of Mary. Contrast Heal, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 5, 148.

great emphasis. The Council of Trent, Twenty-Fifth Session, "On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics, of Saints, and on Sacred Images" (December 4, 1563), in *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 232–35.

shunted aside. Michael P. Carroll, *Madonnas That Maim: Popular Catholicism in Italy since the Fifteenth Century* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 106.

William Thomas. William Thomas, *The Pilgrim: A Dialogue on the Life and Actions of King Henry the Eighth*, ed. J. A. Froude (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1861), 43: "[H]is Highness had found out the falsehood of these jugglers, who led the people unto this idolatry of worshipping of saints, believing of miracles, and going on pilgrimage here and there (as unto this hour you see it used here in Italy)."

Mary held an ambiguous position. Joblin, "Les protestants."

Marian revival. Singleton, "Virgin Mary," 28–29.

A cleavage is perceptible. Heal, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 145.

Martin Luther. On Luther's attitudes concerning the Virgin Mary, see Peter Newman Brooks, "A Lily Ungilded? Martin Luther, the Virgin Mary and the Saints," *Journal of Religious History* 13 (1984–1985): 136–49; Hans Düfel, *Luthers Stellung zur Marienverehrung*, Kirche und Konfession: Veröffentlichungen des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts des Evangelischen Bundes, vol. 13 (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968).

commented with disapproval. Düfel, *Luthers Stellung*, 235.

honored but not worshiped. The principle was summed up in a Latin superscription, *Maria honoranda, non adoranda*, which in 1619 was appended to an image of Mary as queen of heaven that was restored and put on display anew in the Lutheran city of Zittau, in southeast Saxony. Hans Carl von Haebler, *Das Bild in der evangelischen Kirche* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1957), 37.

commentary. In 1520–1521 he composed a "little exposition of the *Magnificat*," a Marian hymn known likewise as the Song of Mary or the Canticle of Mary. The hymn was based on Luke 1:46–55. He maintained that a person should honor Mary as she herself wished and as she expressed it in the Magnificat. See *Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat*, in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, 55 vols. (Saint Louis, MO: Concordia, 1955–1986), vol. 21; *The Magnificat: Luther's Commentary*, trans. A. T. W. Steinhaeuser (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1967).

potentially idolatrous. Heal, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 82–83.

recent retelling. Helena Olofsson, *Gycklarpojken* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 2000); trans. Kjersti Board, *The Little Jester* (New York: R and S Books, 2002).

We sneer. Henry Warrum, *Some Religious Weft and Warp* (Indianapolis, IN: Hollenbeck, 1915), 3. The sentence is preceded by "Idolatry is the worship of idols or images either as gods, the sanctuaries of gods, or the symbols of gods, and is man's effort to reduce the abstract to the concrete in order to establish closer communion with the unknown. Images and icons still have their place in the religions of civilization."

Marian Apparitions

medieval narratives and images. For a beautiful treatment of both medieval texts and art, the reader can do no better than to consult Barnay, *Le ciel sur la terre*.

latest tally. René Laurentin and Patrick Sbalchiero, *Dizionario delle "apparizioni" della vergine Maria* (Rome: ART, 2010).

official policy. Finality came in 1734–1738, in a five-volume treatise written by the archbishop of Bologna, just a few years before his election as Pope Benedict XIV. See Prosper Lambertini, *De servorum Dei beatificatione, et beatorum canonizatione* (On the beatification and canonization of the servants of God).

fascination and perplexity. A little more than a decade ago, a book probed both sightings of the Virgin and official ecclesiastical investigations of such phenomena, including the appearance of the Virgin to six young people in 1981 in the village of Medjugorje, in what is today Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to others in Scottsdale, Arizona. See Randall Sullivan, *The Miracle Detective* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004).

Our Lady of Guadalupe. On the development of the cult down to the present day, see David A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix: Our Lady of Guadalupe, Image and Tradition across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

official accounts. The apparition, which took place at a location called the hill of Tepeyac, in Villa de Guadalupe, a northern suburb of Mexico City, was described in two accounts published in the 1640s. It became the object of official fact-checking in 1723. However, it led to formal beatification of the visionary only in 1990 and sanctification in 2002.

associated with Mary. Barnay, *Le ciel sur la terre*, 124–28.

black eyelashes. The phenomenon is so widespread that it has even received literary treatment: see Sandra Cisneros, *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (New York: Random House, 1991), 114–15 ("Anguiano Religious Articles Rosaries Statues Medals Incense Candles Talismans Perfumes Oils Herbs").

La Morenita. The same nickname, in the form *La Moreneta*, is used for the Black Madonnna of Montserrat.

shepherdess. Her name was Lucia dos Santos.

millions of visitors. Carroll, *Madonnas That Maim*, 2. On apparitions deemed false, see *Vraies et fausses apparitions dans l'Église*, ed. Bernard Billet et al. (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1973).

American historian. David Herlihy, *Medieval Culture and Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 292.

Walsingham. For the modern history, see Dominic Janes and Gary Waller, eds., *Walsingham in Literature and Culture from the Middle Ages to Modernity* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010); in a nutshell, John Milburn, *The Mariological Lectures* (London: Society of Mary, 1998), 1–6.

Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin. Singleton, "Virgin Mary," 20.

Notes to Chapter 5

It would be interesting. Herman Oelsner, "A Story by Anatole France," *The Academy* 55 (November 5, 1898): 218.

King David's Dancing

She liked the story of David. D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, ed. Mark Kinkead-Weekes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 170 (chap. 6, "Anna Victrix," of the pregnant Anna Brangwen, who dances naked before the mirror in her bedroom, out of exultation at her pregnancy). Lawrence also discussed this episode in David's life in an essay entitled "The Crown" that he wrote at roughly the same time. See D. H. Lawrence, *Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works*, ed. Warren Roberts and Harry T. Moore (New York: Viking, 1968), 365–415, at 380.

figure of the jongleur. Martine Clouzot, *Le jongleur: Mémoire de l'image au Moyen Âge. Figures, figurations et musicalité dans les manuscrits enluminés (1200–1330)* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2011), 219–304.

vignette before the ark. The entire passage is 2 Kings (= 2 Samuel) 6.13–23. The dancing is also mentioned at 1 Chronicles 13.8 and 15.27–29. The Douay-Rheims Bible, produced for Catholics at roughly the same time as the King James Bible, follows closely the Latin of the Vulgate Bible that Jerome had assembled more than a millennium earlier, in the fourth century. The early seventeenth-century English of the Douay-Rheims reads:

> 2 Kings (2 Samuel) 14. And David danced with all his might before the Lord: and David was girded with a linen ephod.
>
> 16. And when the ark of the Lord was come into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul, looking out through a window, saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord: and she despised him in her heart.
>
> 20. And David returned to bless his own house, and Michal the daughter of Saul coming out to meet David, said: How glorious was the king of Israel to day, uncovering himself before the handmaids of his servant, and was naked, as if one of the buffoons should be naked.

kinetic energy. The Hebrew verb *kirker* denotes "whirling" or "pirouetting."

manuscript art. For a listing, see Colum Hourihane, ed., *King David in the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton, NJ: Index of Christian Art, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, in association with Princeton University Press, 2002), 118–21. For analysis, see Adelheid Heimann, "A Twelfth-Century Manuscript from Winchcombe and Its Illustrations: Dublin, Trinity College, MS. 53," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965): 86–109; Herbert Schade, "Zum Bild des tanzenden David im frühen Mittelalter," *Stimmen der Zeit* 172.4 (1963): 1–16; Sandra Pietrini, "La santa danza di David e il ballo peccaminoso di Salomé: Due figure esemplari dell'imaginario biblico medievale," *Quaderni Medievali* 50 (2000): 45–73; Julia Zimmermann, "'histrio fit David…': König Davids Tanz vor der Bundeslade," in *König David, biblische Schlüsselfigur und europäische Leitgestalt: 19. Colloquium (2000) der Schweizerischen*

Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften, ed. Walter Dietrich and Hubert Herkommer (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag, 2003), 531–61.

one representation. Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 53, fol. 151r (accompanying Psalm 1). The manuscript is a so-called double psalter, in which the two most important Latin texts of the Psalms are presented in parallel columns. The psalter, dated 1130–1140, is thought to have come from the Benedictine monastery of Winchcombe. See Zimmermann, "'histrio fit David,'" fig. 1.

walks about upside-down. Leclercq, "'Joculator et saltator,'" 147, quoting Drogo of Bergues (in Flanders).

Bernard of Clairvaux. *Sermones de diversis* 41.6, in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Opera*, 6.1: 248–49; ed. Leclercq, Rochais, and Talbot, trans. Pierre-Yves Émery, Sources chrétiennes, vol. 518 (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 2: 236–71, at 252–53: "Respice David ante arcam Domini hilariter saltantem, quam sapienter superbientis feminae reprimat indignationem: *Ludam*, inquit, *et vilior fiam* ante conspectum Domini" ("Consider David dancing joyously before the Lord's ark, and how wisely he restrains the indignation of his haughty wife").

Dante. *Purgatorio* 10.64–66: "Lí precedeva al benedetto vaso, / trescando alzato, l'umile salmista, / e più e men che re era in quel caso" ("There, going before the blessed vessel, / his robe hitched up, was the humble Psalmist, / and on that occasion he was both more and less than king").

prefiguring Mary's entrance. For the Virgin, see Gaston Duchet-Suchaux and Michel Pastoureau, *La Bible et les saints: Guide iconographique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), 120; for Christ, see Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols*, 64.

do we not so call the Virgin Mary?. *Le Croisé: Organe belge de la croisade eucharistique* 23.5 (October 1949): 77. The original quotation is "Alors le moine jongleur dansa, comme David devant l'Arche d'alliance—n'appelle-t-on pas ainsi la Vierge Marie?"

Spanish text. The book, generally agreed to have been completed in 1293, is now conventionally entitled *Castigos e documentos para bien vivir ordenados del Rey Don Sancho IV* (Teachings and writings for right living arranged by King Sancho IV), ed. Agapito Rey, Indiana University Publications: Humanities Series, vol. 24 (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1952). For the exemplum, see the ed. by Pascual de Gayangos, in *Escritores en prosa anteriores al siglo XV*, Biblioteca de autores españoles, vol. 51 (Madrid: M. Rivadeneyra, 1860), 1: 79–228, chap. 17 at 127 ("come joglar con una citole en la mano").

jongleur of God. In Spanish, *juglar de Dios*.

a wise one. *L'"Eructavit" antico-francese: Secondo il ms. Paris B.N. fr. 1747*, ed. Walter Meliga, Scrittura e scrittori, vol. 6 (Alessandria, Italy: Edizioni dell'orso, 1992), 123 (*Eructavit* 235): "Joglerres soi, sages e duiz" (jongleur, wise and learned). On this passage, see Zink, *Poésie et conversion*, 161.

one of the buffoons. *Unus de scurris*. The noun that has been translated as "buffoon" here is *scurra* (whence the etymological root of the adjective "scurrilous"), which is glossed at least once as "jongleur." See *Die Reichenauer Glossen*, 2 vols., ed. Hans-W. Klein and Andre Labhardt, Beiträge

zur romanischen Philologie des Mittelalters, vol. 1 (Munich, Germany: Hueber and M. Fink, 1968–1972), 1: 97, line 1103: "Scurris: ioculator."

dancing. Davies, *Liturgical Dance*.

Unto his vomit. Proverbs 26:11, 2 Peter 2:22.

invoking none other than King David. "Before the Ark of our God King David danced. / We do not read that David from grace was driven." Alternatively, "Before the ark danced King David. / I believe that David was no pagan." From *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame (The Juggler of Notre Dame): Miracle Play in Three Acts*, trans. Charles Alfred Byrne (New York: Charles E. Burden 1907), 27.

Duke Ellington. The American jazz pianist, orchestra leader, and composer Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington.

three full-evening jazz suites. It was performed originally in San Francisco on September 16, 1965, in Grace Cathedral, and recorded later from a performance in Manhattan on December 26, 1965, at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. The second *Sacred Concert*, which premiered at the cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York on January 19, 1968, concluded with a different piece that expressed a similar devotion, *Praise God and Dance*. When Ellington's funeral was held in Saint John the Divine on May 27, 1974, excerpts from the *Sacred Concerts* were played: see *The Duke Ellington Reader*, ed. Mark Tucker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 377.

his own creativity and devotion. *Duke Ellington Reader*, 371–72: "It has been said once that a man, who could not play the organ or any of the instruments of the symphony, accompanied his worship by juggling. He was not the world's greatest juggler but it was the one thing he did best. And so it was accepted by God. I believe that no matter how highly skilled a drummer or saxophonist might be, that if this is the thing he does best, and he offers it sincerely from the heart in—or as the accompaniment to—his worship, he will not be unacceptable because of lack of skill or of the instrument upon which he makes his demonstration, be it pipe or tom-tom. If a man is troubled, he moans and cries when he worships. When a man feels that that which he enjoys in this life is only because of the grace of God, he rejoices, he sings, and sometimes dances (and so it was with David in spite of his wife's prudishness)." For another pairing of David and the Jongleur a few years earlier, see Alan H. Morriss, "A Twentieth-Century Folk Mass," *Musical Times* 98, no. 1378 (1957): 671–72, at 672.

David Danced before the Lord. The title is from a verse of the Bible (2 Kings 6:14), as we have seen, which describes how King David danced before the ark of the Covenant as it was brought into Jerusalem. As recorded on December 26, 1965, this piece is the nine-minute track 10.

tap master. In introducing one performance, Ellington described the dancer as "the most superleviathonic, rhythmaturgically syncopated tapsthamaticianisamist." The performance of Dr. Bunny Briggs on this occasion "broke new ground for modern tap dancing on the concert stage": see Constance Valis Hill, *Tap Dancing America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 206.

Third Sacred Concert. *Duke Ellington Reader*, 371. For discussion, see Thomas Lloyd, "The Revival of an Early 'Crossover' Masterwork: Duke Ellington's Sacred Concerts," *Choral Journal* 49.11 (May 2009): 8–26, at 9.

this particular piece. Bill Hall, "Jazz–Lewd or Ludens?," in *Creative Chords: Studies in Music, Theology and Christian Formation*, ed. Jeff Astley and Timothy Hone (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2000), 194–209, at 203.

Protevangelium of James. The Greek noun *protevangelion* ("first gospel") could be rendered almost synonymously as Protogospel.

apocryphon. The apocrypha are, as the Greek adjective for "secret" or "hidden things," noncanonical texts that complement scripture.

sparse treatment. The presence of Mary in the Bible is concentrated in the accounts of Christ's infancy in Matthew and Luke. The earliest of the three Synoptic Gospels, Mark, names Mary just once (Mark 6:3), Matthew mentions Mary five times, and Luke provides more evidence in his Gospel. In Matthew, Mary is silent, whereas in Luke she speaks four times. Outside the Synoptic Gospels, John brings up Mary twice. The Acts of the Apostles, the earliest text that mentions the Christian church, refers to her only a single time (Acts 1:14).

Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew. For a concise introduction, see Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), 33–42.

gaps in the canonical Bible. Mary Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

seventh chapter. *Protevangelium Jacobi* (Protevangelium of James), in *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans. R. McL. Wilson, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Cambridge: James Clarke; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1991–1992), 1: 429 (7.3): "[T]he Lord God put grace upon the child, and she danced for joy with her feet, and the whole house of Israel loved her." For background information, see 1: 421–25, and especially Hans-Josef Klauck, *Apocryphal Gospels: An Introduction*, trans. Brian McNeil (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 65–72.

The fifteen steps, but not the little jig after the third step, are mentioned in William Emmet Coleman and James Boyce, eds. and trans., *Officium presentationis Beate Virginis Marie in Templo / Office of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Which is Celebrated on the 21st Day of November. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 17330, fols. 7r-14r*, Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen / Musicological Studies, vol. 65/ Historiae, vol. 5 (Lions Bay, Canada: Institute of Mediaeval Music, 2001), 7, 9. The episode of the dancing has apparently not survived in either medieval or Byzantine art: see Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, "Iconographie comparée du cycle de l'Enfance de la Vierge à Byzance et en Occident, de la fin du IXe au début du XIIIe s.," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 32.128 (1989): 291–303.

lineage of David. The genealogy in Luke 3:23–38 is taken by some to be Mary's, by others to be Joseph's.

Presentation. The Presentation is commemorated traditionally on November 21. Such celebration began perhaps as early as 730 (but no later than 1150) in the East, where it is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, and in the late fourteenth century (although known earlier) in the West.

fresco. By Paolo Uccello, from around 1435.

Prato. In Tuscany. An association of the painting with the episode in the *Protevangelium* has been rejected by José María Salcador González, "La Presentación de María en el Templo en la pintura italiana bajomedieval: Análisis de cinco casos," *Espéculo: Revista de estudios literarios* 44 (March–June 2010).

The Widow's Mites

Jesus witnesses the incident. Gospel of Mark, 12:41–44: "And Jesus sitting over against the treasury beheld how the people cast money into the treasury, and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And calling his disciples together he saith to them, Amen I say to you: this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living." *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*, ed. Edgar Swift and Angela M. Kinney, 6 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010–2013), 6: 259. Compare Luke 21:1–4.

novelist's hometown. Carrickmacross, a town in County Monaghan, Ireland.

dreams for the future. Bernard Duffy, *Oriel* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1918), 45: "'Have you decided yet,' he asked, smiling, as they left the church, 'whether your life is to be sublime or ridiculous?' This reference to the ambitions he had disclosed to the bishop made Oriel blush, and in his shyness he could find no answer. 'Come now,' said the Dean, 'there's nothing to be ashamed of. Why when I was your age I wanted to be an itinerant tumbler. So you see we have something in common.'" The bishop is none other than Dean James. For a reprint of the chapter with brief background information, see Bernard Duffy, "Portrait of a Parish Priest," *Clogher Record* 3 (1975): 269–81.

I think I'll be a bishop. Duffy, *Oriel*, 38–39.

the value of an offering. Duffy, *Oriel*, 64–68.

small children. W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance: A Study in Comparative Folklore* (New York: Macmillan, 1923), 23: "A little girl, not exceeding five years, was dancing before a picture of the Madonna and Child; after her dance she turned to her mother and said: 'Do you think the Baby Jesus liked to see me dance?' It is not quite easy to say in this case in how far the purpose was to please the 'Baby Jesus,' and in how far the perfectly natural and innocent purpose was to 'show off' before Him: probably both motives were combined. But the second is purely one of 'showing off.' A child of about three, a boy this time, kept on jumping as high as he could in the field; presently his father heard him say: 'See, God, how high I can jump!'"

volume of literary history. Émile Henriot, *Courrier littéraire: XIXe siècle*, vol. 1: *Autour de Chateaubriand* (Paris: Marcel Daubin, 1948), 31: the hero in question is Captain Gervais (1779–1858), nom de guerre of Étienne Béniton.

Festival of the Crosses. In Spanish, *Fiesta de las Cruces*.

May Cross. *Cruz de Mayo*.

plays a role. On May 3.

Spanish print. An albumen print. Joaquín Sorolla y Bastida produced a painting, as well as preliminary studies, on the same theme.

researcher. J. B. Trend, "The Dance of the Seises at Seville," *Music & Letters* 2 (1921): 10–28, at 28. For fuller information on the May dance, see José Manuel Fraile Gil and Eliseo Parra García, *El mayo y su fiesta en tierras madrileñas*, Biblioteca básica madrileña, vol. 10 (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, Centro de Estudios y Actividades Culturales, 1995).

dancing was often presented. On positive portrayal, see Van Oort, "Minstrel Dances." On condemnations, see Arcangeli, "Dance and Punishment," 30–42.

Stephen of Bourbon. *De luxuria* 461, in Lecoy de La Marche, *Anecdotes historiques*, 397, in Aeppli, *Die wichtigsten Ausdrücke*, 47n56, 77n181.

their small town. In the German region of Saxon-Anhalt.

ceasing to sing and dance. Thompson, *Motif-Index*, no. C 94.1.1 (compare C 51.1.5 "Tabu: Dancing in Churchyard"); Tubach, *Index Exemplorum*, no. 1419. The episode was investigated first in detail by Edward Schröder, "Die Tänzer von Kölbigk," *Zeitschrift für Kirchegeschichte* 17 (1897): 94–164, and later exhaustively (although also very speculatively) by Ernst Erich Metzner, *Zur frühesten Geschichte der europäischen Balladendichtung Der Tanz in Kölbigk: Legendarische Nachrichten, Gesellschaftlicher Hintergrund, historische Voraussetzungen*, Frankfurter Beiträge zur Germanistik, vol. 14 (Frankfurt, Germany: Athenäum Verlag, 1972). Metzner's book includes the Latin originals of the three oldest accounts, alongside ample commentary and interpretation. For the best balance between thoroughness and brevity (with extensive bibliography), see Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, "Tänzersage," in *EdM* 13: 201–4.

The Little Legend of Dance. In German, "Das Tanzlegendchen." In idem, *Sämtliche Werke in acht Bänden*, 8 vols. (Berlin: Aufbau, 1958–1961), 5: 409–16. See also *Sämtliche Werke: Historische-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Walter Morgenthaler (Frankfurt, Germany: Stroemfeld; Zurich: Verlag Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 1996–2012), 7: 421–27. For an English translation, see Gottfried Keller, "A Legend of the Dance," in *Seven Legends*, trans. Martin Wyness (London: Gowans & Gray, 1911), 98–105, and Gottfried Keller, *The People of Seldwyla and Seven Legends*, trans. M. D. Hottinger (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1930), 294–300.

Seven Legends. In German, *Sieben Legenden.*

Gregory the Great's Dialogues. Trans. Odo John Zimmerman, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 39 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), 211–12 (book 4, chap. 18).

The Virgin's Miraculous Images and Apparitions

Theotokos. Corresponding to the Latin *Deipara*. For brief overviews of the theology connected with this conception of Mary, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 55–65; Sarah Jane Boss, "The Title Theotokos," and Richard Price, "Theotokos: The Title and Its Significance in Doctrine and Devotion," in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (London: Continuum, 2007), 50–55 and 56–74, respectively.

City of the God-Bearer. The patriarchate acquired this status because it boasted eventually not only many precious relics of Mary but fully 117 churches and monasteries dedicated to her. See Cyril Mango, "Constantinople as Theotokoupolis," in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art* (Milan, Italy: Skira, 2000), 17–25.

soaked up miracles. For this absorption, the ugly but serviceable neologism "Marialization" has been minted. See Philippart, "Le récit miraculaire marial," 566.

taken into heaven. On the complex and much-debated evolution of doctrines relating to this aspect of Mary, see Henry Mayr-Harting, "The Idea of the Assumption in the West, 800–1200," in *The Church and Mary: Papers Read at the 2001 Summer Meeting and 2002 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. Robert Norman Swanson, Studies in Church History, vol. 39 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2004), 86–111.

Miracles of Our Lady in medieval French verse. *Miracles de Nostre Dame*.

Miracles of Our Lady in Castilian verse. *Milagros de Nuestra Señora*, in *Collected Works of Gonzalo de Berceo*, trans. Bartha et al., 13–141.

Cistercian origin. See Patricia Timmons and Robert Boenig, *Gonzalo de Berceo and the Latin* Miracles of the Virgin: *A Translation and a Study* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 3.

Songs of Saint Mary. *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. For an English translation, see Kathleen Kulp-Hill, trans., *Songs of Holy Mary of Alfonso X, the Wise: A Translation of the "Cantigas de Santa Maria,"* Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 173 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2000).

illustration. On the images, see Jacques Le Goff, "Le Roi, la Vierge, et les images: Le manuscrit des 'Cantigas de Santa Maria' d'Alphonse X de Castille," in *Rituels: Mélanges offerts à Pierre-Marie Gy, o.p.*, ed. Paul De Clerck and Éric Palazzo (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 385–92.

living images. Alejandro García Avilés, "Imágenes 'vivientes': Idolatría y herejía en las 'Cantigas' de Alfonso X el Sabio," *Goya: Revista de arte* 321 (2007): 324–42; Jean-Marie Sansterre, "L'image 'instrumentalisée': Icons du Christ et statues de la Vierge, de Rome à l'Espagne des *Cantigas de Santa Maria*," in *Hagiographie, idéologie et politique au Moyen Âge en Occident: Actes du colloque international du Centre d'études supérieures de civilisation médiévale de Poitiers, 11–14 septembre 2008*, ed. Edina Bozóky, Hagiologia, vol. 8 (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012), 463–76.

performance before pilgrims. San Millan de la Cogolla.

The Jongleur of Rocamadour

other Marian exempla and miracles. An individual specimen from this genre of compilations is sometimes designated by the Latin term *Mariale*. This specific collection, attested in eight manuscripts, comprises 126 Marian miracles. The text was composed around 1172 by a monk in the priory of Rocamadour, in south-central France, but it refers to miracles occurring before 1166. For the Latin *Miracula Sancte Marie Rupis Amatoris*, book 1, miracle 34, see Edmond Albe, ed. and trans., *Les Miracles de Notre-Dame de Rocamadour au douzième siècle*, rev. 2nd ed. Jean Rocacher (Toulouse: Le Pérégrinateur, 1996), 142–45; Marcus Graham Bull, trans., *The Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour: Analysis and Translation* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 1999), 122–23.

writing down miracles. See Signori, *Maria zwischen Kathedrale*, 202–28; idem, "The Miracle Kitchen and Its Ingredients: A Methodical and Critical Approach to Marian Shrine Wonders (10th to 13th Century)," *Hagiographica* 3 (1996): 277–303.

shrine wonder. For the Old French, see Gautier de Coinci, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, 4: 175–89 (2.21: "Dou cierge qui descendi au jougleour"), which supersedes the text in Reino Hakamies, *Deux miracles de Gautier de Coinci, d'un vilain qui fut sauvé pour ce qu'il ne faisoit uevre le samedi et du cierge que Nostre Dame de Rochemadour envoia seur la vïele au jougleour qui vïeloit et chantoit devant s'ymage publiés d'après cinq manuscrits*, Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian toimituksia, B, vol. 113:1 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Kirjapaino, 1958). In my recapitulation I follow the French; in the Latin the object that moves is not a taper, but instead (apparently) a piece of wax. For analysis, see Anna Drzewicka, "La vièle du cœur: Une metaphore musicale de Gautier de Coinci," in *Contez me tout: Mélanges de langue et littérature médiévales offerts à Herman Braet*, ed. Catherine Bel et al., La république des lettres, vol. 28 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2006), 175–89.

Galician-Portuguese. For the concise account, see Alfonso X the Wise, *Cantigas de Santa María*, ed. Walter Mettmann, 3 vols. (Madrid: Castalia, 1986–1989), 1: 75–77 (no. 8); trans. Kulp-Hill, 13–14.

Sieglar. The place name is spelled multifariously, as for example Sygelar, Sigelar, and Siegelar, in medieval and modern texts alike. It is in the diocese of Cologne.

Rocamadour. The French commune is located in a gorge above the river Alzou, a tributary of the Dordogne, in the diocese of Cahors.

Amadour. Henri Fromage, "Rocamadour: Qui est (A)madour?" *Bulletin de la Société mythologie française* 161 (1991): 5–14.

official in control of caring for the church. The medieval equivalent of the facilities director, he held the monastic office of sacristan.

crying for joy. As in the title of the Latin exemplum about the jongleur, the word used here is *gaudium*.

after the beadle had doused it. *Dialogus miraculorum*, book 7, chap. 46, ed. Strange, 2: 64–65; trans. Scott and Bland, 2: 528–30, at 529. On such miracles, see Jaap van Moolenbroek, *Mirakels historisch: De exempels van Caesarius van Heisterbach over Nederland en Nederlanders*, Middeleeuwse studies en bronnen, vol. 65 (Hilversum, Netherlands: Verloren, 1999), 113–14.

King Henry II. Emma Mason, "'Rocamadour in Quercy above All Other Churches': The Healing of Henry II," *Studies in Church History* 19 (1982): 39–54.

Caesarius of Heisterbach. *Dialogus Miraculorum*, book 1, chap. 17, ed. Strange, 1: 24–25; trans. Scott and Bland, 1: 25–26.

wooden image. Jacques Juillet, *Rocamadour: Symboles et histoire*, 2nd ed. (Grenoble, France: Le mercure dauphinois, 2005).

Black Virgin. In French, *Vierge Noire*. For English-speakers, the most widely available account and census of such images is probably Begg, *Cult of the Black Virgin*; see especially p. 216 on

Rocamadour. A Jungian, Begg promotes a theory that the phenomenon had pagan origins and that it came to the West during the Crusades, thanks to the Templars. His evidence must be verified on a case-by-case basis. The best short account is Sarah Jane Boss, "Black Madonnas," in idem, *Mary*, 458–75.

The most convenient compilation and exposition of information in French is Sophie Cassagnes-Brouquet, *Vierges noires* (Rodez, France: Editions du Rouergue, 2000). Cassagnes-Brouquet cites repeatedly a 1550 census of Black Virgins in France, which tallied 190. She provides (on pp. 17 and 20) helpful maps to indicate the geographic distribution of such statues. A count today would be difficult, since older Black Virgins have been stolen, deliberately removed by the local ecclesiastical authorities, or spirited away for other reasons, while copies or alleged copies of now lost ones have appeared in many locations.

icon. An icon by this name survived in Russia until 1941. The panel belonged to the iconographic type known as Hodegetria, from the Greek for "she who shows the way." It represented the Virgin Mary as she holds the infant Jesus while pointing to him as the way of salvation. Byzantine depictions of the Virgin and Child in this pose exercised a great influence upon Italian panel painting, which used the golden highlighting known technically as chrysography. See Jaroslav Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting: The Virgin and Child "Hodegetria" and the Art of Chrysography* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Blachernitissa. It is also known as Theotokos of Blachernae, Virgin of the Sign, or Our Lady of Blachernae. A catch is that no representation of the Byzantine image from the Middle Ages that has been explicitly labeled Blachernitissa depicts Mary holding the infant Jesus. Instead, the figures show her in a praying posture that is designated technically (from the Latin participle for praying) as *orans* or *orant*. Sometimes the Virgin has a medallion of the Christ Child that is inscribed within her breast or that levitates upon it.

Byzantine coins. Vasso Penna, "The Mother of God on Coins and Lead Seals," in *Mother of God: Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine Art*, ed. Maria Vassilaki (Milan, Italy: Skira, 2000), 209–17, at 211.

the Church has sometimes replaced. For a recent controversy, see Benjamin Ramm, "Which Past Should We Preserve?" *The New York Times*, September 2, 2017, C1, C6.

less than fifty miles from Barcelona. In Catalonia, in the northeastern region of the Iberian peninsula.

lead token. The token was called in Latin *sportula*, in French *sportelle*. Both words derive ultimately from Latin *sporta*, referring to the pilgrim's scrip, pouch, or purse to which they were attached. On these objects, see Ludovic de Valon, "Iconographie des sportelles de Rocamadour," *Bulletin de la Société des études littéraires, scientifiques et artistiques du Lot* 51 (1930): 1–30; Esther Cohen, "In haec signa: Pilgrim-Badge Trade in Southern France," *Journal of Medieval History* 2.3 (1976): 193–214; Jean Rocacher, "Les sportelles de Rocamadour (enseignes de pèlerinage)," *Bulletin de la Société des études littéraires, scientifiques et artistiques du Lot* 106 (1985–1986): 269–88; Gilbert Foucaud and Régis Najac, "Sur deux sportelles de Rocamadour trouvées à Capdenac-le-Haut," *Bulletin de la Société des études littéraires, scientifiques et artistiques du Lot* 125.4 (2004): 303–5. For illustrations, see Jean Rocacher, *Rocamadour: Un prêtre raconte la roche mariale* (Paris: Éditions de l'Atelier, 1999), 25, and especially Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*, 234–37.

On pilgrimage to Rocamadour in the twelfth century, see Jean Rocacher, "La Vierge Marie dans le pèlerinage de Rocamadour," in *Marie et le Limousin: Actes de la journée d'études organisée à Seilhac le 9 août 1991*, ed. Sophie Cassagnes et al., Mémoires et documents sur le Bas-Limousin, vol. 12 (Ussel, France: Musée du pays d'Ussel; Paris: Diff. de Boccard, 1992), 53–83.

In both stories. Allen, *De l'hermite et del jougleour*, 51.

a version of this Rocamadour miracle tale. "D'un jongleur a cui Nostre Dame envoia son sierge," which begins "La douce mere au creator / A l'eglise a Rochemadour… ."

anonymous poet. *Chantilly: Le cabinet des livres. Manuscrits*, 3 vols. (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1900–1911): 2: 56 (nos. 68–69).

The True Legend. "Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame: La véritable légende," *Comœdia* 17, no. 3893, August 15, 1923, front page. The newspaper, then influential, has been defunct since World War II.

Gautier de Coinci's version. Kemp-Welch, *Of the Tumbler* 127–37. A German translation, also based on the mid-nineteenth-century Poquet edition, was made by Erhard Lommatzsch, *Geschichten aus dem alten Frankreich* (Frankfurt, Germany: J. Knecht, 1947), 113–18, notes 216–17.

Holy Candle of Arras. Gustave Cohen, "La Sainte Vierge dans la littérature française du Moyen Âge," in *Maria: Études sur la Sainte Vierge*, ed. Hubert Du Manoir de Juaye, 7 vols. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1949–1964), 2: 17–46, at 24–28.

The Holy Candle of Arras

Holy Candle. Known in French as the *Sainte Chandelle*.

This other wonder. The miracle was studied by Faral, *Les jongleurs*, 133–42; Adolphe Henri Guesnon, *La Confrèrie des jongleurs d'Arras et le tombeau de l'évêque Lambert* (Arras, France: Cassel, 1913); and, most recently and insightfully, Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 85–92. For popular coverage, see Claude Esil, "Les jongleurs de Notre-Dame: Arras, la fête des ardents," *La France à table* 110 (October 1964).

opening years of the twelfth century. Perhaps not too long before 1115, during the episcopacy of Lambert de Guînes, who served as bishop of Arras from 1093 to 1115.

half century later. The earliest and fullest written records of the miracle are found in a Latin text that was supposedly composed between 1175 and 1200, and in a French version that, at least in its present form, had to have been composed after 1237. Whatever we decide about the date of its original composition, the official prose account was recorded in a Latin charter drawn up in May of 1241. The original of the charter is no longer extant, but late fifteenth-century evidence attests to its existence. On the dating, see Symes, *Common Stage*, 85–86. For information on the manuscripts and editions and for presentation of the texts alongside each other, see Roger Berger, *Le nécrologe de la Confrérie des jongleurs et des bourgeois d'Arras (1194–1361)*, Commission départementale des monuments historiques du Pas-de-Calais: Mémoires, vols. 11.2, 13,2 (Arras, France: [Commission départementale des monuments historiques du Pas-de-Calais], 1963–1970), 137–56. A briefer account is in Faral, *Les jongleurs en France*, 133–42. The latest *terminus post quem* would be when a fourteenth-century minstrel refers to the miracle: Jean de Condé,

Dit des Jacobins et des Fremeneurs (Song of the Dominican and Franciscan friars), dated 1313; for which, see *La messe des oiseaux et le Dit des jacobins et des fremeneurs*, ed. Jacques Ribard, Textes littéraires français, vol. 170 (Geneva: Droz, 1970). For brief discussion, see Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer*, 143.

ergotism. The disease is known variously as *le mal des ardents* (the malady of the burning, or fevered) in French, *ignis sacer* (holy fire) in Latin, and Saint Anthony's or Saint Martial's fire in English. A form of ergotism caused by ergot poisoning, this affliction resulted from ingesting alkaloids produced by a fungus (in the Linnaean nomenclature, *Claviceps purpurea*) on grains such as rye. Long-term consumption of fungus-ridden foodstuffs, especially infested rye bread, resulted in disease, which in turn led to both convulsive and gangrenous symptoms, with the latter being associated with a burning skin condition. The ergot contained a natural hallucinogen, the psychoactive ingredient of which is lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). See Jacques Devalette et al., *La peste de feu: Le miracle des Ardents et l'ergotisme en Limousin au Moyen Age*, Les cahiers d'Archéa, vol. 3 (Limoges, France: Archéa, 1994).

Itier. Normand was a native of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, while Itier hailed from Brabant.

Brotherhood of the Holy Candle. In French, *Confrérie de la Sainte Chandelle*.

confraternity of jongleurs. It was also known more fully as the Brotherhood of Jongleurs and Burghers of Arras (*Confrérie des Jongleurs et des Bourgeois d'Arras*) and as the Charity of Our Lady of the Fevered of Arras (*Charité de Notre Dame des Ardents d'Arras*). See Berger, *Le nécrologe de la confrérie*; L. B. Richardson, "The 'Confrérie des jongleurs et des bourgeois' and the 'Puy d'Arras' in Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Literature," in *Studies in Honor of Mario A. Pei*, ed. John Fisher and Paul A. Gaeng, Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, vol. 114 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 161–71; Catherine Vincent, "Fraternité rêvée et lien social fortifié: La confrérie Notre-Dame des Ardents à Arras (début du XIIIe siècle–XVe siècle)," *Revue du Nord* 337 (2000), 659–79. For useful tidbits of antiquarianism (and images), see also Louis Cavrois de Saternault, *Histoire du Saint-Cierge d'Arras et de la Confrérie de Notre-Dame des Ardent*s, 3rd ed. (Arras, France: Imprimerie de la Société du Pas-de-Calais, 1910). Such confraternities were religious associations that brought together individuals of the same social class, often of the same profession, who agreed to abide by the statutes of the group and to support its other members. In return for an entrance fee and annual dues, this organization connected its members with the church and saw to the support of the impoverished and the burial of the deceased.

One activity of the confraternity, the foundation of which is documented around 1175, was to present plays: a member was Adam de la Halle, the author and composer of the famous early French play with music, *The Play of Robin and Marion* (*Jeu de Robin et Marion*), composed in 1282 or 1283. Not much is to be made of the fact that the woman's name Marion is a variant of the French Marie (Mary).

guilds for minstrels. Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer*, 126.

Our Lady of the Fevered. *Domina nostra ardentium*.

pulled down by a mob. For a depiction of the destruction as it took place, see Charles de Linas, *La Confrérie de Notre-Dame des Ardent*s *d'Arras* (Paris: Didron, 1857), plate between pp. 56 and 57. A very different replacement in Romanesque revival style, sadly banal in contrast to the original, was completed and consecrated in 1876 (see Fig. n.3).

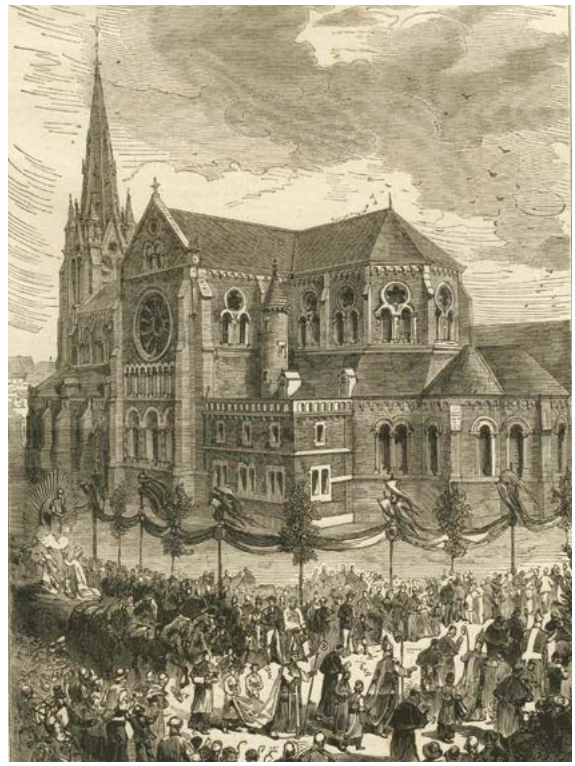


Fig. n.3 Consecration of the new Cathédrale d'Arras. Illustration, 1876. Published in *Le Monde illustré* (1876), 356.

reliquary. Linas, *La Confrérie*, frontispiece.

the language of Marian miracles. Philippart, "Le récit miraculaire marial," 580.

a story's just a story. Stephen King, *11/12/16: A Novel* (New York: Pocket Books, 2011), 52.

Festival of Our Lady of the Fevered. Fête de Notre Dame des Ardents.

conflated to this day. Esil, "Les jongleurs de Notre-Dame," 29–30.

establish group identities. Kay Brainerd Slocum, "*Confrérie, Bruderschaft* and Guild: The Formation of Musicians' Fraternal Organisations in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Europe," *Early Music History* 14 (1995): 257–74.

guilds. On the precise nature of the guilds, see Wilkins, *Music in the Age of Chaucer*, 138 (he identifies the *Confrérie des Jongleurs et des Bourgois d'Arras* as "probably merely a benefit society" and the *Confrérie de Notre Dame des Ardents* as "really a religious guild").

segue from bodily movement. John Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants*, 1: 198–204, posits that the change from bodily to musical performance was favored during the thirteenth century.

within places of worship. To take but one example, the French vernacular verse *La vie de saint Thomas Becket*, by Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, was recited at the tomb of the saint in the cathedral at Canterbury. See Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, *A Life of Thomas Becket in Verse: La Vie de saint Thomas Becket*, trans. Ian Short, Mediaeval Sources in Translation, vol. 56 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2013).

The Pious Sweat of Monks and Lay Brothers

Genius is one percent inspiration. Although attributed traditionally to Edison, the quotation has a disputed origin and wording. See https://quoteinvestigator.com/2012/12/14/genius-ratio/#note-5018-8

five different versions. For further information, see Albertus Poncelet, "*Miraculorum B. V. Mariae quae saec. VI–XV latine conscripta sunt index*," *Analecta Bollandiana* 21 (1902): 241–360, no. 576; Tubach, *Index Exemplorum*, 265, no. 3404: "Monks of Clairvaux harvesting" (Tubach connects the exemplum with another motif, p. 386, no. 5114: "Virgin, Blessed, collects drops of sweat. The Virgin Mary collected drops of sweat from hardworking monks and nuns"); France, *Separate but Equal*, 42–43; McGuire, "Lost Clairvaux *Exemplum* Collection Found," 38–41.

twelfth-century brother of Clairvaux. Herbert of Clairvaux (died ca. 1198), *Liber miraculorum*, in *PL* 185: 1273–36, at 1273–75 (1.1). See Michael Casey, "Herbert of Clairvaux's Book of Wonderful Happenings," *Cistercian Studies* 25 (1990): 37–64, at 49–50 (with Engl. trans.).

Bright Valley. Likewise, *Clara Vallis* in Latin. The etymology is explained gracefully in passing in Wilhelm Preetorius, *Der Tänzer unserer lieben Frau* (Zurich: Die Waage, 1964), on the third and fourth unnumbered pages.

wiped the sweat. The same miracle story appeared earlier in Conrad of Eberbach, *Exordium magnum Cisterciense*, 3.13, 2nd ed. Griesser (1994), 161–64; ed. Griesser (1961), 176–77; *Collectaneum exemplorum* 4.16 [90]: ed. Legendre, 289 (text), 409–10 (sources); and London, British Library, MS Additional 15,723 (late twelfth century), for which, see Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, 2: 629.

much later telling. This much later version is by a fifteenth-century German Dominican, Johannes Herolt (d. 1468), called Discipulus: Miracle 6, in *Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, ed. C. C. Swinton Bland (London: Routledge, 1928), 23. See Guy Philippart, "Les *miracles mariaux* de Jean Herolt (1434) et la *Legenda aurea*," *Le moyen français* 32.1 (1993): 53–67; Philippart, "Le récit miraculaire marial," 578.

monk of Villers. Abundus of Villers, as related by Goswin of Bossut, "Life of Abundus," in Martinus Cawley, *Send Me God* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003), 234.

first hearing this exemplum. Caesarius heard the exemplum in 1199 as told by Gevard, abbot of Heisterbach.

dispatched a breeze to cool them. Caesarius, *Dialogus miraculorum*, book 1, chap. 17: ed. Strange, 1: 24–25; trans. Scott and Bland, 1: 25–26.

chock-full of exempla. On exempla in Caesarius, see Jaap van Moolenbroek, "Over exempels, wonderen en visioenen in het werk van Caesarius van Heisterbach," *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor middeleeuwse studies* 12.1 (1997): 15–29.

Great Dialogue of Visions and Miracles. *Dialogus magnus visionum atque miraculorum*.

Eight such apparitions. Laurentin and Sbalchiero, *Dizionario*, 170–72.

In this poem. For the original text, see Gautier de Coinci, *Miracles*, ed. Koenig, 4: 412–17 (2.31: "De un moigne de Chartrose"). For discussion and translation (into modern French), see Gautier de Coinci, *Cinq miracles de Notre-Dame*, trans. Jean-Louis Gabriel Benoît, Traductions des classiques du Moyen Âge, vol. 78 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 139–51. For appraisal of the resemblances between Gautier's miracle and *Our Lady's Tumbler*, see especially trans. Benoît, 139–40, 143; Bretel, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, 13–14, 18–19. This miracle was omitted from Adolfo Mussafia's source study of *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, on the grounds that Gaston Raynaud, in "Le Miracle de Sardenai," *Romania* 11 (1882): 519–37; 14 (1885): 82–93, had sourced the miracle with which it is transmitted. As poor luck would have it, Raynaud does not deal at all with the miracle of the Carthusian monk. See Adolfo Mussafia, Über die von Gautier de Coincy benützten Quellen, Denkschriften der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, philosophisch-historische Classe, vol. 44.1 (Vienna: In Commission bei F. Tempsky, 1894), 6.

fellow monk sees Mary. Identified solely as a "virgin" or "maiden" (*pucele*).

Song of the Knight and the Squire. Jehan de Saint-Quentin, "Le dit du chevalier et de l'escuier," in *Dits en quatrains d'alexandrins monorimes de Jehan de Saint-Quentin*, ed. Birger Munk Olsen (Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 1978), 68–76.

third form of the legend. Gautier de Coinci, *Miracles*, ed. Koenig, 4: 378–411 (2.30: "Miracle Nostre Dame de Sardenay"). On the worship of the icon, see Bernard Hamilton, "Our Lady of Saidnaiya: An Orthodox Shrine Revered by Muslims and Knights Templar at the Time of the Crusades," in *The Holy Land, Holy Lands, and Christian History*, ed. Robert Norman Swanson, Studies in Church History, vol. 36 (Woodbridge, UK: Published for the Ecclesiastical History Society by the Boydell Press, 2000), 207–15; Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Convergences of Oriental Christian, Muslim, and Frankish Worshippers: The Case of Saydnaya," in *De Sion exibit lex et verbum domini de Hierusalem: Essays on Medieval Law, Liturgy and Literature in Honour of Amnon Linder*, ed. Yitzhak Hen (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2001), 59–69, and in *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zsolt Hunyadi and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: CEU, 2001), 89–100; Michele Bacci, "A Sacred Space for a Holy Icon: The Shrine of Our Lady of Saydnaya," in *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 373–87.

hand towel. In French, *touvaille*: Abbé Alexandre-Eusèbe Poquet, ed., *Les miracles de la sainte Vierge, traduits et mis en vers par Gautier de Coincy* (Paris: Parmantier, Didron, 1857), cols. 647–672, at 669, line 922.

The Love of Statuesque Beauty

another famous Marian miracle. Pinto-Mathieu, *La Vie des Pères*, 793–818; Camille, *Gothic Idol*, 237–39.

bed trick. See Wendy Doniger, *The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

elements from these other accounts. For the broadest perspective, see Theodore Ziolkowski, *Disenchanted Images: A Literary Iconology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 18–77. We will return to the Marian tales in Chapter 18.

The Venus of Ille. This is a tale that Marcel Proust said he was not allowed to read: see Bernard de Fallois, ed., *Contre Sainte-Beuve* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), 238.

The Holy Face of Christ and Virgin Saints

Holy Face. In Italian, *Volto Santo*.

Lucca. An Italian commune in Tuscany. On the origins and spread of the cult, see Diana Webb, "The Holy Face of Lucca," *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 9 (1987): 227–37. With specific reference to the tale of the jongleur and the Madonna at Lucca, see Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, *La Vergine e il Volto: Il miracolo del giullare* (Lucca, Italy: M. Pacini Fazzi, 2009). More generally, see Chiara Frugoni, "Una proposta per il Volto Santo," in *Il Volto Santo: Storia e culto. Catalogo della mostra (Lucca, 21 ottobre–21 dicembre 1982)*, ed. Clara Baracchini and Maria Teresa Filieri (Lucca, Italy: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1982), 15–48.

ankle-length tunic,. The garment is designated in Latin by the term *colubium*.

This is no place for the Holy Face!. *Inferno* 21.48: "Qui non ha luogo il Santo Volto."

Piers Plowman. *Piers Plowman* 6.103.

the image was widely revered. Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*, 254–55. In the process, images of it became, and have stayed, influential in iconography. See Reiner Hausherr, "Das Imerwardkreutz und der Volto-Santo Typ," *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft* 16 (1962): 129–67; idem, "Volto Santo," in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum, 8 vols. (Freiburg, Germany: Herder, 1968–1976), 8: 471–72; Jerzy Golos, "The Crucified Female and the Poor Fiddler: The Long Life of a Legend," *RIdIM/RCMI Newsletter* 11.1 (Spring 1986): 8–10; Olimpia Gołdys, "Ein mysteriöser Spielmann: Zu den kulturgeschichtlichen Aspekten der 'Spielmanns-Ikonographie' in den Volto-Santo-/Kümmernis-Darstellungen vom 13. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert," *Music in Art* 33.1–2 (Spring–Fall 2008): 149–67.

Gospel of John. 3:1 and 19:39.

deposing Christ from the cross. *Relatio Leboini* 1, in *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. Société des Bollandistes, Subsidia Hagiographica, vol. 6, 2 vols. (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1898–1901), 1: 629 (no. 4236). For discussion, see Corine Schleif, "Nicodemus and Sculptors: Self-Reflexivity in Works by Adam Kraft and Tilman Riemenschneider," *The Art Bulletin* 75.4 (1993): 599–626, at 608–10; Michele Camillo Ferrari, "'Imago visibilis Christi': Le 'Volto Santo' de Lucques et les images authentiques au Moyen Âge," in *La visione e lo sguardo nel Medioevo—View and Vision in the Middle Ages*, SISMEL Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2 vols. *Micrologus: Natura, scienze e società medievali/Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies: Rivista della Società internazionale per lo studio del medio evo latino* 6 (1998): 29–42.

arrived in Lucca. To this day, the cross is situated in the same Tuscan city, in a chapel of the cathedral of San Martino. The chapel was built in 1484 to house it in the right-hand nave.

Illumination of the Holy Cross. In Italian, *Luminara di Santa Croce*.

takes place annually. On the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, each September 13.

miracles about the Holy Face. For edition and for dating on stylistic basis, see the still foundational work by Gustav Schnürer and Joseph M. Ritz, *Sankt Kümmernis und Volto Santo: Studien und Bilder*, Forschungen zur Volkskunde, vols. 13–15 (Düsseldorf, Germany: L. Schwann, 1934), 133, and, in addition, Michele C. Ferrari, "Identità e imagine del Volto Santo di Lucca," in *La Santa Croce di Lucca: Storia, tradizioni, immagini. Atti del convegno, Villa Bottini, 1–3 marzo 2001* (Lucca, Italy: Dell'Acero, 2003), 92–102, at 97.

let fall a silver slipper. In Thompson, *Motif-Index*, the gesture is subsumed as motif D1622.3: "Saint's image lets golden shoe (ring) fall as sign of favor to suppliant." This motif is closely related to D1622.2: "Image of Virgin bows to indicate favor."

the miracle is confirmed. Schnürer and Ritz, *Sankt Kümmernis*, 159–78; Peter Spranger, *Der Geiger von Gmünd: Justinus Kerner und die Geschichte einer Legende* (Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany: Stadtarchiv, 1980; 2nd ed. 1991).

Saint Bertin. In Saint-Omer, France. Wendelin Foerster, "Le saint vou de Luques," *Romanische Forschungen* 23.1 (1907): 1–55. The account is given in the prologue to a work known as *La Vengeance Jhesu Christ* (ca. 1430) by Eustache Marcade.

Jenois. His name probably derives from that of an early Christian martyr named Genesius.

encrusted in precious stones. Bejeweled half-shoes of silver were an uncommon adornment but are known from the wardrobe of Madonnas elsewhere, as in the English town of Ipswich (where the Madonna no longer exists) and in the Italian town of Nettuno: see Smith, *Madonna of Ipswich*, 23.

substantial reparation. The most complex and radical explanation has been prompted by the parallel to Cinderella in the motif of the shoe. See Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Cendrillon crucifiée: À propos du *Volto Santo* de Lucques," in *Miracles, prodiges et merveilles au Moyen Âge. Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public. XXVe Congrès, Orléans, juin 1994*, Série Histoire ancienne et médiévale, vol. 34 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995), 241–69; idem, "Réalité matérielle et réalité symbolique: A propos du soulier de Christ," in *"Pictura quasi fictura": Die Rolle des Bildes in der Erforschung von Alltag und Sachkultur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz, Internationales Round-Table-Gespräch Krems an der Donau, vol. 3 (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), 73–85.

song of heroic deeds. In French, *chanson de geste*.

singing an editorial. *Aliscans*, ed. Claude Régnier, trans. Andrée Subrenat and Jean Subrenat, Champion classiques. Moyen Âge (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 328–31 (4821–31 [4759–69]): "I can well tell you and assert as true: a nobleman should not listen to a jongleur if he does not wish, by God, to give of what he has, for the jongleur does not know another way of working for his living… You can verify by the Holy Face of Lucca, which threw down to him its shoe… We ought to love jongleurs greatly: they seek out joy, and love to sing it" (my translation).

Overt incredulity. Boncompagno da Signa, *Rhetorica antiqua* (or *Boncompagnus)*: no citation is provided by Gustav Schnürer, "Die Spielmannslegende," in *Die Görresgesellschaft im Jahre 1914: Jahresbericht und Abhandlungen der Herren Birkner, Büchi, Ehses, Rücker, Schnürer* (Cologne, Germany: J. P. Bachem, 1914), 78–90, at 83.

stranger transmogrification. The bibliography on the tale is extensive. Key studies are Schnürer and Ritz, *Sankt Kümmernis*; Spranger, *Der Geiger von Gmünd*; Regine Schweizer-Vüllers, *Die Heilige am Kreuz: Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im späten Mittelalter und in der Barockzeit*, Deutsche Literatur von den Anfängen bis 1700, vol. 26 (Bern, Switzerland: P. Lang, 1997). For a good distillation in English of what is known and what has been hypothesized, see Ilse E. Friesen, *The Female Crucifix: Images of St. Wilgefortis since the Middle Ages* (Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001), 35–45. In German, the standard encyclopedia entry is Peter Spranger, "Kümmernis," in *EdM*, 8: 604–7.

Brothers Grimm. The Brothers Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (repr. Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986; 1st ed. 1812–1815), 2: 293–94 (no. 66: "Die heilige Frau Kummernis") and xxxxix (notes). In the overall count of the Grimm's tales, this one is reckoned no. 152a (and may be compared with no. 139). In the standard system of folktale tale types, this one is now subsumed as ATU 706 D: "Kümmernis," according to the standard classification system, ATU. The same motif also appeared in the Brothers Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen*, ed. Hans-Jörg Uther, 3 vols. (Munich, Germany: Diederichs, 1993), 1: 269–70 (no. 330: "Die Jungfrau mit dem Bart"). In this instance they followed Johannes Praetorius, *Gazophylaci Gaudium: Das ist, Ein Ausbund von Wündschel-Ruthen, oder sehr lustreiche und ergetzliche Historien von wunderseltzamen Erfindungen der Schätze Wünschelruthe* (Leipzig, Germany: Ritzsch, 1667), 152–53. See Johannes Bolte and George Polívka, *Anmerkungen zu den Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*, 5 vols. (Leipzig, Germany: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913–1932), 3: 241.

collection of exempla from 1700. Entitled *Ovum paschale novum, oder, Neugefärbte Oster-Ayr* (new Easter egg or newly colored Easter eggs) *das ist, Viertzig geistliche Discurs auff den H. Ostertag und Ostermontag*, by the Catholic preacher and parish priest Andreas Strobl (Salzburg, Austria: M. Haan, 1694), 216–17, who drew in turn upon Benignus Kybler, *Wunder-Spiegel, oder göttliche Wunderwerck auss dem Alt- und Neuen Testament zu einem beyhülfflichen Vorrath allerhand Predigen* (2 vols. [Munich, Germany: In Verlegung Johan Wagners: Johann Hermanns von Geldern; gedruckt bey Sebastian Rauch, 1678–1682], 1: 505). On the sources of the exemplum in the latter, see Renate Vollmer, *Die Exempel im "Wunderspiegel" des P. Benignus Kybler S.J. von 1678*, ed. Wolfgang Brückner und Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, Veröffentlichungen zur Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte 35 (Würzburg, Germany: Bayerische Blätter für Volkskunde, 1989), 31, no. 144.

Kummernis. This corresponds to the more common *Kümmernis*, with an umlaut.

sundry other names. She is known also in English as Saint Uncumber, which derives in turn from the Middle Dutch Ontkommer, signifying "freedom from care" (from the negative prefix *ont-* and the noun *kommer*). Names in other languages are: Liberata in Italian and Librada in Spanish, presumably implying something similar to the German, since both mean "freed" in Italian and Spanish. The French Débarras is similar, since it denotes "riddance."

strong maiden. Latin, *virgo fortis*. For Wilgefortis, see *Acta Sanctorum* (July), 5: 63. For iconography and history, see Friedrich Gorissen, "Das Kreuz von Lucca und die H. Wilgifortis/Ontcommer am unteren Rhein: Ein Beitrag zur Hagiographie und Ikonographie," *Numaga* 15 (1968): 122–48.

The tale is widely attested. Hans-Jörg Uther, *Handbuch zu den "Kinder- und Hausmärchen" der Brüder Grimm: Entstehung, Wirkung, Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 457. See also Friesen, *Female Crucifix*, 9–18 (on *Volto Santo*), 47–62 (on Ontkommer and Uncumber), 63–80 (on Wilgefortis), 81–110 (on Kummernis). On the iconography, see Marco Paoli and Carla Simonetti,

"L'iconografia del Volto Santo in codici e stampati," in *Il Volto Santo: Storia e culto. Catalogo della mostra (Lucca, 21 ottobre–21 dicembre 1982)*, ed. Clara Baracchini and Maria Teresa Filieri (Lucca, Italy: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 1982), 49–58.

The Image at Lucca. In German, "Die Bildnus [*sic*] zu Luca." The woodcut is labeled "Sant Kümernus." For information and reproduction, see Hans Burgkmair, *Das graphische Werk: 1473–1973* (Augsburg, Germany: Städtische Kunstsammlungen, 1973), no. 38, catalogue no. 39.

folk art. Koraljka Kos, "St. Kümmernis and Her Fiddler (An Approach to Iconology of Pictorial Folk Art)," *Studia Musicologica* 19 (1977): 251–66.

1816 ballad. Entitled *Der Geiger zu Gmünd* (The fiddler of Gmünd) by the Swabian poet Andreas Justinus Kerner.

Saint Cecilia. The writer had been inspired to compose his poem by seeing a representation of Kummernis with an accompanying account of the legend.

image of Cecilia. In a chapel in Gmünd.

matching item of footwear. The ballad, still known today, enjoyed surges of popularity in the past. The German painter Hermann Knackfuss produced an engraving of this version as a book illustration that was printed in 1871, at the time of the Franco-Prussian War: Hermann Knackfuß, "Der Geiger zu Gmünd Buchillustration," in *Alte und Neue Welt: Illustrierte Katholische Monatsschrift zur Unterhaltung und Belehrung* 5 (1871): 308, reproduced at p. 103 as fig. 49.

The Hermit. *Der Einsiedler* or *Der geigende Eremit*: Berlin, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen, Preussischer Kulturbesitz (Inv. Nr. A I 363), 90 × 69 cm (oil on wood): see Rolf Andree, *Arnold Böcklin: Die Gemälde*, 2nd ed. (Basel, Switzerland: F. Reinhardt; Munich, Germany: Hirmer, 1998), 457 (no. 384). The painting's relevance as an analogue to the juggler tale was pointed out first in 1898 by Oelsner, "A Story by Anatole France," 218.

The Miracle. Kurt Elbau, "Das Wunder," *Lübeckische Anzeigen* 149, Morgen-Blatt, no. 393, August 6, 1899, 3. Cited by August Andrae, "Das Weiterleben alter Fablios, Lais, Legenden und anderer alter Stoffe," *Romanische Forschungen* 16 (1904): 321–53, at 327.

the noun. See Wilhelm Schäfer, "Der Spielmann," in idem, *Erzählende Schriften*, vol. 2: *Rheinsagen* (Munich, Germany: Müller, 1918), 73–74; repr. in *Legenden: Alte Erzählungen in der Dichtung unserer Zeit*, ed. Fritz Schloß, 29–30 (Sannerz, Germany: Gemeinschafts-Verlag, 1923), and ed. Fritz Schloß, 34–36 (with Scherenschnitt on 36) (Sannerz, Germany: Eberhard Arnold, 1925).

The Dancer of Our Lady. The German is *Der Tänzer unserer lieben Frau*. To take four examples from across more than four decades, this was the case with the 1921 adaptation of the tale as a play by Franz Johannes Weinrich, the 1922 translation of the Old French into German by Carl Sigmar Gutkind, a 1963 setting of the story to electronic music composed in 1963 by Konrad Boehmer for a ballet that was performed a year later, and the 1964 scissor-art version of the story by Wilhelm Preetorius.

The sixty-minute composition by Boehmer was commissioned by the Wuppertal ballet company (Wuppertaler Bühnen) during a spell when the composer was active in the West German Broadcasting Company (WDR) in Cologne. The music was recorded in the broadcaster's electronic studio and was performed by the ballet company on January 30, 1964. The ballet was by Erich Walter and Heinrich Wendel, with soloists Inge Koch and André Doutreval. See Konrad

Boehmer, *Doppelschläge: Texte zur Musik*, vol. 1: *Texte zur Musik: 1958–1967*, ed. Stefan Fricke and Christian Grün, Quellentexte zur Musik des 20./21. Jahrhunderts, vol. 12 (Saarbrücken, Germany: Pfau, 2009), 158–59.

Friedrich Hedler. Friedrich Hedler, *Der Tänzer unserer lieben Frau: Ein Spiel nach altfranzösischen und altdeutschen Motiven* (Munich, Germany: Buchner, 1950). The cover has a woodcut by P. J. Paffenholz, and the foreword indicates that the accompanying music (formerly available through the publisher) was by Erwin Mausz. Hedler had been an opponent of Goebbels within the Rosenberg faction of the National Socialists: see Friedrich Hedler, "Wiedergeburt der Schauspielkunst aus dem Geist der Dichtung," *Bausteine* 2 (1934): 97–103. Works with the same German title that tell instead the story of *Our Lady's Tumbler* have been written by Wilhelm Preetorius and Franz Johannes Weinrich, as well as the translation by Curt Sigmar Gutkind in Fraenger.

The Miracle of the Golden Shoes. Maria Dutli-Rutishauer, *Das Wunder der goldenen Schuhe und andere Legenden*, illus. Johannes Wohlfahrt (Rottenburg/Neckar, Germany: Pfeilerverlag, 1954).

Loving Mother of the Savior. Dutli-Rutishauer, *Das Wunder der goldenen Schuhe*, 65–68: *Alma redemptoris mater*.

Tell Me Something!. Henry Blauth and Kurt Roderbourg, *Erzähl mir was!* (Boston: Ginn, 1960), 126–33 ("Der Spielmann unserer lieben Frau").

The Poor Minstrel. "Der arme Spielmann," in *Festkalendar von Frz. Graf Bocci, G. Görres und ihren Freunden*, 10 (Munich: Cotta, and Vienna: Mechitaristen, 1836), 6. Cited by Schnürer, "Die Spielmannslegende," 89–90.

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Abbreviations

EdM *Enzyklopädie des Märchens: Handwörterbuch zur historischen und vergleichenden Erzählforschung*. 15 vols. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977–2015.

LHA *The Letters of Henry Adams*, ed. J. C. Levenson et al. 6 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982–1988.

PL *Patrologiae cursus completus*, Series latina, ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris, 1844–1880.

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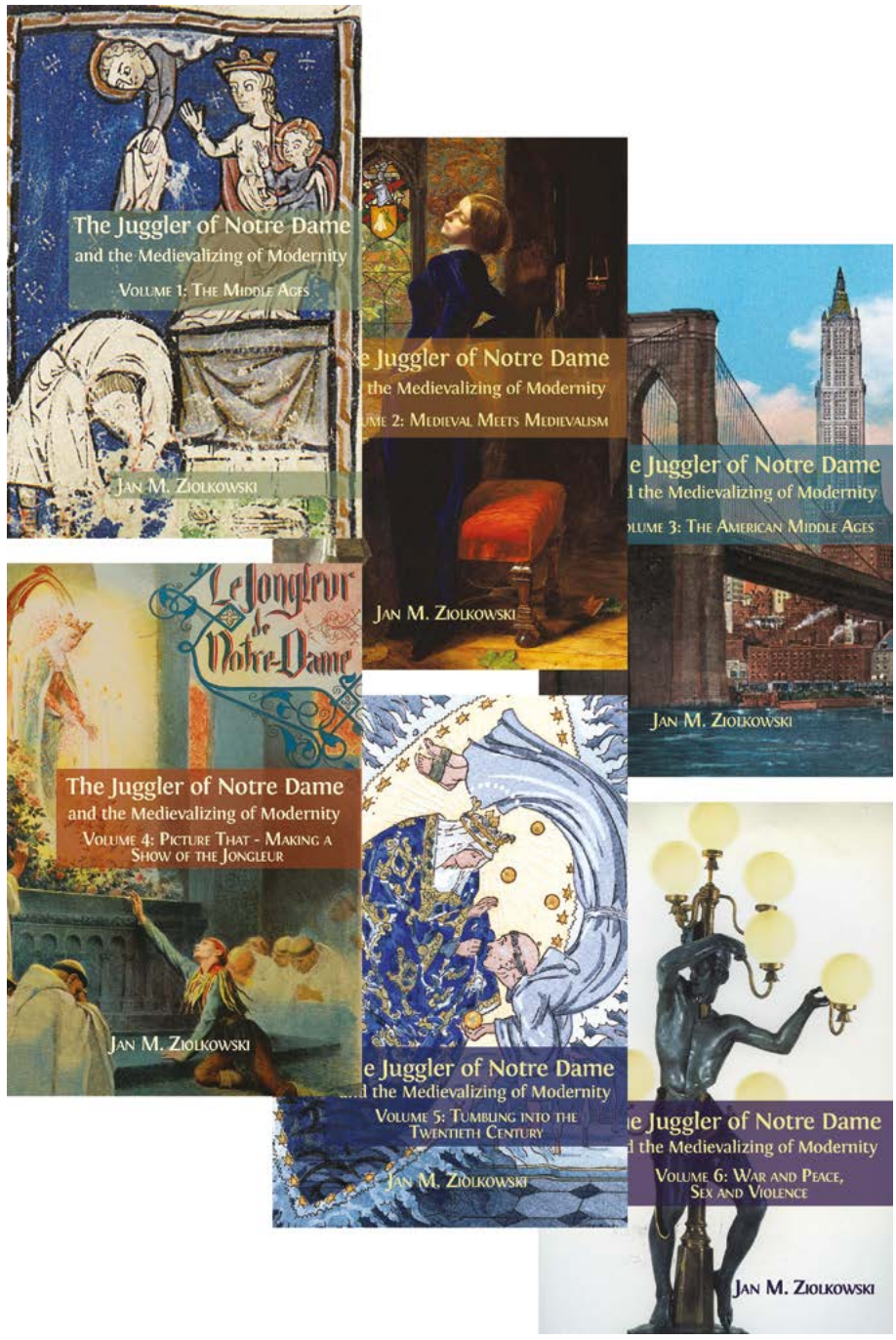
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