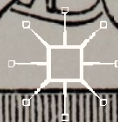
THE NEW MIDDLE AGES

MEDIEVAL RELIGION *and its* ANXIETIES

HISTORY *and* MYSTERY *in the* OTHER MIDDLE AGES

Thomas A. Fudgé



The New Middle Ages

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Medieval Religion and its Anxieties

History and Mystery in the Other Middle Ages

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For Trish Wright.... after 38 years, a long overdue recognition

Preface

This book reflects my idiosyncratic approach to university teaching, in which I have tried to follow the observation of the British medievalist R.W. Southern who noted, we "learn after all by being puzzled and excited, not by being told".[1] I did my first PhD at Cambridge with Bob Scribner. He prompted me to look carefully at the margins of the medieval world. His own work on visual images is well known.[2] I accepted a number of Bob's methodologies including the preoccupation with religious mentalities, the need for adopting wider paradigms for understanding religion and culture, and the importance of religion in its varied manifestations. The idea that religion was not defined by adherence to particular theological convictions but by the shape of popular practice presented new avenues of exploration while prompting new questions. I also learned that messages of all types, including religious and theological ones, underwent transformation, especially in the hands and minds of the audience, between utterance by a leader and reception by the masses. Above all, Scribner underscored that primary sources comprised the weight of evidence and did not require the flimsy thread of theoretical approaches either for nurture or support. I became a believer.

Historical investigation exposes those seeking to control rather than participate in history. Examples include the Roman *damnatio memoriae* policy. This condemnation of memory was a Roman Senate directive mandating that certain persons were not to be remembered, meaning total erasure from historical records.[3] The Soviet practice of airbrushing photographs to eliminate all trace of those expelled from the party, and considered *personae non gratae*, is also germane.[4] A third example was

the 1970s vitriolic controversy surrounding the holocaust museum in Washington, D.C.[5] Another example is the revisionism of the Christian faith of the American founding fathers.[6] Intellectual stagnation is also revealed. One theologian bragged that during his long tenure at Princeton of nearly sixty years his colleagues "were not given to new methods or new theories. They were content with the faith once delivered to the saints. I am not afraid to say that a new idea never originated in this Seminary. Their theological method was very simple. The Bible is the word of God. That is to be assumed or proved. If granted; then it follows, that what the Bible says, God says. That ends the matter."[7] Charles Hodge was not alone. Testifying under oath, three-time nominee for the presidency of the USA, William Jennings Bryan, asserted "I have all the information I want to live by and to die by…I am not looking for anymore."[8] Liberal thinkers like William Cowper Brann deplored the approach claiming such men "could look thro' a keyhole with both eyes at once" while characterizing Baylor University as a conglomeration of "intellectual eunuchs, who couldn't father an idea if cast bodily into the womb of the goddess of wisdom."[9] What a predicament!

The *other* Middle Ages will seem strange to modern readers. Historians are like archaeologists who dig up buried treasure and bring it into the light of a new era. In this way, we are forced to reconsider assumptions and judgements about the past, human civilization, truth, the future, and the meaning of human existence. In this manner, it is possible to avoid the "enormous condescension of posterity" and escape to some degree the confines of the intellectual prisons we have built which determine our appreciation of truth and reality. The past is the future of the world to the extent that history provides new possibilities and perspectives.[10]

If we accept that people took seriously the things discussed in this book, matters we might consider odd, misguided, or dangerous, surely we can learn that historical context shapes assumptions we hold to be inviolable and true in our own liberal, western democracies. For example, draconian drug laws and judicial sentencing guidelines handed down in the 1980s, based upon prevailing wisdom at the time, sent people to prison in the USA for fifty years for simple possession of a restricted substance. Few would support such measures now, yet some jurisdictions remain unchanged. Views on sexuality today are considerably different from the Middle Ages or even the 1960s.[11] The severity of judicial punishment in the aftermath of moral panics associated with alleged ritual child abuse in the 1980s and 1990s in the UK, the USA, and New Zealand is now properly regarded

as misguided.[12] Nevertheless, people like the American Kelly Michaels and the New Zealander Peter Ellis endured prison terms having been convicted on highly suspect evidence. If medieval beliefs, once held as divinely inspired and immutable, can be set aside, is it not possible that a fresh critical approach to contemporary challenges may produce another paradigm shift enabling a re-evaluation of personal truths, social realities, legal policies, and cultural practices? If medieval religion and society cannot be privileged as something absolute and binding for all time, then what basis exists for regarding our policies, practices, and assumptions as normative for everyone for the foreseeable future? There is no epistemological basis to support such arrogance or intellectual certainty short of subjective personal belief systems predicated on notional pre-determination. Such claims are breathtakingly ambitious.

The *other* Middle Ages are filled with extraordinary history and mystery. In those days, we find priests wearing masks, running through church choirs, laughing uproarishly, celebrating the Feast of the Ass. We encounter fortress-churches, images of judgement, punishment, torture, and hell. We see men and women stripped, burned alive, and miscreants dragged naked into churches by ropes fastened around their necks. We learn of men standing on pillars in wildernesses for decades on end and women willingly walled up in churches and convents. What are we to make of women on medieval churches who invite us to look closely at their fully exposed genitals? Or sodomites on church corbels engaging in anal intercourse? Or the man on an Abbey Church fellating himself? In these *other* Middle Ages we observe the piety of honey bees, animals occupying court dockets, the skin of a dead man made into a drum, and thousands of Christians walking pilgrimage paths to sacred sites. We encounter perverts, murderers, and a serial killer who hears Mass and kneels to receive the sacrament. We observe religious women tasting the foreskin of Jesus, others whipping themselves until the blood flows, bishops biting off bits of relics with their teeth before fleeing with their sacred treasures. We read of religiously generated orgasms, deep faith, extraordinary post-mortem instructions, more relics than mathematically possible, and communities practicing their religion in forests completely nude. We enter churches, religious houses, towns, latrines, prisons, cemeteries; we are taken into deserts, to islands, mountains, along roadways from one end of Europe to the other. With R.W. Southern we are startled, amazed, puzzled, and excited.

The investigations which follow are not definitive assessments but interim suggestions requiring further reflection and modification. As the medieval Czech chronicler Petr of Zittau wrote: "Someone will come after me who will refine this roughly written material with a file of subtlety."[13] Instead of attempting some grand metahistorical explanation for the curiosities of the past, I have indulged the possibility of less spectacular causal factors. By introducing the idea of *other* Middle Ages, the study of topics outside the mainstream calls into question the historiographical construct of the Middle Ages itself and suggests the medieval world is still not adequately understood. The incompleteness of this endeavour is part of the obligatory humility of the historian who must consider his or her researches as works in progress.[14] The *other* Middle Ages were rooted not in crowns and kingdoms nor yet in prelates or politics but rather in the mentalities of ordinary people living their lives in a sort of inchoate religious anthropology which shaped the multiple medieval worlds in profound and lasting ways.[15] Those who lived so long ago, so far away, in such strange and wonderful worlds, slumber in silence until they are given the power to speak once more. For it is true "the dead have no existence other than that which the living imagine for them."[16] Those men and women of the *other* Middle Ages all require "a little of our blood to return to fleeting life, to speak to and through us. For they do wait for us, you know, not as the faint spoor of long-vanished existence, but as real persons, real yet speechless until some questioning voice dissolves the spell of their silence."[17]

My indebtedness to many people goes back, in some cases, twenty-five years, reflecting personal or professional relations or the influence of their work and ideas. The list includes Bob Scribner, František Šmahel, Howard Kaminsky, David R. Holeton, Malcolm Lambert, Gail Solberg, Charles Zika, Jiří Kejř, Helmut Puff, Marcia Colish, Anne Hudson, Larry Silver, Peter Dinzelbacher, Constant Mews, Ben Parsons, James Penney, Cary Nederman, Vincent Orange, Claire Daunton, Irv Brendlinger, Franz Bibfeldt, my students especially at Canterbury University and the University of New England, the anonymous readers for Palgrave Macmillan, and Bonnie Wheeler for including the book in her series The New Middle Ages. My son Jakoub assisted with photographing gargoyles and Last Judgements. Ian Campbell read the entire text making cogent comments towards clarity and improvement. At Palgrave, I am grateful to Brigitte Shull, Ryan Jenkins, and Paloma Yannakakis for attending to the usual myriad of technical and administrative challenges required in turning a typescript into a book.

This book is dedicated to Trish Wright, my secretary (or so I think of her), whose real job is Academic Manager of the School of Humanities at the University of New England. Her virtues are many. She is enthusiastic, professional, energetic, humourous, supportive, competent, reliable, and willingly accepts "other duties as required." Her office radar detects passengers a mile away, can scotch MBA and deflect AP without batting an eye, and even quicker than a rat up a rafter in the unplumbed and plumbingless depths of Café 39. Further, she knows more about corn than any agronomist. Beyond this, she has rescued this hopeless Luddite from numerous small catastrophes. With fortitude suggesting the Stoics of antiquity, she heard the entire text orally performed and with much forbearance listened to indelicate ranting and raving on the part of its author. As I mentioned recently to one of my Canadian colleagues, "everyone needs a Trish." This book is offered as a token of genuine and lasting gratitude.

Notes

1. R.W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 47.
2. R.W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, 2nd edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
3. Eric R. Varner, *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and the Roman Imperial Portraiture* (Boston: Leiden, 2004).
4. David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997).
5. Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), pp. 216–220. See also Raul Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996) and Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, 2nd edition (London: Verso, 2003).
6. Among many examples is David Barton, who possesses only an earned undergraduate degree from Oral Roberts University, who has written many self-published books. *The Jefferson Lies: Exposing the Myths You've Always Believed in* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012) was withdrawn by the publisher four months after release over serious concerns of scholarly integrity.
7. A.A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge* (New York: Scribner's, 1880), p. 521.
8. *The World's Most Famous Court Trial: A Complete Stenographic Report of the Famous Court Test of the Tennessee Anti-Evolution Act at Dayton, July 10–21, 1925* (Cincinnati: National Book Company, 1925), p. 294.

9. William Cowper Brann, *The Complete Works of Brann, the Iconoclast*, 12 vols (New York: The Brann Publishers, 1919), vol. 10, pp. 80 and 82.
10. Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 112–117.
11. For example, in July 1965 Charles O. Cotner was arrested, prosecuted, and remanded to serve a prison sentence of between two and fourteen years for violating the Indiana Sodomy Statute. His offence was having anal sex with his wife. Though his wife declined to press charges, the state of Indiana prosecuted Cotner. Jon D. Krahulik, "The Cotner Case: Indiana Witch Hunt" *Indiana Legal Forum* 2 (Spring, 1969), pp. 336–50.
12. J.S. La Fontaine, *Speak of the Devil: Allegations of Satanic Abuse in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Debbie Nathan and Michael Snedeker, *Satan's Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt* (New York: Basic Books, 1995), and Lynley Hood, *A City Possessed: The Christchurch Civic Creche Case* (Dunedin: Longacre, 2001).
13. *Petra Žitavského Kronika Zbraslavská* (Chronicon aulae regie), ed. Josef Emler, in *Fontes rerum bohemicarum*, vol. 4 (Prague: Nákladem musea Království Českého, 1884), p. 4.
14. I am again indebted to R.W. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: Hambledon Press, 1987), pp. xi–xiv.
15. Outlined adroitly in R.W. Scribner, *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400–1800)*, ed. Lyndal Roper (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
16. Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*, trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 1.
17. Arthur Quinn, *A New World: An Epic of Colonial America from the Founding of Jamestown to the Fall of Quebec* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1994), p. 2.

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CHAPTER 1

The Feast of the Ass: Medieval Faith, Fun, and Fear

Commenting on the scandalous carnivalesque "Feast of the Ass," Richard of St. Victor, the twelfth-century prior of a famous Augustinian abbey in Paris, drew attention to another side of the Middle Ages. "But today, more than other days of the year, they concentrate on fortune-telling, divinations, deceptions, and feigned madness. Today they outdo each other in turn with offerings of observation of silly or superstitious intent. Today, having been seized up by the furies of their bacchant-like ravings and having been inflamed by the fires of diabolical instigation, they flock together to the church, and profane the house of God with vain and foolish rhythmic poetry in which sin is not wanting but by all means present, and with evil sayings, laughing and cacophony … and many applaud with the hands of priests, and the people love these things."[1]

One of the more popular medieval farces, the Feast of the Ass (*festum asinorum*) was originally held on Christmas Day but later celebrated on 14 January. Initially, the feast was a celebration of the beast that carried Mary and the infant Jesus to safety in the face of the massacre of the innocents ordered by King Herod. Later, it evolved into a raucous festival. The event was celebrated as a masquerade. Priests and clerks wore masks, dressed as minstrels, women, or pimps, and danced in the choir while singing dishonourable songs. They played games in sacred places. They ran and jumped shamefully throughout the churches without any embarrassment. They scuttled about town on carts and caused great laughter

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with their vulgar acts, scurrilous gestures, and immoral talk. Masks depicting biblical characters predominated. The most popular was Balaam on his famous talking ass. A monstrously dressed cleric would be chosen as bishop, placed on an ass, facing the tail and would be led into the church for Mass to the shout "Balaam comes" as the ass entered. Pseudo-Balaam spurred the ass, and on behalf of the beast, someone cried out, "why do you spur me so hard, you wretch?" whereupon someone else intoned the words, "Cease to obey the commands of King Balek." Then the crowd implored the ass to prophesy. At Sens, the choirboys had a custom of calling their archbishop "Ass" during the festival.[2] Nominated persons carried a plate of broth before the ass and a jug or bowl of beer, and the ass was permitted to eat in the church. The ass incensed the altars and raising one leg, called out in a loud voice, "Boo." The clerics carried large torches rather than the usual candles. The ass rode from altar to altar incensing as he went while everyone sang the "song of the ass."[3]

> Today is the day of gladness
> Away all thoughts of sadness
> Envy and grandeur away
> We will rejoice with heart and voice
> For we keep the Ass's Feast today
>
> From eastern lands once there came a modest ass
> This ass was fine and very strong
> No burden was too heavy
> Hee Haw Mr. Ass, Hee Haw
>
> All are taken into the church
> By the great strength of the ass
> Now he pants before his cart
> Drags his heavy burden
> Now with strongest teeth he bites
> The tough straw in pieces fine
>
> Clean straw and dry chaff
> Sharp thistles he eats
> Thrashing on the box floor
> From early morn till night
> Hey, Mr. Ass, you sing Hee Haw
>
> With his flapping ears and long
> Lo the harnessed son of song
> He is chosen; hear his call
> Ass of asses, lord of all

Now say amen, you little ass
You are sated with your straw
Amen, amen, over again
Fly from that which was
Hee Haw, Mr. Ass, Hee Haw.[4]

The ass was then led to the high altar, having been taught to kneel at the proper place while the priest-pretender chanted the refrain: "Hee Haw, Mr. Ass, Hee Haw." Then the entire congregation joined in the chorus, with the speaker for the ass taking up the refrain: "Hee Haw, Mr. Ass, Hee Haw. This is the famous day, the most famous of all famous days. This is the festive day, the most festive of all festive days." The clerics then turned their garments inside out and danced in the church while all the people looked on and laughed. When the ceremony came to an end, instead of the usual words of dismissal, the priest brayed three times like an ass and in place of the usual, "we bless the Lord," the people responded by braying three times in the same manner. These mock religious festivals prevailed from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. By the end of the Middle Ages, the church increasingly began to legislate against them. Quite apart from special events like the Feast of the Ass, we find many examples of medieval church visitations wherein gross and blatant irregularities among the religious were notorious.[5] The Feast of the Ass reveals both medieval mentalities as well as anxieties.

The later medieval church made efforts to suppress these activities and their mandates echo the objections raised 300 years earlier by Richard of St. Victor. During session 21, on 9 June 1435, the Council of Basel passed a resolution "against performing spectacles in churches."

> In some churches, during certain annual celebrations, there are carried on various scandalous practices. Some people with miter, crozier and pontifical vestments give blessings after the manner of bishops. Others are robed like kings and dukes. In some regions this is called the Feast of Fools or innocents, or of children. Some put on masked and theatrical comedies, others organize dances for men and women, attracting people to amusement and buffoonery. Others prepare meals and banquets there. This Holy Synod detests these abuses. It forbids ordinaries as well as deans and rectors of churches, under pain of being deprived of all ecclesiastical revenues for three months, to allow these and similar frivolities, or even markets and fairs, in churches, which ought to be houses of prayer, or even in cemeteries. They are to punish transgressors by ecclesiastical censures and other remedies of the law. The holy synod decrees that all customs, statutes and privileges which do not accord with these decrees, unless they add greater penalties, are null.[6]

These activities and efforts at their suppression reflect aspects of medieval religion and various levels of thinking around religious practice.

The world of the Middle Ages was one filled with devils, witches, horrific demons, flying animals, spirits in the trees and grass, monsters, weird visions, magic, superstition, anticipation of the coming of the antichrist, the danger of an incubus or succubus in one's bed, strange things occurring without explanation, diseases like the Black Death that swept Europe with long deadly strokes, natural disasters, the brevity of life, high infant mortality, cynicism and despair, conflict, crisis, and the coming and terrible end of the world embodied in the haunting lyrics of the thirteenth-century dirge *Dies Irae*.[7] The ideas compressed into the words of the "day of wrath" suggest a world of insecurity and fear but this, as we have suggested, was also an essentially religious world. The great fortress churches of Languedoc were erected as bulwarks against the rising tide of dissent and heresy.[8] All of this related intimately to the problems of life at the end of the Middle Ages: food shortages, the need for shelter, illness, death, divine punishment, and the advance of hostile enemies. Around these concerns arose popular beliefs that sought to explain the unexplainable and provide meaning to an otherwise meaningless existence.[9] This is not to suggest that life in the late medieval period was devoid of meaning. It has been shown that, even with the steep ascent of heretical inclination and the European reformations in the sixteenth century, there was an increase in piety and religious observance in different parts of Europe.[10] Official religion and popular beliefs mingled freely and, on the edges of the church world, cultural categories of popular religion evolved and we find glimpses of this in the *other* Middle Ages.

The definition of medieval popular religion is a fluid one, but it is possible to identify certain common themes and characteristics, namely, that the ideas were most often transmitted orally, that its observance was regulated by particular rituals, that it received its essential identity from the community that embraced it, and finally, that it existed in varying degrees of opposition to the prevalent forms and patterns of "official" religion. This is not to suggest that popular religion had no meaningful connection to literate, written, institutional, or official forms of religion. Popular religion did not necessarily exclude social élites, nor is it necessarily only the provenance of the lower classes. Indeed, it is purely arbitrary and artificial to attempt to divide either culture or religion into separate categories.[11] What the church did not or could not explain was taken up by the imagination of common people (e.g. barmaids and blacksmiths) and shaped

into the numerous rituals and rites of purification and transition that characterize popular culture. Religion in its official, ecclesiastically sanctioned forms, emphasized faith in the unseen. Popular beliefs, on the other hand, constituted an unending quest for certainty and assurance. Popular beliefs and religion frequently acknowledged human inability to control the crises of the late medieval world, and thus, sought either to obtain or control higher power. Popular religion may be regarded in certain ways as a manipulation of power. These power struggles caused popular religion to undergo tremendous metamorphoses by the later Middle Ages.

The material and supernatural worlds were fundamentally significant for medieval culture. The supernatural world interfaced with the material world in many ways. Actions and activities in the natural world were believed to have ripple effects in the supernatural. Witchcraft iconography showing women stirring water and causing rain reflected the popular belief in similarity.[12] The celebration of the Eucharist and the mysterious transformation in the sacrament of the altar underscores the same conviction among the intelligentsia and official structures of belief. Both sacramentalism and magic had at its core the belief that ritual actions performed in the material world had relevance in the supernatural realm. It is not surprising to read medieval tales wherein all the water would be emptied from containers in a house after someone died therein lest the soul of the dearly departed drown. Windows in that dwelling were opened to allow the soul to escape. Neighbours closed theirs for obvious reasons. The material world also penetrated the supernatural, and in certain contexts, was considered an alien, contaminating intrusion. Therefore, heretics and other defiling undesirables might be ordered disinterred and removed from church cemeteries. The unpredictability, the capriciousness of these colliding worlds prompted a whole range of beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, popular religious observances, and physical boundaries. These included eaves, the threshold, fences, crossroads, gargoyles, and other arbitrary lines of demarcation that indicated the nebulous space between the natural and supernatural, spaces and lines where the supernatural crossed into the material realm.[13] These lines could not, and would not, be properly defined until the Last Judgement.

The Last Judgement itself, taken up in Chap. 5, as an art genre with its horrific images of hell reflected some of the anxieties in late medieval culture. The violence of medieval society was mirrored in the violence of hell.[14] The judicial cruelty, with its unusual punishments, that marked this period occurs with considerable frequency in late medieval "Last

Judgements."[15] Reigning over these worlds was both God and the Devil, the latter a malevolent presence of powerful evil and darkness.[16] Images of death and concerns about final judgement and eternal punishment exerted some force on the thinking of late medieval people and must be considered a formative factor.

The story of the Hussite military commander, Jan Žižka, being made into a drum on his death in 1424 is as aspect of popular beliefs and popular religion and very much exemplifies one dimension of the *other* Middle Ages.[17] Its symbolism was part of that dynamic creation of religious mythology developed in the struggle of the Hussite movement. It reflected both faith in the unknown and unexplained as well as a statement of certainty and conviction. Clearly, faith informed certainty as much as conviction informed belief. For Aeneas Sylvius and other Hussite detractors, the drum posthumously explained the ominous old man. For some of Žižka's followers, the drum was a reminder of God's presence, through their deceased captain, always with them. Both beliefs mirror fundamental medieval superstitions. Scholars have grappled with the question of how far apart the world preached by the priest was from the world of the peasant. There is more evidence to suggest that these worlds were not as far removed one from each other as hitherto imagined. Problems of illiteracy and cultural relevance bedevil attempts to reconcile the two. Latin, liturgy, and learning contrast sharply with beer, brothels, and bowel movements. Or do they? The carnivals of popular culture celebrating the foolish, the unruly, and the disorderly, like the "Feast of the Ass," stand in apparent stark contrast to the wisdom, discipline, and order of the religious life. But to what degree are these categories valid? To what extent did priests and monks participate in a learned religious world? The world preached by the pastor and the friar was not necessarily the world those individuals lived in. The idea of a culture of literate monks working prodigiously on manuscripts and the transmission of learning has been questioned and clarified.[18] In as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it has been shown that clerics, both Catholic and Protestant, were practitioners of popular magic and held to superstition as readily as peasants.[19] The world they preached was perhaps an artificial one. The faith of the churchmen, at least as pronounced, had no remedies or correctives for the old problems of life. The Eucharist, whether in Roman or heretical theological or liturgical forms, did not improve the harvest, and the idea of ecclesiastical authority, either papal or conciliar, did not sustain families throughout the rigors of cold harsh winters. So people, bishops and farmers, educated

élites and unlettered peasants, sought out their own ways to deal with the intersection of faith and life.[20]

Traditionally, the medieval world, in its European context, has been dominated by popes, kings, monastic figures, theologians, knights, and nobility. The bulk of scholarship, historically, has focused on these subjects for two reasons. The importance of the institutions represented by these members of society cannot be gainsaid and the mass of extant documentary material pays sustained attention to these elements of the Middle Ages. One might say the structure of medieval society rested on the twin pillars of the papacy and monasticism. Indeed, the multiple worlds of Europe between the fall of the Roman Empire and the awakenings associated with the Renaissance revolved, to some extent, around the colossus of the medieval church. But there was much more to Europe than academic theology, royal power, barons, and bishops. It is folly to devote too much attention to these explorations while neglecting the more subtle nuances of the medieval legend. Kings and popes, wars, monasteries, and great ideas dominate the study of the European Middle Ages. One must not deliberately ignore such considerations, but a fuller perspective should also include the alternative topics that all too frequently are either overlooked or dismissed as insignificant or unworthy of scholarly attention. The Czech king Václav IV was also Holy Roman emperor (for a time) and witnessed the outbreak of the Hussite Revolution during his reign. These events have produced books. The fact that little Wenceslas shat in the font during his baptism at Nürnberg is seldom mentioned. That he shat again all over the altar in St. Vitus' Cathedral during his coronation at age two, whilst crying loudly and creating an escalating commotion, subdued only by a quick-thinking baker who handed the royal brat a cake, has attracted little comment. Such incidents are routinely dismissed. These *other* Middle Ages shed considerable light on those dark corners of history in which is concealed so much of what that world was really like. Beliefs of ordinary people, visual culture, and the wonderful weirdness of those marvellous Middle Ages should rightly be emphasized along with a great deal of mischief, mayhem, and madness, all of which characterize not only popular culture but may also be found in the palaces of popes, the courts of kings, the theatres of theologians, and the businesses of barons. Until a generation ago, it was rare to find scholarly treatments of subjects too far afield from politics, economics, the church, and those ideas that had been deemed important by academics over the past half millennium.

Later medieval Europe was an age characterized by fear, uncertainty, apocalyptic angst, and visions of calamity. Changes in weather caused the ice pack to drift so far south that regular shipping routes between Norway and Greenland had to be changed. Between 1315 and 1317 there were universal crop failures from Ireland to Hungary. Severe famine wracked Europe in the 1330s and 1340s. For example, more than 4000 people starved to death in Florence in 1347. The arrival of the Black Death intensified the medieval preoccupation with the "four last things" – death, judgement, heaven, and hell. There were waves of pestilence, and populations plummeted between 1400 and 1440. Many German towns were abandoned, never to be resettled. In 1316, Flemish records indicate that 10 % of the population was buried at public expense. In 1534, people in Vienne marched barefoot in procession chanting: "Death, famine, drought come to punish sinful cities."[21] Eschatological fear convulsed parts of Europe and the later medieval period was a time of disturbance.

Defining the *other* Middle Ages calls for the identification of the various outcasts, the despised, the hated, the contemptible, and the feared who made up the underside of society. Living in these medieval underworlds were heretics, Jews, homosexuals, whores, lepers, criminals, gypsies, witches, the insane, the diseased, and the socially disinherited. There are four basic categories. First, those who violated rules and regulations: the lawbreakers or the criminals. Second, those who violated social mores and moral principles, and as a consequence, were considered perverts, namely, prostitutes and homosexuals. Third, those who were cultural and ethnic outsiders characterized as the Other. Here one must think of gypsies, Jews, and Turks. Fourth, those who were ill or weak, namely, lepers and lunatics. All of this had severe consequences. An anonymous painting from 1424 for the Carmelites at Göttingen (now at Hanover) shows God showering down avenging arrows on the sinful.[22] A madman on a cathedral corner in Reims from the thirteenth century joins the other usual visual parodies of humanity.[23] Kings prevailed, popes presided, and wars were waged. But amid these predictable elements of medieval history were the *other* Middle Ages.

These *other* Middle Ages represented multiple worlds filled with beliefs fashioned and formed by the immediate context. These were worlds inhabited by humans but firmly related to the supernatural world. The *other* Middle Ages were not separated from the modern world by time and space alone, but this was a world where people thought differently than we do. Recognizing this, we must avoid what E.P. Thompson

called, "the enormous condescension of posterity" and make every effort to avoid the trap of psychological anachronism wherein we think they thought just like us.[24]

Furthermore, this was a world where religion played a key role, permeating life in practically every respect to a depth and extent that today is almost inconceivable.[25] Attempting to take into account the nature and meaning of these *other* Middle Ages means we must ask questions of context, of geography, of chronology, of gender, and of station in life, as well as critical questions about our sources, since medieval people seldom left any direct clues about their beliefs or views of life. This means there is plenty of history and mystery to be explored. Sometimes there are only a series of dead ends in the exploration, which is why mystery remains. As František Palacký, the father of Czech historiography, once noted, "In vain may a historian send thousands and thousands of questions into the dark and deaf night of the past ages; even if he may catch a gleam it is doubtful whether it is light or will-o-the-wisp."[26] This is all the more true of those elusive and seldom-studied *other* Middle Ages where mentalities and anxieties reveal the fabric of the medieval world.

Notes

1. Richard of St. Victor, sermon 49, in PL, vol. 177, col. 1036.
2. E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1903), vol. 1, pp. 331–2.
3. The feast was thus described by the Czech priest Jan Hus in the early fifteenth century in his *Výklad na Páteř*, in Amedeo Molnár, ed., *Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera Omnia*, vol. 1 (Prague: Academia, 1975), p. 342. The relevant passage has been translated in Thomas A. Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia* (London: I.B. Tauris 2010), p. 10. Other details can be found in a letter from the Theology Faculty at Paris to French bishops and cathedral chapters (12 March 1445), in PL, vol. 207, cols. 1169–1176.
4. The Song of the Ass, in a three-part musical arrangement, has been preserved in the British Library, Egerton MS 2615, fols. 43v-44r. The Latin text has been printed in Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, vol. 2, pp. 280–2.
5. Examples include Ivan Hlaváček and Zdeňka Hledíková, eds., *Protocollum visitationis archidiaconatus Pragensis annis 1379–1382 per Paulum de Janowicz archidiaconum Pragensem, factae* (Prague: Academia, 1973), *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (AD 1327–1369)*, ed., F.C. Hingeston-Randolph, 3 vols (London: George Bell, 1894–1899), vol. 1,

pp. 435, 586–7; vol. 2, pp. 723, 828, the thirteenth-century Odo of Rouen, *Registrum visitationum* found in Jeremiah O'Sullivan, ed., *The Register of Eudes of Rouen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), pp. 21–2, 24–6, 368–9, 500, and Karl Joseph von Hefele and Henri Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles*, 9 vols (Paris: Letouzey and Ané, 1907–1952), vol. 7, pt. 1, p. 650. The last source is a 1429 provincial synod at Paris which outlined 41 canons aimed at eliminating clerical irregularities.

6. Mansi, vol. 29, fol. 108.
7. Shinners, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000–1500*, pp. 501–503. The words of the song appear in Chap. 5 below.
8. See for example Sheila Bonde, *Fortress-Churches of Languedoc: Architecture, Religion and Conflict in the Middle Ages* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). The churches at Albi, Avignon, Agde, Maguelone, and Saint-Pons-de-Thomières are among those which exemplify this idea very well.
9. Among the best recent treatment of popular beliefs is R.W. Scribner, "Elements of Popular Belief", in Thomas A. Brady Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy, eds., *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600*, 2 vols (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 231–62. On popular religion see Gábor Klaniczay, *The Uses of Supernatural Power: The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, trans. Susan Singerman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), and John Shinners, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion 1000–1500: A Reader* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1997).
10. A classic study is Bernd Moeller, "Frömmigkeit in Deutschland um 1500" *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 56 (1965), pp. 3–31.
11. On the ostensible dilemma of the term "popular religion" see Bob Scribner's comments in Bob Scribner and Trevor Johnson, eds., *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400–1800* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 2–3 where he concludes that it is "almost impossible to evade some kind of polarised conceptualisation."
12. Examples of witches making rain by stirring water in a pot or otherwise manipulating some container include the woodcuts in Ulrich Molitor, *De Lamiis et Phitonicis Mulieribus* (Cologne: Cornelis de Zierikzee, 1489); Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome, n.p., 1555); Thomas Murner, *Narrenbeschweerung*, London, British Library MS 11517.c.31, fol. M3v; the woodcut by Hans Schäuffelein, "The evil witches" in Ulrich Tengler, *Der neü Layenspiegel* (Augsburg, n.p., 1511), fol. 190r and the titlepage woodcut in Paulus Frisius, *Deß Teuffels Nebelkappen* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Wendel Hum, 1583).
13. Scribner, "Elements of Popular Belief," p. 238.
14. Among the notable "Last Judgements" and portrayals of hell should be mentioned Taddeo di Bartolo's "Hell" executed in the Collegiate Church in San

Gimignano between 1410 and 1415, Hubert van Eyck's "Last Judgement" and Stefan Lochner's "Last Judgement" both from the 1430s, and the huge "Last Judgement" fresco in the Cathédrale of St. Cécile in Albi from the end of the fifteenth century.

15. Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans., Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 20–22.
16. Scribner, "Elements of Popular Belief", pp. 236–7 and Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).
17. Details of the story and its significance can be found in Thomas A. Fudge, "Žižka's Drum: The Political Uses of Popular Religion" in *Heresy and Hussites in Late Medieval Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), pp. XIII, 546–69.
18. Mark Dilworth, "Literacy of Pre-Reformation Monks" *The Innes Review* 24 (Spring 1973), pp. 71–2 and John Shinners and William J. Dohar, eds., *Pastors and the Care of Souls in Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998) represent two opposite views.
19. See for example Gerald Strauss, "The Reformation and its Public in an age of Orthodoxy" in *The German People and the Reformation*, ed., R. Po-Chia Hsia (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 194–214 and Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*, pp.1–16.
20. Shinners, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion 1000–1500*, pp. xv–xvi.
21. Vienne, Archives Municipales MS BB 15, fol. 93r.
22. Richard Palmer, "The Church, Leprosy and Plague in Medieval and early Modern Europe", in *The Church and Healing*, ed. W.J. Sheils (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), p. 81.
23. Sandor Gilman, *Seeing the Insane: A Cultural History of Madness and Art in the Western World* (New York: John Wiley, 1982), p. 19.
24. E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, revised edition (London: Gallancz, 1980), p. 12.
25. Jiří Kejř, *Husité* (Prague: Panorama, 1984), p. 41.
26. Quoted in František M. Bartoš, *The Hussite Revolution 1424–1437*, trans., J. Weir, ed., John M. Klassen (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1986), p. xii.

CHAPTER 2

Prosecuting Animals as Criminals in Medieval Europe

Violence against animals in the European Middle Ages was neither isolated nor unusual. We find a few cases from the eighth and ninth centuries, more in the high Middle Ages, and then a real burst after 1400 extending into the seventeenth century. The apparent randomness is puzzling. Is Satan involved? Were these episodes an outgrowth of the struggle to establish order? So many cases come from the later Middle Ages, yet it is difficult to establish any correlation between areas that hanged pigs, for example, and those that later hanged witches. There are strands of thought about animals as friends, beasts who obey, creatures who perform essential social functions, like dogs trained to protect sheep, and the various ways in which animals served humans.[1] These are models that contrast with the wayward criminal beast that must be tried and punished. From whence do these images come? Canon lawyers, theologians, authors of romance literature, or satirists? Coming to terms with miscreant medieval animals sheds light on social otherness and reveals more fully the tortured quest for order in the Middle Ages. In this chapter, I commit the sin identified by Erica Fudge of only looking at human representations of animals, and that in the narrow legal sense.[2] Nevertheless, the many cases noted below suggest several categories of explanation. These include an effort at maintaining control, the quest for order, the universality of law, a fear of the demonic, and scapegoating. Each of these provides insight into how medieval communities functioned.

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Recently the skeletons of seventy-nine medieval cats were discovered in a well in Cambridge. Their throats had been slit.[3] The killing of animals is also seen in medieval churches.[4] The relation of animals to medieval law is a difficult one but cannot be reduced to phantom legal ritual. Not infrequently, animals were defendants in European courtrooms. An assailant described as "a pig with a black nose" murdered a four-month old girl on 27 March 1567 at the northern French town of Senlis. The beast was convicted of the crime and hanged on the road running west between Senlis and Saint Firmin.[5] Animals were loved and feared in the Middle Ages. Francis of Assisi was known for his kindness to animals but some cities used talismans to protect its citizens from dangerous creatures.[6] Animals were also part of medieval material culture. The early eighth-century *Codex Amiatinus* alone required more than 500 sheepskins.[7] The twelfth-century canon lawyer, Gratian, concluded that since animals were irrational, they could not be regarded as legally competent.[8] That opinion did not preclude numerous legal trials in the later Middle Ages that one scholar calls "rituals of inclusion."[9] These judicial events provide insight into the relationship between humans and the natural world, underscoring that animals, nature, and humans are part of an integrated cosmic history. The story of St. Francis and his agreement with the wolf of Gubbio is well known. It is not common knowledge that this pact was consistent with well-established medieval legal tradition. To wit, one might enter into a treaty with an animal and if the animal failed to honour his agreement it might then be cited before the courts to show cause.[10] At issue likewise is the pervasive medieval understanding that all animals existed for the various uses of humankind.[11] Thirteenth-century missals indicate the notorious Feast of the Ass was celebrated each January.[12] During these carnivalesque celebrations, such animals were honoured and taken into churches.

Medieval religious law or canon law had its beginnings as a set of rules aimed at regulating Christian life. As the medieval church expanded and became more complex, its leaders sought and gained new legal powers of coercion and control. This necessitated an equivalent increase in law. By the end of the Middle Ages, canon law had become voluminous and complex. Inasmuch as there was no definite separation of church and state, this development created a situation wherein the broad thrust of canon law had to be reckoned with by merchants and theologians, politicians and priests. One of the goals of medieval legislation was the definition and implementation of social order. From the thirteenth century, the bodies of civil and canon law became in some ways virtually indistinguishable.

Canonists accepted the Justinian code as a supplementary source of canon law. The boundaries between canon and civil law remained largely permeable. In other words, canon law functioned as considerably more than a set of religious regulations that people might choose to comply with. It defined communities, and individuals' membership and specific place within them. One's relationship to law could be a positive element of one's status; the noble was subject to more legal obligations than the peasant, the male more than the female, and the cleric more than the lay person. Canon law played a central role in medieval political, economic, and social life. In terms of private life, this legislation passed rulings on marriage, divorce, legitimacy of children, sexual conduct, commercial and financial behaviour, labour, poor relief, wills, burial, holidays and celebrations, criminal matters, heresy and blasphemy, and almost every conceivable social circumstance.[13] The quest to establish order at the end of the medieval period was part of the struggle to identify the benefits of written law while making sense of authority in conflict. The search for universal order knew no boundaries. For example, the laws of society and church extended beyond the scope of human conduct and applied to animals as well.[14] Two cases that came before French courts at the end of the Middle Ages form the basis for that discussion. Both reveal the contours of thinking in the medieval period and the dimensions of its anxieties.

In the first case, the eminent French jurist and later "chief justice" of the Parlement in Provence, Bartholomé Chassenée (1480–1542), was appointed to represent the defence in a legal case that may have been styled the People of Autun v. City Rats in the ecclesiastical court in the year 1522.[15] The charge preferred against the defendants constituted the wilful eating and destruction of local barley. From a legal point of view, the offense constituted a felony. A formal summons was drawn up against the alleged perpetrators and posted by the court officer. It described the felons as "filthy animals, gray in color, living in holes." The accused were remanded to appear before the court to answer charges within six days. At the scheduled arraignment no one answering to the description appeared. The presiding judge demanded to know why the defendants had not obeyed the summons. Focusing on procedural arguments, defence counsel, Chassenée, submitted that unfortunately the original summons had been incorrectly phrased. He advised the bench that the original legal writ lacked sufficient clarity insofar as it was too local in nature. The scope should have been broader, to wit that all rats within the diocese should have been specified. As it stood, the general summons had caused confusion among his clients

as to which members of the rodent population were being compelled to appear in court to face the nominated charges. Moreover, the court order had not been disseminated adequately in order to reach all members of the rodent community. Chassenée explained to the judge that for these reasons his clients had not appeared. Hearing these arguments, the court agreed with the conclusions of defence counsel, whereupon the court issued an order that required priests in every parish church within the Diocese of Autun to read from every pulpit the text of the revised summons that incorporated the arguments of Chassenée.

Despite these measures, when the scheduled second hearing was held, no diocesan rats appeared before the ecclesiastical court. Chassenée pleaded for an extension on the grounds that many of his clients were elderly and infirm and it was necessary to make complex and unusual travel arrangements. The court agreed and calendared a date for a third hearing. Despite the allocation of a reasonable timetable, the rats once again failed to appear and were now in danger of a contempt citation. With contumacy now at issue, Chassenée explained to the court that the failure of his clients to appear did not indicate a lack of respect for the court. Indeed, defence counsel argued, the rats were very anxious to appear but hesitated out of fear of being exposed to their mortal enemy. Chassenée explained to the court that his clients were reluctant to venture out of their places of dwelling for it was public knowledge the plaintiffs owned a number of ill-deposed cats. The cats could not be relied on to maintain a posture of neutrality in the legal suit inasmuch as they belonged to the plaintiffs. The lawyer for the defendants advised the court that the long distance and difficulty of the journey to the hearing along with the considerable dangers that accompanied it on account chiefly of the malevolent vigilance of their sworn feline enemies, who lay in wait for the defenceless rats in every street and at every corner with evil intentions, made safe passage to and from the court hearings a matter of grave concern for the defendants. Chassenée begged the court to enact measures to protect his clients and guarantee the defendants would not be harassed and badgered by the sinister cats. After all, the court had a duty to protect all defendants. Chassenée suggested the risk to his clients could only be mitigated if the plaintiffs were required to lock their cats up, thereby guaranteeing the defendants would not be molested coming to, or returning from, the court. The counsel for the rodent population asked the court to consider requiring the plaintiffs to put up large monetary bonds to ensure the safety of his clients. Were this so ordered, Chassenée promised his clients would then appear without

delay to answer the original charges in the case of the people of Autun versus the rats of the diocese. Taking the matter under advisement, the court agreed with this protective order. The citizens of Autun, however, refused to consent and would not agree to bind over their cats to keep the peace. With this obstacle, the judge had no option but to hear a motion for dismissal of the case. Charges against the rats were then summarily withdrawn *sine die*. Though he won the case, it should be pointed out that Chassenée was unable to collect any fees from his clients. The legal wrangling and innovative skills of the attorney, Bartholomé Chassenée should not detract from the drama aimed at maintaining social order.

Chassenée had previously used similar legal strategies when defending woodworms at Mamirolle in 1520.[16] On 22 April, Hugo, Bishop of Besançon, visited the Church of Saint-Michel in Mamirolle. The bishops' throne, used only once yearly, was brought out for Hugo to sit on. However, the chair had been infested with woodworms and one leg had been seriously weakened. When Bishop Hugo sat down, the chair collapsed and the bishop was thrown headlong, striking his head on the altar steps and was seriously injured. Formal charges were brought against the woodworms. Bartholomé Chassenée represented the defendants. He argued the court lacked the proper authority to try the case. He submitted that his clients had neither reason nor volition to answer the summons. While acknowledging that a procedural summons had been issued, Chassenée demanded proof that the writ had been accepted by his clients. Chassenée drew the court's attention to the enormous distance the defendants had to travel to appear and noted the hazards of that undertaking through Mamirolle, a town populated with predatory cats. Moreover, since all woodworms in the Church of Saint-Michel had been named as defendants, Chassenée concluded the summons as drawn up was conclusively invalid for its failure to specify the woodworms that had caused the bishop's mishap. On behalf of his clients, Chassenée argued the woodworms behaved according to nature, and to thus try them was to violate the law of God. Moreover, excommunication was illogical. The prosecution countered with the argument that the woodworms were demon-possessed and the sabotage of the episcopal throne was a work of the Devil. The suggestion was not a throwaway comment. It has been argued that demonology provides a link between the idea of law and the idea of nature up through the seventeenth century.[17]

The second case occurred earlier than these legal procedures and was heard in 1386 in the Norman village of Falaise. The charges stemmed from an incident wherein a sow attacked an infant causing such severe injury to

the infant's face and arms that the child died. The local court tried the sow on charges of homicide. Following a court trial, the defendant was found guilty and condemned to death. A spectacular execution followed. The pig was brought to the place of execution having been formally dressed in jacket, breeches, and gloves. The sentence of death was carried out on the sow, who remained dressed in this attire after having its nose slit and its face covered with the "mask of a human face." The head and front legs are assumed to have been maimed at the order of the court (extant records do not say this) and the sow was hung by its hind legs and left on the gallows on the public square near City Hall for all to see. Ostensibly, a fresco was painted on the west wall in Falaise's Church of the Holy Trinity to commemorate the execution.[18] The Falaise fresco has not survived but other images of criminal animals are extant.[19] While the rats of Autun escaped punishment for their alleged misdeeds, the sow of Falaise endured some form of legal procedure and became subject to capital punishment. Court trials of animals appear to conform to the broad outlines of the *ordo iudiciarius* of European medieval legal history.[20] In 1314, near the village of Moisy, a bull attacked a man so savagely that he died of his injuries. The miscreant beast was arrested, imprisoned, tried, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. The Parlement of Paris confirmed the judgement of the local court and the sentence was carried out on the common gallows at Moisy-le-Temple. The case was appealed on legal technicalities. The Parlement of La Chandeleur declined to vacate the judgement. The appellate court upheld the conviction and execution but ruled the case could not serve as legal precedent because the Count of Valois, who arrested the bull and brought criminal charges, had no jurisdiction in Moisy. Without reference to the felonious bull, Carthusians in Dijon took action for similar reasons against a horse in 1389.[21] These trials and procedures appear to have satisfied a need in medieval communities for addressing social anxieties by enacting "rituals of justice."[22]

The background for the judicial ordeal of animals in Christian Europe has Hebrew roots, and it has been argued these roots provided a partial foundation for the medieval trials.[23] The thesis has not been proven. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, a text from the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 21:28) mandates that if an ox gores someone and kills them, the ox is to be stoned. Scholars suggest that in the Middle Ages, secular and ecclesiastical authorities took this Hebrew idea literally and the punishment of death followed.[24] There is only very thin legal evidence that this statute had any meaningful application in the medieval practice of trying

animals. The comparatively late appearance of judicial procedures against animals mitigates the argument even further. It is noteworthy that Jewish law and Midrash hold many of the same tenets as later medieval practice. The Mishnah and Talmud note that animals that perished during the great flood recorded in Genesis were sinners, and even some survivors on Noah's ark sinned and had to be punished. Elsewhere the Mishnah does question whether it is possible for animals to sin. A high value is placed on animals in a trial situation where it is required that at least two witnesses be cross-examined in a court comprising twenty-three judges. During trial proceedings, the animal defendant is to be present in the courtroom and should reasonable doubt concerning guilt be established, the animal ought not to be executed. Where guilt is determined, executions are to be similar to that meted out to human offenders. Animals involved in sexual contact with humans must be destroyed.[25] None of this is inconsistent with the medieval justice system as applied to the legal process of animals on trial. Bartholomé Chassenée's book on animal trials amassed a litany of authorities to buttress the theories undergirding the legal procedures governing animal trials. These included the Hebrew Bible; the New Testament; the Justinian Code; various Christian theologians, including Boethius and Gregory the Great; Greek and Roman authorities such as Aristotle, Cicero, Ovid, Virgil, and Seneca; and a wide array of medieval sources up to and including his older contemporary, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

What can we learn from animals, and, more to the point, what can we learn from the medieval judicial treatment of animals? What do these incidents tell us about being human, about being good, and about social order in the European Middle Ages? Regardless of interpretations, outcomes, or conclusions, the subject of animal trials provides an important clue to understanding the mentalities and anxieties of the past.[26] A survey of medieval Europe demonstrates that animals played no small role in society. Animals or animal-like creatures appear frequently in art forms like Last Judgements and on medieval buildings, both sacred and secular, in the form of gargoyles, grotesques, corbels, hunky punks, sheela-na-gigs, or chimeras.[27] This subject is taken up in some detail in Chaps. 4 and 5. Misericords can be found in many church choirs and the suggestiveness of their images remains both compelling and mysterious.[28] In the Cathedral of SS Katherine and Maurice in Magdeburg one can still find fourteenth-century misericords featuring the dog, lion, elephant, bird, fox, pig, eagle, ox, dragon, hawk, and peacock. It is impossible to distinguish with any

degree of certainty what people in the Middle Ages thought about animals from what they thought about themselves. Medieval Europeans seemed to believe that animals were quite capable of committing crimes against humanity, and therefore could, and should, be subjected to legal judgement. The precise origin of certain European legal customs remains an open question. Ambiguity of origins aside, it is clear that courts had multiple functions and one of these involved the legal prosecution of animals.

A review of animal trials reveals that such legal processes took place in royal, civil, and ecclesiastical courts. Secular courts dealt with capital offences while church courts handled civil proceedings. That capital cases were heard by secular courts is not surprising given that canon law stipulated the church could neither shed blood nor impose the penalty of capital punishment.[29] In heresy trials, the church always relaxed the condemned to the secular arm for execution of sentence. Thus, the sow of Falaise was tried in a secular court while the rats of Autun were ordered to appear before an ecclesiastical court.[30] The distinction between the legal trials of animals and the quite separate punishment of animals must be maintained in any investigation of the medieval practice of law. Legal proceedings before church courts occurred mainly because it was impractical to arrest, detain, and bring to a courtroom rodents and insects that were not subject to immediate human control. Therefore, medieval people turned to the church for intervention in situations where crop devastation or similar threats faced a community.[31] Civil courts dealt with individual beasts but I find no evidence that church courts ever prosecuted a single animal, preferring instead to hear charges against a collective. Ecclesiastical proceedings are older than the secular processes and may have influenced the latter to some extent.[32] The *modus procedendi* in church trials consisted of four basic elements. First, a proxy was named or appointed who had the brief to order the defendants to appear before the said court. Second, a hearing was scheduled and held wherein a representative of the defendants would be told by the presiding magistrate that the defendants were court-ordered to vacate the area. Third, if the summary order was not heeded then the legal process advanced to a judicial trial. Fourth, if guilt was established, the appropriate punishment was declared and carried out.[33]

The jurist, Bartholomé Chassenée, set forth in some detail the methods of procedure that attended the trials of animals. It is here that we learn that ecclesiastical courts were the normal and preferred venue for the trials, save in those instances where a capital offense had been committed. Reflecting the rubrics of medieval canon law, Chassenée stressed that

church judges had no jurisdiction in capital cases since they were competent only in the administration of canonical punishments.[34] Offenses meriting the stake or the scaffold did not come under the purview of ecclesiastical courts. Occasionally a church proceeding might be handled by a civil magistrate but subject to ecclesiastical authority. Commenting on Chassenée, one might note the absurdity of pre-trial preparations that included determining whether the accused should be regarded as a lay person or a cleric. Chassenée suggests it should be taken for granted that animal defendants might normally be considered members of the laity without invoking a special inquiry in each case to make a determination. An exception might be if a particular defendant, be they pig, bear, or rat, were to claim clerical status, and therefore, invoke *privilegium fori* (the right to be tried in an ecclesiastical court) and *privilegium canonis* (special protection). In that event, Chassenée declares the burden of proof would be incumbent on the defendant.

Legal distinctions are treated by Chassenée in terms of punitive measures exacted by the court in response to criminal behaviour and measures taken by the authorities to prevent criminal charges. He likewise argues against any punishment that does not enjoy the benefit of a judicial decision. Law and legal procedure remained of supreme importance to Chassenée, and animals came under the purview of canon law just as fully as did humans.[35] Modern interpreters note that law can be civil religion in some societies and a culture cannot be understood without coming to terms with its legal systems.[36] Animal trials seem to have laboured on points of law, especially on the matter of establishing culpability on the part of the accused.[37] Interrogatories must have been fascinating. Chassenée claimed animals knew when they transgressed because they tried to conceal their deeds and exhibited fear or timidity when their miscreance was discovered. In one sense, Chassenée's important work on animal trials establishes one incontrovertible point: criminal proceedings against animals in medieval Europe were an established aspect of the prevailing justice system and that the jurisdictional competence of both secular and ecclesiastical courts in such matters had been recognized. Court action against animals was generally not considered malfeasance. Moreover, punishment of animals was not unreasonable if their unmitigated actions had severe consequences for the wider community.[38]

Two and a half centuries before Bartholomé Chassenée appeared at court representing an accused criminal population of rats, Thomas Aquinas argued that animals could not be legally charged with crimes on

the grounds they were unequipped to understand such charges being incapable of reason.[39] The only justification for punishing animals was if they were agents of Satan. The early sixteenth-century anonymous *Malefactio animalium* argued that animals that perpetrated harmful deeds did so at the behest of Satan.[40] Establishing that point of view beyond reasonable doubt was no small task for the prosecutors and courts in medieval Europe. The history of witch hunting in Europe provides a considerable body of evidence to support the idea that Satan might take on animal form.[41] Guibert of Nogent, a twelfth-century Benedictine abbot, wrote of a demon in the form of a badger while Caesarius of Heisterbach claimed they appeared as horses, pigs, and bears.[42] Demonic entities could assume almost any conceivable animal form.[43] In Lucerne in 1573, a man charged with bestiality claimed an evil spirit in the form of a dog had seduced him into his criminal mischief.[44] The later role of animals during the witch-hunting period may have some parallel to this opinion as well as to their earlier legal prosecution. While no one specifically believed that animals possessed a legal intent to kill, the absence of legal intent did not absolve beasts from liability. Indeed, criminal liability was held both by secular and church authorities and this conviction played no mean role in the history of animal trials. It appears the animals that killed or injured humans were regarded as threatening the order of creation and such serious infractions could not go unpunished.

With respect to the story told in the Hebrew Bible of the Mesopotamian prophet Balaam and his famous talking ass (Numbers 22), it has been suggested that societies that accepted that Balaam's donkey showed more perception and good sense than Balaam himself likewise fostered an intolerance towards animals in general.[45] In some respects, there was less room for pitying the animal in the medieval world than in the modern world. Unlike the modern world, the Middle Ages does not seem to know anything *a fortiori* of animal rights. Whatever ambiguity surrounds these episodes in medieval legal history the trials of animals cannot simply be relegated to folklore: animals were regarded as criminals in a legal sense. Real trials were convened, real sentences were handed down, real punishment (executions) followed, and all of this was directed by a proper judiciary in accordance with established law and legal practice.[46] Judicial proceedings were open to scrutiny and not held *in camera*. Prosecuting attorneys were assigned to try the case and defendants were provided with legal representation. In 1519, when field mice in Stelvio in western Tyrol were arraigned on charges of criminal activity in conjunction with damage to local crops,

Schwarz Minig opened for the plaintiffs and Hans Grinebner handled the case for the defence.[47] No one seems to have regarded these procedures as specious or illegal. Sometimes detailed records were kept. For example, the homicide trial record of a bull who killed the teenager, Lucas Dupont near Beauvais, in 1499 is extant in the Cistercian abbey of Beaupré, and the Swiss chronicler Diebold Schilling provides a fulsome account of legal proceedings against a species of vermin in 1478.[48] Court minutes from the Swiss town of Glarus record that on St. Ursula's day (21 October) in 1500 plaintiffs appeared before Judge Wilhelm von Hasslingen. Simon Fließ, from the village of Stilfs, lodged a formal complaint against mice alleged to be destroying local crops. Minig von Partsch was the prosecutor, and Heinz Griebener was the defence counsel. The trial judge was Conrad von Spengser. We know the names of ten jurors. Three named witnesses gave testimony. For the defence, Griebener argued for a protective order (in the face of an expulsion threat). The appeal asked for an assigned place of residence for the defendants, posted guards along the departure route to protect the defendants from hostile dogs and cats, and further that the court make acceptable provisions for pregnant defendants. The judge ruled the mice had fourteen days to vacate their present abode and took into account the arguments of the defence counsel.[49] Outside the courts, academic jurists often weighed in on such perplexing matters. As late as 20 July 1621, the law faculty at Leipzig University ratified a decision that a cow that pushed a pregnant woman causing her death ought to be killed.[50] Certain laws used the term *auctor criminis* (author of crime) to refer to an animal.[51]

Animals sometimes committed shocking acts like mice that gained access to the pyx in medieval churches and unworthily consumed the body of Christ.[52] Such blasphemy did not necessarily result in criminal proceedings, though the prosecutor in the previously mentioned court case against woodworms in Mamirolle in 1520 noted the hanging of a pig that had eaten the Eucharistic host. Dogs entering the monastic buildings at the Benedictine abbey at Whitby were subject to capture and severe punishment.[53] At times, animals killed people and these acts were graphically portrayed.[54] The crimes of medieval animals ranged from misdemeanour disturbing the peace, to felony murder committed by bees, bulls, horses, and snakes, to sexual offenses. Medieval theologians considered sex with animals a sin against nature, the same denunciation used to describe same-sex intercourse.[55] Both practices were collapsed into a legal category called sodomy. The term is exceptionally problematic, especially in the persistent

appeal to abominable and detestable crimes or sins against nature.[56] A fifteenth-century sexually suggestive misericord in St. Nicholas Cathedral in the German town of Stendal shows a woman riding backwards on a goat resting her fulsome bosom on the goat's hind end. Cases of bestiality in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries often resulted in the executions of both human and animal perpetrators. The punishment was generally burning alive, though there are a number of cases of death by hanging. Imperial law, codified in the 1532 *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* (article 116), mandated death by burning for same-sex relations and bestiality.[57] The statute was lifted verbatim from the 1507 *Constitutio Criminalis Bambergensis* authored by Johannes Schwarzenberg.[58] Occasionally the animal was not executed on the grounds of questionable consent. This was the decision at Toulouse when a donkey was adjudicated to have been an unwilling partner. Its owner was hanged; the donkey went free. In 1565, a mule and a man were sentenced to death for the crime of buggery at Montpellier. Since the mule was wont to kick, his hooves were ordered cut off before being taken to the stake.[59] Between 1530 and 1607, Lucerne authorities prosecuted thirty-six cases of bestiality.[60] Sexual crimes involving animals led to the inventing of a third type of criminal procedure in addition to cases normally relegated to secular or ecclesiastical courts.[61]

It is likely that animals that killed humans or that were involved in cases of sexual misconduct were not tried in the strict legal sense. Ordinarily there were no formal court proceedings, there were no defence lawyers appointed and legal discovery, deposition, and interrogatories were unnecessary. A presumption of guilt prevailed and *fama publica*—the belief by reputable persons that the defendant was guilty—thereby established. The suspected animal was simply apprehended and summarily executed.[62] As a mark of special shame and disgrace, there was a medieval practice of hanging wolves or dogs with criminals in German and Scandinavian lands. Writing in the thirteenth century, Saxo Grammaticus notes in his *Gesta Danorum* criminals hanging upside down with a live wolf and mass executions with a wolf tied to each convict.[63] The custom of executing animals and criminals together for certain offenses, the so-called *poena cullei*, is known in the fifth-century Theodosian Code and is reflected in the thirteenth-century *Sachsenspiegel*.[64] In these codes, the criminal was placed into a sack with a rooster, snake, monkey, and dog, sometimes dead, other times still alive. The punishment has been illustrated in medieval manuscripts. Monkeys and snakes would not have been easily accessible in medieval Europe. If such punishments occurred, substitutions must

have been made and we know of cases wherein cats replaced monkeys. This revived classical punishment can be found from the fifteenth through to the early seventeenth centuries in the German lands, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Italy.[65]

There are cases of fraud perpetrated by field mice masquerading as heretical clerics (hence Chassenée's advice on pre-trial preparations) and accusations of theft levelled against foxes. Likewise, there are numerous instances of infanticide carried out by pigs. Among animal species accused of crimes and misdemeanours we find horseflies, Spanish flies, gadflies, beetles, grasshoppers, locusts, caterpillars, termites, snails, worms, leeches, rats, mice, moles, snakes, bulls, cows, donkeys, horses, mules, pigs, eels, roosters, bears, larvae, vermin, dogs, wolves, goats, chicken, sheep, oxen, and dolphins. The earliest documented authentic trial of an animal seems to have been that of a pig who was subjected to a judicial procedure at Fontenay-aux-Roses near Paris in 1266. The charge was the murder of a child and the animal was burned at the urging of the monks of Sainte Geneviève.[66] The religious had no business urging anything of the like. Convicted animal felons were punished in various ways but hanging predominates. We know of other methods, including burying pigs alive in 1456 at Oppenheim on the Rhine, in 1463 at Amiens, and in 1557 at Saint-Quentin. Throughout the fifteenth century pig felons were hanged at Labergement-le-Duc in 1419, at Brochon in 1420, at Trochères in 1435, and at Abbeville in 1490.[67] Sometimes animals were beaten or maimed prior to execution.[68] This may be attributed to the viciousness of executioners or to the judicial mandate. Such practices reflect mentalities and anxieties. It was not uncommon for significant corporal punishment to precede capital punishment in human trials, especially those involving heresy or witchcraft.[69] Violence against humans and animals was widespread in the Middle Ages. In Viking Denmark cats were killed by having their heads wrenched off to the point where most of the occipital area was removed.[70]

According to d'Addosio there were 92 animal trials up through 1599 while Evans lists 113 trials for the same period.[71] Both numbers can be expanded, but the definition of court trial or formal legal proceeding remains at issue. There is a clear concentration from the fifteenth through to the seventeenth centuries. In addition, there were eight known cases before 1300 and an additional twelve in the fourteenth century. This increased to thirty-six processes in the fifteenth century, fifty-seven in the sixteenth century, and fifty-six in the seventeenth century. The main concentration

of trials seems to have been in the south and east of present day France, in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, but judicial procedures can also be found elsewhere in Europe, especially in the Slavic lands.[72] It is surely suspect to conclude that the body of evidence gathered thus far represents the essential sum and substance of animal trials.[73] Records before the thirteenth century are scattered and incomplete on many subjects. There were no animal trials in England but there is one known case wherein a dog was beheaded and buried with his owner in what was likely an unofficial execution.[74] Corpses and inanimate objects did occasionally come under legal purview. We know of statues being remanded to prison, brought to trial, convicted, and publicly executed between the tenth and sixteenth centuries.[75] Eudes Rigaud, Archbishop of Rouen, noted around 1250 that popular fear or frustration was sometimes expressed against religious statues that were occasionally thrown to the ground or whipped.[76]

When animals could not or would not appear for trial, they were tried *in absentia*. A writ of *habeas corpus* or the physical presence of the accused was not deemed absolutely essential in order for the judicial proceedings to go forward. Moreover, there does not seem to be any legal statute requiring an animal to appear before a judge, yet in practice this is often what happened. Peter Dinzelbacher has noted this "discrepancy between legal prescription and juridical practice is yet to be explained."[77]

In 1479 cockchafers near Lausanne became defendants in a lawsuit. Richardt, Chancellor of Berne, seems to have been the impetus behind the legal proceedings. The insects were cited to appear at the bishops' court. However, the action lacks probity since the defendants were assigned a court-appointed counsel named Perrodet who had been dead for six months by that date. Since neither counsel nor defendants appeared, a default judgement was handed down.[78] Ordinarily, animals were afforded exactly the same rights under the law as humans. Officials at Lausanne ordered vermin to appear in court for the purpose of responding to criminal charges.[79] While confined to prison and bound over for trial, animals were sometimes incarcerated with human offenders and were equally entitled to the same allowance of the king's bread as the accused men and women. Jailers charged the same fee for their board as required of human defendants.[80] There are no examples of a writ of *habeas corpus* being filed on behalf of a confined animal. Extant hangmen's bills indicate similar fees both for human and animal executions.[81] At trial these accused beasts were entitled to legal representation. On occasion attorneys of some note were appointed to represent the animal defendants. A prime example is

the appearance of Bartholomé Chassenée in 1522 on behalf of the diocesan rats of Autun, as previously discussed. Judicial penalties ranged from a specified crack on the head, to the anathema (curse), periods of imprisonment, physical mutilation, formal ecclesiastical excommunication or *animadversio debita*, the sentence of death. Sometimes the condemned were offered pardon or clemency. Occasionally animals were called as witnesses in other legal cases, but such testimony had particular legal difficulties and was generally problematic.[82] Notwithstanding this, there is one famous English case in which a dog acted as an accuser in a murder case. The dog's owner was found dead and thereafter the dog persistently attacked a certain man and was perceived as the dog charging the man with the crime. A regular "ordeal of battle" was arranged in which the dog faced the suspect and won. The man confessed to the crime and was hanged.[83] In some places, as at Falaise in 1386, there were practices of dressing animals in human clothes for trial and/or execution.[84] Capital punishment was ordinarily carried out by the incumbent hangman of the jurisdiction. For example, in 1394 a pig found guilty of the murder of a child in the parish of Roumaygne was hanged by Jehan Micton who was paid for his services.[85]

In cases where a verdict of capital punishment was not returned or was deemed inapplicable, the defendants were often subjected to the penalty of excommunication. Chassenée devoted part of his *Consilia* to presenting arguments *pro* and *con* on the matter of excommunicating animals. A canonical punishment of this nature in an animal trial creates a problem. By comparison, Jews and Muslims cannot technically be regarded as heretics since their alleged deviance is not from the Christian faith. Regardless of terminology employed in the Middle Ages, they may be infidels but not heretics. Animals technically cannot be excommunicated from a community they have never been received into. Chassenée argued this in his defence of the woodworms at Mamirolle in 1520. Nevertheless, there is a long history of legal prosecution of animals that has included the censure of excommunication. In the context of animal trials, the application of this ecclesiastical weapon is meaningless and a pronouncement of anathema seems more accurate. Thus, on 17 August 1487, with the court having found for the plaintiffs, the Cardinal Bishop of Autun responded to the devastation caused by slugs by ordering the creatures to vacate the diocese on pain of anathema. He invoked ecclesiastical ritual aimed at purifying the area, petitioning God for deliverance, and solemnly warning the defendants of eternal punishment.[86] Elsewhere, an invasion of locusts near Botzen in the Tyrol in 1338 resulted in prosecution in the church

courts at Kaltern with excommunication as the outcome. Two hundred years later in 1559, the Saxon vicar, Daniel Greyßer, excommunicated a flock of birds that had taken up residence in his church and disrupted the religious proceedings with noise and "scandalous acts of unchastity committed during the sermon." Among the acts of the medieval archbishops of Trier around 975, the clearly annoyed Egbert, tenth-century Bishop of Trier, cursed a number of birds that disrupted the liturgy with their chirping and defecating on his head and vestments while he said Mass in the Church of St. Peter.[87] In 1547 the priests of the collegiate church of St. Barnard in the French town of Romans excommunicated all caterpillars that had eaten local crops. The accused were afforded the benefit of legal counsel but ultimately expelled on pain of further and more severe papal sanctions.[88] The inconsistencies in these procedures were pointed out and commented on.[89] Bartholomé Chassenée noted the definition of the anathema and laboured to show how it differed from formal excommunication when applied in a legal proceeding against an animal.[90] Anathemas levelled against animals may have been directed against the Devil and demonic entities.[91] Exorcism formulas have been shown to be remarkably similar when applied either to demons or animals.[92] For example, beetles were commanded to vacant their current dwellings and relocate where they could no longer harm humans.[93] These rituals have a longer history. "*Contra mortalitatem Porcorum*" is a thirteenth-century prayer aimed at preventing a plague among swine.[94] Even earlier, it is possible to find less formal warnings aimed at getting rid of bothersome animals.[95]

The trials of animals seem to have vague origins in the unsettled and unsettling ninth century where we encounter other peculiar court cases. In January 897, a full nine months after he died, Pope Formosus was placed on trial in the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome by his successor Stephen VI. The rotting corpse was dressed in full pontifical garments and propped up on a throne. A deacon was appointed to answer the charges. At the end of the macabre trial Formosus was found guilty as charged. His acts of office were retroactively nullified. His fingers were cut off and his body thrown into the Tiber River. Six months later Stephen was deposed and remanded to prison. Here he met with foul play and was strangled to death.[96] The earliest reliable animal proceeding dates from the same century (824) in Italy wherein a group of rats were excommunicated as a result of their crimes. *Lex talionis*—the law of retribution or the "eye for an eye" doctrine—prevailed in medieval Europe. In 864 the Council of Worms decided that bees that stung a person to death ought

to be suffocated in their hive. There is no evidence a legal proceeding was held. Even in the late medieval period when there was an upswing in judicial procedures there is no reason to believe that legal rights were applied in every instance wherein an animal was held liable for misbehaviour. In fourteenth-century Sardinia cattle and donkeys might be punished for causing damage, according to the legal charter *Carta de Logu*, but there is no firm evidence trials were held.[97]

Reviewing the records of animal trials from a number of legal processes around Europe gives clear indication of the types of offenses, procedures, and outcomes surrounding the formal application of law to miscreant animals. Notable legal anomalies abound. In the autumn of 1379 there was a prominent trial in Burgundy wherein three sows who had killed the swineherd Perrinot Muet were brought to the bar of justice. The verdict seemed overly broad inasmuch as the court not only convicted the three perpetrators but also indicted two entire herds of swine as accomplices. All were remanded for execution. The evidence for the mass convictions seem to have rested on the fact that the two herds, one belonging to the community and the other to the Priory of Saint-Marcel-lès-Jussey, hearing of the fatal assault rushed to the scene. Their behaviour was adjudicated by the court as accessory to crime. The potentially severe economic loss prompted the prior of the religious house, Humbert de Poutiers, to petition Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who interceded and arranged for the pardon of both herds save for the original three perpetrators and one of Prior Humbert's pigs, apparently to symbolize possible collusion.[98] Charging the entire herds with criminal complicity has legal precedence. Some medieval law codes proscribed that any living creature in the vicinity of certain crimes (sexual assault or rape) were to be decapitated.[99] Other laws mandated that a rapist's horse or dog was subject to having scrotum and tail cut off as close to the buttocks as possible.[100] Irish law stipulated that the crime of the one became the responsibility of the many. Therefore, if a bee stings a person causing blindness, the entire hive must suffer the penalty.[101] Such punishment must have been meted out to those creatures for failure to render assistance to the victim.[102]

Criminal cases against animals were wide ranging. A pig was hanged at Mortaign in 1394 on charges of eating a consecrated Eucharistic host.[103] In the fifteenth century at the Swiss town of Lausanne, documents from municipal records reveal the city conducted separate prosecutions against eels, worms, rats, numerous groups of vermin, and several groups of bloodsuckers on the shores of Lake Léman. In some cases, the bishop

granted them a grace period of three days to leave the jurisdiction to avoid harsher punishment. A protracted fifteenth-century lawsuit between the citizens of Saint-Julien (France) and a beetle colony may have lasted up to forty-two years. In 1545 the owners of local vineyards in the village of Saint-Julien brought a complaint. The procurator was Pierre Falcon. Claude Moral represented the defendants while Pierre Ducol acted for the plaintiffs. After a preliminary hearing a judicial sentence was suspended. Public prayers were recommended, sinners were admonished to mend their ways, and every one encouraged to pay tithes to the church. Special masses were ordered celebrated. The defendants appeared to concede and vacated the area. Unsurprisingly, they later returned. The legal process was restarted and this time court proceedings ensued. The case came before the prince-bishop. Since Falcon and Morel were deceased, François Amenet (or Fay) and Petremand Bertrand appeared for the plaintiffs while Antoine Filliol and Pierre Rembaud represented the defendants. Rembaud argued for the natural rights of his clients to have adequate sustenance.[104] Filliol denied the legitimacy of excommunication in the current proceedings. Fay, on behalf of the plaintiffs, suggested segregating the insects to a particular piece of land called Grand-Feisse. Following review, Filliol submitted that his clients did not find the solution satisfactory since the parcel of land in question was simply undesirable and petitioned the court with the boilerplate request that the claims of the plaintiffs be dismissed with costs. This submission was taken under review. A lacuna in the court records leaves the outcome to speculation. However, it appears the beetles may have had the last word insofar as the resolution of the case goes. The summary judgement pages of the court proceedings have been eaten by insects hence we do not know the final verdict. The same is true of the judgement pages in the case against the woodworms of Mamirolle in 1520. The last recorded date of 20 December 1587 indicates the litigation in Saint-Julien must have ended then.[105] The insects remained free on their own informal recognizance but in France a pig was held in custody as a result of misconduct. The pig was incarcerated in the prison at Pont de Larche under the custody of Warden Toustain Pincheon for twenty-four days prior to execution in 1408.[106]

As noted thus far, a variety of criminal cases filled the dockets of European courts. Variations of legal challenge and unique social factors reveal the broad nature of these phenomena. In December 1456 in Savigny (France) a sow and her six piglets were arrested and accused of homicide. The murder victim was five-year-old Jehan Martin. Witnesses

were called and the judicial inquiry resulted in the conclusion, on 10 January 1457, that the entire pig family was culpable in the death. The sow was executed in accordance with prevailing legal requirements but the piglets were acquitted on account of their youth and the poor example of their mother.[107] It has often been reported in the literature of animal trials that a trial was convened at Basel in 1474 wherein a rooster was formally accused of laying an egg that defied natural law, raising suspicions. We have the apparent report of an eyewitness Johannes Knebel, chaplain of the Basel Minster. Once guilt had been established, the disorderly rooster was publicly burned at the stake.[108] There is some doubt about this incident, though the story is not inconsistent within the history of European animal trials.[109] The source says nothing about legal proceedings. It does affirm an egg, ostensibly laid by the rooster, was discovered. A magistrate beheaded the alleged perpetrator first and then burned him on Kohlenberg Hill before a large crowd on 4 August.

It is entirely possible that at least some of the alleged legal proceedings involving animals were not authentic and have been misconstrued. Failure to differentiate between trials and punishment may be the culprit. For example, it has been claimed that there were trials of animals in the thirteenth century. To support this claim, an appeal has been made to a description of criminal punishment in the legal manuals of Beauvais written by Philippe de Beaumanoir in 1283. Close inspection reveals the subject in question focuses on punishment, not formal legal proceedings and the difference is crucial.[110] In 1478, a group of caterpillars were determined not to have been on board Noah's ark, a story narrated in the Hebrew Bible. Thus, having apparently survived the great mythological universal flood, they were determined to have been able to survive only with the help of Satan. The aforementioned counsel of Thomas Aquinas seemed relevant in this proceeding. These suspicious caterpillars were denounced as illegal aliens in God's kingdom and forbidden thereafter to eat or procreate. There is no reliable witness as to whether they complied with that sentence or of their ultimate fate. At Berne in 1478 cockchafer larvae were invited to appear before the bishop with the opportunity to tell their side of the story against formal charges of jeopardizing the food supply. In 1499 in Germany, unverified charges were brought against a bear accused of ravaging a village. The legal procedures were delayed and remained pending when it was submitted to the court that the defendant had the right to be judged by a jury of his peers. That is to say, by other bears! Since the presiding judge was reluctant to seat such a jury, the charges were ultimately set aside.

At Troyes (France) in 1515 and 1516, insects were threatened with anathema. Three years later in Italy (1519) certain moles were charged with crop damage. Since they failed to obey the summons to appear before the court they were formally sentenced *in absentia* to banishment. The court was merciful however, and granted a fourteen-day extension to all pregnant moles and infants in order to comply with the judicial decree. Following this legal precedent, in 1520 a judge of Glurns in south Tyrol banned mice but he too granted a temporary reprieve to all pregnant mice and young offspring.[111] The court in Autun may have been aware of these precedents when it allowed Chassenée's clients (the rats) an extension to prepare for an appearance owing to the aged and infirm among the accused. Defendant beetles in fifteenth-century Chur required legal representation because the court considered them minors.[112] In a 1579 case, a group of field mice adjudicated to have been aboard Noah's ark were charged with greed and disproportionate food consumption. In the Dutch lands in 1595 at Leiden a dog that bit a child was sentenced to be hanged in order to set an example and provide a deterrent to other recalcitrant dogs. The case stands out for the severity of sentence inasmuch as the charge was grievous bodily harm, not homicide. Moreover, trials of dogs are conspicuous by their almost complete absence from judicial records.[113] Another unusual case saw the judiciary of Marseilles bring formal proceedings against a group of dolphins that apparently had congregated in the port in such numbers as to make navigation difficult in 1596. At Rouvre (in western France) one goat and sixteen cows were arraigned on boilerplate charges of generic misbehaviour while the village of Coire in the Swiss territories brought a mound of larvae before their tribunal. Resulting legal formalities were sometimes impressive.

In what may have been the continuation of an earlier criminal proceeding (discussed above), vermin were brought to trial in the ecclesiastical court at Berne before Benedict of Montferrand, Bishop of Lausanne, in 1479. The defendants were described as sub-animal, possibly demonic creatures that secretly crept about in fields perpetrating grievous wrongs against God. Jean Perrodet of Freiburg was appointed advocate for the defence. The defendants, referred to as "damned filth" and not even proper animals, were ordered out of the jurisdiction subject to ban and exorcism. Armed with the power of the holy cross, the bishop cursed the vermin in the name of God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—and the locals were greatly relieved at the court decision.[114] The case was later cited by Bartholomé Chassenée as precedent while other witnesses note the action

was approved by professors of Heidelberg University.[115] The cases of criminal proceedings against animals can be multiplied. It should also be noted that at times misbehaviour by animals was connected to human vice. A mid-sixteenth-century case in the village of Aargau involving a complaint against swarms of insects resulted in the Bishop of Constance instructing the people to abstain from dancing, gambling, and sensuality.[116]

While cats were mainly feral in the European Middle Ages, domestic animals were considered parts of medieval households and the deeds of humans reflected on animals and vice versa.[117] In the case noted above of the pig family of Savigny convicted of homicide in 1456–1457, the six piglets that were spared were later repudiated by their owner Jehan Bailly, who refused to be held accountable for their future behaviour. Appearing before the judge, the six little pigs were declared vacated property by the court and were given to the noblewoman Katherine de Barnault.[118] Owner responsibility did play a role in some legal statutes. In medieval Sweden, for example, an animal that killed a human was required to be handed over to the next of kin with additional compensation.[119]

Of particular interest in many cases is who brought charges against animals and for what reason. In the spring of 1494 the infant child of Jehan and Gillon Lenfant was strangled on the farm of Clermont-lez-Montcornet. Criminal charges were brought not by the decedent's parents but rather by local Praemonstratensian monks. A pig was arrested and imprisoned in the abbey to await trial. Witnesses were brought and the preponderance of evidence supplied by the religious indicated felonious homicide. The court found that the perpetrator had unlawfully entered the Lenfant home and carried out the brutal attack. A successful prosecution was mounted by the advocate for the plaintiffs, Jehan Lavoisier, and the court returned a guilty verdict on 14 June. The convicted felon was sentenced to be hanged in the interests of justice, to set an example, and to express appropriate social horror at the outrage.[120] The execution was greeted by a large cheering crowd who witnessed the demise of the convicted criminal. Evidently charges were not considered against either parent, both of whom had left the infant alone at the time of the crime, and we read not a word addressing parental responsibility. By contrast, a case five years later in 1499 determined by the Abbey of Josaphat at Sèves near Chartres resulted in the hanging of a murderous pig and in a finding of negligence on the part of the owners, Jehan Delalande and his wife.[121] The fact that charges in the 1494 case were preferred by the monks who seem to have provided the testimony and evidence necessary to secure legal conviction raises a multitude of pertinent queries.

In the 1494 case, as in so many others, it is impossible to fully explore the social context on account of the brevity and paucity of extant records. The usefulness of such exploration could not be overstated. What does seem apparent is that lines of distinction between humans and animals appear to have become blurred, especially with the advent of werewolves and the notion of demonic entities in animal form. Both notions pervaded European mentalities by the end of the Middle Ages. Lucas, Bishop of Tuy in northwest Spain, wrote that the day after the burning of a group of heretics the ashes were transubstantiated into innumerable toads. Writing in 1234, Bishop Lucas seems to suggest the loathsome creatures had clear affinity with the enemies of the church.[122]

Judicial procedures against animals reveal colliding social and intellectual worlds in medieval Europe. The thirteenth-century Cistercian prior, Caesarius of Heisterbach, tells the story of a woman who went to Mass, received the consecrated host, but did not ingest it. Instead, she took the Eucharistic host home and put it in a beehive. The next day she discovered the bees had piously and reverentially preserved the host.[123] Inside medieval churches we find misericords giving animals human abilities or characteristics: foxes, pigs, and cats are featured in pulpits preaching, pigs are depicted as shepherds, animals play musical instruments, cats are hanged by mice, dancing bears can be found, while apes are studiously reading. Other animals are featured holding weapons in combat with a human, still others are shown wearing ecclesiastical vestments, and yet more are depicted as "heretics."[124] Outside medieval churches it is possible to find gargoyles threatening humans, a goat mounting a woman, or a monkey grabbing a naked female.[125] A hand-coloured broadsheet from the 1530s, by Georg Pencz, shows a group of rabbits that captured two hunters and were in the process of executing them. The accompanying text tells us the rabbits apprehended their nemeses, subjected them to interrogation and trial that resulted in a finding of guilt and summary sentence of death.[126] All of this was most disorderly, indicating a lack of social order. The presence of such motifs presents startling contradictions. These worlds continued to collide, presenting the historian with paradox, riddle, and enigma.

Forty-four years after his death in 1384, the posthumously condemned John Wyclif was ordered dug up and removed from consecrated ground at Lutterworth.[127] Anxiety over issues of purity, contamination, and danger seem to have undergirded that official order. That the supernatural world pushed into the material world from all sides within popular belief

structures at the end of the Middle Ages cannot be doubted. Both medieval religious and popular culture had at its core a belief that ritual actions performed in the material world had an impact in the supernatural world. The obvious example is the central ritual of the medieval church in its celebration of the Mass. Another less well-known but nevertheless excellent example is that of the death of Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I, on 12 January 1519. The emperor left specific instructions that once dead his body was to be severely whipped, his hair roughly cut off and his teeth broken out. Why? It seems the pious emperor wished to appear before God not as a powerful monarch but as a contrite penitent.[128] The story is taken up in a larger context in Chap. 9.

Animals are generally conspicuously missing in most histories.[129] They do emerge in legal records. The main question is this: what were the emotional, metaphysical, and religious beliefs that guided the relevant legal systems? There are a variety of explanations available in order to understand the complex and puzzling history of animal trials. It is likely no single factor can be advanced to explain these events.[130] The explanatory challenge is to engage at the level of "folk psychology."[131] It is possible to argue that humans reaching into the animal kingdom in an effort to correct "disorder" were thereby enforcing discipline in both realms and exerting power over both. Thus the punishment of animals was regarded as the application of law in the interest of justice or an attempt to apply its own moral standards to a larger concept of justice.[132] Here we might take instruction from the stories of St. Patrick exorcizing snakes out of Ireland in the fifth century and Bernard of Clairvaux excommunicating flies in twelfth-century France. That said, there are serious impediments between our post-modern world and understanding the practices and mentalities of those in other times and other places. People in late medieval Europe did not think as we think. Exercises in psychological anachronism create more heat than light.[133] Certainly animal trials were an effort to come to terms with the natural world, and in Christian theology there existed plenty of conflict between the two realms. Among several possible concerns, these legal procedures indicate a preoccupation with law and order. Mob violence and the idea of taking justice into one's own hands do not figure in the history of animal trials in medieval Europe. For example, one hangman who executed a pig without a trial was hounded out of town, suffering the penalty of disorderly conduct and violation of legal statutes and proper procedure.[134] Ideas of order had to be implemented properly otherwise disorder ensued. The hangman was a servant of the state and

an integral component in the struggle to maintain social order and punish lawbreakers and those who disrupted social norms and customs. Animals acting contrary to the interests of humans had to be punished otherwise the quest for social order could not be maintained. In practice, the applied rules of these proceedings make no distinction between humans and animals.[135]

In the formal prosecution of non-human defendants, it would also appear that giving animals human characteristics helps to explain legal proceedings against them. This can be detected in legal citations wherein one reads, for example, that "the pig acted with great cruelty" at Moyen-Moutier when it killed the infant daughter of Claudon Françoise. The offender was hanged.[136] It is worth noting that animal trials sometimes coincided with the rise and proliferation of witch trials and those connections, while a subject for another venue, should not be minimized.[137] At the root of this social phenomenon was a prevailing idea that "law" governed all of the universe not just humans. In other words, justice was a universal attribute and it applied to all of nature. The communal extension of moral codes to encompass animals indicates a possible conviction that all living creatures were governed by a single, immutable, moral principle. That would explain the preoccupation with making certain that all living creatures acted in accordance with existing social norms and values and those that contravened those standards had to be punished. The shift in judicial procedure from the accusatorial model to proceedings by inquisition encouraged and facilitated trials. Gratian declared that the trials and executions of animals were needed in order that the crime might be forgotten. He was repeating earlier views and the idea persisted.[138] The strategy may have had the opposite result. The public spectacle of trials and executions aimed to punish offenders and eliminate all trace of the crime. Sometimes this included destroying the trial records. A French lawyer at the end of the Middle Ages commented this was done in order to eradicate even the memory of the crime.[139] A preoccupation with Roman legal models may have led to the re-emergence of the *poena cullei* in later medieval Europe, though it should be noted that this judicial punishment never enjoyed any particular medieval history in popular culture.[140]

Animal trials seem to have appeared most often in contexts of social crisis of one form or another, especially during times of epidemics, economic depression, and social conflict. This underscores the importance of context as an essential aspect of the explanatory matrix. But such times are always with us. The thirteenth-century introduction of judicial torture also plays

a crucial role and animals were not exempt from its application. Despite failing to advance any evidence, some scholars submit that animals were sometimes tortured on the rack in order to obtain a confession—legally regarded as *regina probationum* (the queen of proofs). The sounds of pain emitted by the helpless beasts were accepted as the desired admission.[141] In the German town of Cochem on the Mosel River a goat accused of breaking and entry into a vineyard was put in a wine press to determine guilt.[142] Ostensibly, there were occasions when animals confessed to crimes without application of torture. In some legal processes animal trials were viewed specifically as a useful deterrent to other animals as well as to humans.[143] Dressing animals in human clothes may have been done because the authorities wanted to use the execution as a pedagogical tool for the entire community. Perhaps the function was to humanize the animal in order that the beast might be executed as inhuman.[144] There is a possibility that the theatrics of some animal trials and executions, like that of the pig of Falaise in 1386, may have performed similar functions as morality plays.[145] It is probable, especially with comparisons to the rise of witch hunting, that a potent fear of the demonic underlay judicial procedures against animals. After all, Aquinas had declared that Satan could lead animals astray, and the well-known story of Jesus sending demons into the herd of swine (Mark 5:1–20) seemed to support that theory. A pervasive interest in the Devil and the occult in the Middle Ages permitted the inclusion of miscreant animals to enter that consideration. It would be stretching the evidence, however, to imply that the Devil was a pervasive line of argument or excuse for explaining wayward animals. Beyond this, animal trials allowed communities to apply notions of justice to the animal kingdom as a means of exerting power over forces it could not control. The desire to bring stability to the multiple worlds of late medieval Europe included the natural and animal worlds. If this were true, then such trials were legal attempts to assert moral order, thereby relieving tensions between humans and animals. This principle finds expression in popular culture.

There were also superstitions about animals in medieval Europe. For instance, cats were thrown into bonfires during Carnival at Paris and elsewhere in the belief this would bring the community good luck. In late medieval Ypres the cat feast was held during Lent when cats were thrown from a tower.[146] Studying the history of animals suggests a closing of the gap between humans and animals in the twelfth century.[147] Analogies between the two worlds begin to emerge and we find evidence of human vices and virtues personified in the animal kingdom. The social function

of medieval bestiaries was to use stories of animals to make a religious or moral point, generally in support of existing theological convictions.[148] Animals and stories about them in the Middle Ages were often devices used for religious teaching or social satire. Here we might think of the *Physiologus*, bestiary sources, and the traditional literature on Reynard the Fox.[149] Both vice and virtue can be found in the legal records of animal trials but admittedly it is the several vices that feature most prominently. Some legal codes granted animals status akin to that of humans. This went both ways. Animal trials created the impression that authorities were in control and working hard to maintain the standard of living medieval communities had come to expect. Once the medieval world disappeared, nature (and animals) as a legal subject gave way to more overt anthropocentrism in the late Renaissance and Enlightenment.[150] This did not bring a complete end to the appearance of animals on the dockets of courtrooms in Europe, but it did cause a decline in the numbers of animals formally arraigned and prosecuted for criminal behaviour. The criminal prosecution of animals in medieval Europe reveals clues to how communities thought and functioned. They cannot be viewed as unimportant. Theoretical approaches draw imaginative and sometimes amusing conclusions. The trial of animals may be an example of an intolerable problem that has no apparent solution. The conundrum produces an extraordinary legal measure. In other words, something has to be done even if that action is neither convincing nor satisfying. Animal trials may, therefore, be an example of how communities attempt to maintain the integrity of a legal or social system.[151]

There is some chance it is impossible to explain the trial and punishment of animals in medieval Europe. Perhaps this phenomenon is simple legal inertia where one system replicates the rules of another system in a blind mechanical fashion. There is sufficient merit in the suggestion that ultimately animal trials are impenetrable to the modern mind. Without being able to enter the consciousness and cosmos of Chassenée and the world of medieval mentalities the quest remains elusive.[152] In addition to the obsession with order, animal trials may have been a means of eliminating social danger, creating a deterrent and establishing culprits' behaviour in order to solidify cognitive control.[153] This mirrors, to some extent, the special homicide courts in antiquity that dealt with animal violence. These processes understood animals as instruments of communal pollution and their punishment absolved the community.[154] The diversity and complexity of European society in the later Middle Ages preclude identifying a

single factor accounting for the legal and criminal prosecution of animals. Public involvement in these proceedings may suggest medieval communities felt a need to contain, control, or otherwise eradicate offensive beasts much in the same way as it dealt with human offenders. Whether the initiatives against animals can be traced to a fear of a similar act recurring, or a general aversion to unauthorized agents of death and destruction, or a need to maintain order by means of purification, revenge, or robust law enforcement, cannot be determined absolutely. The ambiguity underscores medieval mentalities and anxieties.

The legal preoccupation with the misdeeds of animals did not vanish with the Middle Ages.[155] In 2008 a court convened in the Macedonian town of Bitola found a bear guilty of criminal damage and repeated theft of honey from privately owned beehives in the village of Krivogaštani. The contumacious bear failed to appear before the magistrate and since it was determined the animal had no identifiable owner and belonged to a protected species, the court ordered the state to compensate the owner of the beehives $3500 (£1750; €2238). The bear seems to have taken no note of the judgement against him and remains a fugitive from justice at large in an undisclosed location somewhere in Macedonia.[156]

Notes

1. Pia F. Cuneo, ed., *Animals and Early Modern Identity* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014) consists of a number of essays dealing with this correlation.
2. Erica Fudge, “A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals,” in Nigel Rothfels, ed., *Representing Animals* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002), pp. 3–18.
3. Rosemary M. Luff and Marta Moreno García, “Killing Cats in the Medieval Period: An Unusual Episode in the History of Cambridge, England” *Archaeofauna* 4 (1995), pp. 93–114.
4. Misericords from the later Middle Ages depict killings. Examples are Sainte-Trinité in Tocqueville-sur-Eu on the Norman coast and at Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Chaumont-en-Vexin which feature the killing of pigs.
5. Paris, Nationale Bibliothèque MS cited in E.P. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1906), pp. 356–7.
6. An example is sixth-century Paris noted in the *Historiae Francorum*. Lewis Thorp, trans., *Gregory of Tours: The History of the Franks* (London: Penguin, 1974), book 8, chap. 33, p. 467.
7. Aleksander Pluskowski, ed., *Breaking and Shaping Beastly Bodies: Animals as Material Culture in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007). The codex

is kept in Florence, Bibliotheca Medicea Laurenziana MS Amiatino 1. Comment in Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans., Dáibhi Ó Crónin and David Ganz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 10.

8. C.15 q.1 a.c.4 in Emil Friedberg, ed., *Corpus iuris canonici*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879–81), vol. 1, col. 747.
9. Esther Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), pp. 100–131.
10. Rosalind Hill, *Both Small and Great Beasts* (London: The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, n.d. [*c.*1953]), p. 8.
11. For example, see the thirteenth-century Franciscan scholastic Bartholomeus Anglicus, *De rerum proprietatibus* (Nürnberg, 1483), book 18, and reinforced in modern scholarship. Keith Thomas, *Man and Natural History: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983) and Cuneo, ed., *Animals and Early Modern Identity.*
12. Jacques Heers, *Fêtes des fous et carnavals* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), pp. 136–41.
13. I rely on useful overviews in James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (New York: Longman, 1995), Clarence Gallagher, *Canon Law and the Christian Community* (Rome: Università Gregoriana Editrice, 1978) and Constantine Fasolt, "Visions of Order in the Canonists and Civilians" in *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600*, vol. 2, pp. 31–59.
14. The best studies are Karl von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse" *Mittheilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 12 (No. 4, 1891), pp. 546–601, Carlo d'Addosio, *Besti Delinquenti* (Naples: Luigi Pierro, 1892) and Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals.* More recently see also Peter Dinzelbacher, *Das Fremde Mittelalter: Gottesurteil und Tierprozess* (Essen: Magnus Verlag, 2006), pp. 103–56. Most trial sources were edited in the nineteenth century.
15. Chassenée wrote a book on the legal procedures of animal trials. *Concilium primum, quod tractatus iure dici potest, propter multiplicem et reconditam doctrinam, ubi luculenter et accurate tractatur quaestio illa: De excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, 1531. The book was reprinted at Venice in 1581 and at Lyons in 1588. A copy of the second edition has been preserved at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. I use the 1588 edition. See also J. Henri Pignot, *Un jurisconsulte au seizième siècle: Barthélemy de Chasseneuz* (Paris: Larose, 1880).
16. Besançon, Archives Municipales CG 377a contains the relevant documents and forms the basis for the summary.
17. E.V. Walter, "Nature on Trial: The Case of the Rooster that Laid an Egg" *Comparative Civilizations Review* 10–11 (1983–4), p. 55 and Von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse," p. 548.

18. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 140–1, 335. Paul Friedland, *Seeing Justice Done: The Age of Spectacular Capital Punishment in France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 2–11 judges the matter fraudulent. It was customary in Burgundy to hang animals upside down. The *Coutumes et stilles gardez au Duchié de Bourgoigne*, Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 293, article 197, written between 1270 and 1360, claims this. Esther Cohen, "Law, Folklore, and Animal Lore" *Past and Present* 110 (February 1986), p. 12 provides the text.
19. Engraving in Joost de Damhouder, *Praxis rerum criminalium* (Antwerp: Jo Beller, 1554), p. 490.
20. As outlined in Kenneth Pennington, "Due Process, Community, and the Prince in the Evolution of the Ordo iudiciarius" *Rivista Internationale di Diritto Comune* 9 (1998), pp. 9–47. The concept is traceable to the early medieval period. Linda Fowler-Magerl, *Ordo iudiciorum vel ordo iudiciarius: Begriff und Literaturgattung* (Frankfurt a M: Klostermann, 1984), pp. 10–11.
21. Hans A. Berkenhoff, *Tierstrafe, Tierbannung und rechtsrituelle Tiertötung im Mittelalter* (Leipzig and Zürich: Heitz & Cie, 1937), pp. 28, 32–3.
22. Paul Schiff Berman, "Rats, Pigs, and Statues on Trial: The Creation of Cultural Narratives in the Prosecution of Animals and Inanimate Objects" *New York University Law Review* 69 (No. 2, 1994), p. 326.
23. Jen Girgen, "The Historical and Contemporary Prosecution and Punishment of Animals" *Animal Law* 9 (2003), pp. 115–16.
24. J.J. Finkelstein, *The Ox That Gored* [Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. 71, pt. 2] (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1981), pp. 25–47 and Victor Aptowitzer, "The Rewarding and Punishing of Animals and Inanimate Objects" *Hebrew Union College Annual* 3 (1926), pp. 117–55.
25. *Midrash Tanchuma, Noah* 5, Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 108a, Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 54a, Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 55a, Ohr HaChaim to Leviticus 17:11, *Shailos U'Teshuvos Chazon Nachum* II 10:2, Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 2a, and Mishnah, *Sanhedrin* 7:4. Reference to these sources in Natan Slifkin, *Man and Beast: Our Relationship with Animals in Jewish Law and Thought* (Brooklyn: Yashar Books, 2006), pp. 93–108 and Aptowitzer, "The Rewarding and Punishing of Animals and Inanimate Objects," pp. 131–40.
26. Fudge, "A Left-Handed Blow: Writing the History of Animals," pp. 3–18 argues that a consideration of animals potentially challenges anthropocentric assumptions.
27. See Janetta Rebold Benton, *The Medieval Menagerie: Animals in the Art of the Middle Ages* (New York: Abbeville, 1992), *Holy Terrors: Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings* (New York: Abbeville, 1997), *Medieval Mischief: Wit*

and Humor in the Art of the Middle Ages (Stroud: Sutton, 2004), Bill Yenne, *Gothic Gargoyles* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2000), Ronald Sheridan and Ann Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques: Paganism in the Medieval Church* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), Joanne McMahon, *The Sheela-na-Gigs of Ireland and Britain: The Divine Hag of the Christian Celts* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 2000) and Peter Poyntz Wright, *Hunky Punks: A Study in Somerset Stone Carving*, 2nd edition (Market Harborough: Heart of Albion Press, 2004).

28. Elaine C. Block, *Corpus of Medieval Misericords in France: XIII–XVI Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), Christa Grössinger, *The World Upside-Down: English Misericords* (London: Harvey Miller, 1997) and Dorothy and Henry Kraus, *The Hidden World of Misericords* (New York: Braziller, 1975).
29. Regional church councils decreed that clerics could not even attend public executions (Mâcon II, 581) and any person under Holy Orders involved in such events was subject to defrocking (Toledo IV, 633). Carl Josef von Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte: nach dem Quellen bearbeitet*, 9 vols (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1873–90), vol. 3, pp. 41, 83.
30. This critical distinction between secular and church courts has been cogently delineated in Von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse".
31. Chassenée, *Concilium primum. . .de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, fol. 16r.
32. Girgen, "The Historical and Contemporary Prosecution and Punishment of Animals", p. 99.
33. There is a useful analysis of ecclesiastical trials in Von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse", pp. 560–72.
34. Chassenée, *Concilium primum. . .de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, especially part 4, para. 5.
35. Chassenée, *Concilium primum. . .de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, fols. 14v–16v.
36. Paul Schiff Berman, "An Observation and a Strange but True 'Tale': What Might the Historical Trials of Animals Tell us about the Transformative Potential of Law in American Culture?" *Hastings Law Journal* 52 (November 2000), p. 180 and Ruth Mazo Karras, Joel Kaye and E. Ann Matter, eds., *Law and the Illicit in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
37. Melodie Slabbert, "Prosecuting Animals in Medieval Europe: Possible Explanations" *Fundamina: A Journal of Legal History* 10 (2004), p. 166 and Berkenhoff, *Tierstrafe, Tierbannung und rechtsrituelle Tiertötung im Mittelalter*, pp. 121–4.
38. Chassenée, *Concilium primum. . .de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, fol. 16r.

39. *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae. 76, 2. *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa theologiae* [Blackfriars edition] (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1975), vol. 38, pp. 204–7.
40. Anon. *Malefactio animalium* (Bologna, 1502). Copy in the Franciscan library, Ferences Műemlék Könyvtár in Gyöngyös, Hungary. I rely on Ervin Bonkalo, "Criminal Proceedings against Animals in the Middle Ages" *Journal of Unconventional History* 3 (No. 2, 1992), p. 28.
41. This is mainly an English and Scottish contribution to witchcraft theory. Rossell Hope Robbins, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown, 1959), pp. 190–193.
42. Paul J. Archambault, ed., *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), p. 206 and Joseph Strange, ed., *Caesarii Heisterbacensis monachi ordinis cisterciensis Dialogus miraculorum*, 2 vols. (Cologne: Heberle, 1851), vol. 1, pp. 71, 204 and 257–8.
43. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 67 lists no fewer than fifty-five possibilities noting the most frequent were the snake, goat, and dog.
44. Lucerne, Staatsarchiv, Archiv 1, Personalien, AKT 113/2093. Referenced in Helmut Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland 1400–1600* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 222, n.42.
45. Hill, *Both Small and Great Beasts*, p. 4.
46. Important for documentary extracts and noting sentences is Alexandre Sorel, "Procès contre les animaux et insectes suivis au Moyen Âge dans la Picardie et le Valois" *Bulletin de la société historique de Compiègne* 3 (1876–7), pp. 269–314 and Jean Vartier, *Les procès d'animaux du Moyen Age à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1970).
47. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 111–113 and pp. 307–8.
48. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 358–9, pp. 113–15 and pp. 309–310.
49. Bonkalo, "Criminal Proceedings against Animals in the Middle Ages", pp. 28–9.
50. The writ survives in the parish registers of Machern near Leipzig and has been printed in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, p. 361. In accordance with *Aktenversendung*, German law faculties often passed rulings in unusual procedures. John H. Langbein, *Prosecuting Crime in the Renaissance: England, Germany, France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 198–202.
51. This has been noted in sixth-century Frankish law. *Lex Salica*, ed., J.H. Hessels (London: John Murray, 1880), cols. 209–215.

52. Anne Hudson, "The Mouse in the Pyx: Popular Heresy and the Eucharist" *Trivium* 26 (1991), pp. 40–53.
53. Noted in John M. Steadman, "The Prioress' Dogs and Benedictine Discipline" *Modern Philology* 54 (No. 1, 1956), p. 1.
54. A fourteenth-century misericord in the Church of St. Andrew in Norton (Suffolk) reveals a lion killing and devouring a man.
55. The term is used excessively in the eleventh-century *Liber Gomorrhianus* (letter 31) by Peter Damian, Kurt Reindel, ed., *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani* (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1983), part 1, pp. 284–330 mostly to describe same-sex relations and masturbation.
56. See Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) and Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland*.
57. Arthur Kaufman, ed., *Die Peinliche Gerichtsordnung Kaiser Karls V. von 1532 (Carolina)*, (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1996), p. 81.
58. Article 141, *Brandenburgische Halßgerichtsordnung* (Nürnberg, 1516), fol. 29v.
59. Jacques Berriat-Saint-Prix, "Rapport et recherches sur les procès et jugements relatifs aux animaux" *Mémoires de la Société nationale des antiquaires de France* 8 (1829), p. 429.
60. Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland*, p. 90.
61. Berkenhoff, *Tierstrafe, Tierbannung und rechtsrituelle Tiertötung im Mittelalter* and Dinzelbacher, *Das Fremde Mittelalter*, pp. 125–7.
62. This is the conclusion of Von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse", p. 556 and Finkelstein, *The Ox That Gored*, p. 72.
63. Hilda Ellis Davidson, ed., *Saxo Grammaticus The History of the Danes, Books I-IX* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1996), pp. 138, 152, 255.
64. On this see Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice*, pp. 173–5. A 1335 gloss on the *Sachsenspiegel* by Johannes von Buch was instrumental in making the *poena cullei* part of criminal law.
65. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale MS Latin 9187, fol. 34r, a late thirteenth-century source. See also Florike Egmond, "The Cock, the Dog, the Serpent, and the Monkey: Reception and Transmission of a Roman Punishment, or Historiography as History" *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2 (No. 2, 1995), pp. 159–192.
66. Finkelstein, *The Ox That Gored*, p. 67.
67. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 138, 157.
68. Slabbert, "Prosecuting Animals in Medieval Europe: Possible Explanations", p. 166.
69. A witchcraft process at Munich against a family of defendants included mutilations with red-hot pincers, breasts sliced off, punishment on the

wheel, and impaling, all before burning at the stake. The sentence is in Munich, State Archives, *hexenakten* 4, prod. 5 and illustrated on an extant broadsheet in Munich Stadtmuseum, Prints Collection, Inv. no. M. I/320.

70. Luff and García, "Killing Cats in the Medieval Period", p. 104.
71. D'Addosio, *Besti Delinquenti*, pp. 359–62 and Evans, *Criminal Prosecution*, pp. 313–26.
72. Von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse" collected a small concentration of trials from Slavonic territories (mainly late). Of value also is Berriat-Saint-Prix, "Rapport et recherches sur les procès et jugements relatifs aux animaux", pp. 403–50.
73. Von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse", p. 559.
74. Hill, *Both Small and Great Beasts*, p. 12.
75. Michael Camille, *The Gothic Image: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 224 and Joseph Hemingway, *History of the City of Chester*, 2 vols. (Chester: J. Fletcher, 1831), vol. 1, pp. 360–1.
76. Heers, *Fêtes des fous et carnavals*, p. 53.
77. Peter Dinzelbacher, "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary Approach" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (No. 3, 2002), p. 410.
78. William Jones, *Credulities Past and Present* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1880), p. 302.
79. Dinzelbacher, "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary Approach", p. 412.
80. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 141–2 and pp. 338–9.
81. Berkenhoff, *Tierstrafe, Tierbannung und rechtsrituelle Tiertötung*, pp. 118–19.
82. Walter W. Hyde, "The Prosecution and Punishment of Animals and Lifeless Things in the Middle Ages and Modern Times" *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 64 (No. 7, 1916), p. 719.
83. Hill, *Both Small and Great Beasts*, p. 14.
84. The practice of executing animals attired as humans can be found as late as 1685. In the margraviate of Ansbach a felonious wolf was hanged in human clothing wearing a wig and mask. John Fosberry, trans., *Criminal Justice Through the Ages* (Rothenburg o.d.T: Mittelalterliches Kriminalmuseum, 1993), p. 173.
85. The document appears in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 336–7.
86. Chassenée, *Concilium primum. . .de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, fol. 19r.
87. *Gesta trevirensium archiepiscoporum* in Edmund Martène and Ursin Durand, eds., *Veterum Scriptorum et monumentorum historicorum, dogmaticorum,*

moralium, amplissima collectio, 9 vols (Paris: Montalant, 1724–33), vol. 4, col. 158.

88. Archives Départementales de la Drôme, MS E 3794 contains the records. Comment in Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans*, trans. Mary Feeney (New York: Braziller, 1979), p. 9.
89. For example, some authorities denounced the custom and practice of excommunicating animals on the grounds that it was illogical. An example is the Spanish Benedictine Leonardo Vairo, *De fascino libri tres* (Venice: Aldum, 1589), pp. 159–60. The book originally appeared in Paris in 1583.
90. Chassenée, *Concilium primum … de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, part 5.
91. Walter, "Nature on Trial: The Case of the Rooster that laid an Egg," p. 66.
92. Cohen, "Law, Folklore, and Animal Lore", pp. 32–3.
93. Chassenée, *Concilium primum. . .de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, fol.17v and the fifteenth-century Swiss canon Felix Malleolus, *Tractatus de exorcismis* in *Variae oblationes opuscula et tractatus* (Basel, 1497), fol. 79r–v.
94. London, British Library MS Cotton Julius D VII, fol. 8v. The manuscript originated from the St. Alban's Benedictine Abbey.
95. The tenth-century Byzantine Kassianos Bassos recommended a written warning coupled with a dire threat for the benefit of field mice. See Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 132–3.
96. While the acts of the synod are lost, Ernst Dümmler, *Auxilius und Vulgarius: Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Papstthums in Anfange des zehnten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1866) includes tenth-century sources for the event in context. For a text by the presbyter Auxilius see pp. 59–95 and 107–16 and for another by Eugenius Vulgarius, a poet of Naples, see pp. 39–46 and 117–39. See also Michael Edward Moore, "The Body of Pope Formosus" *Millennium* 9 (No. 1, 2012), pp. 277–98.
97. M. Mimaut, *Histoire de Sardaigne, ou La Sardaigne Ancienne et Moderne*, 2 vols (Paris: Blaise, 1825), vol. 1, pp. 444–8.
98. Relevant records from the Archives of Cote-d'Or have been printed in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 343–4.
99. *Sachsenspiegel* 3.1. In *The Saxon Mirror: A Sachsenspiegel of the Fourteenth Century*, trans, Maria Dobozy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p. 117.
100. According to the thirteenth-century English jurist Henry de Bracton, *De legibus et consuetudinibus angliae*, 4 vols., George E. Woodbine, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1968), vol. 2, p. 418.
101. Thaddeus O'Mahoney, ed., *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland*, 6 vols (Dublin: A. Thom, 1865–1901), vol. 4, p. 179.

102. I agree on this with Rudolf His, *Geschichte des deutschen Strafrechts bis zur Karolina* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), p. 18.
103. Noted in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 156–7.
104. The same argument can be found earlier in Chassenée, *Concilium primum...de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, fols. 16v–17v.
105. The acts of the synod are extant and the original records have been preserved in the city of St. Jean-de-Maurienne in southeast France. They have been published in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 259–284.
106. The relevant document has been printed in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 340–1.
107. The very complete records from the Monjeu archives have been printed in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 346–51.
108. *Diarium*, in *Basler Chroniken*, 2 vols, Wilhelm Vischer and Heinrich Boos, eds (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1880–1887), vol. 1, p.102.
109. Sven Limbeck, "'Ein seltzam wunder vnd monstrum, welches beide mannlichen vnd weiblichen geschlecht an sich hett': Teratologie, Sodomie und Allegorese in der Medienkultur der frühen Neuzeit", in Sven Limbeck and Lev Mordechai Thoma, eds., *"Die sünde, der sich der tiuvel schamet in der helle": Homosexualität in der Kultur des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2009), p. 199 says the claim that a rooster was tried indicates a misunderstanding of what actually happened. I am grateful to Helmut Puff for bringing this to my attention.
110. Berman, "Rats, Pigs, and Statues on Trial", p. 305. He adduces *The Coutumes de Beauvaisis of Philippe de Beaumanoir*, trans., F.R.P. Akehurst (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), chapter 69, article 1944, p. 712.
111. Dinzelbacher, "Animal Trials: A Multidisciplinary Approach", p. 415.
112. Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice*, p. 120.
113. William Ewald, "Comparative Jurisprudence (I): What Was it Like to Try a Rat?" *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 143 (1995), p. 1904.
114. Primary source extracts can be found in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 115–121.
115. Chassenée, *Concilium primum. . .de excommunicatione animalium insectorum*, fol.17r and Felix Malleolus, *Tractatus de exorcismis* in *Variae oblationes opuscula et tractatus* (Basel, 1497).
116. The original documents, formerly in the Baden archives, have been lost. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 124–5.
117. Luff and García, "Killing Cats in the Medieval Period," p. 110.

118. This is noted in the extant *procès verbal* and printed in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 350–1.
119. Karl von Amira, *Nordgermanisches Obligationenrecht*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Veit, 1882–1895), vol. 1, p. 397 notes thirteenth and fourteenth-century law.
120. The sentencing document appears in Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, pp. 354–5.
121. D'Addosio, *Besti Delinquenti*, pp. 295–6 for the text of the sentence.
122. *De altera vita fideique controversiis adversus Albigensium errores libri tres* 3.15 in Marguerin de la Bigne, ed., *Maxima bibliotheca veterum et antiquorum scriptorum ecclesiasticorum*, 27 vols (Lyons: Annison, 1677–1707), vol. 13, col. 283.
123. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus magnus visionum atque miraculorum, libri XII*, vol. 2, p. 170–3. Caesarius was the prior of a Cistercian abbey in the Siebengebirge near the village of Oberdollendorf.
124. Rats as heretics appear in fifteenth and early sixteenth-century misericords in Champeaux, Ancienne collégiale Saint-Martin, and in the Church of Saint-Anne à Gassicourt in Mantes-la-Jolie. In both cases four rats (perhaps parodying the four evangelists) are gnawing holes in the Christian community symbolized by an orb with a cross on top.
125. Cathedral of Saint John (Sint-Janskathedraal), Den Bosch, The Netherlands, Church of Notre-Dame-des-Marais, Villefranche-sur-Saône, France, and the Cathedral of St. Rumbald (Sint-Romboutstoren), Mechelen, Belgium.
126. Georg Pencz, "Rabbits Catching the Hunters", *c.*1535, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, accession number 42.43.
127. The order was formulated at session 8 of the Council of Constance (4 May 1415). See Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 415–6. On 9 December 1427 Pope Martin V prevailed on Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, to carry out the order. It was fulfilled in the spring of 1428.
128. An anonymous deathbed image is at Graz, Alte Galerie des Steiermärkischen Landesmuseums Ferdinandeum. Color reproduction in Hugo Soly, ed., *Charles V 1500–1558 and his time* (Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 1999), p. 122. On the last days of the emperor see Hermann Wiesflecker, *Maximilian I: Die Fundamente des habsburgischen Weltreiches* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1991), pp. 376–84 and Peter Schmid, "Sterben-Tod-Leichenbegräbnis König Maximilians I," in Lothar Kolmer, ed., *Der Tod des Mächtigen, Kult und Kultur des Todes spätmittelalterlicher Herrscher* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1997), pp. 185–216.
129. Dorothee Brantz, ed., *Beastly Natures: Animals, Humans, and the Study of History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).
130. Philip Jamieson, "Animal Liability in Early Law" *Cambrian Law Review* 19 (1988), p. 62.

131. Nicholas Humphrey, *The Mind Made Flesh: Frontiers of Psychology and Evolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 245.
132. Von Amira, "Thierstrafen und Thierprocesse", p. 553 and Berman, "Rats, Pigs, and Statues on Trial", p. 321.
133. Suggesting the trials of pigs are expressions of antisemitism and that killing a pig is symbolically killing a Jew or that the serial killing of Jews is rehearsed in these procedures is one such example which strikes me as rather imaginative and a thesis which says more about political motivations than historical research and interpretation.
134. Piers Beirne, "The Law is an Ass: Reading E.P. Evans' *The Medieval* [sic] *Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*" *Society and Animals* 2 (No. 1, 1994), p. 39.
135. Peter Mason, "The Excommunication of Caterpillars: Ethno-Anthropological Remarks on the Trial and Punishment of Animals" *Social Science Information* 27 (No. 2, 1988), p. 272.
136. Berkenhoff, *Tierstrafe, Tierbannung und rechtsrituelle Tiertötung*, p. 125.
137. See Wolfgang Schild, "Recht – Neuzeit", in Peter Dinzelbacher, ed., *Europäische Mentalitätsgeschichte: Hauptthemen in Einzeldarstellungen* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1993), pp. 534–554.
138. C.15 q.1 a.c.4 in *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 1, col. 747 and Ivo of Chartres (late eleventh century) who regarded the killing of the animal as necessary for erasing all memory. *Decretum* 9. 90, 107–8 in PL, vol. 161, cols. 682 and 686. The same idea is reflected by the thirteenth-century English theologian Thomas of Chobham, *Summa* 7.2.19.2 in *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, Frederick Broomfield, ed. (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1968), pp. 402–3. The sixteenth-century lawyer Jean Duret said the same thing. Cited in Léon Ménabréa, *De l'origine de la forme et de l'esprit des jugements rendus au Moyen-Age contre les animaux* (Chambéry: Puthod, 1846), p. 124 and see note 136.
139. Jean Duret, *Traicte des peines et amendes tant pour les matieres criminelles que civiles* (Lyon: François Arnovllet, 1610), p. 37. First published in 1573.
140. J.D. Cloud, "Parricidium: From the Lex Numae to the Lex Pompeia de parricidiis" *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtgeschichte. Romanistische Abteilung* 88 (1971), p. 18 and Egmond, p. 169.
141. Arthur Mangin, *L'homme et la bête* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1872), pp. 344–5.
142. Bonkalo, "Criminal Proceedings against Animals in the Middle Ages," p. 27.
143. In 1474 a pig was hanged having been convicted of homicide in the area of Oron and the court ordered the pig be left on the gallows as a warning to all miscreants. Evans, *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, p. 143.

144. Enders, "Homicidal Pigs and the Antisemitic Imagination," pp. 204 and 227.
145. Finkelstein, *The Ox That Gored*, pp. 72–3 and Slabbert, "Prosecuting Animals in Medieval Europe: Possible Explanations", p. 166.
146. Beirne, "The Law is an Ass", p. 28, Hill, *Both Small and Great Beasts*, p. 3, Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice*, pp. 106–7 and Cohen, "Animals in Medieval Perception: The Image of the Ubiquitous Other," in *Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives*, eds., Aubrey Manning and James Serpell (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 66.
147. Joyce E. Salisbury, "Human Beasts and Bestial Humans in the Middle Ages," in Jennifer Ham and Matthew Senior, eds, *Animal Acts: Configuring the Human in Western History* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 9–21.
148. Debra Hassig, *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life, and Literature* (New York: Garland, 1999). Important bestiaries include the twelfth-century *Worksop Bestiary*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M. 81, the fourteenth-century *Queen Mary Psalter*, London, British Library MS Royal 2 B. vii, and the *Isabella Psalter*, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Codex Gall 16, also from the fourteenth century.
149. Kenneth Varty, *Reynard the Fox: A Study of the Fox in Medieval English Art* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1967).
150. Erica Fudge, ed., *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans and Other Wonderful Creatures* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004). She also explores the challenges and dangers of anthropocentrism in *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2002).
151. Alan Watson, "Curses, Oaths, Ordeals and Trials of Animals" *The Edinburgh Law Review* 1 (1996), pp. 420–436.
152. Ewald, "Comparative Jurisprudence (I): What Was it Like to Try a Rat?," pp. 1914–1943.
153. Humphrey, *The Mind Made Flesh*, pp. 247–52.
154. Marilyn A. Katz, "Ox Slaughter and Goring Oxen: Homicide, Animal Sacrifice and Judicial Process" *Yale Journal of Law and Humanities* 4 (No. 2, 1992), pp. 249 and 272.
155. Girgen, "The Historical and Contemporary Prosecution and Punishment of Animals," pp. 122–133.
156. http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/7295559.stm published on 2008/03/14 02:28:27 GMT. I am grateful to my colleague Ian Campbell for bringing this story to my attention. I would also like to acknowledge the insightful audience response and comments to earlier versions of this theme presented at the Texas Medieval Association conference at Texas A&M University in October 2007 and at the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies annual conference at Monash University in Melbourne in February 2013.

CHAPTER 3

Piety, Perversion, and Serial Killing: The Strange Case of Gilles de Rais

If the criminal prosecution of animals figures in the *other* Middle Ages, there are equally disturbing judicial proceedings involving people underscoring social anxiety. This chapter sets forth an essentially accepted, but troubling narrative followed by an examination of potential problems in the narrative and in the judicial proceedings on which it is based. In the documentary legal records of later medieval Europe, we find an intriguing reference among the acts of a civil and ecclesiastical trial stating that the crimes of the accused "cannot presently be expounded on by reason of their horror, but that will be disclosed in Latin at the appropriate time and place."[1] In a sworn deposition during an inquiry in the ducal court in Brittany on 28 September 1440 we read a testimony relating to the same court case.

> Jeanette, the wife of Guillaume Sergent, living in the parish of Sainte-Croix in Machecoul, in the hamlet called La Boucardière, declares that about a year ago last Pentecost, her husband and she had gone digging in a field to plant hemp. They had left one of their sons, eight years old, at home, to tend their little girl of one-and-a-half years, but on their return they could not find the said child of eight, which greatly astonished and dispirited them; and they went to inquire about him in the parishes of Machecoul and elsewhere, but since then they have had no more news of him and have never heard that anyone had seen him.[2]

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A full year had elapsed between the alleged disappearance and the sworn statement. This was only one of dozens of sworn testimonies submitted under oath in the ecclesiastical and civil courts in Nantes and we are told that rumours were rife throughout Brittany and the Vendée. These testimonies, from shop owners, tradesmen, farmers, beggars, nobles, clerics, mercenaries, commoners, men, and women, chronicled a decade of terror in which children mysteriously disappeared throughout Brittany, never to be seen or heard of again. Ostensibly, horrible crimes were committed in the castles of Champtocé, Machecoul, and Tiffauges, and in the houses of La Suze at Nantes, a certain Lemoine house in Vannes, at the convent of the Friars Minor at Bourgneuf-en-Rais, and in the town of Josselin. The trial documents are of exceptional interest for historians, criminologists, psychologists, and folklorists.[3] Before turning to those documents, it is necessary to look at one of the most interesting characters in fifteenth-century Brittany who, as it turns out, is the defendant in the trial of 1440, a man who was encouraged to be bad.[4]

His immediate background is significant to the extent that this helps to explain his privileged place in the world at the end of the Middle Ages and also to account for his rapid ascent to power. He belonged to the lineage of the Laval-Montmorency, Craon, and Rais heritage. His father, Guy de Rais, married Marie de Craon on 5 February 1404 and lost no time securing an heir to his fortune. Before the end of the year, a son was born in the ominously named Black Tower in the castle of Champtocé.[5] Today Rais is Retz. The child, Gilles de Rais (today often spelt "Retz"), was born into the wealthy house of Laval. At the height of his power and career, Gilles de Rais was among the wealthiest of European nobles. He was also a descendant of several of the greatest French heroes of the Hundred Years' War. In 1420, he married his cousin, Catherine de Thouars. The matrimonial act is shrouded in mystery but it appears that Gilles forced the marriage on his bride and may in fact have kidnapped her for the purpose. The ceremony was performed by an obscure monk and we have little evidence to suggest the marriage was one of anything other than opportunism on the part of Gilles. The nuptials increased Gilles' wealth rather dramatically since Catherine was a wealthy heiress. On account of the close familial relation, the church annulled the marriage, but with papal authorization, Gilles and Catherine were remarried in 1422 and from this union came a single child, Marie de Rais, who was born in 1429.

Gilles participated in aspects of the conflict with England and at the age of twenty-five was made Marshal of France. Famously, he was a

comrade-in-arms to Joan of Arc and fought alongside her in some of her more important battles. He was at Chinon when she first arrived to see the dauphin. It was Gilles de Rais who was commissioned to lead the troops entrusted to Joan. At Orléans in 1429 he was joint commander of the escort furnished by Joan. It was Gilles who rescued Joan at Orléans when she was wounded. He fought alongside her at Patay and Paris. When Joan was again wounded at Paris, ostensibly she called on Gilles for aid and it was Gilles who carried her to safety.[6] It was Gilles de Rais who escorted the priest designated to carry the holy water at the dauphin's coronation.[7] It was Gilles who was among those dispatched to the abbey church of St. Rémi, fully armed and carrying his banner, to collect the holy oil used in the coronation. We also know that Gilles was instrumental in raising money for the support of Joan's forces.[8] It has been said that Joan once stayed in a castle belonging to one of Gilles' friends at Sully on the Loire.[9] All of this demonstrates the close association between Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais. Gilles gained a reputation for being a brutal warrior and possessing extravagant tastes. In the course of his early career, Gilles became lord of numerous fortified castles dominating the Loire Valley from Angers to the Atlantic.

Up until about 1433, Gilles de Rais seemed to possess all the requirements and characteristics needed for a successful political career. All of that promise came to an abrupt end when his main patron at the royal court, the grand chamberlain, Georges de la Trémoille, fell from power. Up to this point, Gilles de Rais might have come down to us as one of the more colourful figures who helped Joan of Arc set France on its road to unity and independence. However, this is not the portrait to emerge from the historical past. Indeed, Gilles' later life and its aftermath served to position him rather firmly in the shadows of the *other* Middle Ages and consign him to a type of perpetual infamy. After the demise of Joan, Gilles seems to have withdrawn from public life and retired to his estates at Machecoul, Mer Mort, Champtocé, and Tiffauges. Here he lived as a prince, as one of the most honoured and wealthiest men in all of France.[10] An examination of his life and activities in the early to mid-1430s is revealing and tells us much about his social standing as well as some indication of his religious piety. Gilles retained a bodyguard of 200 knights. He maintained a private chapel, the Chapelle des Saints-Innocents behind the walls of Machecoul Castle, serviced by no fewer than thirty canons and had himself designated canon of Saint-Hilaire of Poitiers.[11] Gilles' chapel had its own dean, vicar, choir, school of music, archdeacons, curates, treasurer, chapter, and

a schoolmaster.[12] By all indications, Gilles de Rais was a deeply religious man who exhibited special devotion to the cult of the Holy Innocents. Beyond this fervid passion for aspects of the Christian faith, Gilles lived in the dawn of the Renaissance and it seems evident that he imbibed its ethos. He owned an extensive library containing rare, illuminated manuscripts. It is not possible to say to what extent he used these literary sources. He loved music, the arts, literature, and the theatre. A large retinue accompanied Gilles wherever he went and this was characterized by great pomp that included a herald, choir, and several portable organs.[13] His land holdings, possessions, and annual income made him extremely wealthy but he was also known for great generosity. Beggars who came to his castle were often beneficiaries of his distribution of alms.

Gilles de Rais was notable for sponsoring staged plays for local communities, sometimes with a cast of hundreds. He spent money wildly and often arbitrarily. His generosity was matched only by his almost total lack of discretion. For example, on the sixth anniversary of the Battle of Orléans in 1435, Gilles put on *The Mystery of the Siege of Orléans* in which he played a character. More than 500 actors took part in the production. A near endless supply of food and wine was available not only for those employed in the great play but also for all spectators. The play was extraordinary. It consisted of more than 20,000 lines, 140 speaking parts, and 500 extras in addition to the named cast and recounted in sumptuous detail the greatest exploits and achievements of his former colleague, Joan of Arc.[14] *The Mystery of the Siege of Orléans* is a dramatic reproduction and theatrical performance of the siege along with the processional commemoration of that momentous and decisive victory.[15] In the mystery play, the citizens of Orléans are encouraged to participate in the victory celebrations as an expression of piety and thanksgiving to God for the miraculous victory and also a commemoration of their role in winning the war against the English and expelling them from French territory.[16] The play specifically thanks the local citizens for their role in aiding the work of God through Joan.[17] During the year Gilles de Rais lived at Orléans he spent an enormous amount of money.[18] His unchecked spending eventually began to exact a toll and soon Gilles was forced to sell lands and castles to the Duke of Brittany in order to pay off his debts. This transfer of power and property to the Duke of Brittany alarmed both the Laval and Rais families as well as the French king. In 1436, King Charles VII ordered that such sales must cease. The royal mandate was effectively ignored in Brittany

where powerful men were eager to obtain property and the continuation of disunity in France made enforcement of such royal orders impossible.

A series of events brought Gilles de Rais to formal trial in 1440. There were several developments, events, and suspects in these years that formed the background for a court proceeding that, as already noted, revealed charges and allegations of such horrific nature that presiding officials endeavoured to suppress public disclosure. Despite his difficulties, Gilles de Rais outwardly remained pious and even made a rather theatrical appearance at the Church of the Holy Trinity at Machecoul on Easter Day 1440 where he made solemn confession, expressed great humility, and received the Eucharist along with the ordinary worshipers.[19] Already the die had been cast and the plot suddenly thickened. A relatively minor incident brought Gilles to public infamy. Earlier in 1440, he sold the Castle of Saint-Étienne-de-Mer-Morte. Thereafter, a quarrel arose and Gilles had the buyer's brother accosted. This was undertaken with some flair. Gilles took a retinue of sixty horsemen to the Church of Saint-Étienne-de-Mer-Morte where Jean Le Ferron was hearing Mass. Le Ferron possessed the keys to the castle. The armed men accompanying Gilles dragged Jean to the gates of the castle where Gilles de Rais forced its surrender and then chained Jean Le Ferron hand and foot and remanded him to the castle dungeon at Sainte-Étienne and later at Tiffauges. Local authorities might have been inclined to overlook the entire incident were it not for the fact that Jean was a priest, and thus, subject to clerical immunity from such actions.[20] This behaviour, that only exacerbated Gilles' disregard for royal policy, combined to suggest that Gilles de Rais had shifted his own political allegiances and therein jeopardised all border acquisitions since 1435. Be that as it may, the bishop ordered Gilles de Rais arrested and a warrant for his detention was issued. "We, Jean Labbé, captain of arms, acting in the name of my lord … enjoin Gilles … to grant us immediate access to his castle and to constitute himself our prisoner so that he may answer to the triple charge of witchcraft, murder and sodomy."[21] Astonishingly, the abduction, abuse, and detention of a priest resulted in allegations of witchcraft, sexual misconduct, and homicide.[22] Thus began an investigation that involved inquisitorial procedure and further charges of heresy that not infrequently involved allegations of sexual misconduct.[23] The idea, expounded in canon law, that arrest on charges of heresy also implied seizure of property had significant ramifications for Gilles and tremendous advantage for his enemies.[24]

There were several key players in the case against Gilles de Rais. Suspect number one was a magician. Testimony was forthcoming that Gilles eventually turned to magic and alchemy in an effort to reverse his fortunes and try to save his wealth. This led him into several ill-fated encounters and relations with a number of magicians and necromancers. Chief among these was an Italian practitioner named Francesco Prelati who occupies a crucial role in the formal trial. Gilles dismissed the entire affair as frivolous and without merit. This was his initial position. However, in the days that followed, this wealthy, pious, and generous benefactor was transformed into a monster of indescribable horror and atrocity. Fifteen days before the actual commencement of legal proceedings, some of the property belonging to Gilles de Rais was disposed of by those controlling it. Two of his confidants, Gilles de Sillé and Roger de Briqueville, fled. The records indicate that the Bishop of Nantes, Jean de Malestroit, and the "Vice-Inquisitor into Heresy," Jean Blouyn, acting on behalf of the Inquisitor-General of France, Guillaume Merici, preferred forty-nine charges against Gilles de Rais. Jean de Malestroit and Jean Blouyn presided over the ecclesiastical trial. Pierre de L'Hôpital, the President of Brittany, convened the secular proceedings.[25]

The forty-nine charges in the indictment were divided into three categories. The first was broadly construed as a breach or abuse of clerical privilege, and this related to the abduction of Priest Jean Le Ferron. The second charge was presented in terms of conjuring demons, understood as sorcery connected to alchemy and may be related to Gilles' connections with necromancers, especially Francesco Prelati. The final category specified sexual perversion. It is possible to understand these initial charges as an invitation to "scandal, malice and self-interest."[26] Upon examination, articles fifteen to forty-nine in the indictment of Gilles de Rais appear to parallel the standard *pro forma* charges often levelled against heretics, sorcerers, Jews, and other outsiders in medieval Europe. There are grounds for assuming that details of the writ were concealed from Gilles. Like his friends, he did not take up the option to flee. Perhaps he believed himself immune from criminal prosecution. Perhaps he regarded the matter as deficient when it came to the weight of inquiry. When confronted by the authorities, he consented to answer the charges of heresy. Gilles would have felt quite confident about this. Ecclesiastical and secular court proceedings were conducted simultaneously but separately in the upper and lower halls of the castle of La Tour Neuve in Nantes.

The initial charge of infringing on the ecclesiastical protection and rights of Jean Le Ferron need not be explicated further. This was relatively straightforward. The second indictment was underscored in the sixteenth charge.

> In a lower hall of the castle at Tiffauges …in the diocese of Maillezais, he had several signs, and characters traced by certain masters like François Prelati … self-styled expert in the forbidden art of geomancy; and in a wood close by the castle at Tiffauges he had these same signs traced in the earth by Jean de la Rivière, and Antoine de Palerme, a Lombard, as well as by a man named Louis, and other magicians and conjurors of demons, and had them conjure and divine, and he invoked and had them invoke evil spirits answering to the names of Barron, Oriens, Beelzebub, and Belial, by means of fire, incense, myrrh, aloes and other aromatics.[27]

All of this was embellished in the fifteenth charge of the bill of indictment that also set forth the allegations of sexual crime and murder.

> Considering what was reported at first by public rumor, then by the secret inquiry led by the said Reverend Father, Lord Bishop of Nantes, in his city and diocese, at the same time as by his commissioners, deputed by apostolic authority … as well as that led by the aforesaid prosecutor of the ecclesiastical court of Nantes … denunciations reiterated grievously and tearfully, with lamentations, by many persons of both sexes … bemoaning the loss and murder of their children, boys and girls, stating positively that these same boys and girls were taken by the said Gilles de Rais, the accused [and his accomplices] … and that by them these children have had their throats cut inhumanly, had been killed and finally dismembered and burned, and in other respects shamefully tormented; that the same Gilles de Rais, the accused, had sacrificed the bodies of these children to demons … and that with the said children, as many boys as girls, sometimes while they were alive, sometimes after they were dead, sometimes as they were dying, Gilles had horribly and ignobly committed the sin of sodomy and exercised his lust on the one and the other … the aforesaid prosecutor declares and intends to prove, if necessary, that by all evidence, for the past forty years, every year, every month, every day, every night and every hour of these forty [sic] years … the aforesaid Gilles de Rais … took, killed, cut the throats of many children, boys and girls; that these were taken, killed, butchered … that on these same children he committed the said unnatural sin of sodomy and abused them ignominiously; and that he committed and perpetrated in many and various places … all that is set forth above and below.[28]

These charges specified that the bodies of the murdered victims were burned, thrown into ditches or trenches in the vicinity of the castles in question, or were otherwise disposed of in the sewer ("the sinks") of the Castle at La Suze or discarded in "secret and out-of-the-way places."[29] The accusation of sodomy was never defined. This is less a peculiarity with the courts in fifteenth-century Nantes than a lack of precision amongst theologians and lawyers in the Middle Ages. Medieval canon law restricted the types of sexual expression deemed acceptable. In order to comply with a modicum of acceptability, three general requirements determined whether it was licit or not. Sexual relations were confined to heterosexual vaginal penetration within the bonds of holy matrimony, for the purpose of procreation, and performed in the missionary position. Any other sexual contact might fall into the category of sodomy.[30] By the thirteenth century, the term had taken on a pejorative connotation both in legal and in popular parlance.[31] Apart from comments in a single testimony, we cannot be entirely sure exactly what Gilles' sodomitical offenses were. It would be specious to assume too much on the little information we possess from the legal records. The ecclesiastical trial alleged that Gilles and his accomplices had committed the sin of sodomy on the children in question along with "many other enormous and unusual crimes." The charge of sodomy is not explicated.[32] Some analyses of the legal proceedings see the charge of sodomy as the central issue.[33] Is it possible that sodomy was little more than an excuse for the church to conveniently prosecute Gilles with a view towards its own political interest? After all, there were plenty of sexual deviants about who were never legally accosted.[34] The criminal indictment laid the crimes at the feet of "the said Gilles de Rais, the accused, Gilles de Sillé, Roger de Briqueville, Henriet Griart, Étienne Corrillaut, also known as Poitou, André Buchet, Jean Rossignol, Robin Romulart, a man by the name of Spadine, and Hicquet de Brémont, familiars and frequent guests of the same Gilles de Rais."[35]

During the civil trial on 18 September 1440, the reason for some of the atrocities committed came into clearer focus and we are told at least part of the reason why Gilles abducted and killed children.

> Inquiry and inquest with a view to proving, if possible, that the said Lord de Rais and his followers, his accomplices, conveyed away a certain number of small children, or other persons, and had them snatched, whom they struck down and killed, to have their blood, heart, liver, or other such parts, to make of them a sacrifice to the Devil, or to do other sorceries with, on which subjects there are numerous complaints.[36]

The charges further enumerate that Gilles sometimes offered parts of the bodies of the decedents, namely, the hands, eyes, or hearts, to demons in glass vases.[37] The canonical court put the number of Gilles' victims at 140. The secular court numbered them at more than 200.[38] Recent studies inflate the serial killing to encompass more than 800 victims.[39] Gilles himself eventually testified that there were so many he could not possibly know the number.[40] The lurid charges are compressed when the court noted that it is "common opinion" that the said Gilles de Rais, "the accused …was and is a heretic, a relapsed heretic, a magician, a sodomite, a conjuror of evil spirits, a seer, a cutter of the throats of innocents, an apostate, an idolater, having deviated from the faith and being hostile to it."[41] Put together, then, Gills de Rais was accused of heresy, apostasy, conjuring demons, criminal activity in connection to crimes against nature, sodomy, sacrilege, and violating the immunity of the medieval church. These were serious charges, even if the defendant initially failed to appreciate their gravity.

Suspect number two was a maid. Examination of the trial records in the proceedings against Gilles de Rais reveals that much of the lurid information came from the testimony of a woman named Perrine Martin.[42] This woman, known also as "La Pellissonne," bore the moniker "La Meffraye" or "the terror" and worked as a servant for Gilles. It is quite unclear how her testimony was obtained. It is not known if torture or the threat of torture was used to elicit her sworn deposition. Whether or not the methods of judicial torture were employed, the evidence submitted by La Meffraye did not constitute legal evidence. The examination did not take place in court and her statements were not repeated before the presiding judges. Moreover, her testimony was circulated throughout the city, thereby causing serious prejudice to the case for the defence. In other words, Gilles de Rais was tried in the medieval equivalent of the media and popular culture.

On 13 September 1440, Gilles de Rais was summoned before the episcopal court in Nantes. Preliminary hearings were held on 28 September and again on 8, 11, and 13 October. These hearings produced only two further witnesses in addition to the seven noted in the episcopal letter of 29 July.[43] None of these witnesses possessed any first-hand knowledge of what had happened to the missing children before hearing details of the so-called confessions of Perrine Martin. This calls into question the bishop's 29 July claim that Gilles de Rais was being charged with child murder and heinous crimes on the basis of public rumour.[44] Two days after the preliminary hearings concluded, the formal trial opened on 15 October. Having been privy to the lurid testimony of Perrin Martin that

had been circulated throughout Nantes and the surrounding locale, the courtroom was crowded with people demanding vengeance for alleged missing or assumed murdered children.[45] The criminal proceeding likewise attracted many people curious to see the accused and to hear prurient accounts of his crimes and misdeeds.

Initially, Gilles went on the offensive during the preliminary hearings and attempted to block procedural developments by challenging the legal competence of the judges to hear the case or to preside over court proceedings that had indicted him. The records indicate that Gilles was uncooperative and arrogant in response to the queries put to him. Gilles indicated he would appeal but that initiative was denied on technical legal grounds.[46] He refused to take an oath. He went further in actively vilifying the judges by denouncing them as simoniacs and dissolute men unworthy to sit in judgement of one who was a devout and faithful Christian. Gilles told the court in no uncertain terms that he was sorely vexed to have to appear in such a place and stated he preferred to be hanged rather than be forced to respond to such improper judges. The court was unmoved and, after having threatened him several times with excommunication, Gilles de Rais was declared an excommunicate on 13 October.[47] Thus, the formal trial began with Gilles already declared outside the church. However, by that time Gilles had changed his mind and had decided to cooperate. In the space of two days, he completed a total volte-face. He begged forgiveness for his intemperate and impertinent remarks and offered full apology to the court officials for his insolence and misbehaviour. He indicated he was now fully prepared to submit to the lawful authority and established jurisdiction of the court without further prevarication or appeal. In response to this astonishing and unexpected display of contrition, the court and the church lifted the ban of excommunication, thereby readmitting the accused miscreant back into the church. This is extraordinary in that the defendant was charged with heresy. One must ponder which factors impressed upon the thinking of Gilles de Rais over the course of those two days prompting him to withdraw his defiance to the court and offer a plea of submission and willingness to do nothing to further obstruct the court procedure. The forty-eight-hour interval is of seminal importance but unfortunately we can learn nothing from the records for these are silent and constitute some of those lost moments of history.

The important detail is clearly the forty-eight-hour interval of which nothing is recorded, and after which everything had changed. After this interval of silence, Gilles confessed and he was restored to communion

with the church. What happened in those forty-eight hours seems obvious. The prosecutors made a deal with him: if he continued obdurate he would die ignominiously and without the blessing of the church. Hell awaited him assuredly. Of this outcome, Gilles had no doubt. His properties would be forfeited, and it is impossible to know the nature and extent of the threats that may have been raised against his family. On the other hand, if he confessed, he would still die ignominiously but he could save his soul, and perhaps some of his properties would be left to his family who would otherwise be unharmed. He agreed, having no choice about his temporal fate. And he confessed to crimes so incredible, and his insistence that the confession be made public and in the vernacular, seems to be a declaration that he expected no one to give it credence. This was how Gilles imagined he could save his reputation. No one would believe such confessions; they were too incredible. Whereas if his confession was *in camera*, no one outside the court would be able to evaluate the nature and content of his admissions, and would therefore have no recourse but to believe in his guilt. Placed against the prevailing political and economic motives, there is an abundance of circumstantial detail to suggest a conspiracy (his fellow accused who escaped unpunished) and there is testimony, too often ignored or overlooked, that not everyone believed in his guilt.

On the second day of the trial (16 October), Francesco Prelati was deposed. His testimony corroborated the allegations of the court that he had been connected to the defendant and acknowledged he knew of common rumour connecting Gilles de Rais to crimes against children. However, Prelati adamantly claimed to know nothing about murder, although he admitted he had seen one dead child, six months old, in the Castle of Tiffauges.[48] The third suspect to undergo interrogation and give testimony to the court was a priest. Father Eustache Blanchet was deposed on 17 October. He testified that Gilles often wandered about his estates at all hours and admitted that he was responsible for bringing the sorcerer Francesco Prelati to Brittany. Blanchet testified that he had heard both Prelati and Gilles de Rais invoking Satan in their alchemical rituals. Like Prelati, Blanchet admitted that he also knew of gossip and common rumour concerning stories of children who had mysteriously gone missing. He told the court he suspected Gilles was writing a book "on the ceremonies of his school" using ink made from the blood of murdered children.[49] Father Blanchet even represented to the court that while he had not actually seen the book in question he had in fact personally seen the said ink well. However, he was unable to shed any light on allegations of sexual

abuse on the part of the defendant. Thus far, the testimonies of Prelati and Blanchet established little more than efforts on the part of the accused to conjure magic or turn the theories of alchemy to his advantage. The alleged deposition of Perrine Martin was troubling for the defence but it had been improperly obtained and was technically illegal. The three witnesses were able to provide the court with little more than hearsay evidence. Had he not decided to plead guilty, Gilles de Rais would have been relieved when the examination of Father Blanchet closed. Gilles doubtlessly felt quite confident defending himself on charges of heresy. If the sorcerer, the maid, and the priest had done little to harm him legally, additional witnesses had more to contribute than hearsay.

Suspects four and five were introduced into the proceedings. These were a steward and a servant, Henri Griart and Étienne Corrillaut, better known as Poitou. The former had joined the household of Gilles de Rais in the capacity of steward or chamberlain around 1434 while the latter arrived as early as 1427. Their testimonies were especially damaging and ultimately damning. These two deponents testified that Gilles de Rais had engaged in the systematic sexual abuse of children in his castles throughout the Loire Valley. Poitou testified, ostensibly without the prompting of torture, that Gilles had disclosed the nature of his crimes to him. The court record spares little detail.

> In order to practice his unnatural debaucheries and lascivious passions with the said children, boys and girls, the said Gilles de Rais first took his penis or virile member into one or the other of his hands, rubbed it, made it erect, or stretched it, then put it between the thighs or legs of the said boys and girls, bypassing the natural vessel of the said girls, rubbing his said penis or virile member on the bellies of the said boys and girls with great pleasure, passion, and lascivious concupiscence, until sperm was ejaculated on their bellies.[50]

In terms of the charge of sodomy, this deposition represents the fullest extent of our knowledge and it would be imprudent to speculate further. Poitou testified of how skeletons of murdered children were disposed of and these numbered as many as eighty-six. Poitou went further to reveal the depth of Gilles' depravity by stating that at times when it was impossible to find boys or girls from the countryside he resorted to abusing his own choirboys, though he never killed any of them since he loved them very much, but swore them to keep his deeds secret. Of his devotion to the choirboys we read elsewhere that he bestowed on them many gifts and finery and on each occasion when they performed he saw to it they had new costumes.[51]

The deposition of Henri Griart on 17 October was much the same and contained plenty of lurid details of the misdeeds of Gilles de Rais. We lack specific details under which these testimonies were encouraged or extracted. Were these men tortured? Their accounts are so close as to be practically verbatim in places with respect to details of events that in some cases presumably occurred years earlier. Was there dictation on the part of the interrogators as was usual in inquisitorial procedures relating to heresy and witchcraft investigations? We know of marginal notations in manuscript records wherein the inquisitor has noted to the effect that if the witness had not yet implicated the accused, then at a predetermined place in the interrogation the witness may be tortured until the desired outcome is achieved.[52] We cannot know with any degree of certainty what went on behind the scenes in the trial of Gilles de Rais.

Suspect number six was the choirmaster André Buchet. There were rumours that the choirmaster also harboured unnatural desire for his charges but such gossip was neither proven nor sustained. Buchet was constantly recruiting new members for his illustrious choir, a project fully funded by Gilles de Rais who rewarded his choirmaster handsomely for his work. The preponderance of evidence submitted by the witnesses for the prosecution in the case against Gilles de Rais thus far consisted mainly of rumour, hearsay, innuendo, gossip, and suspicion. What happened next was a breakthrough that the prosecution could hardly have imagined.

Having heard from the nominated key witnesses, as determined by the court, Gilles de Rais was scheduled to be subjected to interrogatory torture on Friday, 21 October at 2:00 p.m. in order that the court might arrive at a definitive understanding of the nature of the charges.[53] As the time approached, Gilles announced that he was prepared to testify and make full confession in order, as he put it with grim humour, to spare them the bother of torture. The entire procedure is curious for it would have been extraordinary for someone of Gilles' social rank and standing to be threatened with judicial torture.[54] The testimony of Gilles de Rais in the ecclesiastical court of Nantes has been called "confessions of a medieval sodomite" and it is doubtful that anyone had any inkling of what Gilles was about to say under oath once he declared that torture would be quite unnecessary since he was prepared to make a full and complete statement to the court concerning the charges levelled against him.[55] Is it significant that the confessions of Gilles de Rais were made only after the threat of torture?

Without flinching, Gilles de Rais took the witness stand and admitted the essential veracity of the charges filed against him. His informal *confessio*

extra iudicialis, or his "out of court confession," bragged that his crimes were sufficient to convict 10,000 men.[56] This might be construed as an example of the criminal propensity to extravagance.[57] He declined to modify or challenge the indictments or indeed any of the testimony made against him by the several witnesses. Instead, Gilles did everything possible to incriminate himself.[58] He confessed that he did enjoy his vice. He admitted to the systemic sexual abuse of children. He confessed that he personally had decapitated many of his victims. He admitted that he had beaten many other children to death with a stick. He testified in open court that he had, with considerable unrestrained lust, kissed the dead bodies of his victims. Moreover, he appeared to corroborate the earlier testimony of Poitou when he stated that he had in fact asked his accomplices to judge which decapitated head was the more pleasing. The courtroom must have been shocked into stunned silence at these disclosures as Gilles continued. He testified that it was true that he enjoyed sitting on the children in order to more closely observe their death. The Marshal of France confessed that at times he had ordered their bodies cut open so that he could view their internal organs.[59] One of the wealthiest men in the realm declared he had ordered the disposition of the remains of murdered children by various and sundry means. Moreover, he admitted that he employed agents to search out and seize victims to satisfy his cravings. Two of the most successful of these kidnappers were women.[60] The religiously observant and pious Gilles de Rais admitted his culpability in the said crimes and entered an unqualified guilty plea. From a prosecutorial point of view, the trial was an absolute success. Confession was considered the *regina probationum* (queen of proofs) and was generally regarded as unassailable, especially when it had been obtained without the use of torture.

The court, which comprised the bishop, inquisitor, four local prelates, and civil judges, considered the crimes and offenses of Gilles separately. This meant that two separate courts were concurrently considering the case against Gilles de Rais. It might be noted this was the identical procedure used in the trial of Joan of Arc nine years earlier. The inquisitor found the defendant guilty as charged on the allegations of apostasy, heresy, and the invocation of demons. The bishop returned a verdict of guilty on the charges of sodomy, sacrilege, and the violation of ecclesiastical privilege. The secular judges condemned him on the indictment for murder. Thus, the Marshal of France was denounced as a heretic, a relapsed heretic, magician, sodomite, invocator of demons, apostate, murderer, idolater, one who strayed from the faith and was hostile to it, a

soothsayer and sorcerer.[61] On 22 October, Gilles asked that his confession be read publicly in the vernacular. This was not extraordinary save that, in this case, the details were shocking. Gilles even added more lurid details to his original confession. He exhorted everyone present to obey church authority without question. He asked pardon of the parents of the children he had abused and murdered. His previous excommunication having been revoked meant that Gilles de Rais had been reincorporated into the church and thereby absolved. Upon request, the penitential confession of the convict was heard by the Carmelite monk Jean Jouvenel. The court ordered that on the following day, 26 October, at 11:00 a.m., Gilles de Rais be relaxed to the secular arm for execution of sentence.

On the next day, at the specific request of the condemned man, the bishop and clergy of Nantes formed the beginning of a great procession that began two hours prior to the scheduled execution. This procession was accompanied by an innumerable group of the common people from the city and the immediate area. We are told that an enormous throng accompanied the condemned man and they prayed for his soul.[62] There is some irony that the people once clamouring for his death now prayed for his salvation. The procession wound its way through the streets of Nantes with much ritual, pomp, and music, over the bridges that spanned the Loire River that flowed around the Ile Faydeau to the place of execution on the island called La Gloriette in the meadows of La Madeleine. Reaching the place of punishment, Gilles had requested that he be executed along with his accomplices, Henri Griart and Poitou, since they had committed the heinous acts together. However, Gilles requested that he be put to death first. The court ordered that the three men be hanged and then their bodies burnt on a pyre. Henri Griart and Poitou were hanged and their bodies burned according to the court order. In the case of Gilles de Rais, he was hanged but his mortal remains were not committed to the fire. It seems someone was prepared to cut the rope before the fire reached him. His relatives, or several women, were permitted to retrieve the corpse and he was interred in the Carmelite Monastery Church of Notre Dame in Nantes.[63] There is some evidence that bones of the decedent were kept as relics of his piety.[64] Sometime after the tumultuous events of that autumn, Gilles' daughter Marie de Rais raised a monument to her father on the Chaussée de la Madeleine (Gloriette Island) between the École Ste. Barbe and a private house and in front of the Hôtel de la Boule d'Or that survived well into the nineteenth century. A fragment is apparently preserved in the Museum of Archaeology in Nantes.[65]

The execution of Gilles de Rais brought a decade of terror, of mass murder, of serial killing, and paedophilia in Brittany to an end. The missing children were now more or less accounted for, their unfortunate fates now revealed. The tormentor who had perpetrated such ghastly crimes had been punished in accordance with law. With the monster now dead and ensconced beneath a marble slab in the monastic church, life could return to normal in the Loire River Valley. Before considering the case closed, however, there are a number of queries that remain unanswered and unaccounted for. Was the trial of Gilles de Rais quite as straightforward as the verdicts handed down in the courtrooms of Nantes in 1440 seem to indicate? Initially, one must query the nature and reliability of the court records.[66] The case for the prosecution of Gilles de Rais was founded principally on reports drawn up by ecclesiastical and inquisitorial personnel, legal writs prepared for trial, documents based largely if not exclusively on memory, and depositions made by persons known and unknown who may or may not have been tortured or subjected to various degrees of duress. Frankly, there are no proven strategies for determining how reliable such information is. There are two considerations inherent in this matter. There is the possibility that notaries or other court officials fraudulently manipulated the legal record of the trial of Gilles de Rais. I can find no grounds for sustaining this possibility. On the other hand, it is possible the evidential value of the testimonies comprising the case against Gilles is too weak to support the weight of the allegations. This is a different type of reliability test. The notarial records are more or less unimpeachable, at least certainly no more suspect than any other similar trial of the period, but there is considerable question about the integrity of the evidence submitted. The recording of that evidence is likely trustworthy but the evidence itself is quite another matter. In other words, interrogations undertaken during inquisitorial proceedings were recorded by Jean Delaunay, Jean Petit, Nicolas Géraud, and Guillaume Lené, the court-appointed notaries. These individuals prepared a narrative of the details obtained during the deposition but it cannot be considered that such records were verbatim reports. Instead, these constituted the sum and substance of the testimony as was customary.[67] That limitation in mind is still not the centre of the issue. The core is that what the notaries Jean Delaunay, Jean Petit, Nicolas Géraud, and Guillaume Lené faithfully recorded is potentially fundamentally flawed and amounting to a template consisting of boilerplate testimony and evidence seen with some regularity in late medieval heresy trials.

Comparing the inquisitorial procedures of this heresy trial to the standard procedures of the *ordo iudicarius* reveals significant departures and irregularities.[68] Some of these are substantial, with rather severe implications for the findings of the court and some that cast considerable doubt on the verdict. It is curious that apart from Perrine Martin, Poitou, and Henri Griart, none of the other approximately 500 servants who worked for Gilles de Rais were called on to testify, give witness, or corroborate the evidence submitted to the court in support of the indictment. Guillaume Daussy was one of the servants and his son was sexually abused and murdered by Gilles, according to the defendant's own testimony, yet Daussy never gives evidence, even to the extent of confirming his son's disappearance.[69] The majority of the testimony submitted as evidence is little more than hearsay. Parents who knew nothing of their missing children's whereabouts soon began asserting the youngsters had been sodomized and murdered. On what basis were such accusations and assumptions founded? Once or twice in the proceedings we hear about the discovery or existence of skeletal remains on properties owned by Gilles but this hardly constitutes *prima facie* evidence. Charges against Gilles were disseminated by word of mouth and in Latin when they ought to have been written down. Some of the witnesses, especially Prelati, Blanchet, and Perrine Martin were possibly subjected to torture, gave evidence that was then used against Gilles, and in some cases thereafter were freed and not even charged with complicity in the case. André Buchet, Gilles' choir director and also choirmaster for the Duke of Brittany, who aided and abetted in procuring children for Gilles and apparently helped in disposing their bodies, may have received payment for his services in this regard, but surprisingly was never prosecuted. Gilles was absolved without being subjected to the usual ceremony of abjuration. More startling and irregular was the fact that the excommunication of Gilles de Rais was lifted on request by the defendant despite the glaring fact that a charge of heresy continued to hang over his head. The condemned was permitted to choose the place of burial and to some extent dictate the course of his execution. In return for not revoking his confession, Gilles was permitted to die more humanely rather than by burning, which was the standard medieval method for executing convicted heretics.

Moreover, and equally troubling, is the fact that the trial proceedings suggest alleged rumours about the criminal activities of Gilles de Rais for as long as eight years.[70] We must wonder why the authorities delayed investigating for so long. At the arraignment the indictment stated that

the crimes began in 1426, but Gilles later testified that he only perpetrated his heinous offenses from 1432. Tellingly, no cases of missing children prior to 1432 were introduced as evidence at trial. How can the earlier date be explained? Further, there is the question of motivation on the part of the prosecution. The immediate social and political turmoil that existed between France and Brittany is directly at issue. Castles and lands belonging to Gilles were of strategic importance. Brittany would eventually be absorbed by France, but in 1440 it might be argued that Gilles de Rais held one of the critical keys in the struggle. Notably, upon his death, most of his estates were confiscated by Jean V de Montfort, the Duke of Brittany, and Bishop Jean Malestroit had likewise gained a significant portion of his property before the trial. One explanation for the delay in prosecuting Gilles alleges that only once the church authorities had taken advantage of the wealth controlled by Gilles did they begin to gather evidence for a criminal indictment.[71]

The fate of the accused was also curious. Gilles and his two principle companions, Henri Griart and Poitou, were executed. Prelati was condemned to life imprisonment. He escaped custody but was later hanged, having been convicted of additional crimes. Father Blanchet was fined and banished. Perrine Martin, the woman known as La Meffraye, hanged herself in a prison cell in Nantes.[72] The choirmaster André Buchet was untouched. Gilles de Sillé vanished without a trace. Roger de Briqueville received a pardon for his role in the crimes.[73] Of the others named in the criminal indictment, Jean Rossignol, Robin Romulart, Spadine, and Hicquet de Brémont, we hear not a word of their whereabouts or fate. A fifteenth-century chronicler noted that the majority of the barons of Brittany, especially those closely related to the accused, were stricken with grief and greatly confused at what was considered the disgraceful death of Gilles de Rais. Prior to the criminal proceedings Gilles had enjoyed the esteem of his countrymen and was renowned as a brave knight in combat.[74] More than this, to all outward appearances during the time he was allegedly engaged in the sexual molestation of children on an alarming scale and committing serial killing he did not cease from the practice of religious faith. During the years of terror, Gilles de Rais remained outwardly pious. He was regularly observant of his religion. He went to confession and received the sacrament. He also repeatedly mentioned his desire to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to visit the holy sepulchre. At the same time that the court alleged he was engaged in mass murder and unspeakable cruelties, Gilles was also participating for an entire year

in a mystery play staged at Orléans celebrating the victories of his former colleague Joan of Arc.[75] Where are the missing children of Orléans? We know of no names or cases even remotely connected to Gilles de Rais, yet the court records of 1440 assure us that "for the past fourteen years, every year, every month, every day, every night…" Gilles de Rais sexually abused and murdered children. Where are the victims in Orléans? It should also be noted that his relatives later attempted to mount an insanity defence on behalf of Gilles in the ducal court of Brittany.[76] This was unsuccessful. The query remains: was the trial and condemnation of Gilles de Rais a travesty of justice or was he in fact the scoundrel the court condemned? Some writers assume the evidence presented at trial speaks for itself and therefore Gilles de Rais was guilty as charged.[77] There have been those in the past 130 years who have questioned either the verdict itself or raised objections about one aspect or another of the trial procedures.[78] Such claims cannot be dismissed out of hand. The judges who presided over the trial of Gilles de Rais may well have been villains who used law and legal procedure for their own ends, but this does not mean they were incapable of detecting real crimes.[79]

The threat of torture or its actual application seems likely to have elicited the near-verbatim testimony of Henri Griart and Poitou. The unreliability of confession extracted from witnesses under duress historically has proven to be universal.[80] Their depositions were ever more damaging than anything offered by the others. These two factors, torture and similarity of witness, were not carefully scrutinized by the court. Confessions in many inquisitorial proceedings relating to heresy or witchcraft are remarkably similar in many parts of Europe. This may be attributed to the nature and standardized questions asked of the defendant or deponent. Leading questions were often asked. In many records there are no specific answers provided, only the single word *affirmat* meaning the witness has affirmed the point in question. Sometimes a statement of confession written in the first person would be drawn up by the court, which the accused or deponent would be compelled to sign or otherwise affirm. The evidence accepted by the court cannot be adjudicated as other than wholesale rumour and hearsay. Despite the sense that there were many witnesses arrayed against Gilles de Rais, it is troublesome to find that the court records provide us with the names of only seven clearly identified deponents on the matter of sexual abuse and murder, of which two depositions (Perrine Martin and an otherwise unknown Tiphaine, the widow of Robin Branchu) are no longer extant.[81] There is reference to the depositions of fifteen other witnesses on

the alleged rumours of *infamia* of Gilles de Rais.[82] These testimonies by attorneys, merchants, apothecaries, notaries, physicians, and barbers are general witnesses on the matter of public outcry concerning Gilles, but the depositions are not extant and the witnesses were only saying they knew of rumours and general unrest. Inasmuch as the crimes were alleged to have been committed over a period of some fourteen years, it seems extraordinary that only eight witnesses to these atrocities could be noted by name in the criminal proceedings.

Suspicions are only deepened when one turns to the victims. According to the narrative of the indictment, the court heard that Gilles de Rais, during every month of every year over a substantial period of time, did indeed abduct, or caused to be seized, children who were then taken to one of his castles where they were ritualistically abused and subsequently murdered. We should expect the legal dossier to be filled with the names of the children who went missing or who were found dead at the hand of the serial killer in the region of the Loire River. The indictment only identifies two victims.[83] Of the clearly identified scores of victims Gilles is alleged to have murdered, we find a figure well below the 140 victims generally assumed by the ecclesiastical court and the 200 alleged in the secular tribunal. Upon examination it becomes apparent that full names can only be determined for ten of the victims: Colin Avril, Jean Donete, Guillaume Delit, Jean Hubert, Olivier Darel, Perrot Dagaie, Bernard Le Camus, Princé Jacquet, Guillaume Le Barbier, and Jamet Brice. Many others (twenty-nine in all) are identified only as the son or child of a certain man or family: the nephew of the prior of Chéméré, the brother of Catherine, wife of a painter named Thierry, or the sons of the widow Yvon Kerguen, Perrone Loessart, Guillaume Daussy, Jean Bernard, Jean Meugner, Guillaume Jeudon, Jean Jeudon, Alexandre Chastelier, Guillaume Sergent, Mathelin Thouars, Jeanne Édelin (or Bonneau), Macé Sorin, Oran, Thomas Aisé, Guillaume Hamelin (two sons), Michwau Bouver, Eustache Drouet (two sons), Jean Jenvret, Jean Fougere, Éonnet de Villeblanche, Magnet, Robin Pavot (two sons), and Couperie (two sons). Beyond this, there are the pages of Guillaume Hilairet and Francesco Prelati, the nephew of Denis de Lemoin, and a young man connected to Jean Toutblanc. Three victims are totally anonymous, noted only as a boy from the town of La Roche-Bernard, a seven-year-old at Machecoul, and a six month old seen at Tiffauges. This renders a total of forty-six children. During the secular court trial, the names of a dozen parents or family members are listed as filing complaints over missing children supposed murdered by Gilles de Rais.[84]

Given the allegations lodged against Gilles and the period of time he was accused of engaging in his criminal preoccupations, it seems extraordinary that less than a dozen victims could be fully identified as missing or murdered. In a fourteen-year period in a region riven with war, conflict, and political hostility, add to this the expected level of criminal activity, or the likelihood of misadventure, accident, familial violence, runaways, unexplained absences, the peripatetic nature of late medieval life, or peril by wild animal, one is left rather underwhelmed by the scope of the charges and the paucity of nominated victims. Forty-six alleged dead children is an atrocity but it does not meet the criteria maintained by the court that for years Gilles Rais stalked the countryside seizing, abusing, and murdering children on a daily basis. These observations beg the question: when were the alleged victims killed? According to the information gleaned and presented as evidence there were no known killings between 1434 and 1436 and only one in the year 1437. Yet the indictment represents heinous criminal acts over a fourteen-year period. This implies that while he was engaged in battles in support of Joan of Arc and her agenda, Gilles de Rais was also raping and murdering children. Yet over a four-year period he seems to have been essentially inactive. Both observations may in fact be true. The history of criminology reveals that horrific crimes have been committed by individuals who simultaneously have been priests, political leaders, presumed loving and faithful spouses, and revered public figures. The same discipline can be shown to reveal cases of modern serial killers, rapists, or other violent criminals who cease and desist from their criminal activity for years at a time before resuming their previous deviant behaviour.[85] In the case of Gilles de Rais, he may have raped and killed children after hearing Mass and saving Joan of Arc from certain death on the battlefield. He may well have stopped killing for several years before resuming his reign of terror. The problem is aligning that behaviour with the charges against him, especially as enumerated in the fifteenth charge.[86] There is a glaring problem of consistency between the indictment and the evidence presented.

Alluding to the evidence in the case against Gilles de Rais in 1440, one is again struck by the nature of the proofs advanced to secure conviction. In sum, there is a total lack of forensic or physical evidence. The legal proceedings reveal the following. The body of the Lavary boy was thrown into a latrine belonging to a man named Boetden, a neighbour of Jean Memoire in Vannes. Bernard Le Camus's remains were sent to Machecoul for burning, a point confirmed by Gilles, while an additional forty-five

heads and bones were dispatched to the same location for the same reason.[87] We hear of rumours about bones discovered at Champtocé.[88] Both Poitou and Griart claim they were privy to hearsay about the bones of two children found in the lower part of the tower at Machecoul.[89] During the ecclesiastical trial, Poitou said he helped remove thirty-six or forty-six skeletons (he was not sure which) from the tower at Champtocé for transport to Machecoul for burning while at the secular proceeding he settled on the figure of forty-six skeletal remains.[90] Griart likewise testified in the first proceeding there were either thirty-six or forty-six skeletons but decided there were thirty-six when he appeared before the secular magistrates.[91] Why have two deponents hesitated over the same two figures but later were able to definitively state a precise number? Poitou said he had no idea how the children died.[92] Later, he claimed to have aided in the removal of about forty children's bones from Machecoul to be burned elsewhere.[93]

Not only do we not know the identities of many of the alleged victims, we have no *prima facie* proof they were victimized by Gilles de Rais. Poitou testified that he had brought perhaps forty children in total to Gilles at Nantes, Machecoul, Tiffauges, and elsewhere. The same claim is included in the deposition of Henri Griart.[94] The deposition of Guillaume Hilairet includes a comment that he heard that a man named Jean du Jardin had said that a conduit filled with the remains of little children had been found at Champtocé.[95] Such hearsay evidence was never established, nor was Jean du Jardin ever subpoenaed to testify and neither were ditches excavated near Champtocé. There were two skeletons presumed to have been uncovered at one or more of Gilles' castles. These were not produced. We encounter more hearsay testimony including Perrine Rondeau of Machecoul who swore she saw ashes that was said to be the remains of burned children taken from the house of Perrot Cahu after Eustache Blanchet had stayed there. There was also a bloody shirt that smelled so bad she fell ill.[96] Henri Griart testified he had personally killed twelve children and asserted that he had heard that forty bodies were discovered in a room at Machecoul.[97] Poitou claims eleven or twelve children were slain at La Suze.[98] Moreover, we have the sworn testimony of Poitou who submitted there were at least eighty victims he knew of whose bodies were uncovered at Machecoul and burned.[99] Why could Poitou not lead the authorities to the final repository of the remains, indeed any of the remains, if in fact he could identify that many murders and presumably he had been assigned the unedifying task of deposing of at least some of these remains? Two skeletons were mentioned. However, the presence

of skeletal remains does not *ipso facto* imply foul play. Nor yet does it establish that Gilles de Rais was in any sense responsible for the death of the person. Moreover, skeletons may have been on Gilles' property before he took ownership or assumed residence. A skeleton may be evidence of homicide and appallingly brutal inhumanity. Alternatively, it may have no relation to these things at all. Such discoveries may be irrelevant circumstantial evidence or merely a red herring seized on by overzealous or unscrupulous prosecutors or inquisitors. The Lavary boy allegedly was killed in June 1440 and his remains thrown into a specifically identified latrine. The body refused to sink sufficiently and so Poitou had to be lowered by rope into the cesspool to submerge the body. The choirmaster André Buchet and Griart had some difficulty getting Poitou out.[100] We read of no search conducted in this latrine to establish with *prima facie* evidence the testimony of a murder committed only two months before legal proceedings. The oversight is extraordinary and it appears that confession as *regina probationum* satisfied the court absolutely. In a number of witch trial proceedings, defendants confessed to having sex with the Devil or committing homicide of certain named individuals. Examination of such testimony sometimes conclusively established virginity and proved that victims of murder were in fact alive. In these instances, confession appears not to be the queen of proofs.

The obvious answer to the missing skeletons is that Gilles de Rais took particular care to cover his tracks, conceal incriminating *indicia*, or otherwise destroy the evidence of his crimes. Indeed, we have already encountered testimony addressing this issue. However, accepting such evidence uncritically in capital cases especially is a particularly dangerous method of procedure. These charges filed against the defendant were clear in the allegation that the bodies of the murdered children were burned, thrown into ditches or trenches in the vicinity of the castles in question, or were otherwise disposed of in the sewer of the Castle at La Suze.[101] It is quite impossible to say by which method the majority of the corpses were concealed. It seems unlikely that many were thrown into ditches or trenches. These might have come to light if they were not buried and even if they were, the work of weather, erosion, and wild animals would certainly have eventually laid bare the crimes of Gilles de Rais. After all, these crimes took place eight to fourteen years earlier. Yet we hear not a substantiated word of the remains of a child found in a ditch or trench on or near properties controlled by the accused. One sewer is mentioned at the Castle of La Suze. Castle sewers in late medieval Europe were either deposited in

one way or another into a stream of water or cesspools were used. How feasible would it be to dispose large numbers of bodies in such a sewer? In the case of a river or stream, it seems highly plausible that human remains would have turned up with some regularity. Cesspools had to be periodically cleaned out with the almost certain discovery of bodies or bones.[102] There is no indication that either court hearing the case against Gilles de Rais ever ordered a latrine inspection.

The suggestion that the bodies were burned is perhaps the most compelling of all, for this might be achieved privately behind castle walls or in specific rooms. However, it is unlikely Gilles de Rais and his alleged murderous colleagues could have created and sustained fires hot enough to destroy a human body or at least reduce it to a level where further destruction can be undertaken. Where are the skeletons? How much time is required to reduce a human body to a size where it might be disposed of without causing a great deal of attention, keeping in mind the extent and limitations of fifteenth-century technology? Modern cremations require temperatures between 1600 and 1800 degrees Fahrenheit (870–980 degrees Centigrade) over a period of more than two hours in order to incinerate a single human body. Poitou testified that the cremations were carried out "on andirons in the room of the said Gilles, with thick pieces of wood, thereafter arranging faggots on the dead bodies, and kindling a large fire."[103]

Suggestions that Gilles de Rais murdered hundreds of children, and disposed of their bodies in the manner described in the criminal charges, is difficult to support without physical proof or unimpeachable evidence. This does not mean that crimes were not committed, but it does maintain that proving those crimes is a difficult task. The quality of the non-forensic evidence that came before the court is evidentially weak, amounting to rumour, suspicion, and hearsay. Three examples will suffice. Glaring inconsistencies in the testimony of Poitou seems not to have been noted by the court, nor did it elicit any objection. On one occasion, Poitou submitted a sworn statement to the court that he had been sexually abused by Gilles de Rais at knifepoint shortly after he came to live with Gilles at about the age of ten. Elsewhere, he testified that his abuse occurred when he was about the age of twenty.[104] Criminal cross-examination did not occur and normally defendants accused of heresy in the later Middle Ages, a category in which Gilles found himself, did not have legal counsel or representation during trial.[105] Poitou's confused testimony went unchallenged. Henri Griart testified that he cut the throat of a young boy

from Dieppe but later said he was uncertain who committed the murder because he was not there at the time.[106] Which statement or confession should be accepted as true? Finally, we hear repeated references in the trial records to the sexual abuse and murder of young boys and girls but not a single girl is cited in any of the testimonies as a victim of the criminal Gilles de Rais. Girls are mentioned six times in the indictment, once in the judicial sentence, fifteen times in the deposition of Poitou in the ecclesiastical court (but not once in testifying in the secular trial proceeding), thrice in the testimony of Henri Griart in the church proceeding, twice in his secular court testimony, and once in the deposition summary about the public outcry. Moreover, Gilles admitted to killing a large number of male children but says nothing about girls.[107] It is troubling to note that the criminal proceeding in the secular court appears to have accepted without critical evaluation the evidence submitted in the ecclesiastical court and seems to have contented itself with the examination of witnesses concerning the unexplained disappearance of children. Twenty-seven references to girls but not a single case presented to the court.

Concerns in the trial itself raise queries of motivation on the part of those behind the charges as well as the reasons why Gilles de Rais may have been targeted. Giving the defendant the benefit of the doubt in terms of criminal misconduct, are there indications the court may have committed acts of malfeasance, misfeasance, or nonfeasance? There are two considerations. First, were the judges and prosecutors disinterested third parties or were they in a position to benefit from the prosecution and conviction of Gilles de Rais? More specifically, what about the role of Jean de Malestroit? In his capacity as Bishop of Nantes, Malestroit possessed unusual power both in the spiritual and secular realms. It was Malestroit who compiled the initial allegations against Gilles and these appear to have been based on a crucial lack of critically examined evidence. It was Malestroit who declared that his investigation was based on "*fama publica et frequenti*." In response to this "frequent and public rumour" he conducted a diocesan visitation and interviewed many "discreet" people in the parish churches.[108] His 29 July document warrants closer scrutiny. Four observations may be made. First, the document might be regarded as illegal in the sense that it originated outside the court and legal procedure. Second, there is a worrisome element of potentially leading the witnesses. The bishop asks deponents not to hesitate to give witness. This might be construed as an "invitation to scandal, malice, and self-interest."[109] Third, the names of witnesses that are included are not attached to any details of

actual crimes. Fourth, it is manifest that the said witnesses could not possess direct knowledge of the alleged crimes. Having amassed a case for the prosecution, Malestroit appears contented for his dossier of proof to be confirmed by confessions that may have been extracted from deponents who faced the severe duress of judicial torture. Bishop Malestroit's letter provides the framework for prosecution. The required detail is fulfilled in subsequent confessions, and puzzlingly the depositions neither expand on nor deviate from the presumptive claims of the pre-trial outline.[110] The case against Gilles de Rais ultimately rested precariously on hearsay and public rumour about missing children but lacked all semblance of *prima facie* proof.

Gilles' connection to Joan of Arc may also have been a contributing cause for his downfall. Joan had been condemned in 1431 and destroyed after a trial at Rouen with Bishop Pierre Cauchon presiding.[111] In a strictly legal sense she was not executed for political or military reasons but for heresy and by an ecclesiastical court. One of the puzzles in the Joan affair was the apparent lack on the part of King Charles VII, who owed his crown to Joan, to do anything either to ransom or rescue her. Or had he? We know that Gilles de Rais was at Louviers in the winter of 1430, a mere sixteen miles from Rouen where Joan was imprisoned. Suggestions have been advanced that Gilles was there as part of some rescue operation that for unknown reasons failed to materialize.[112] Did the defendant's association with the now unpopular Joan of Arc contribute to his downfall and prosecution? And what should be made of two royal letters dated 3 January 1443 addressed to François I, Duke of Brittany, the president of the *parlement* of Brittany, and other officials that refer to Gilles and declared that "without cause [he] was condemned to death and killed" by order of Pierre de L'Hôpital?[113] The judges involved in the court case were summoned to appear before the supreme court of the *parlement* of Paris to show cause. History is silent on the matter.

The verdict of the criminal proceedings against Gilles de Rais, then, rests on the confessions of the defendant that he was guilty as charged, indeed guilty of more than had been alleged and further, the horror of his crimes had not been completely disclosed. If this is not to be taken at face value, how then should it be explained? That Gilles belonged to an underground pagan resistance movement against Christianity along with Joan of Arc and that both died as martyrs to paganism cannot be given serious attention.[114] Moreover, the force of argument suggesting the case of Gilles de Rais can only properly be understood by seeing the defendant

as the archetypal medieval criminal whose deeds are the outgrowth of that world fails to convince.[115] In attempting to evaluate the veracity of the confessions made by Gilles de Rais in the court in Nantes, there are several factors to be considered in assessing the confessions of defendants in trials such as the one in which Gilles was arraigned. While confessions are often strong indications, they do not necessarily prove anything and require confirmation or supporting evidence. The veracity of confessions must be tempered for they are often extracted by means of judicial coercion, namely torture or the threat of torture. The hopelessness of many inquisitorial proceedings in later medieval Europe sometimes induced defendants to testify to whatever was required, thereby committing "judicial suicide."[116] Furthermore, one cannot rule out any number of psychological issues that might prompt an individual to confess to crimes they did not commit or exaggerate the nature and scope of their offenses. This raises the question of historical fiction in the records of inquisitorial court cases in the later Middle Ages.

With respect to the confession of Gilles de Rais, there appears to be four interpretive options. First, he was telling the complete and unvarnished truth. Second, he was telling the truth but grossly exaggerating the nature and extent of his crimes. Third, he was not telling the truth at all but spoke out of morbid fear of torture, perpetual excommunication, and eternal hell. Fourth, he was not telling the truth on account of insanity. In his public confession, Gilles seems to attribute his depravity to improper diet and elsewhere to a lack of discipline brought to bear on him in his youth.[117] The causal connections seem feeble.[118] Gilles implored parents at his trial to not be so negligent with their children. It is reported that for years after his execution, parents in Nantes whipped their sons on the anniversary of his death.[119] He may even consciously have been modelling his penitential confession on literary sources.[120] This should be contrasted with his private testimony delivered in the prison cell where he had been detained, when he told an indeterminate number of officials including Pierre de l'Hôpital, the chief justice of Brittany, that he alone was responsible for his crimes that he had deliberately perpetrated from no other source or influence save that of his own desire and interest.[121]

It does not seem prudent or sensible to conclude that the crimes committed by Gilles de Rais (whether real or imaginary) should be seen as belonging to the medieval world in which he lived.[122] Rather, however we understand the confessions of Gilles de Rais at the climax of his legal ordeal, it does seem certain that he believed his penitential admissions

merited divine grace and forgiveness. Though condemned to capital punishment, his confessions won him the sympathy of many at the court and on his way to death. Perhaps the ultimate strangeness of the case involving Gilles de Rais was the defendant's assumption that his sins, whatever they might be, were required by God in order for one to achieve forgiveness and salvation. His life ended in a blaze of stunning and public drama, but for whatever reason, this spectacularly unique trial seems to have attracted little contemporary comment and, unlike Joan of Arc, Gilles de Rais soon vanished as an historical figure.[123] His crimes and murders were considered of insufficient value for much commentary. Hidden in the records of history and revealed in the unsolvable mysteries of the past, Gilles de Rais exemplifies aspects of those *other* Middle Ages.

Notes

1. Jean Malestroit, bishop of Nantes, official court summons of Gilles Rais in Georges Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, trans., Richard Robinson (Los Angeles: AMOK, 1991), p. 156. The acts of the trial were formerly in the archives of the Prefecture of Nantes and in the Bibliothèque de Nantes but are no longer obtainable there. The oldest record of the secular court proceeding is in French dating to 1530 owned by the Trémoille Archives but preserved in the National Archives, MS 1 AP 585. The ecclesiastical trial records are Paris, Bibliothèque national MS Lat. 17663. Only the church trial has detailed records. See also Paris, Bibliothèque national MS fr. 3876, fols. 103–128. I can find no evidence of a facsimile edition of the trial records as advertised by Jean Benedetti, *Gilles de Rais: The Authentic Bluebeard* (London: Peter Davies, 1971), p. 3. Ostensibly, the now-defunct La Société de l'Ecole des Chartes intended to publish a facsimile edition of the trial minutes but the effort was aborted and this may be the basis for Benedetti's assertion. See Auguste Vallet de Viriville, "Chronique: Mars-Mai 1862" *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes: revue d'érudition* 23 (1862), pp. 371–2. I am grateful to Ben Parsons for the reference. There is a modern translation of the trial records in Georges Bataille, *Le procès de Gilles de Rais* (Paris: Société nouvelle des editions Pauvert, 1997) but the translation is from the French rather than the Latin. The only published edition of the transcripts in their original language is Eugène Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France dit Barbe-Bleue (1404–1440)* (Paris: H. Champion, 1886).
2. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 258.
3. For some direction on medieval French legal procedure, see Fredric Cheyette, "Choice of Law in Medieval France", in Morris Forkosch, ed.,

Essays in Legal History in Honor of Justice Felix Frankfurter (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), pp. 481–96; Hannah Skoda, *Medieval Violence: Physical Brutality in Northern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Scott L. Taylor, "Judicium Dei, vulgaris popularisque sensus: Survival of Customary Justice and Resistance to its Displacement by the 'New' *Ordines iudiciorum* as Evidenced by Francophonic Literature", in Albrecht Classen and Connie Scarborough, eds. *Crime and Punishment in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), pp.109–30.

4. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 31.
5. Benedetti, *Gilles de Rais: The Authentic Bluebeard*, p. 31 and Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 70. This seems erroneous. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France dit Barbe-Bleue (1404–1440)*, pp. 5–8 establishes Gilles' birth in September or October 1404 at Machecoul Castle.
6. There are conflicting reports on what precisely happened but while noting that her injuries were chiefly an arrow wound to the leg ("atrocissime in crure cum sagittal vulnerata") one source tells us that Gilles stayed with Joan the entire day. Jean Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VIII roi de France*, ed., Auguste Vallet de Viriville, 3 vols (Paris: Jannet, 1858), vol. 1, pp. 107–9.
7. Francis Gies, *Joan of Arc: The Legend and the Reality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 110.
8. Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Joan of Arc: Heretic, Mystic, Shaman* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), pp. 102–3.
9. Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: Image of Female Heroism* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1981), p. 37.
10. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, p. 60.
11. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. cxlviii-cli for the endowment document.
12. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. 61–2 and Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 93–4.
13. Noted in the anonymous "Mémoire des héritiers de Gilles de Rais pour prouver sa prodigalité", in Pierre-Hyacinthe Morice and Charles Taillandier, eds., *Mémoires poir server de preuves à l'histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Bretagne* (Paris: Charles Osmont, 1744), vol. 2, col. 1337.
14. V.l. Hamblin, ed., *Le Mistère du Siège d'Orléans: édition critique* (Geneva: Libraire Droz, 2002). Fires at the notarial archives at Orléans in 1940 destroyed the records but some details are preserved in Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. 70–7.
15. There are arguments that the play was composed in the 1450s. Barbara Craig, "The Staging and Dating of the Mystère du siege d'Orléans" *Res publica litterarum* 5 (No. 2, 1982), p. 82.

16. *Le Mistère du Siège d'Orléans*, p. 421.
17. *Le Mistère du Siège d'Orléans*, p. 579.
18. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 96 says perhaps a billion modern French francs were spent.
19. We read of these details in the deposition record of Father Eustache Blanchet. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, p. lxxiii.
20. Medieval persons under ecclesiastical holy orders possessed *privilegium fori* (the right to be tried in an ecclesiastical court) as well as *privilegium canonis* (special protection), meaning they enjoyed a certain level of immunity from secular authorities and hostile actions such as that perpetrated by Gilles de Rais.
21. Benedetti, *Gilles de Rais*, pp. 176–7.
22. A modern plate marks the event on the steeple of Saint-Étienne-de-Mer-Morte, noting the arrest of Gilles de Rais. "Gilles de Rais, Marshal of France, entered this church armed on the day of Pentecost 1440 during Mass. He seized Jean Le Ferron, a tonsured cleric and locked him up in his fortress nearby. Jean de Malestroit, Bishop of Nantes, cited Gilles to appear before the official in his pastoral letter of 13 September. Jean V, Duke of Brittany, arrested Gilles the next day. He confessed his crimes. Tried, sentenced, he was put to the gallows in the meadow of Biesse in Nantes on 26 October 1440."
23. E. William Monter, "Sodomy and Heresy in Early Modern Switzerland" *Journal of Homosexuality* 6 (Nos. 1–2, 1980–1), pp. 41–55.
24. *Vergentis in senium*, in PL, vol. 214, cols. 537–9 became incorporated into canon law. X 5.7.10 *Vergentis in senium*, in Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 2, col. 782. See also the study by Henry C. Lea, "Confiscation for Heresy in the Middle Ages" *English Historical Review* 2 (April 1887), pp. 235–59 and more recently P.R. Cavill, "Heresy, Law and the State: Forfeiture in Late Medieval and Early Modern England" *English Historical Review* 129 (April 2014), pp. 270–95.
25. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de* Rais, p. 159. Pierre de L'Hôpital was the most important person in the Breton judiciary.
26. Arthur C. Howland, "Criminal Procedure in the Church Courts of the Fifteenth Century, as Illustrated by the Trial of Gilles de Rais" *Papers of the American Society of Church History*, 2nd series, 5 (1917), p. 36.
27. Hearing of 13 October in the ecclesiastical court, in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 172–3.
28. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 171–2. On several occasions the English text says forty years when in fact it should read fourteen years.
29. Charge 27, ecclesiastical court hearing, in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 172, and 174–5.

30. The authoritative study of sex in the Middle Ages is James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). On sodomy, see the work of Mark Jordan and Helmut Puff noted above and also Michael Goodich, *The Unmentionable Vice: Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1979).
31. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* and Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400–1600.*
32. Court hearing on 28 September in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 160.
33. George Bataille, *Gilles de Rais: Leben und Prozeß eines Kindermörders*, new edition, trans. Ute Erb (Vastorf: Merlin Verlag, 2006) is the latest edition of Bataille's influential study.
34. Philippe Reliquet, *Le Moyen-Age: Gilles de Rais: maréchal, monster, martyr* (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1982), pp. 244–5 claims same gender sexual activity among the French barons at this time in history was not uncommon.
35. Hearing of 13 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 171–2.
36. Secular court inquest 18 September in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 253.
37. Charge 31, ecclesiastical court proceedings in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 176.
38. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 174–5 and 250.
39. Ronald M. Holmes and Stephen T. Holmes, *Murder in America* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 95 and Peter Vronsky, *Serial Killers: The Method and Madness of Monsters* (New York: Berkeley Books, 2004), p. 47.
40. Ecclesiastical court hearing, 22 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 196–7.
41. Charge 45, ecclesiastical court hearing, 13 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 178.
42. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. 205–7. Her testimony is not extant.
43. The Latin text appears in Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. i–ii.
44. Howland, "Criminal Procedure in the Church Courts of the Fifteenth Century, as Illustrated by the Trial of Gilles de Rais", p. 39.
45. Brett Kahr, "The Sexual Molestation of Children: Historical Perspectives" *Journal of Psychohistory* 19 (No. 2, 1991), pp. 191–214 offers some useful commentary on the subject in general.
46. Ecclesiastical court hearing of 8 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 163–4.
47. Hearing in the church court on 13 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 167 where the trial record notes Gilles was threatened four times with the censure.

48. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 212.
49. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 219–20 while in the secular court proceedings Henri Griart says the alleged blood may have actually only been red ink, p. 278.
50. Poitou's testimony before the ecclesiastical court, 17 October, in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 225.
51. Anonymous "Mémoire des héritiers de Gilles de Rais pour prouver sa prodigalité", vol. 2, col. 1338.
52. An example is noted in Michael Kunze, *Highroad to the Stake: A Tale of Witchcraft*, trans., William E. Yuill (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 87 where ten-year-old Hansel Pappenheimer was compelled to testify against his parents and siblings. His interrogation record includes this comment at question number 62, in the hand of his examiner: "Can be tortured to the limit so that he incriminates his mother." His testimony, contrived though it may have been, provided the basis for the damning judgement and condemnation of the entire family who went to the stake after brutal torture.
53. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 190.
54. Benedetti, *Gilles de Rais*, p. 182. This does not imply that members of the nobility were exempt from torture.
55. James Penney, "Confessions of a Medieval Sodomite" in *Perversion and the Social Relation*, eds., Molly Anne Rothenberg, Dennis A. Foster and Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 126–58. Reprinted in Penney, *The World of Perversion: Psychoanalysis and the Impossible Absolute of Desire* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 35–67. I use the latter.
56. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 193. The out of court confession was made in the presence of Jean Prégent, Bishop of Saint-Brieuc, Pierre de L'Hôpital, Jean Labbé, Yvon de Rocerf, the priest Jean de Touscheronde, and the notary Jean Petit.
57. Henry Lee Lucas (1936–2001) confessed to 600 killings most of which were later dismissed as untrue. Joel Norris, *Henry Lee Lucas: The Shocking True Story of America's Most Notorious Serial Killer* (London: Constable, 1993).
58. Penney, "Confessions of a Medieval Sodomite", p. 39.
59. Several elements of the crimes of Gilles de Rais including sitting on his victims, masturbating, and viewing internal organs are found replicated in the crimes of Andrei Chikatilo who killed more than 50 victims in Russia between 1978 and 1990. Mikhail Krivich and Ol'gert Ol'Gin, *Comrade Chikatilo: The Psychopathology of Russia's Notorious Serial Killer*, trans. Todd P. Bludeau (Ft. Lee, N.J.: Barricade Books, 1993).

60. Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper & Row, 1887), vol. 3, p. 474. These were the aforementioned Perrine Martin and Étiennette Blanchu. We know practically nothing about the latter. Apparently common rumour implicated "several old women" as Gilles' agents. Deposition of Eustache Blanchet, 17 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 219.
61. Charge 45 of the bill of indictment presented to the church court on 13 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 178.
62. Paul Marchegay, ed., (anon.) "Récit authentique de l'exécution de Gilles de Rays et de ses Deux serviteurs: le 26 Octobre 1440" *Revue des provinces de l'Ouest* 5 (1857), p. 177.
63. Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VIII roi de France*, vol. 2, p. 6.
64. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, p. 340. The church was destroyed in 1793 during the French Revolution.
65. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, p. 343.
66. An examination of this query has been offered in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 145–8.
67. Bernard Gui, *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, ed., Célestin Douais (Paris: Picard, 1886), pp. 188, 214, and 243.
68. Antoine Dondaine, "Le manuel de l'inquisiteur (1230–1300)" *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum* 17 (1947), pp. 85–194, Jiří Kejř, *Husův proces* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 2000), Massimo Vallerani, *Medieval Public Justice*, trans., Sarah Ruben Blanshei (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), Kenneth Pennington, "Innocent until Proven Guilty: The Origins of a Legal Maxim" *The Jurist* 63 (No. 1, 2003), pp. 104–24, Pennington, "Torture and Fear: Enemies of Justice" *Rivista internazionale de diritto commune* 19 (2008), pp. 203–42, Pennington, "Due Process, Community and the Prince in the Evolution of the *Ordo iudiciarius*", pp. 9–47, and Thomas A. Fudge, *The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
69. Noted in Gilles' confession in the ecclesiastical court hearing of 22 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 200.
70. Noted in the deposition of Eustache Blanchet on 17 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 220.
71. Penney, "Confessions of a Medieval Sodomite", p. 66.
72. Benedetti, *Gilles de Rais*, p. 190.
73. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. cxlv–cxlvii.
74. Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *Chroniques*, ed., J.A. Buchon (Paris: Verdiere Libraire, 1826), vol. 7, p. 96.
75. Of course double lives are not exceptional. One need only recall the careers of Kim Philby, Edmund Backhouse, Elmer Gantry religious types, or

otherwise ordinary people later found to have led lives of sometimes gross criminality.

76. "Mémoire des héritiers de Gilles de Rais pour prouver sa prodigalité", col. 1338.
77. D.B. Wyndham Lewis, *The Soul of Marshal Gilles Rais with some Account of his Life and Times, His Abominable Crimes, and his Expiation* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1952), a book without scholarly merit.
78. These include Lea, *The History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. 3, pp. 468–88, Howland, "Criminal Procedure in the Church Courts of the Fifteenth Century, as Illustrated by the Trial of Gilles de Rais", pp. 25–45, Saloman Reinach, "Gilles de Rais", in *Cultes, mythes et religions*, ed., Hervé Duchêne (Paris: Robert Laffort, 1996 [1904]), pp. 1026–49, Fernand Fleuret, *De Gilles de Rais à Guillaume Apollinaire* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1933), Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), pp. 271–2, Gilbert Prouteau, *Gilles de Rais ou La gueule de loop* (Monaco: Editione du Rocher, 1992), and Jean-Pierre Bayard, *Plaidoyer pour Gilles de Rais, Maréchal de France, 1404–1440: Compagnon de Jeanne d'Arc* (Coulommiers Dualpha, 2007). This latter work originally appeared in 1992.
79. Jacques Heers, *Gilles de Rais: Vérités et légends* (Paris: Perrin, 1994), p. 12.
80. Pennington, "Torture and Fear: Enemies of Justice", pp. 203–42, makes this persuasive argument.
81. Referred to in the ecclesiastical court hearing of 15 October and in the secular court inquest of 6 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 184 and 271.
82. These depositions were taken on 21 October in the ecclesiastical court in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 244–5.
83. Charge 21 identifies the ten-year-old son of Jean Lavary of Vannes, while charge 29 identifies a boy about fifteen years old living in the house of a man called Rodigo in the village of Bourgneuf as victims. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 174, 175–6.
84. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 249.
85. Dennis Rader, an American serial killer in Kansas, killed four people in January 1974, one in April, did not kill again until March 1977, again in December of that year, silent until April 1985, again in September 1986, and lastly in January 1991. Roy Wenzl, et al., *Bind, Torture, Kill: The Inside Story of BTK, the Serial Killer Next Door* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).
86. Charge 15 in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 171–2.
87. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 200 for Gilles' confirmation during his in-court confession of 22 October.
88. Deposition of Eustache Blanchet on 17 October in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 220.

89. Poitou's and Griart's testimonies in the ecclesiastical court proceeding (17 October) and the latter's deposition in the secular process in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 223, 233, 275.
90. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 224 and 280.
91. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 233 and 275.
92. According to his testimony in the ecclesiastical process in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 224–5.
93. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 227.
94. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 225 and 234.
95. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 259 from the church trial.
96. Noted during the secular court trial in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 262.
97. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 278 in his secular court deposition.
98. Testimony during the secular trial in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 280.
99. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 280.
100. According to the confessions of Henri Griart during the secular court case in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 279.
101. Charge 27 from the ecclesiastical court case in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 174–5.
102. On medieval sanitation and sewers see Dolly Jørgensen, "Cooperative Sanitation: Managing Streets and Gutters in Late Medieval England and Scandinavia" *Technology and Culture* 49 (No. 3, 2008), pp. 547–67, Ernest L. Sabine, "Latrines and Cesspools of Mediaeval London" *Speculum* 9 (No. 3, 1934), pp. 303–21 and Lynn Thorndike, "Sanitation, Baths, and Street-Cleaning in the Middle Ages and Renaissance" *Speculum* 3 (No. 2, 1928), pp. 192–203.
103. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 226 and confirmed by Henri Griart, pp. 235 and 276–7 in both trials.
104. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 228 for the ecclesiastical trial testimony and p. 279 for statements at the civil trial.
105. Medieval canon law contained rulings barring or limiting legal advocacy for heretics. X 5.1.15 *Veniens*, in Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 2, col. 737. Papal decretals forbade lawyers from aiding heretics under threat of severe penalty. X 5.7.1 *Si adversus*, in Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 2, cols. 783–4. In 1254, the Council of Albi excluded lawyers from acting for the defence in heresy proceedings. Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum conciliorum nova, et amplissima collectio*, vol. 22, col. 838. Other fourteenth-century authorities pointed out that lawyers who did offer their services to defendants in heresy cases ran the risk of being accused of similar offenses. Nicholas Eymeric, *Directorium inquisitorum* (Venice: sumptibus Simeonis Vasalini, 1595), p. 565. In the latter stages of the Council of Constance

(1418), Pope Martin V ruled that suspected heretics had no right to an attorney. *Inter cunctus* in Hermann von der Hardt, *Magnum oecumenicum constantiense concilium*, 7 vols (Leipzig: Gensch, 1699–1742), vol. 4, cols. 518–31. In general, there is little evidence in the records and registers of inquisitorial proceedings that heretics had lawyers. Louis Tanon, *Histoire des tribunaux de l'Inquisition en France* (Paris: Larose et Forcel, 1893), p. 401. The Czech medieval canon law specialist Jiří Kejř, *Husův proces* defends this perspective as does Fudge, *The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure*. There are scholars who disagree. Walter Ullmann, "The Defense of the Accused in the Medieval Inquisition" *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 73 (1950), pp. 481–9, Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Inquisition and the Prosecution of Heresy: Misconceptions and Abuses" *Church History* 58 (1989), p. 455, and Kelly, "Inquisitorial Due Process and the Status of Secret Crimes" *Monumenta iuris canionici, Series C: Subsidia* 9 (1992), p. 408.

106. Noted by Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 122.
107. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 171, 172, 175, 208, 225, 226, 228, 229, 234, 237, 245, 278–9, and 283 reflecting testimony in both legal procedures.
108. This appears among the acts of the canonical process and is the declaration concerning the infamy of Gilles de Rais. It is dated 29 July 1440. The Latin text has been printed in Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. i–ii with the date 30 July.
109. Howland, "Criminal Procedure in the Church Courts of the Fifteenth Century, as Illustrated by the Trial of Gilles de Rais", p. 36.
110. Howland, "Criminal Procedure in the Church Courts of the Fifteenth Century, as Illustrated by the Trial of Gilles de Rais", p. 37.
111. François Neveux, *L'évêque Pierre Cauchon* (Paris: Denoël, 1987) is the premier source on Cauchon.
112. A document uncovered by Paul Marchegay places Gilles in Louviers. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, pp. 33–5. Ernest Alfred Vizetelly, *Bluebeard: An Account of Conmorre the Cursed and Gilles de Rais* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1902), pp. 170–2 thinks Gilles may have been involved in a secret rescue operation. The possibility has generally been ignored or overlooked.
113. Cited in Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, p. 354.
114. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, pp. 270–9.
115. That perspective from Bossard to Bataille has been examined and challenged. See Penney, "Confessions of a Medieval Sodomite" and Ben Parsons, "Sympathy for the Devil: Gilles de Rais and His Modern Apologists" *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 37 (2012), pp. 113–37.

116. Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, fourth edition (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 16.
117. During the ecclesiastical court case in Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, pp. 195 and 203.
118. On the day before his 1989 execution, American serial killer Ted Bundy claimed that hard-core pornography shaped his violence. The idea is controversial. George R. Dekle, Sr., *The Last Murder: The Investigation, Prosecution and Execution of Ted Bundy* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), p. 219.
119. Leonard Wolf, *Bluebeard: The Life and Crimes of Gilles de Rais* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1980), p. 226, n.18.
120. Possibly *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium* written by the first-century Latin author Valerius Maximus, a copy of which Gilles possessed. I owe this to Parsons, "Sympathy for the Devil: Gilles de Rais and His Modern Apologists", p. 124.
121. Bossard, *Gilles de Rais Maréchal de France*, p. xlv.
122. Bataille, *The Trial of Gilles de Rais*, p. 71.
123. Late medieval historiography seems to have taken little interest in the criminal proceedings at Nantes and we are left with rather insignificant notes in the chronicles of Jean Chartier and Enguerrand de Monstrelet.

CHAPTER 4

Gargoyles and Glimpses of Forgotten Worlds

If spiritual authorities had important functions in the application of law and criminal procedure in the Middle Ages, it may be consistent to note that medieval churches often towered physically above their communities. This reflects values and categories of thought. A striking example is the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres, but Chartres is hardly an anomaly of those hundreds of edifices raised across Europe in the Gothic period. St. Stephen in Vienna, Burgos Cathedral in Spain, Reims, the Duomo in Milan, Seville Cathedral, York Minster, Notre Dame in Paris, Cologne Cathedral, and the Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence are only a few of the more impressive. Between 1050 and 1350, several million tons of stone were quarried in France alone for the building of cathedrals. The foundations of these structures are laid as deep as ten meters. In some cases, there is as much stone below the ground as can be seen above. Unlike their predecessors, medieval cathedrals were large enough, in some cases, to accommodate entire towns. A fourteen-storied building could be erected in the choir of Beauvais Cathedral without reaching the vaulting. The spire at Chartres is equivalent to a thirty-storied skyscraper while a forty-storied skyscraper would be required to match the spire at Strasbourg. Such cathedrals literally dominated the physical world of medieval Europe. There has always been considerable attention paid to church buildings. This attention has chiefly been devoted to the interiors of these medieval masterpieces. Less attention has been devoted to the exteriors, or at least to the lesser details. From a religious perspective,

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cathedrals were erected to the glory of God. Tiny carvings and sculptures unseen except from the roofs, executed with great care and craftsmanship, are indicative of this ethos. Cathedrals were not for the glory of humankind, civilization, or even of the Christian religion itself. Cathedrals were for the glory of God. It is difficult to essay a contrary judgement of this evaluation from either a medieval theological or social point of view. This makes the subject of those details on these ecclesiastical buildings all the more puzzling. It prompts the query of how medieval people understood the dazzling array of visual imagery, what it indicated about their thinking, and how it reflected their deepest anxieties (Fig. 4.1).[1]

This chapter raises a curious question: How did waterspouts in the Middle Ages come to achieve notoriety? Or how did a permissible and irreverent sense of humour flourish in a world that had so many rules? Among the spires, towers, and flying buttresses of many medieval churches, one can find with relative ease a whole series of rather strange creatures positioned on the heights of these fascinating and mysterious medieval buildings. A number of French churches are particularly rich in this regard including the cathedrals in Amiens and Rouen, and smaller churches such as the Benedictine Abbey Church of St. Ouen in Rouen, SS Peter and Paul in Aumale, and Notre Dame at Louviers, the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, Sainte-Chappelle, Chartres, Notre Dame in Evreux, and the Gothic cathedrals in Senlis, Laon, and Noyon. The monstrous gar-

Fig. 4.1 Female gargoyle with elongated waterspout. St. Vitus' Cathedral, Prague, Czech Republic

goyle on the north side of the Cathedral of Saint Rumbald in Mechelen, Belgium, is one example amongst hundreds. These stone images make a too-frequent appearance among the towers and buttresses of towering European churches to be incidental or unimportant. Some of them appear to be birds, but are partly wolf, caterpillar, or bat, with strange and horrific resemblances to reality. Strangely, gargoyles have been almost entirely ignored by art historians and are absent in a meaningful sense from all major studies on medieval sculpture. There has been, as it were, a "conspiracy of silence" about their existence and meaning.[2] One must wonder why. Even the most casual glance among the flying buttresses of a Gothic cathedral or along the daring vertical lines of a church such as Notre Dame, Paris, reveals an entire genre of stone curiosities. Gargoyles were placed in specific places on medieval buildings. If churches, this might include outside the clerestory, on walls containing stained glass, at the top of rectangular parts of windows near the arched top, on the façade of transept wings, the exterior façade of the ambulatory on the apse, near the terminus of the flying buttress at the base of the roof, tower tops at the four corners, at the base or waist of spires, and of course, on the outside walls of the nave.[3] These carvings have been ignored because they have been considered unimportant.[4] Those who encounter them are often baffled.[5] Nevertheless, medieval gargoyles should be considered part of the structure of religion in the Middle Ages and a clue, however obtuse, to understanding mentalities and anxieties.[6]

Distinctions and Definitions

Not all of these sculptures or carvings are synonymous. There are several distinctions and definitions that should be drawn. The first are the *chiméres*. A chimera is essentially a hybrid animal made up of various animal parts.[7] The famous parapet chimeras on the north tower of Notre Dame in Paris, especially the brooding double-horned fellow with protruding tongue on the west parapet originally assumed to relate to a thirteenth-century model, are classic examples. There are also hunky punks. These are architectural features serving no purpose whatever and are often presented as a short squatting figure.[8] The thirteenth-century Church of St. Mary at Isle Abbots in Somerset, England, features eight hunky punks on its tower, one playing bagpipes and others as lions, dragons, and goats. Beyond this, there is the sheela na gig, which is quite simply a naked woman displaying exaggerated genitals.[9] Two excellent examples include

the one over the priest's door of the late thirteenth-century parish church of All Saints at Buckland in Buckinghamshire and the twelfth-century sheela on an exterior wall under the eaves at the twelfth-century Church of St. Mary and St. David at Kilpeck in Hertfordshire. Then there is the generic grotesque. These are carvings that are ugly, fantastic, strange, and ostensibly have no real purpose either. On the east wall of the parish Church of St. James the Great at Abson in Gloucestershire, England, one can see a crouching male figure clearly aroused sexually. It is impossible to determine what is intended by this Norman-era carving.

There is also the corbel that has an architectural function in the form of a support bracket.[10] Some of these are especially provocative. The Romanesque female exhibitionist on the corbel table of the Church of St. Martin at Fontaines d'Ozillac is well preserved. On the north wall of the nave on the eleventh-century Church of Saint Radegonde in Poitiers, another female figure pulls her vulva open while a male figure at the twelfth-century Solignac Abbey Church appears to be self-fellating. Another woman prominently displays her anus and vagina while yet another male figure exhibits an enormous penis.[11] The overt display of human genitalia has been interpreted as a means of repelling the forces of evil.[12] That does not seem consistent with sex acts. A corbel at the Church of St. Christopher in Courpiac includes a scene of anal sex. At Nieul-le-Virouil, in western France north of Bordeaux, a man with a penis as thick as himself penetrates his female partner and both figures on the corbel gaze at the viewer.[13] Finally, a couple with halos embrace on the eleventh-century Church of Saint Nicholas at Mailleznais, but the male's tunic is too short to conceal his large penis, which his partner has somewhat provocatively grasped.[14] Other examples exist wherein only a penis and testicles are featured on a corbel.[15] The collegiate church of San Pedro de Cervatos in northern Spain has a corbel table featuring nearly 100 corbels, one-quarter of which might be classed as obscene, featuring anal displays and sodomy (Fig. 4.2).[16] On the twelfth-century abbey Church of St-Genès in Châteaumeillant under the words "*Hac rusticani mixti*" ("this is what the peasants do"), we find two men kissing, one holding his erection in his left hand.[17] All of these sexual positions and variations challenge the assumption of an uptight Middle Ages. Of course, many corbels are less arresting but some depict human figures hanging from them as though desperately trying to avoid a fall.[18] Many of the corbels are medieval, including some at Prague.[19] Beyond these there are roof bosses and misericords inside medieval churches. The former are keystones that

Fig. 4.2 Male and female figures displaying their genitals. Corbels, Collegiate Church of San Pedro de Cervatos, Campoo de Enmedio, northern Spain, 1180–1199, north apse wall

hold in place the ribs of vaulting. Many of these are colourful and depict a variety of images.[20] Misericords are small wooden shelves beneath the underside of a seat. Monks and canons stood in choir stalls for prayer and *misericordia* ("mercy seats") were provided for the aged and infirm on which they might recline. These misericords often featured intricate carvings.[21]

In addition to these categories are the more frequent gargoyles. By definition, a gargoyle is a spout or hollow tube-like projection connected to the gutter of a building or the pier of a buttress that is designed expressly to throw rainwater away from the footings of the building to prevent it from running down walls and eroding the mortar. Occasionally, a gargoyle might have two heads curving away at different angles.[22] Gargoyles of the Gothic period were frequently given grotesque forms, but the two words are not synonymous, since grotesques did not serve as rain spouts. Strictly speaking, gargoyles were waterspouts. This is the fundamental characteristic of the gargoyle as distinct from other sculptures or carvings like the chimera, hunky punk, sheela na gig, grotesque, and corbel. Today it is sometimes quite impossible to tell if water ever flowed through certain of these creatures on account of erosion or alterations to the architectural form of the building in question. Hence, the term *gargoyle* has evolved to include a whole range of grotesque images on medieval

European buildings. For reasons outlined below, I believe that the existence of the gargoyle, and its stone cousins, provides visual evidence and glimpses of forgotten worlds that have vanished into the dimness of the medieval night. It is true that many medieval gargoyles have been restored or replaced.[23] Medieval gargoyles perished rapidly. A century was more than sufficient to warrant their replacement.[24] There is no way to determine precisely how true to their medieval forms the modern repairs or replacements are, or even if they bear any meaningful relationship. We do know that repairs to gargoyles extended to the later medieval period.[25] It is possible, though ultimately unprovable, that repairs and restorations did not alter the original representations. Conversely, in other cases, it seems certain that the replacements are not medieval at all.

These examples of medieval Gothic sculpture are not the province of a single place or time but instead must be regarded as part of the inheritance of the later European Middle Ages. Different European languages have words for these silent creatures of stone. In Italian, the term *grónda sporente* literally means a protruding gutter. The German *Wasserspier* means a water spitter. The Dutch *waterspuwer* carried essentially the same meaning, indicating a water spitter or water vomiter. The Spanish *gárgola* means throat as does the French *gargouille* and the Latin *gargula*.[26] The Czech *chrlič* indicates a spout. Each of these signifies its function. What seems clear is that gargoyles were a feature of European Gothic architecture, Gothic revival buildings and restoration, and Chinese architecture, the latter being decorative waterspouts from the Ming Period (1368–1644). It is the frequency of these creatures in medieval European Christendom that becomes strikingly noteworthy.

We know approximately when they appeared but we do not know why. The beginnings are steeped in legendary tales. The story of the origin of the gargoyle seems to have its root in the sixth century near Rouen in France with a dragon called *La Garouille* that lived in a cave near the Seine River. This beast, possessing a long reptilian neck and slender snout was a bane on the community in that it swallowed ships, was responsible for floods, and caused great damage and destruction when it breathed fire. Hence an annual human sacrifice was observed in order to pacify the creature. This went on for some time until the arrival of a Christian priest from Rome who offered to rid the community of its terror on condition that the populace convert en masse to the Christian faith. This was agreed upon. By use of bell, book, candle, and cross, the beast was subdued. Vanquished at last by the power of God, the beast was destroyed at the stake. However,

Fig. 4.3 Contorted male gargoyle with animal claws. The Cathedral and Metropolitical Church of Saint Peter, York, England

his head and neck refused to burn on account of the fact that it had long been accustomed to fire. The townspeople removed these remains from the stake and fastened them to the city walls, and thus, the remnants of the dragon became the model for the medieval gargoyle.[27] The earliest European examples of gargoyles date to around 1220 at Chartres, Paris, and Rouen. In the beginning, these waterspouts were simple forms, but they evolved into various transformations, especially twisted grotesques. It is these types that are most commonly associated with the term *gargoyle*. Some became models of sculptural mastery (Fig. 4.3). Others appear as composite figures, half human, part animal, and in some cases, bearing clear marks of the mythical. One thinks, for example, of the gargoyle possessing a human head while maintaining a monstrous bestial body seen on the south side of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence. Gargoyles were sometimes grotesque, horrible, funny, or combined a number of these features like the dragon on the Collegiate Church of Sainte-Waudru in Mons, Belgium. Others appear deliberately as demonic, like the characterizations of the evil monster on the Cathedral of our Lady in Freiburg, Germany, or the one-horned gargoyle at the top of the north tower on the south side of Notre Dame, Paris, or the devil heads on the upper part of the south tower on Notre Dame in Chartres. Still others have distinct religious connotations while others are completely irreligious.[28]

Gargoyles can be found in great numbers in France and these occurrences can be multiplied throughout northern Europe. Westminster Abbey featured gargoyles from 1245 on, Siena Cathedral from the 1270s and St. Vitus' Cathedral in Prague from the mid-fourteenth century.[29] All but one on the latter have been replaced.[30] Gargoyles could be found just as often on parish churches as they were on cathedrals, thus blunting any argument that the gargoyle was a feature of the medieval cathedral. From the end of the thirteenth century, these stone creatures become more complicated, quite a bit larger and featuring varying degrees of caricature.[31] It is difficult to evaluate the reasons behind these developments. More intriguing is the fact that gargoyles are rarely found in isolation. It is rather common for medieval churches to feature dozens of them sometimes clustered together. The north side, south ambulatory, and south tower of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, the north façade of the Church of St. Séverin in Paris, the south side of the York Minster in England, and the southwest corner of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Amiens are examples. According to one perspective, "there once existed an enormous population of gargoyles, a sort of society of stone people, animals, and monsters living in an aerial environment".[32] Given the size and weight of many of the sculptures, it is likely many were made on the ground and then hoisted into position later on completion. Many weighed several hundred pounds and chiefly were made of limestone, marble, or sandstone. These were sometimes reinforced with iron bars.[33] A few, such as those on Reims Cathedral, were made from lead at the end of the Middle Ages after the great fire of 1481 and some are copper-lined like the thirteenth-century Sainte-Chapelle in Paris.

At the time these medieval gargoyles were created, they were endowed with bright colours and gildings. In the course of centuries, this has been almost entirely lost. Paint and colour would have made these features on medieval buildings even more dramatic. It is noteworthy that essentially no two gargoyles are alike. Beyond this, it remains an unsolvable puzzle that so many of them were placed on buildings so high and in some places so obscured by other features that one is compelled to wonder why such care was given to them. There are many examples of gargoyles on Canterbury Cathedral and elsewhere. In terms of care, it has previously been noted that other roof and spire décor was equally attended to in terms of detail. The weekly building accounts for St. Vitus' Cathedral in Prague (1372–1378) indicate that stonemason-sculptors were given the

brief for detailed work including gargoyles. More than 200 men are mentioned in these accounts.[34] To what extent were these gargoyles, perched so high on medieval churches, never intended for the human eye? Was the work done for God and to the glory of God?

Role and Significance

Turning to the role of these gargoyles in the Gothic world of the later Middle Ages or attempting to understand their significance raises infinite questions but few reliable answers. Their mouths are open but they do not speak. They gesture but what do they mean?[35] Perhaps they mean nothing at all, but this response belies their near ubiquitous presence. What meaning should be or can be attached to the feline-headed man who glares out from the cloister beside the Old Cathedral in Utrecht? There are no reliable guides from medieval sources to aid our inquiry. This striking lacuna may be persuasive enough to simply ignore the existence of the gargoyle and consider its presence unimportant for understanding the world in which they appeared.[36] While their presence indicates quite clearly widespread acceptance or, at least, toleration of gargoyles in medieval Europe, there were voices of discontent. In 1125, Bernard of Clairvaux set down a searing critique on religious art for Abbot William of St. Thierry. In this *Apologia* Bernard turned to the decoration of Cluniac churches and mentioned the curiosities of certain images.

> What are these fantastic monsters doing in the cloister, distracting the brothers while they read? What is this ridiculous monstrosity all about? This puzzling sort of ugly beauty or rather beautiful ugliness? What is the meaning of these filthy monkeys? These wild lions? These monstrous centaurs? To what purpose are here placed these creatures, half-beast, half-human or these spotted tigers, those fighting knights or hunters winding their horns? One might see several bodies with one head or conversely many heads on one body. In one case you see a quadruped with the tail of a snake, elsewhere a fish has a quadruped's head. Over there is an animal which in the front half is a horse but the back is a goat. Now one sees a creature with horns in the front and is equine behind. In summation, there are so many astonishing and contradictory forms that one might prefer reading marble than manuscripts and spend the whole day pondering these stupendous things rather than meditating on the law of God. Oh God! If we are not ashamed of such absurdities, should we not at least regret what we have spent on them?[37]

It has been argued that since the mid-nineteenth century, the interpretation of gargoyles and the wider scope of monstrous images within Romanesque and Gothic art has been shaped by this single anxiety-riven text of Bernard of Clairvaux.[38] It seems clear that Bernard claimed these images were not only unintelligible but dangerous, though perhaps unwittingly he also betrays his faint admiration when he notes that it is possible to leave aside the study of the various codices and be distracted by the compelling curiosity of the sculptured images. It brings to mind that penetrating observation about the unrelenting boredom that attended the wearisome round of the monastic life and how this was sometimes alleviated by monks dripping candle wax on bald heads below in the choir.[39] Whether or not monks could actually read is beside the point.[40] The appearance of these fantastic images carved in stone surely presented a welcome distraction.

There is the suggestion that conceptions of this kind, wherein one finds the gargoyle, are essentially of popular origin. "The gargoyles like churchyard vampires, or the dragons subdued by ancient bishops, came from the depths of the people's consciousness, and had grown out of their ancient fireside tales".[41] By the later Middle Ages, and certainly evident by the fifteenth century, there appeared in art tendencies toward base, perhaps obscene, motifs. We may conclude that the Middle Ages possessed a sophisticated awareness of such matters.[42] Extant sources tell us virtually nothing about their significance. Their existence is rarely mentioned. Had Bernard of Clairvaux's dismissal been that powerful and persuasive? They could not have been used for pedagogical purposes like other art forms such as stained glass essentially on the grounds that they were placed on churches so high up and frequently obscured by other architectural features that in many cases it would have been quite impossible for persons on the ground to have been able to engage in any meaningful contemplation. Moreover, the fact that they appeared on buildings other than churches tends to mitigate against a specific religious connotation. One thinks of monsters with bulging eyes or other striking gargoyles on the town hall in Leuven and on the north façade of the Brussels town hall as examples. It is quite impossible to suggest that gargoyles could possibly have been made without the knowledge of the authorities, either ecclesiastical or secular. There are simply too many of them to support such argument. We know about the proliferation of popular events such as the Feast of Fools and the Feast of the Ass and the inversion of culture employed in these annual affairs. Did these aspects of

popular culture influence the creation of the gargoyle or was it the other way round? Alternatively, perhaps both draw from a common source. Are there grounds for assuming the survival of pagan ideas in gargoyles? One example is the human face on a monstrous composite body that appears on Lichfield Cathedral in England or the monsters with human heads on the south tower of the Cathedral of St. John in Den Bosch, Netherlands. The thesis is not new.

Meaning: Problems and Possibilities

One may endlessly describe the medieval gargoyle, but when the question of meaning arises, there is considerably less to say with certainty.[43] Exploring the relationship between Gothic architecture and scholasticism may conclude that art and the history of ideas reflect common notions of order and thought. However, the gargoyle is left out of the equation. Possibly these creations can only be understood as related to the irreconcilable *Sic et Non* of those Middle Ages which even Peter Abelard mischievously refrained from proposing solutions.[44] There have been attempts to provide an explanation by creating linkages between medieval legends and biblical texts. The preoccupation with evil has also been considered relevant. Perhaps these stone characters are really guardians of the church, placed in their precarious perches to ward off demonic assaults on the kingdom of God, like the group hovering above the bishop at the top of Beverly Minster in England or the three heads on the exterior south wall of Canterbury Cathedral. Gargoyles may have been expelled from the cathedrals from the middle of the twelfth century, banished, but retained as guardians of the outer walls.[45] If the gargoyle does not protect against the Devil, then perhaps the gargoyle is the personification of evil itself that has been locked out of the church and expelled from the community of the faithful. Might not the braying ass and the lion-like monster on the south side of the Strasbourg Cathedral exhibit their fury because they have been excluded? Alternatively, on this line of argument about the pervasive presence of evil, the gargoyle is a symbol of sin and temptation lurking on the edges of salvation. The faithful pilgrim must pass the tests and survive the trials in order to obtain salvation symbolized by entry into the church. It was the third-century Bishop Cyprian of Carthage, who argued that "outside the church there is no salvation".[46] As attractive as the suggestion is, when one inserts the key into the lock it fails to turn. Alas, evidence of the grotesque can also be found inside church buildings. Admittedly, these

are fewer in number and smaller in scale, but they are there nonetheless and cannot be ignored. There are grotesques on the ceilings of the naves of great cathedrals, others in chapels as well as in crypts.

In 2006, twelve carvings were rediscovered in the roof of the nave at St. Clement's Church at Outwell in Cambridgeshire. Their reappearance provides a glimpse into a forgotten world. It is likely these carvings date to the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Part demonic and part human, they mirror the general description found in the *Apologia* of Bernard noted earlier. Some of the figures are demons, others are human but have bestial features, deformities, or other peculiarities. A level of ambiguity surrounds the St. Clement's carvings. From one perspective it appears that evil has triumphed over good. The demons appear to loom over the apostles whereas medieval Christian theology taught that in the struggle between the cosmic forces of light and darkness, or good versus evil, good ultimately prevails. The St. Clement's carvings do not clearly represent that point of view. The sculptures are difficult to see with the naked eye once again, calling into question their meaning and function. Closer views seem to suggest the apostles are standing firm and it is the demons who are weighed down by the burdens of sin, and therefore, have been defeated by the apostles. Perhaps, from the floor of the nave, it seems that evil will prevail but the observation is faulty for, in fact, when one gets closer to the end of the spiritual pilgrimage and everything is sorted out in the Last Judgement, it is good that emerges victorious from the age-long struggle. It is also possible to read a ludic or comedic dimension in the carvings. It is possible that the carvers were dabbling with concepts and conceits, with ideas of humankind or the internal human dialogue between higher and lower things, or the relationship between the holiness of the apostles and clear human frailty, or perhaps the demonic or deformed nature is simply a reflection of normal life. It is quite impossible to know what was in the mind of the carvers or of those who paid for the construction of the roof. Nevertheless, the carvings can be understood on several different levels: virtue and vice, heterodoxy versus orthodoxy, ludic commentary, or simply a desire to do something different from other local churches.[47]

Returning to the outside of these medieval buildings, it might be possible to argue that gargoyles are effectively condemned souls who, for one reason or another, have been forbidden from entering the church. Intercepted on their way to eternal damnation, they are forced to endure a sort of purgatory on the edges of this life where their sins have caused them to be turned to stone, and thus, they are made to labour for all time

in the service of the church. In this case, they have become waterspouts. Other explanations advance theories that gargoyles should be understood as demons, not humans, whom the power of God has turned to stone in much the same way as Lot's wife was transformed into a pillar of salt on account of wickedness and disobedience.[48] There is sufficient evidence to argue that theologians of the Middle Ages conceived of demons as fearsome creatures who preyed on the souls of men and women.[49]

There is some possibility that gargoyles were a form of medieval popular entertainment. The imp-man gargoyle on the tower of the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Elkstone, England, is an example. However, this possibility is severely limited on account of the fact that few people could actually see them. It is true that many of the gargoyles possess an inherent entertainment component. Some of them appear to laugh. Others leer, and indeed, sneer and it is possible they were created to amuse. One gargoyle in the later medieval cloister yard near the former Cathedral of Saint-Étienne in Toul, France, adds an interesting twist in his function as a waterspout. Either deliberate planning or incompetence (more likely the former) causes this gargoyle, in the form of a monk, to empty his water onto the heads of other gargoyles positioned below, in this case, via a barrel he carries on his right shoulder.[50] Perhaps, as noted already, the gargoyle exists as a remnant of a pre-Christian past that the medieval church found impossible to totally eradicate.[51]

On the other hand, perhaps they mean nothing at all. It may be a fallacy to assume that everything has particular meaning or significance and in vain does the historian strive to discover symbolic meaning hidden in every form of art that has come down to us from the Middle Ages. It is true that very often hidden meanings are embedded in the vestiges of the past, but is it not possible to assign significance where originally there was none? Despite the vagueness that necessarily attends the study of the medieval gargoyle there are anomalies that continue to perplex. There are several examples where fifteenth-century gargoyles actually threaten humans on the Cathedral Church of St. John in Den Bosch in the Netherlands. Positioned on a flying buttress on the south side, this is a motif that has not been located anywhere else.[52] There are similarly positioned figures on the buttresses of the fifteenth-century Great Church (Groote Kerk) of St. Eusebius in Arnhem, Netherlands, but here there are no gargoyles opposing the humans.[53] A lion holds a human head on the exterior north wall of the nave on the Church of Notre Dame in Chartres while a gargoyle wearing a hood sits on a man's head.[54] At Notre Dame in Amiens we find a winged gargoyle on

top of an infant on the apse. There are many categories of gargoyles including drummers, percussionists, and other musicians including flutists and lyre-players. There are blind men, butter-makers, animals with offspring, various creatures, monsters, griffins, buglers, wood-carriers, bricklayers, shepherds, women, devils, and scribes. On the cathedral in Berne we find a gargoyle that appears to be strangled. Gargoyles as hooded monks appear to observe passers-by from the apse on Notre Dame Paris and elsewhere. It does seem worthy of noting that the well-known limitations and censorship placed on artists of the period and well into the Renaissance do not seem to have been applied to the masons who created the Gothic gargoyles of the later Middle Ages. Curiously enough, the usual restrictions placed on artistic expression seem not to have been applied to the creators of the gargoyles.[55] Hence, we find little evidence of censorship or iconoclasm.

Humans and Animals

In general, medieval gargoyles assume either human or animal appearances and attributes. On Cologne Cathedral one finds a man dressed in clothing appropriate to the period. Some are possibly caricatures of real medieval people. We know, for example, that Renaissance artists deliberately portrayed their enemies in unfavourable light. Vasari tells us the features of Minos in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel "last judgement", wearing a pair of ass's ears, were those of Biagio da Cesena who was the master of ceremonies in the Vatican.[56] Others of these human figures were demonized for reasons that we can now never fully know. And what can be said about the partially clothed man with a dog's face on the cloister beside the Old Cathedral in Utrecht? In the south transept of Wells Cathedral there is an entire group of men clearly suffering from toothache. Elsewhere, a man plays a musical instrument on the side of St. Vitus' Cathedral in Prague, and a king plays a zither flanked by gargoyles on the apse at the base of the roof on Notre Dame in Amiens. Some gargoyle-like carvings are animals depicted as able to play musical instruments.[57] Some of the gargoyles are intended to be understood as drunk while others are scandalous in their act and demeanour. There are fools and vagabonds and others, like the man with a hand on his own throat on the west façade of the Cathedral of St. Pierre in Poitiers, that invite considerable speculation.[58]

We find dice players, jugglers, and other marginalized persons all congregated together on medieval churches and other buildings providing glimpses into forgotten worlds. One senses mockery in the well-attested

array of mouth-pullers. An example is the one who poses with a small boy on the Church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Chappel in Brussels. The same must be said for those who extend their tongues provocatively like the mouth-puller on the Town Hall in Brussels.[59] This idea can be found elsewhere in medieval iconography, for example in portrayals of the Devil mocking his victims or as a symbol to identify heretics, traitors, and blasphemers. Shouting devils seize little people on the Cathedral of Saint-Michel in Brussels. In more explicit and shocking fashion, demons sodomize two men on the cathedral cloister panel in Girona in northeast Spain. Other gargoyles appear to be terrified, like the human on the York Minster with his hands on his head. Some gargoyles appear to be vomiting as they remove water from the building while others have been constructed in such a manner they appear to be drooling, spitting, or defecating in the exercise of their office (Fig. 4.4).[60] In the case of the latter, a twelfth-century example on the south side of the Cathedral of Saint-Lazare in Autun seems to indicate more than the act of defecation. On the south side one finds a gargoyle bending over and pulling his upper legs apart to reveal his gaping anus and gargantuan testicles. There is both crude eroticism as well as exhibitionism. Perhaps the gargoyle intended to shock. Can the posture be intended to drive away the forces of darkness?[61] I remain unconvinced. It seems rather unlikely that portraying huge phal-

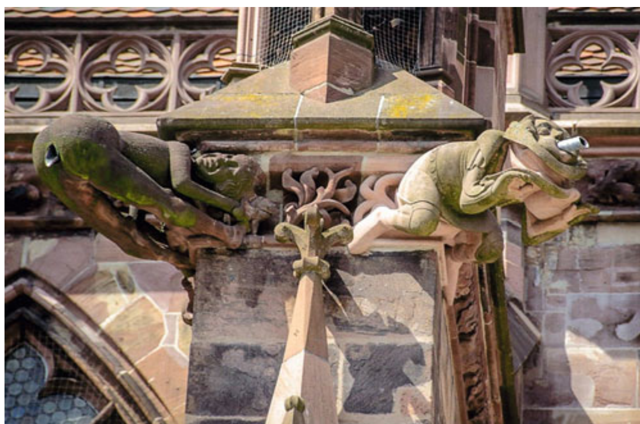

Fig. 4.4 Gargoyle displaying his arsehole. Münster Unserer Lieben Frau, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Germany, south side

luses could be considered a warning against lust.[62] Similar examples can be located on the Cathedral of our Lady in Freiburg and on a wall surrounding a building in Paris.[63]

The gargoyles that portray animal features include dogs, pigs, goats, lions, donkeys, monkeys, birds, and cows among others. There are composite depictions like the winged lion on the Cathedral of St. John in Den Bosch in The Netherlands. One can also find a pig with a harp. This could mean that particular sins were associated with certain animals and also with particular parts of the body.[64] The medieval seven deadly sins had visual counterparts in this manner.[65] Pride was depicted with the lion and the head. Envy was shown as a snake and in the eyes. Anger was visually represented by the wild boar and the heart. Sloth was portrayed as an ass and feet. Greed found itself in the wolf and the hand. Gluttony was reflected in the bear and the belly while lust took its image from the pig and genitals.[66] Behind all of this was a consciousness of the work of the Devil. Though it seldom appeared as a gargoyle, the owl was regarded in later medieval Europe as a demonic creature and it can be found with some regularity in the art of that period.[67] On the façade of the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Marais in Villefranche-sur-Saône in France, a lion-like gargoyle steps on a small dragon. Animals often had specific symbolic meaning assigned to them. Monkeys and pigs were nearly always viewed negatively while dogs and lions attracted positive attention. An impressive lion gargoyle appears on the pinnacle of the nave, south side, on the Church of Notre Dame d'Eveux in France. The sin of gluttony is reflected in a corbel at the Church of St-Hilaire in Foussais-Payré in western France, and by the man holding a cup and pitcher on the Church of Notre Dame in L'Epine.[68] It is unfortunate that the medieval sources that have survived do not provide specific clues about the essential code necessary to understand the complexity of the world of the gargoyle. Close consideration of gargoyles reveals that many share the medieval iconographical physical characteristics of the demonic.[69] These include bodies that appear human but possess horns. Others have pointed animal ears, fangs, beards, membranous wings, or tails. An attacking winged monster on the north façade of Notre Dame in Paris is an example. Others exhibit cloven or clawed feet, hairy bodies, or menacing demeanour. Such gargoyles, like the one on the Town Hall in Bruges, or the crouching creature in the north side doorjamb at Notre Dame Paris, exude the grotesque in all of its ugliness.

Unholy Acts in Holy Places

Earlier, gargoyles at Autun and Freiburg were singled out for their misbehaviour on medieval churches. If the precincts of ecclesiastical buildings in the Middle Ages should be considered holy, then the gargoyle has sometimes been responsible for exhibiting unholy acts in those sacred spaces. Nakedness is a point to be noted inasmuch as the nude was rarely depicted in medieval art.[70] Exceptions to that general rule include the crucified Christ and sinners consigned to hell. But even here, the exposure of genitals was rare. It has been suggested that nude gargoyles are never shown to urinate (Fig. 4.5).[71] I have found little evidence to refute that assertion. However, gargoyles can be found misbehaving. In the shadows of the north side of the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Marais in Villefranche-sur-Saône in France, one finds a barelegged woman straddled by a goat, both of whom appear to be smiling. In medieval and early modern iconography, especially images relating to witchcraft, the Devil frequently was portrayed as a goat, an animal that we have previously seen was associated with lechery and lust.[72] The anatomy of the goat was used to depict the devil and witchcraft, especially the horns, tail, and cloven hoofs. Lewd acts involving humans and goats feature in medieval iconography.[73] Goat gargoyles appear on the lower part of the north exterior wall of the nave of Notre Dame in Paris, the apse of the Cathedral of St. John in Den

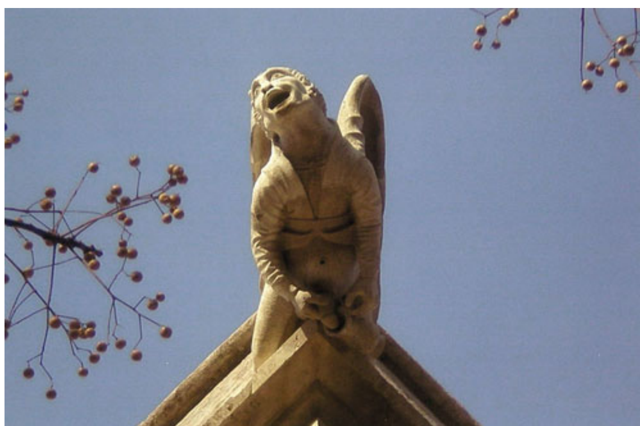

Fig. 4.5 Male angelic gargoyle urinating in a jug. La Lonja de la Seda. Valencia, Spain, 1483–1498, southwest corner

Bosch, Netherlands, and on the north exterior wall of the ambulatory of the Cathedral of St. Rumbald in Mechelen, Belgium. On the bishops' palace at Sens, a thirteenth-century gargoyle of a goat with an enormous penis is depicted.[74] Monkeys sometimes have been cast into similar categories. High on the apse end of the Cathedral of St. Rumbald in Mechelen in Belgium we find a nude woman grabbed from behind by a monkey. The gargoyle dates to the fourteenth century. Monkeys were frequently shown in medieval art as sinners.

Other carved figures, such as corbels and misericords, depict figures engaged in sexual activity. This includes portrayals of bisexuality and hermaphroditism at Maillezais and in Palace Street in Canterbury. Frequently, these carvings are some distance from the ground, but in other cases, they are placed where they are easily seen. At the former Benedictine Abbey at Millstadt in southern Austria, founded in the eleventh century, one encounters a striking portrayal of analingus. In the Romanesque cloister south of the main monastery building, about four feet off the ground, one encounters two figures. One wears a skirt, straddles the other, forces the buttocks apart, and inserts a rather long tongue between the buttocks.[75] Another example appears just to the top left of a Norman tower window, beneath the clock, on the Church of SS Andrew and Mary at Whittlesford, just south of Cambridge. Here a woman facing outward reaches beneath her buttocks and inserts her fingers into her vulva while a bearded man, with an obvious erection, approaches from her left. The medieval Christians worshipping God passed beneath this pair as they entered church. The contrast is striking. It seems peculiar that the greatest concentration of erotic carvings on the collegiate church of San Pedro de Cervatos in northern Spain face the monastic enclosure.[76]

Contradictions and Disorder

The world of the later Middle Ages was a time when law and order strove to gain traction amid numerous challenges. The physical appearance of these gargoyles is other-worldly. Instead of the systems of medieval social order, the world of the gargoyle indicates the chaos and disorder of hell. Gargoyles add a this-worldly, perhaps even a human, element to the divinely intended, other-worldly cathedrals and churches of the Gothic Middle Ages. These monsters surely tell us much about medieval superstition and popular beliefs, even if that communication is muted and unclear. Moreover, there is that human proclivity for the other-worldly and a fasci-

nation with the fantastic and even a sense of pleasure that can be derived from the distorted. It is possible that elements of all this figures in the creation of the gargoyle. It is axiomatic among historians of architecture that gargoyles are not essential to the aesthetics of medieval or Gothic buildings.[77] In certain places and in particular times, these depictions of paganism and imagination were Christianized and made to represent sin, evil, the demonic world, and even the Devil. The Church of St. Mary and St. David in Kilpeck, Hertfordshire, reveals clearly more pagan decoration than Christian.[78] Indeed, it may be possible to conceive of gargoyles as representing demonic forces that contrast sharply with the divine order propagated and defended by the medieval church.[79] Occasionally we find evidence of the struggle between good and evil depicted in stone. Above the passageways of the pillars on the buttressing system of Prague's St. Vitus Cathedral, we find evidence of this in the outer triforium and the great tower.[80] A menacing dragon is one of twelve reliefs. Adjacent to the north portal of Notre Dame in Rouen one sees a fifteenth-century statue of St. Genevieve flanked by small grotesques. The demon on her left holds a bellows and at one time must have been attempting to extinguish the candle she once held. The beatific faces of Genevieve and the angel seem to assure the viewer that good does prevail.

An Enduring Riddle?

As noted previously, the subject and significance of the medieval gargoyle has often been passed over in silence. This can only be accounted for either that scholars have been reluctant to delve into a subject lacking meaningful source commentary or that the gargoyle has been found to be embarrassing and thus left ignored on the spires, towers, and flying buttresses of medieval buildings. Of the two it is manifestly evident that the silence that attends the paucity of sources of information left over from the later Middle Ages only exacerbates the mystery surrounding these troubling and amusing creations. What we have then is an enduring riddle. That the gargoyle presents us with glimpses of forgotten worlds is apparent. How are we to understand those worlds when the evidence is so ambiguous? There are five explanatory models. The first, though hardly defended these days, is the idea developed by Auber that the physical medieval church was so meticulously designed and constructed that nearly every brick and stone had meaning and significance.[81] The assumption is as unlikely as the notion that the medieval cathedral was a place of free

expression and discourse.[82] As for gargoyles, Auber really had no definite explanation but he proposed several possibilities worth considering. First, he claimed the images that Bernard of Clairvaux condemned were in fact heretics.[83] This is altogether fanciful. Second, he suggested that because the gargoyle had been consigned to the exterior of churches, to perform menial labour as water spouts, this could mean they were in some sense either demonic or related to other undesirables such as heretics who had been expelled from the community of faith.[84] This idea is also speculative. Finally, Auber included the gargoyle in a catalogue of elements of religious art that he considered obscene. Features like the gargoyle had one meaningful purpose only, and that was to serve as a warning to the faithful about the perils of sin and depravity.[85] I suppose this is also the meaning latent in the numerous images on Bourges Cathedral relating to the sin of homosexuality.[86]

A second school of thought (noted earlier) concludes that the Gothic gargoyle is an expression of sheer paganism.[87] Defenders of this position tend to regard the sculptors as crafty and devious, pulling the wool over the eyes of their patrons as well as the ecclesiastical authorities of the day. A third perspective concludes that the gargoyle cannot be explained or understood in any meaningful sense.[88] In contrast to Sheridan and Ross, Émile Mâle does not consider the masons shrewd or devious. Instead, he prefers to characterize them as innocent copyists of earlier designs that they neither understood nor considered subversive. For Mâle, the sculptors had no ulterior motive. Other opinion asserts that these visual images conveyed different messages to different viewers.[89] This raises a number of unanswerable queries. What did medieval people see when they saw gargoyles? What were the effects of these sculptures on the viewers and how were they understood?[90] Did the creators of these strange images have a purpose that the church strove to suppress by seeing to it that the explanations and interpretations were forgotten and eventually lost?[91] It is amazing so many survived, though we do know that some gargoyles were removed as evidence of medieval irrationality,[92] but in general, gargoyles were not forcibly removed from public places. Fourth, the types of iconographical images we have been considering were created purposefully to provide visual support for the moral teachings of the Christian religion, even if at times in reverse. They constitute a concerted campaign against sin.[93] The sexual carvings do little to titillate and instead seem designed to disgust. Fifth, the gargoyle represents the freedom of the medieval Christian from church authority.[94] Sixth,

they are warnings to intruders and guardians of the sacred mysteries. Gargoyles "originally said 'Keep Out!' not just to other demons, but to heretics, Jews, prostitutes, and 'others' of all kinds who sought to enter the sacred space of the bishop and canons".[95] This sits rather uncomfortably with the presence of women in medieval monastic churches exposing their genitals. Perhaps the gargoyle and his relatives actually target demons and warn them against further approach.[96]

It seems clear that viewing medieval art through modern eyes is fatal and that creating artificial categories with the use of terms such as marginal, official, high, low, and so on when referring to art is a form of hegemony by posterity on the past. Outcomes are seldom useful.[97] The intersection of modernity and medievalism further confused the meaning of the gargoyle and his carved cousins the chimeras, hunky punks, sheela na gigs, roof bosses, misericords, grotesques, and corbels. The sculptures on Notre Dame, Paris, may represent a world that never existed, but there is sufficient evidence elsewhere surviving from those Middle Ages to suggest that other worlds once flourished and these silent reminders indicate these worlds once were real.[98] The imagery still visible in the corbels, misericords, gargoyles, grotesques, capitals, hunky punks, friezes, and reliefs on countless churches and cathedrals have, in different ways, "survived decay and iconoclasm, theft and even restoration".[99] Enemies of the Gothic form considered it "an architecture of fear".[100] Perhaps the gargoyle can only be understood through the prism of fear while traces of medieval mentalities and anxieties persist in stone.

In the thirteenth century, gargoyles were terrifying in their visual representation. In the fourteenth century, they took on comedic dimensions that by the fifteenth century gave way to amusement. As the history of the Middle Ages came to a close, so did the age of the gargoyle. They seem to disappear into the dimness of the medieval night just as silently as they arrived. By the time the Renaissance settled into the social and cultural fabric of Europe gargoyles had virtually disappeared from churches. The Royal Chapel at Granada, built around 1520 by Ferdinand and Isabella, is among the first major ecclesiastical structures free from the Gothic influence. As such, the chapel has no gargoyles. By the mid-sixteenth century new ornamental styles had replaced the medieval stonework.[101] The worlds that produced the dazzling array of mysterious carvings eventually were forgotten until all that remained for certain was the gargoyle, who continues to amuse, puzzle, and perplex.[102]

Notes

1. Herbert L. Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004).
2. Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques: Paganism in the Medieval Church*, p. 8.
3. Yenne, *Gothic Gargoyles*, p. 16.
4. Anthony Weir and James Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 9.
5. Jørgen Andersen, *The Witch on the Wall: Medieval Erotic Sculpture in the British* Isles (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977), p. 22.
6. Michael Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame: Medievalism and the Monsters of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), p. 246.
7. Lester Burbank Bridaham, *Gargoyles, Chimeres, and the Grotesque in French Gothic Sculpture* (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1930).
8. Wright, *Hunky Punks: A Study in Somerset Stone Carving.*
9. Ostensibly the term, of uncertain meaning, is derived from the Celtic language. McMahon and Roberts, *The Sheela-Na-Gigs of Ireland and Britain*, Eamonn P. Kelly, *Sheela-na-Gigs: Origins and Functions* (Dublin: Country House, 1996), Weir and Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches*, pp. 11–22, Andersen, *The Witch on the Wall: Medieval Erotic Sculpture in the British Isles*, Sheridan and Ross *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 18, and Barbara Freitag, *Sheela-Na-Gigs: Unravelling an Enigma* (London: Routledge, 2004).
10. Very little has been written about them despite the fact they number in the "hundreds of thousands." Weir and Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches*, p. 37.
11. Both are in French churches, the former at Notre Dame-des-Miracles in Mauriac and the latter at St. Peter's in Champagnolles.
12. Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 54.
13. Weir and Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches*, p. 80.
14. The ribald nature of many of these carvings has been noted. Jurgis Baltrusaitis, *Réveils et prodigies: Le Gothique fantastique* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1960) and Claude Gaignebet and Jean-Dominique Lajoux, *Art profane et religion populaire au Moyen Age* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1985) are among many examples.
15. This is manifest at the Church of Ste-Columbe, a twelfth-century foundation, at Charente in western France. I owe the reference to Benton, *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages*, pp. 124–5.

16. Glenn W. Olsen, "On the Frontier of Eroticism: The Romanesque Monastery of San Pedro de Cervatos" *Mediterranean Studies* 8 (1999), pp. 89–104.
17. Weir and Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches*, pp. 8–9 and 84–5.
18. Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, pp. 12–13.
19. Klára Benešovská and Ivo Hlobil, *Peter Parler & St Vitus's Cathedral 1356–1399* (Prague: Správa pražského hradu, 1999), pp. 130 and 142. Above the balustrade on the first level of the great tower under the cornice of the gallery are the largest corbels on the cathedral.
20. Martial Rose and Julia Hedgecoe, *Stories in Stone: The Medieval Roof Carvings of Norwich Cathedral* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997) and C.J.P. Cave, *Roof Bosses in Medieval Churches: An Aspect of Gothic Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948).
21. Block, *Corpus of Medieval Misericords in France*, covering the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, Grössinger, *The World Upside-Down: English Misericords*, and Dorothy and Kraus, *The Hidden World of Misericords*, are good introductions.
22. A rare example is a fifteenth-century gargoyle on the triforium on the south exterior wall of the nave on the Church of Notre Dame in Louviers, France.
23. This has been shown in Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*. The St. Vitus gargoyles were replaced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Benešovská and Hlobil, *Peter Parler & St Vitus's Cathedral 1356–1399*, p. 110. Restored gargoyles are considered worthless by some scholars, Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 9, though Camille points out that the restorers at Notre Dame went to some lengths to preserve historical accuracy. *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, p. 17.
24. Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, pp. 353–4.
25. Hans Reinhardt, *La Cathédrale de Reims: Son histoire, son architecture, sa sculpture, ses vitraux* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1963), p. 209, refers to documents underscoring the need for gargoyle repairs. Also Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, p. 15.
26. Benton, *Holy Terrors: Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings*, p. 8.
27. The legend is recounted in Karl Shuker, *Dragons: A Natural History* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2003), pp. 18–19.
28. Benton, *Holy Terrors: Gargoyles on Medieval Buildings*, p. 15.
29. Benešovská and Hlobil, *Peter Parler & St Vitus's Cathedral 1356–1399*, pp. 12, 14, 16, and 22. According to the chronicle of Beneš of Veitmile, work began on St. Vitus' Cathedral in 1344. Josef Emler, ed., *Fontes rerum bohemicarum*, 8 vols (Prague: Nákladem nadání Františka Palackého, 1884), vol. 4, p. 495.

30. Benešovská and Hlobil, *Peter Parler & St Vitus's Cathedral 1356–1399*, p. 36. The sole survivor is over the passageway between the cathedral oratory and the palace on the south side.
31. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 15.
32. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, pp. 15–16.
33. Yenne, *Gothic Gargoyles*, pp. 16–17.
34. Prague, Archive of the Metropolitan Chapter at St. Vitus' Cathedral, codex XI/1–2 with details in Benešovská and Hlobil, *Peter Parler & St Vitus's Cathedral 1356–1399*, pp. 12, 14, 16, and 22.
35. On gestures see, as a starting point, Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), passim and Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans., Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 362–70.
36. By any calibration, gargoyles are part of the margins of the medieval world. Nurith Kenaan-Kedar, "The Margins of Society in Marginal Romanesque Sculpture" *Gesta* 31 (No. 1, 1992), pp. 15–24 and Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
37. PL, vol. 182, cols. 915–916. See also Conrad Rudolph, "The Scholarship on Bernard of Clauirvaux's *Apologia*" *Cîteaux: Commentarii Cisterciensis* 40 (1989), 69–111 and his *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's Apologia and the Medieval Attitude Towards Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).
38. Thomas E.A. Dale, "The Monstrous", in Conrad Rudolph, ed., *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), p. 253.
39. Roland H. Bainton, *The Medieval Church* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), p. 40.
40. Dilworth, "Literacy of Pre-Reformation Monks" *Innes Review* 24 (1973), pp. 71–2.
41. Émile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. Dora Nussey (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 59.
42. Nicola McDonald, ed., *Medieval Obscenities* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006).
43. Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 81–6 for possibilities of meaning.
44. Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: Meridian, 1985), *passim* but p. 67 for Abelard.
45. Allan Temko, *Notre-Dame of Paris: The Biography of a Cathedral* (New York: Viking Press, 1952), p. 230.

46. Often cited erroneously as "extra ecclesiam nulla salus," the phrase accurately is "salus extra ecclesiam non est." Cyprian, Epistle 73, "To Iubaianus, concerning the baptism of heretics", 21.2, in William Hartel, ed., *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, vol. 3.2 (Vienna: Friedrich Tempsky, 1871), p. 795.
47. This paragraph is greatly indebted to several exchanges with Dr Claire Daunton, Trinity Hall, Cambridge, who made the discovery. It is expected she will publish on the Outwell carvings.
48. The narrative of Lot appears in Genesis 19 and the fate of his wife (v. 26) was the penalty for disobedience (v. 17).
49. The early thirteenth-century Bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne, is an example. His *De universo*, 2.3.11-13 in *Guilielmi Alverni episcopi parisiensis…Opera omnia*, ed., Blaise le Féron, 2 vols (Frankfurt: Minerva, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 1036–43 is an example. Secondary literature includes Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), Robert Muchembled, *A History of the Devil*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), pp. 9–34, and Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 242–64.
50. Janetta Rebold Benton, "Gargoyles: Animal Imagery and Artistic Individuality", in Nona C. Flores, ed., *Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland Press, 1996), figure 2. There are similar barrel-bearing gargoyles on the Chain Gate at Wells Cathedral, Bern Cathedral, and on St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, pp. 8–9.
51. Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 8.
52. I have not seen a parallel elsewhere but I rely on Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 25 for the statement.
53. Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, pp. 15–16.
54. This fourteenth-century gargoyle can be seen on the north façade of Notre Dame in Rouen, France.
55. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 40.
56. Giorgio Vasari, *These Splendid Painters* (New York: J.H. Sears & Co., 1926), pp. 197–8.
57. Examples include a pig playing a harp on the Church on Notre Dame in L'Epine, a monkey performing with bagpipes on the same church, and another twelfth-century gargoyle pig on the south wall of the nave in Melrose Abbey, Roxburgh, Scotland, is shown playing bagpipes.
58. Gargoyles on the west façade are original thirteenth-century creations. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 131.
59. Some interpreters consider the sticking out of the tongue to have sexual connotations. Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), vol. 1, p. 198.

60. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 65.
61. As suggested in Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 66.
62. Olsen, "On the Frontier of Eroticism: The Romanesque Monastery of San Pedro de Cervatos", p. 95.
63. The defecating person appears on a south buttress. The exposed anus is part of an increasing scatological element in imagery at the end of the Middle Ages. Gaignebet and Lajoux, *Art profane et religion populaire au Moyen Age*, pp. 210–15. The wall now surrounds the Musée National du Moyen-Age but it was originally constructed in the later fifteenth century as the residence of the abbots of Cluny. Comment and photograph in Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, pp. 116–17.
64. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 86.
65. See discussion and photographs in Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, pp. 47–69.
66. On the medieval sins see Richard G. Newhauser and Susan J. Ridyard, eds., *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: The Tradition of the Seven Deadly Sins* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), Newhauser, *The Seven Deadly Sins: From Communities to Individuals* (Boston: Leiden, 2007), and Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century*, trans., Alan J.P. Krick (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1989).
67. The owl was regarded as a sinister creature and widely regarded as a bird of evil and indication of ill omen. In the Middle Ages it sometimes served as a symbol of the Devil or of the Jews. The mid-fourteenth-century text *Dialogus creaturarum* (Gouda, 1480) in the 82nd dialogue noted that owls lurked in churches, drank oil from the lamps, and defiled the sanctuary with excrement. More than that, the association of the owl with the demonic and witchcraft stems in part from the assumption that the owl has knowledge of the evil that will befall humankind before it happens. Such knowledge was of course knowledge of darkness and the occult. The thirteenth-century English poem "The Owl and the Nightingale" introduces the owl crouching in an old, overgrown stump, accused of fouling his own nest, a creature of the night, feared both by other birds as well as humans. There are numerous editions of this poem. See, for example, Brian Stone, trans., *The Owl and the Nightingale* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971). The owl can also be found in ecclesiastical carvings. For example, there is a fifteenth-century misericord of an owl clutching a mouse in the Ely Cathedral. There are owls in other misericords in St. Nicholas Church, Amsterdam, St. Mary's, Old Malton, Beverley Minister, and the Cathedrals in Norwich and Gloucester and many others. Moreover, the owl appears in numerous

apocalyptic settings. The owl watches the persecution of the Mother of God by the seven-headed dragon of the Apocalypse. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Auct. D 4.17 fols. 9v-10r. An owl can be found in the retinue of the Whore of Babylon. London, British Museum, Add. MS 35166 fol. 20r. Another example shows the owl sitting outside the gates of the New Jerusalem personifying that which is contaminated and detestable and unsuited for the holy. London, British Museum, Add. MS 35166 fol. 29r. The owl plays a part in the art forms of the later Middle Ages in a variety of ways. An excellent example of the persistent use of the owl can be found in the work of the Flemish master Hieronymus Bosch (†1516) who seems to have featured the owl prolifically: "The Hearing and the Seeing Field" (Berlin); "Adoration of the Magi" (Madrid, *c.* 1510); "Marriage at Cana" (Rotterdam, *c.* 1502); "Ship of Fools" (Louvre, *c.* 1500); "Conjurer" (St. Germaine-en-laye, *c.* 1500); "Haywain" (Madrid, *c.* 1505); "Wayfarer, the so-called Prodigal Son" (Rotterdam, *c.* 1510); "Ecce Homo" (Frankfurt, *c.* 1505); "Garden of Earthly Delights" (Madrid, 1510); "Tabletop of the Seven Deadly Sins" (Madrid, *c.* 1500); "Temptation of St. Anthony" (Lisbon, *c.* 1513); "St. Jerome at Prayer" (Ghent, *c.* 1505), et al.

68. I owe both references to Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, pp. 54–56.
69. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 108.
70. On nudity in medieval art see Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art*, pp. 87–101.
71. Benton, *Holy Terrors*, p. 65 and Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, p. 117.
72. Charles Zika, *Exorcising our Demons: Magic, Witchcraft and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Boston: Brill, 2003), pp. 305–10.
73. The Waldensians were amalgamated into accusations of heresy and witchcraft. In one depiction they are shown kissing the posterior of a goat. Frontispiece to the French version of the fifteenth-century work by Johannes Tinctoris, *Tractatus Contra Sectum Valdensium*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, cabinet des manuscripts, fonds, français 961.
74. Gustave-Joseph Witkowski, *L'Art profane à l'église, ses licences symboliques, satieiques et fantaisistes: Contribution à l'étude archéologique et artistque des edifices religieux*, 2 vols (Paris: Jean Schemit, 1908), vol. 1, p. 452.
75. On the history of this religious house see Erika Weinzierl, *Geschichte des Benediktinerklosters Millstadt in Kämten* (Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereins, 1951).
76. Olsen, "On the Frontier of Eroticism: The Romanesque Monastery of San Pedro de Cervatos", p. 91.
77. Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 7.

78. Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 118.
79. Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature*, p. 37.
80. Benešovská and Hlobil, *Peter Parler & St Vitus's Cathedral 1356–1399*, pp. 114–123.
81. Charles Auguste Auber, *Histoire et théorie du symbolisme réligieux*, 2nd edition, 4 vols (Paris: Féchoz et Letouzey, 1884).
82. Witkowski, *L'Art profane à l'église*, *passim*.
83. Auber, *Histoire et théorie du symbolisme réligieux*, vol. 1, pp. 344–5.
84. Auber, *Histoire et théorie du symbolisme réligieux*, vol. 1, pp. 377 and 384.
85. Auber, *Histoire et théorie du symbolisme réligieux*, vol. 3, pp. 404–38. A similar argument can be found in Lisa M. Bitel, *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), p. 233 and Andersen, *The Witch on the Wall*, pp. 138–158.
86. Michael Camille, "Dr Witkowski's Anus: French Doctors, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art", in McDonald, *Medieval Obscenities*, p. 31.
87. Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, passim.
88. Mâle, *The Gothic Image*, pp. 46–63.
89. Kenaan-Kedar, "The Margins of Society in Marginal Romanesque Sculpture," p. 18 and Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, p. 264.
90. For a theoretical approach to the issues of the hideous, grotesque, violent, or otherwise unclassifiable elements of art see Valentin Groebner, *Defaced: The Visual Culture of Violence in the Late Middle Ages*, trans., Pamela Selwyn (New York: Zone Books, 2004).
91. Sheridan and Ross, *Gargoyles and Grotesques*, p. 124.
92. Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, p. 14.
93. Weir and Jerman, *Images of Lust: Sexual Carvings on Medieval Churches*, pp. 10, 150, 154 and Francisco J. Pérez Carrasco, "La iglesia contra la carne: El programa contra la lujuria esculpido en la iglesia de Cervatos" *Historia* 16 (No. 196, 1992), pp. 55–66.
94. Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France*, vol. 1 (Paris: Lacroix & Cie, 1876) but I rely on Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, p. 112.
95. Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, p. 357.
96. This is a thesis in Ruth Mellinkoff, *Averting Demons: The Protecting Power of Medieval Visual Motifs and Themes*, 2 vols (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 42–51. Warding off evil is an explanation offered by Mellinkoff, E.H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 258, Camille, "Mouths and Meanings: Towards an Anti-Iconography of Medieval Art" in *Iconography at the Crossroads*, ed. Brendan Cassidy

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 52 and Meyer Schapiro, *Late Antique, Early Christian, and Mediaeval Art: Selected Papers* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), pp. 185–6.

97. Benton, *Medieval Mischief*, pp. 138–9, is a useful caution.
98. Camille, *The Gargoyles of Notre Dame*, p. 189, for the verdict on Notre Dame.
99. Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 376.
100. Temko, *Notre-Dame of Paris: The Biography of a Cathedral*, p. 178.
101. Harpham, *On the Grotesque*, pp. 85–6.
102. Two accessible books with plenty of excellent pictures are Benton, *Holy Terrors* and Yenne, *Gothic Gargoyles.*

CHAPTER 5

To Hell with the Theologians: Doctrines of Damnation in "Last Judgements" in the Medieval Latin West

Not unrelated to architectural curiosities was the fate of sinners. Both motifs featured in the *other* Middle Ages. In the early fifteenth-century, an astonishing episode was imagined as taking place in Paris in 1084 during the funeral for Raymond Diocrès, a canon of Notre Dame. During the vigil, the deceased canon sat up and exclaimed: "By the judgement of God, I have been accused, judged and condemned." He told his horrified listeners of the torments he had seen in hell. "J'ai été appelé, au juste jugement de Dieu, j'ai au jugement de Dieu, j'ai été condamné au juste jugement de Dieu." He declared anyone doubting his words would share his fate. This extraordinary scene appeared as an illustration for the Office of the Dead in a famous medieval book.[1] The tale was told as the context of Bruno turning to religious life and the founding of the Carthusian order. Cyprian of Carthage (c.200–258) and medieval theologians after him held staunchly that apart from the church, salvation was impossible.[2] The fact that generations of Christians believed this claim provided the church and its theologians with considerable power. From early Christianity, a strong tradition of eschatological expectation became entrenched in the Latin west. During the last three centuries of the Middle Ages, notions of the end of the world, divine judgement, and the fate of the damned took on public and graphic dimensions. These images do not simply reflect the power of the church alone, nor are they indicative of the powerlessness of the theologians.[3] I believe that image and theology worked together

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in the Latin west to create a widely understood doctrine and a particular cultural environment.

Late medieval European mentalities developed an obsession with the end of the world. The terrors of hell predominated, creating (and reflecting) considerable anxiety. Fear of the Devil and demonic entities became an increasing preoccupation. In the later medieval worldview there were only two kinds of people: the good and the bad; the saved and the damned. The fear of damnation became a recurrent theme, and the violence of hell mirrored the violence that characterized late medieval society. Those boundaries were often characterized by revenge, retaliation, war, assassination, execution, robbery, poison, crusade, feud, hostility, fanaticism, and brutality. In the obsession to construct and maintain social order, it may be said that judicial cruelty dominated late medieval Europe.[4] The world of social order and justice knew only two extremes: total punishment or mercy. The propensity for bifurcation and extremes found inspiration in the material world: the Black Death swept through Europe repeatedly in the later Middle Ages with long deadly strokes. For example, in Siena, a city of 80,000 residents, at least 65,000 succumbed to the ravages of the plague.[5] Wars were long, brutal, and endemic. Even the church suffered, splintering along political lines and offering limited stability. God seemingly had forsaken human civilization. In the absence of a merciful God a general rubric emerged: everything that happens visibly in the world can be accomplished by demons.[6] The demonic represented death and endings of all types. All of this may suggest the later Middle Ages was a "psychically disturbed" period in the Latin west.[7]

Images of death—final judgement, damnation, and hell—became indelibly imprinted on the consciousness of late medieval people. More than this, those images formed that consciousness.[8] One of the reflections of this ethos is found in the hulking and terrifying portrayals of "Last Judgements." In these visual representations, the hopelessness and evil of human life and the world reach concise summary and expression. Authorities, both secular and ecclesiastical alike, used fear as a means of enforcing compliance and conformity. The terrors of the last judgement were developed by theologians, described vividly by preachers, and portrayed graphically in hundreds of art pieces throughout Europe. Behind these images lay the knowledge of the coming "four last things": death, final judgement, heaven, and hell. The last judgement, as understood in the later Middle Ages, constituted a great drama in five acts. First, signs of the end appear accompanied by the birth of antichrist.[9] The judge appears,

the dead arise from their graves, judgement is executed by Christ while Archangel Michael holds the scales in his hands, and the righteous and wicked are separated.[10] The former ascend to heaven while the latter are consigned to hell. In many last judgement scenes, demons seize the condemned. Sometimes they are joined to fellow sinners with long chains and dragged into the gaping jaws of hell (Fig. 5.1).[11] This frightening image became heightened by the popular belief current at the end of the fourteenth century that since the beginning of the Great Schism (1378) no one had entered paradise.[12] In 1371 a mosaic of the last judgement, in triptych form, was completed on the exterior south wall of St. Vitus' Cathedral in Prague. On the lower right, two demons, having captured at

Fig. 5.1 The damned bishop. The medieval Doom painting over the chancel arch in the Parish Church of St. Thomas and St. Edmund, Salisbury, England, after 1470

least fifteen people, have roped them together and dragged them towards the pit of hell.[13]

The guilt of sin formed the burden of the last judgement. The seven deadly sins fashioned the categories of miscreant behaviour: *gula* (gluttony), *luxuria* (lust), *avaritia* (greed), *acedia* (sloth), *superbia* (pride), *ira* (wrath), and *invidia* (envy). Those guilty of such misdeeds were barred from paradise and sentenced to the torments and tortures of hell. A critical inquiry must address the origins of this thinking: was this understanding a creation of the High and later Middle Ages? The gloom of impending doom is imbedded in the hymnody of the period, represented especially in the thirteenth-century *Dies Irae*.

> Day of wrath and doom impending,
> David's word with Sibyl's blending:
> Heaven and earth in ashes ending.
>
> Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth
> When from heaven the judge descendeth,
> On whose sentence all dependeth!
>
> Wondrous sound the trumpet flingeth,
> Through earth's sepulchres it ringeth,
> All before the throne it bringeth.
>
> Death is struck, and nature quaking,
> All creation is awaking,
> To its Judge an answer making.[14]

The thirteenth-century Dominican Vincent of Beauvais described hell in vivid word images: "Nix, nox, vox, lachrymae, sulphur, laquei, sitis, aestus. Malleus et stridor, spes perdita, vincula, vermes."[15] These lines are a litany of terror: cold, darkness, voices crying out, lamentations, brimstone, thirst, fire, hammers, choking, hope only for destruction, chains, and the worm. Did Vincent simply concoct this picture of the damned? Among the most powerful and effective attempts in the period to detail the belief in hell is Dante's early fourteenth-century *Inferno*, part of his *magnum opus*, the well-known *Divine Comedy* from the early fourteenth century. Here, both sinners and unrighteous are found. On his tour, Dante finds gluttons clawed and flayed, heretics burning, murderers submerged in boiling blood, pimps flogged, flatterers pushed down into human excrement,

swindlers thrown into boiling pitch, thieves thrust into pits filled with snakes, troublemakers mutilated by demons, and liars suffering the ravages of disease.[16] Did Dante simply copy the opinion of Vincent of Beauvais? Did Dante create these visions and images of terror from his own imagination? The answers must be negative insofar as there exists a tradition of final judgement, hell, and suffering extending from earliest Christianity to the end of the Middle Ages. Émile Mâle is not altogether correct to suggest that the horrors of hell have little in common with the books of theologians.[17] It will be useful to review the early Christian literature on the subject before turning to medieval visual depictions.

In the New Testament there are allusions to the torments of hell. According to Jesus, evildoers and wicked individuals are gathered and thrown into "the furnace of fire" where people "weep and grind their teeth" (Matthew 13:41–2). Jesus tells the unrighteous to depart "into eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41) and describes hell as "an unquenchable fire where the worm does not die and the fire is never extinguished" (Mark 9:44–48). Jesus appears to take for granted that "hell" exists. He does not develop a particular line of thinking on the subject. The *Apocalypse of St. John* refers to a lake of fire burning with brimstone wherein the wicked are cast and tormented forever (19:20, 20:10, 21:8).

In the second century, the *Apocalypse of Peter* vividly expands these themes. St. Peter is taken by Christ to paradise and shown the wonders of that place. Then he is ushered to another area where the pleasantries of paradise have vanished.[18] Thick darkness shrouds sinners subjected to unending torture. Blasphemers hang by their tongues over fire. Those who spurned righteousness sink in a lake of boiling filth. Adulterers hang upside down, their heads in filth. Murderers languish in narrow places, covered with worms, constantly assailed by evil creeping creatures and bitten by snakes. The excrement of the tormented runs down forming a lake in which women who aborted foetuses stand immersed to the neck. Persecutors of Christians burn while evil spirits flog them mercilessly. Insatiable worms gnaw at their insides. The wicked rich, dressed in foul rags, are rolled back and forth on sharp heated rocks. Usurers are forced to stand in swamps of pus, blood, and seething muck. Men and women who engaged in same gender sexual relations are thrown down from high cliffs repeatedly. Disobedient children are pecked endlessly by flesh-eating birds. Girls who lost their virginity prior to marriage are beaten until the blood pours. Sorcerers hang on whirling wheels of fire. Slanderers and

perjurers bite off their own lips and tongues from the excruciating pain caused as red-hot irons are thrust into their eyes. The tormented cry out for mercy, in Peter's hearing, but learn it is too late. This reminds the reader of the much later sentence hanging above the entrance to Dante's hell in Canto 3: "abandon hope all who enter here."[19]

The *Apocalypse of Peter* is significant for it is the first Christian literary description of hell following the canonical *Revelation of St. John*. This second-century text (*c*.135) gained high regard in early Christianity. The immediate influences appear to be Orphic-Pythagorean mysteries and Jewish Apocalyptic sources.[20] In the late second century, a list of authoritative Christian texts originating at Rome called the Muratorian Canon included this text. Around 200 C.E. Clement of Alexandria considered it Scripture.[21] In the early fourth century, Bishop Methodius regarded Peter as "divinely inspired Scripture."[22] A century and a half later, Sozomen records that Peter was used in churches in his own time.[23] The late first-century Clement of Rome describes the day of judgement as a "burning oven" (II Clement 16:3) where the unrighteous are punished with "terrible torture in unquenchable fire" (II Clement 17: 6–7). Polycarp referred to the coming judgement as a fire amounting to eternal punishment (Martyrdom 11:2). Another anonymous early text mentions eternal fire that punishes without end.[24] Justin Martyr (100–165), an early Christian apologist, speaks of "eternal punishment" and "eternal fire."[25] Tertullian (c.155–c.240) writes extraordinarily: "What a great spectacle bursts before the eye. How it excites my admiration." The sight of sinners groaning in the darkness causes Tertullian to experience great joy. Those caught in the fierce fires, "glowing with flames," "tossed in fiery billows," "dissolving in the fire," are cause for celebration.[26] Basil of Caesarea (c.330–379) asserted that in hell the damned are cut off completely and irrevocably from God.[27] There was some pause in all of this fervour to consign the wicked to a place of torturous damnation. Origen (c.184–c.254) suggested divine grace ultimately would redeem all creation. He was exceptional in a tradition of theologians advocating doctrines of damnation and eternal hell.[28] Origen was not sure whether hell was eternal or just a long time and he does not appear to accept the idea of eternal punishment for humankind. In his treatise *On First Principles*, it appears the Devil is converted from hostility to God; not destroyed.[29] Origen apparently denied this in a letter to friends saying not even a lunatic would say such a thing, though he admits there is a possibility demons might be converted from darkness to light.[30] This led Origen to speculate the love of God would

eventually accomplish universal salvation.[31] Fourth-century church fathers Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus appear to have been carried along by the force of Origen's arguments. It is noteworthy none of the early councils set forth an orthodox doctrine on the fate of the wicked and none condemned Origen's views until 543 and 553, respectively. However, by the fifth century, the type of theology proposed by Origen and his followers had been suppressed.

John Chrysostom (c.349–407) noted in the day of judgement, all human thoughts, words, and deeds would be placed on the scales and whichever way the balance leans carries with it the commensurate irrevocable sentence.[32] He insisted it was necessary to preach about hell in order to avoid it. Chrysostom declared the very thought of hell made him tremble but he was compelled to preach in order that his hearers might be saved, otherwise they stood in grave danger of being dragged off to the torture chambers.[33] Once thrust into the torments of hell Chrysostom argued, the suffering was eternal.[34] If John Chrysostom popularised the idea of an eternal hell of literal torture, it was Augustine of Hippo (354–430) who caused it to become orthodox theology in the Latin West. Augustine echoed Chrysostom: "Good and evil actions shall hang in the scales. If the evil is greater the guilty shall be dragged off to hell."[35] Those dragged off to hell suffer a double torment: separation from God as well as the fire.[36] Augustine devoted considerable space to explaining the suffering of the damned and the nature of eternal punishment.[37] He emphatically taught eternal punishment in hell and his teaching prevailed. After some initial hesitation, Jerome (c.347–420) agreed with his contemporaries. He wrote noting Origen's works were being published but only after the censor had edited out all harmful ideas like ultimate reconciliation and statements suggesting hell was not eternal.[38] Hell had to be eternal.[39] It was simply too dangerous to preach otherwise. The faithful had to have a healthy fear of eternal damnation. Jerome reasoned this would frighten them away from sin so he advanced the argument that all sinners must suffer eternally.[40] By the fifth century, Augustine's ideas on hell were promoted virtually everywhere. There was no greater influence on western theology as fundamental as Augustine.[41]

As the late antique period faded, Gregory the Great (c.540–604) articulated a doctrine of damnation that, coupled with Augustinian theology, proved attractive to the medieval mind. According to Gregory, hell included a fire that could not be extinguished, a worm incapable of death, an unbearable stench, a darkness one could feel, and continual

punishment at the savage hands of monsters. Curiously, the four books of Gregory's dialogues have not attracted as much attention by historians as they deserve. From a theological standpoint, the fourth book contributes a great deal to ideas of hell, devils, and the nature of damnation. Traditional ideas prevail. The damned are found "burning in flaming dungeons" afflicted by the "unspeakable pains of hell."[42] Gregory makes much of the New Testament story about the beggar Lazarus and a certain anonymous rich man (Luke 16:20–31). After a life of poverty and want, the former reclines in the bosom of Abraham; the latter, having lived a life of luxury and selfish gain, is tormented in the flames of hell. Gregory asserts that torture in hell is proportional to the transgression. He tells his deacon, Peter, of the pressing necessity of being spared from "eternal damnation."[43]

The doctrine of hell found in Augustine is likewise present in the commentaries of medieval religious thinkers. The anonymous *Rule of the Master* from which St. Benedict (c.480–c.545) drew heavily declares the faithless will wind up in the eternal fires of hell with the devil where they shall suffer the pains of damnation.[44] Fear and horror are terms used in monastic rules to express the fate of the wicked. Isidore of Seville (c.560–636) described the tortures of hell as punishment with fire that burns the body.[45] Some theologians like Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) perceived hell somewhat differently, pondering especially its duration.[46] Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) suggested the torments of hell might only be symbolic.[47] Elsewhere in his *oeuvre* one finds Thomas presenting a clear defence of the more traditional view supported by five arguments.[48] Pope John XXII created controversy in 1332 when he apparently affirmed "neither the damned nor the devils are in hell at present but the place of torment would only become their habitation at the end of time."[49]

Around 1175 a theological encyclopaedia known as the *Hortus deliciarum* was assembled and illustrated with 344 miniatures at the convent of Mont Sainte-Odile under the direction of the abbess Herrad of Landsberg. The book was a compendium of medieval knowledge. The original was destroyed in 1870 in the bombardment of Strasbourg during the Franco-German War. Fortunately copies of some of the manuscript had been made. The depiction of hell is instructive.[50] The damned look on from the flaming frame of the picture. Some of the tormented hold their noses against the stench of the Devil's fumes. Satan presides over hell in a parody of secular power, sitting on a throne with clawed feet. Animal heads of the throne's arms devour hapless human victims. Taloned legs

crush the heads of others. The Devil holds baby antichrist in his arms, in parody of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the infant Christ. Antichrist is the Devil's son. A demon leads a friar into the depths of hell in the lower left. The various vices shown in the torments meted out to the damned are primarily along the lines of the seven deadly sins.

In the High Middle Ages many visions of final judgement, damnation, and hell were recorded.[51] Some became very popular, appearing in many languages. *St. Patrick's Purgatory* is extant in numerous manuscripts but the fullest version dates from 1153.[52] In Patrick's vision, hell is filled with torture scenes, a wheel of red-hot nails, boiling cauldrons, and elements derived from earlier descriptions of the damned. Around this same time *Tundale's Vision* was recorded. The vision of 1149, experienced by a knight named Tundale, occurred in Ireland. The next year an Irish monk travelling through Europe stopped at Regensburg in Bavaria. The abbess of a convent there asked the monk to record the vision, which he did in a Latin version.[53] It was translated into German shortly thereafter. *Tundale's Vision* became extremely popular and by the end of the fourteenth century had been translated into at least thirteen languages, including Swedish and Serbo-Croatian. *Tundale's Vision* features pits of fire, an entire valley of fire with furnaces and ovens everywhere. A great beast belches fire as other creatures torture and torment the damned. Sinners weep in the face of this sustained onslaught, but even their tears are tiny flames of fire.

Thurkill, a workman in Essex County, England, experienced a similar vision in October 1206.[54] Souls are weighed on scales to determine if they go above to heaven or down below to hell. In *Thurkill's Vision,* hell is a theatre. Sinners are forced on the stage to re-enact their transgressions for the demonic audience. These unfortunates are endlessly tortured by fiends. For some of the damned, their clothing bursts into flames. Demons tear other transgressors from limb to limb with prongs and iron hooks all ablaze with tongues of fire. The severed limbs are fried, and once thoroughly cooked, are reattached. Then the torment begins anew. Hot nails are driven into the bodies of other performers. *Thurkill's Vision* is graphic. One of the damned has his throat cut. The tongue is pulled out and severed at the root by goblins, demons, and inhuman monsters. Sexual sinners are forced to repeat their wicked deeds for the audience before they too are tortured mercilessly. Such visions and journeys remained popular for centuries. Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pilgrimage of the Soul* is an example. Completed in the 1350s, this French poem was soon translated into other languages. Seventy manuscripts are extant, some illustrated. Guillaume's

journey is not unlike Dante's tour of hell with the same emphasis on the sufferings of the damned.[55]

Liturgical books of the Middle Ages reflect similar theological and popular ideas. The last full page miniature in the mid-twelfth-century "Winchester Psalter" shows an angel unlocking the door of hell behind which the damned are crammed in everlasting torment and tortured in every conceivable way.[56] The slightly earlier "Silos Beatus Apocalypse" (1109) features a demon with huge genitals tormenting damned lovers.[57] The "Holkham Bible Picture Book" from the 1320s reveals demonic creatures transporting helpless sinners to hell. A baker and an alewife are carried by two demons. A third demon carries a tonsured man while pushing a wheelbarrow full of sinners.[58] The fifteenth-century "Hours of Catherine of Cleves" depicts hell as a huge burning castle having two great mouths that devour naked sinners.[59] Examples could be multiplied. Vincent of Beauvais (†1264) wrote a summary of ideas on the consummation of history and the Last Judgement that proved influential.[60]

In the religious world of the Middle Ages, hell was not confined to books. Preaching played a fundamental role in the creation of these ideas in the popular mind. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, there was considerable preaching on the last judgement and hell, but by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, homilies had shifted emphasis. Now the stress fell on good Christian life and morality.[61] This assertion is contestable. Medieval priests sometimes neglected the duty of preaching. Pope Innocent III once characterised his clerical contemporaries as "dumb dogs who do not bark."[62] The ninth chapter of the Rule of St. Francis (1223) obliges friars to preach on vice and virtue, punishment and glory.[63] Prior to this, the Fourth Lateran Council convened at Rome and included among its decrees a declaration calling for more preaching in order to prepare the faithful for confession and communion that the Latin Church had just made obligatory on an annual basis. Among other instructions, such preaching should focus on the seven deadly sins.[64] From this time on, the theme of deadly sins finds a routine place in preaching.[65] Throughout the later Middle Ages, English bishops issued *Constitutions* containing material clergy were expected to expound on.[66] The Lambeth Constitutions of 1281 are a good example.[67] The synodal statutes of Bishop William of Blois for the Diocese of Worcester in 1229 called for priests to instruct penitents on the seven deadly sins.[68] As late as the fourteenth century, preaching took careful note of the deadly sins committed by men and women. While the

damned were preparing for eternal burning they were forced to listen to the voices of condemnation.

> Open your mouth, O horrible hell,
> to swallow these sinners
> – this of hell below
> O cursed cohort,
> your fate shall be in fire forever
> – and this the voice of the judge above us.[69]

Ecclesiastical doctrine made clear that hell was peopled by sinners and these included heretics, Jews, Muslims, prostitutes, criminals, and all transgressors. The iconography of hell included these categories as well as others deemed unacceptable.[70] Jews and Muslims were thought to be in league with Antichrist so it is not surprising to find them in hell (Fig. 5.2).[71] The Muslim prophet Mohammed is gutted in hell and in churches could sometimes be seen suffering the torments of the damned.[72] In Dante,

Fig. 5.2 Satan eating and defecating sinners. Giovanni da Modena, The Inferno, fresco, detail. Bolognini Chapel, Basilica di San Petronio, Bologna, Italy, 1410

Mohammed, his son-in-law Ali, and Saladin are consigned to eternal torment.[73] Jews were depicted huddled together signifying a special category of sin in addition to the usual seven deadly offenses.

A study of sermons in the High Middle Ages reveals substantial emphasis on the wages of sin, the last judgement, and the eternal tortures of hell. According to the French theologian Alain of Lille (†1203) preaching could be defined as public instruction on the faith and morals based on reason and authority.[74] In his "instructions for parish priests" John Myrc, the fifteenth-century canon of the Augustinian monastery of Lilleshall in East Shropshire (a twelfth-century foundation), tells the preachers to fear the day of doom.[75] If this advice was taken, one might expect preaching on the subject. Myrc personally engaged in graphic preaching of the terrors of hell and the various pains of torment the tortured suffered there. Myrc notes the pains of darkness, fetters, whipping, cold, fire, fear, the worm, confusion, and stench, among others.[76] The English Dominican, John Bromyard, was one of the most influential preachers in late medieval England. His massive *Summa Praedicantium* is based on thirteenth-century sources. He spares little detail on the fate of the wicked. They descend into a deep lake in hell where they bathe in foul pitch and sulphur and are held in torturous flames. Toads oppress them. Worms attack their bodies while demons afflict their souls. Torment is eternal.[77] Handbooks for preachers insist that all the water in the ocean cannot put out one spark of hell-fire.[78] Popular literature reflects a similar ethos. In representative texts we find repetitive descriptions of the chaos of hell: perpetual noise, screaming of the tortured, ravings of devils, and the sound of their flaming hammers at work. The damned are crushed together in a huge oven. Some are so tormented they tear at the faces of their fellows or rip their own flesh, some chewing away their own tongues in an indescribable frenzy of pain and fear.[79]

Public sentiment reflected in the works of art on the last judgement do not follow the arguments set forth by Origen and his disciples. Theologians from Augustine to Aquinas wielded sufficient influence to prevent that. By the later Middle Ages, the power of the theologians had grown to significant proportions. In 1290 Cardinal Benedetto Caetani (the future Pope Boniface VIII) told theologians at Paris, "you sit in your chairs and think Christ is ruled by your reasoning." He ruefully commented that theologians "have filled the whole world with their pestiferous teachings."[80] Issues of politics and power aside, Boniface had a point. In terms of the doctrine of damnation, most theologians took the more literal view that

persisted in numerous forms via different media throughout the history of the medieval Latin west. That doctrine is reflected in the *Dies Irae*, in the well-known and popular work of Dante, but especially in the hundreds of “Last Judgements” executed throughout Europe in the later Middle Ages. In these “Last Judgements,” often painted in graphic and exaggerated size within the precincts of churches, we encounter ideas of hell and damnation as defended and promoted by theologians, though it is significant that a clear orthodoxy on the last judgement did not emerge in the Middle Ages.[81] Theologically, the last judgement functioned as a neutral place between heaven and hell, defining life and death, dividing angels and devils, while separating the saved and the damned. Against the background of theology, sermons, and the teaching of ecclesiastical doctors, we turn our attention now to those visual images.

Inscriptions in the Last Judgement tympana at the Abbey Church of Ste-Foy in Conques-en-Rouergue and at the Cathedral of St-Lazare in Autun (both twelfth century) have Christ saying that he alone is the judge crowning the righteous and punishing the wicked. At least 117 people are shown on the Ste-Foy “last judgement” portal. The setting sun on the west face of these churches illuminates this climax of history. Last Judgements in the later Middle Ages brought together in vivid colour the insistence on pain, physical fire, and eternal torture. Thomas Aquinas argued images in the church were pedagogically useful.[82] It seems pictures were the books of the illiterate.[83] In traditional theology, hell was thick with an intolerable stench of filth, rot, and excrement. Sin stank in the nostrils of God and so hell was imagined as an enormous privy with all its disagreeable features. Human waste frequently related to sin and punishment because it was an object of shame and disgust.[84] A Dutch saying of the later Middle Ages put it thus: “the Devil’s ass is the gateway to hell.”[85] In a painting by Hieronymus Bosch, St. Anthony arrives at his cave-home to discover it has been invaded by demons and transformed into a tavern-cum-brothel.[86]

In the hells of Last Judgements, monsters seize the damned, eat them, then vomit or defecate them. A good example is the three-headed, horned, black Devil with blank, glaring eyes painted by Fra Angelico around 1431.[87] These demonic creatures are frequently hybrid combinations of human and animal parts not unlike some of the gargoyles discussed in Chap. 4. They wreak havoc on hapless transgressors. Fornicators are dismembered and beaten; fat sodomites are spitted like pigs from anus to mouth on a skewer and cranked over an open fire. Giotto’s Last Judgement from the

early fourteenth century executed as a fresco in the Capella Scrovegni in Padua displays a full gamut of tortures. Disembowelled men hang from trees; adulteresses hang by their hair while their counterparts are suspended by their genitals. Other sinners are flogged, flayed, disembowelled, dismembered, hacked up, pierced, impaled, throttled, cramped, torn, blinded, suffocated, crushed, and subjected to the rack. The torments of hell are vivid and the chaotic nature of damnation prominently displayed.[88] Hanging is a frequent punishment in hell and the damned are suspended by the neck, feet, hands, tongues, ears, genitals, or hair. Often maggots, toads, or snakes penetrate their bodies while they hang helplessly. On the tympanum of the central doorway of the thirteenth-century Cathedral of St. Étienne in Bourges, final judgement unfolds. A woman suffers in a great cauldron while below two demons with bellows stoke the fires. A grinning fiend tortures a mitre-wearing bishop while a large toad bites the breast of the woman. The agony of the damned is likewise vivid in the bas relief work of Lorenzo Maitani from the early fourteenth century on the façade of Orvieto Cathedral and contorted bodies reveal the terror of the damned above the west door at Conques (Fig. 5.3). Elsewhere, the condemned are gnawed by voracious demons.[89] On the tympanum of the Church of Ste-Foy at Conques, the scene of destruction is outlined in image and word.

Fig. 5.3 Last Judgement. West tympanum, painted limestone relief, Abbey Church of Ste-Foy, Conques-en-Rougergue, France, first half of the twelfth century

> The assembled saints stand before Christ their judge, full of joy. Thus are given to the chosen, united for the joys of heaven, glory, peace, rest, and eternal light. The chaste, the peaceable, the gentle, the pious are thus filled with joy and assurance, fearing nothing. But the depraved are plunged into hell. The wicked are tormented by their punishments, burnt by flames. Amongst the devils, they tremble and groan forever. Thieves, liars, deceivers, misers, and ravishers are all condemned with criminals. Sinners, if you do not reform your ways, know that you will have a dreadful fate.[90]

The key motif for punishing sinners in hell, however, is through the use of fire. In the afterlife, there are many variations on the theme of agonizing heat. Sinners are sometimes impaled on hooks protruding from flaming wheels or hung in blazing trees. Women are forced down on saddles studded with red-hot spikes. In other depictions, burning ladders appear made of glowing iron with sharp teeth rungs whereupon the wicked are forced to climb over and over. Others are beaten with burning clubs or pelted with showers of fiery rain. More sinners are pierced through the tongue or head with nails heated to a red-hot degree. Still others are forced to dress in flaming cloaks.[91] All of this is attended by demons. Medieval theological opinion remained divided on the question of whether demons actually had the power to torture people in hell after judgement.[92] Notwithstanding this debate, the presence of demonic creatures in Last Judgements normally represent a climate of torture and fear.

Between 1410 and 1415, Taddeo di Bartolo (*c*.1362–1422) executed a large Last Judgement fresco cycle in rather gruesome detail in the Collegiate Church of San Gimignano, not far from Siena.[93] The church has tenth-century origins but in 1056 Pope Vittore II made it a *Propositura,* meaning it had responsibility for other churches in the area. In 1148 Pope Eugenius III consecrated it. The structure itself is a fine, though relatively rare, example of Tuscan Romanesque architecture. The fresco cycle is located on the upper part of the central nave between the two doors, above the first two arches on the right and left. Taddeo's "hell" is particularly significant since it brings together the various strands of religious thought about sin and punishment meted out at the last judgement. Taddeo underscores the categories of sin, horrific torture, demonic presence, and the underlying preoccupation with sexual misconduct and sadistic retribution. Taddeo's hell is divided according to the seven deadly sins. Sinners are put into one of several compartments based on their earthly transgressions. Nearly 1,200 years earlier, Origen wrote that "each

sinner kindles his or her own fire," meaning the particular vices of that individual "forms the fuel" that keeps the fire burning.[94] Preachers reinforced the idea. "That fire is so much kindled and lighted with the sticks of covetousness, craving, strife, pitilessness, and other vices of this kind that it can never be quenched by all the water in the world."[95] Medieval theology tended to popularise the doctrine of *contrappasso* (retaliation) in the sense the inflicted punishment reflects the nature and severity of the sin.

In Taddeo's fresco cycle, Lucifer presides over the torture, appearing with three ape-like faces, a parody of the Trinity, and into each of his three mouths stuffs sinners.[96] Judas is among those eaten by the Devil in this fashion.[97] Lucifer has horns and scaly skin and crushes nude figures against his knees. The hapless victims writhe in pain as blood spurts. The Devil's anus and genitalia form another face. The victims eaten by the three mouths are then defecated, screaming, into the flames below, joining countless others already there. As if this were not enough, the taloned feet of the gigantic devil rips at these sinners while green snakes bite them repeatedly and strangle them. Death does not intervene in hell and their fate is to suffer until Lucifer again picks them up and the process begins again, lasting for eternity. On either side of Lucifer, demons add to the torment of the condemned with the use of hammers and mallets. Other fiends, using wrench-like tools, abuse the mouths of the damned, cutting out their tongues while their flesh, especially their genitals, are subjected to the horrors of red-hot tongs. Two of those thus abused are Herod and Nero, identified by name on their foolscap. A number of other sinners in this area of the fresco are similarly identified as Simon Magus, Cain, Pharaoh, and Nebuchadnezzar from Biblical narratives. Along with these are the twelfth-century Arab philosopher Ibn Rushd (known in the west as Averroës) and the fourth-century western Roman emperor Maxentius. The torturing demons have bat wings, one has a biting serpent for a tail, while others possess fangs and multiple sets of horns.

In the compartment to the right of the Devil, labelled *superbia,* the proud are identified by a woman admiring herself in a mirror. Another of the proud is about to be dismembered while yet another transgressor, bound with a chain, is prepared for decapitation by two demons. He is identified also as a "blasphemer" (*bastemiat*[ori]). On the other side of the Devil in the compartment of *invidia*, the envious are dealt with by other demons of torture. A traitor with the words *"falso testimonio"* written on a scroll lies in flames while scorpions crawl over him. At the same time a demon pours boiling liquid into his mouth. In the same area another

sinner is pulled upright, bound, and split up the torso and disembowelled by another demon. The bound man is restrained by chains while a fiend bites his head. Still another sinner hangs upside down in preparation for cannibalism. A fourth victim is hanged by the neck, with snakes wrapped around him, and whipped by another demonic creature.

Below this upper part of the fresco is a central zone divided into three equal compartments. On the left, in an area labelled *gola*, six large gluttons—a tonsured friar, two women, and a nobleman among them—gather around a table. They are bound and cannot reach the food. Several demons attack them in various ways while fire licks at their limbs. In the centre, *la varitia*, a usurer lies on his back displaying a swollen belly. The cause of his discomfort is immediately revealed in the demon crouching on his chest defecating gold coins into his mouth. Above this unfortunate sinner, two demons strangle a miser with a cord to which is attached a red-tasselled moneybag. Two other demons feed gold coins to a skeleton who clearly exchanged his substance for the goods that remain in a bundle hanging with him. In the lower left of the compartment a man is pierced through the heart with a dagger. The presence of fire and snakes add to the panicked misery of the condemned.

The compartment on the right *la lussuria* holds the lustful. In the upper left a devil mounts a woman grabbing her breasts with his claws. On the right, an *avultera* (adulteress) and a *ruffiano* (procurer) try to flee from a demon who administers a sound thrashing. The procurer's flesh is torn with tongs (Fig. 5.4). In the lower portion of the compartment two male *sotomutto* (sodomites) are skewered. A demon has thrust a pole into the bound man's anus and presses it through his body until it exits his mouth, entering the mouth of the second sinner. While this is going on, another demon attacks the helpless sodomites with a wrench-like weapon. The image is not the creation of Taddeo. An anonymous thirteenth-century Umbrian mystery play includes a dialogue between two demons describing how they will inflict punishment on the sinners. The punishment here depicted is there described.

The lower portion of Taddeo's fresco reveals further torture. On the right, three demons violate an equal number of women. One woman bites her hand in agony as she attempts to flee but is bitten by a demon on the back. A second woman sits while the third crawls on hands and knees and is raped by a demon's tail. A kneeling man makes an effort to stab himself in a hopeless attempt at suicide as a demonic creature prepares to strangle him. On the lower left side of this depiction of a post-Last Judgement

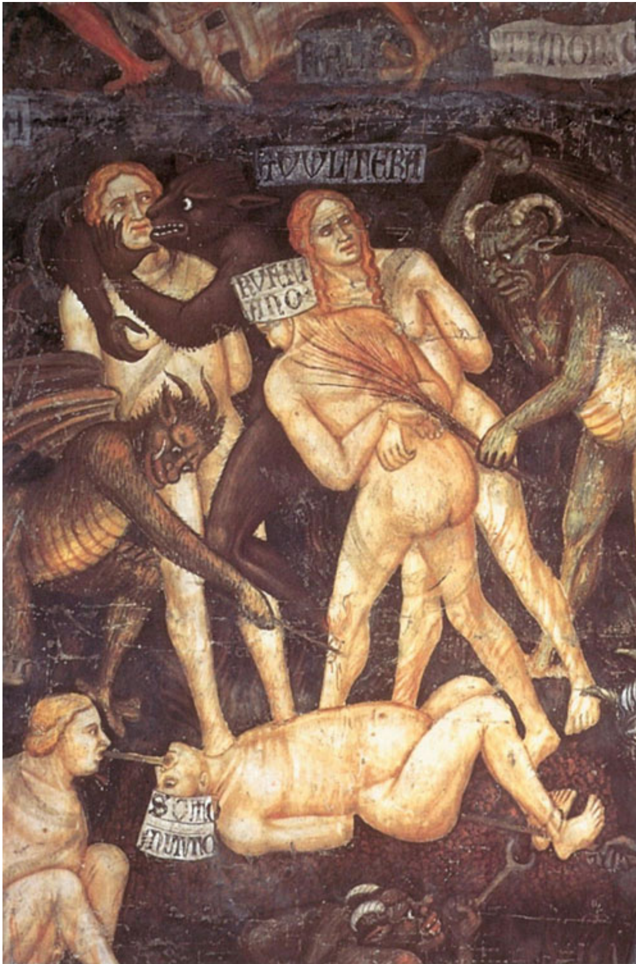

Fig. 5.4 Punishing sodomy. Taddeo di Bartolo, Last Judgement, fresco, detail. Collegiate Church of Santa Maria Assunta, San Gimignano, Italy, 1410–1415

hell one finds the gaping jaws of the entrance to hell where a demon prepares to throw a person headlong into that orifice. Two women and two men crouch on the ground, knees pulled to their chins, enduring the agony inflicted on them by biting snakes, demons, fire, and a flying

female demon. Two more women are attacked by other demons while an unusual female demon torments another damned woman genitally with a stick. The same unfortunate sinner is also bitten on her genitals by a snake. Simultaneously, a fiery liquid is poured on her head as still another demon attempts to drag her away by wrapping his serpent-like tail around her. Her understandably anguished face is about to be bitten by the demon. Another damned female is carried off in similar fashion. Both of these tormented are guilty of the deadly sin of lust or some other type of sexual transgression. Sexual misconduct and sexual torment are decisively linked in this Last Judgement. Not infrequently, miscreant behaviour characterises the Devil and the demons of hell. The female religious house known as the Humor Monastery in northern Romania at Mănăstirea Humorului near Gura Humorului, founded in 1530, was built on early fifteenth-century monastic foundations. The murals are the work of Toma of Suceava in the early 1530s. The Last Judgement on the wall beneath the porch, though now greatly faded, portrays the Devil as a lustful and indecent woman.

Taddeo's hell corresponds to the seven deadly sins, dramatically underscoring mentalities and anxieties. The upper five compartments are easily identifiable by the legible words on scrolls: pride, envy, gluttony, greed, and lust. The identifying scrolls for the lower two regions are now unreadable but may be seen as sloth and anger. Hell in the Collegiate Church of San Gimignano is inverted. The mouth is at the bottom. As one goes higher up the wall of the Collegiate Church, so correspondingly one descends farther and deeper into the recesses of hell. The sins are therefore portrayed deliberately in a specific hierarchy. It is interesting that works like *St. Patrick's Purgatory* and *Tundale's Vision* preserve in writing the visual images seen in Last Judgements inside churches.

At the time Taddeo di Bartolo was working in the Collegiate Church in San Gimignano, the theologian Jan Hus was writing a commentary on the Christian faith (*Vyklad na vieru*) in Prague. In that exposition he described the Last Judgement.

> The Saviour frequently reminded his apostles of Judgement Day and how terrible it would be. The horrible judge sits above humankind angry with the wicked. The Day of Judgement is terrifying. On the right, the sins accuse, on the left a multitude of devils pull the [damned] into hell. Behind is the burning world while in front angels push [the wicked] into hell. Within is the terrible gnawing of conscience. This horrible verdict of the court has

> seven parts. The first is a terrible chasing away … the second is separation from God … the third malediction … the fourth sulphurous torture… the fifth, despair of being liberated, because [the judge] declares "it is eternal". The sixth relates to torture … the seventh is eternal fellowship with devils … Oh, what a terrible verdict! There is no end to it! Even if the entire world from the earth to the sky was filled with poppy-seeds, and each grain signified thousands of years, even at the time the last grain was laid, the damned ones hoping to be delivered from torture at that time, would still have to wait …The eternal fire will burn the soul and the body …[98]

Hus was convinced that hell was literal and eternal and one can find comments in his sermons about real devils luring the unwary into eternal flames.[99] The doctrines of damnation in art and in theology are closely related.

The horrifying details of Last Judgements cannot be dismissed as isolated instances in the art forms of the later Middle Ages. Indeed, Taddeo di Bartolo's fresco in the Collegiate Church in San Gimignano cannot be regarded as unique or innovative within the genre. The cathedral at Albi in southern France provides another striking example of the sufferings of the damned portrayed in equally horrifying detail. Anonymous Flemish artists prepared the fresco in the late 1470s and 1480s behind the altar. Originally over 200 square metres in size, the work is possibly the largest fresco of a Last Judgement ever executed. The church itself took 200 years to construct and its meridional Gothic architecture constituted a formidable bulwark against the Cathar heresy. Religious dissent was locked outside the fortress walls of Saint Cécile but inside the dire warnings of the theologians about the fate of sinners could be found writ large in colour.[100] Above the terrors of the damned, on the west interior wall, resurrected souls present their hearts as individual open books for examination.[101] Under apostles and angels sit illustrious French Christians including Charlemagne, St. Louis, and Blanche of Castile. On the left side, naked women holding books to their breasts march to final judgement. While the books of the lives of the faithful are to be inspected, demons drag the unfortunates down. Like Taddeo di Bartolo, the artists of Albi have divided hell into seven chambers corresponding to the seven deadly sins. The proud are placed on wheels, the envious plunged into frigid rivers (or alternatively into a lake of fire), and the angry are punished in a dank cave bearing the hallmarks of a butcher's shop where demons cut up the faithless on tables. The slothful are devoured by serpents while the greedy are thrown into vats of water that transubstantiate into molten metal and

are then tortured by a devil wielding an iron spike. The gluttonous are forced either to eat their own members or disgusting beasts such as worms, toads, and serpents while the lustful are plunged into wells where snakes and toads abuse their genitals and attempt to devour them (Fig. 5.5).[102]

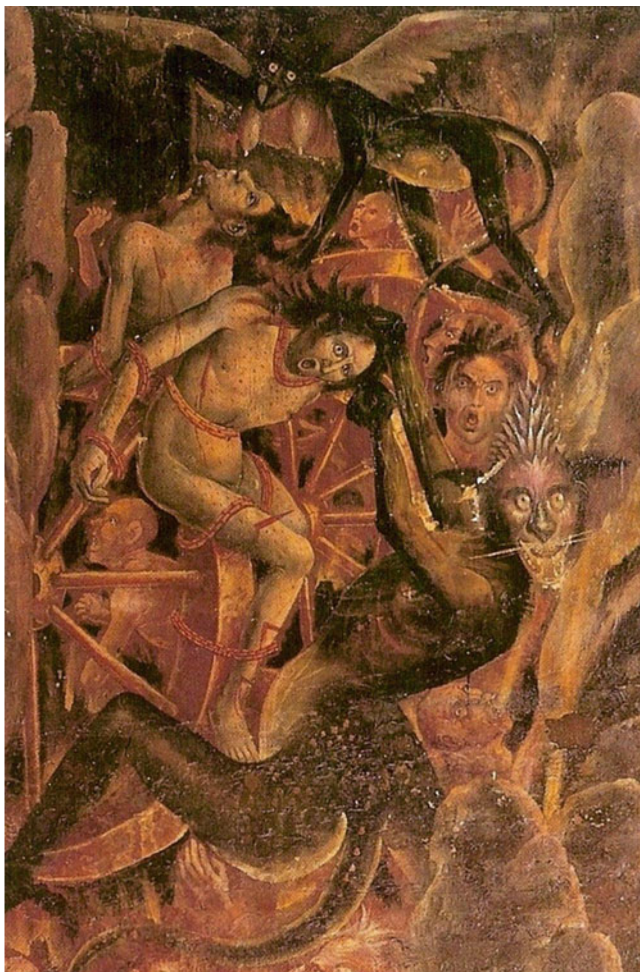

Fig. 5.5 Terror in hell. Last Judgement (detail), Flemish School. Cathédrale Sainte Cécile, Albi, France, 1474–1484

All of this sounds remarkably similar to the scenes portrayed in the *Apocalypse of Peter*. However, that text was little known in the later Middle Ages and there is no evidence the artists responsible for the Albi Last Judgement were aware of it. But theologies of hell and doctrines of damnation were present in many traditions. The Albi artists may have been familiar with the *Visio Pauli* and the author of that text quite clearly had read the *Apocalypse of Peter*.[103] The "Vision" or the "Apocalypse of Paul" originated in the later fourth century and was translated into Latin from Greek by the sixth century and thereafter into a number of vernaculars. Despite its fourth-century advent, the *Visio Pauli* represents earlier motifs.[104] The New Testament reveals St. Paul had once been caught up into the "third heaven" where he was witness to many wonderful things (II Corinthians 12:2–7). Ostensibly, according to the *Visio Pauli*, he also went to hell where he saw terrible things. The usual sinners appear in this vision of hell but churchmen of various ranks are likewise featured. These include bishops, lectors, priests, and deacons. Trees of fire grow at the gates of hell. The damned are hanged there by various bodily parts including hair and eyebrows. Seven furnaces belch forth flames around the screams of the wicked. Souls are lashed to a constantly revolving wheel of fire. This wheel makes a cycle one thousand times every day and each revolution is sufficient to torture a thousand souls. Other sinners fall from a bridge into mud sinking to a commensurate level with their sinful behaviour while in life. One old man has his intestines pulled up through his mouth with an iron, while another of the damned has worms crawling from his mouth. Usurers devour their own tongues eternally and sexually promiscuous women are tormented by snakes in the bottomless pit. A river of fire flows continuously and a two-headed worm lurks to torment. The horrors of the *Visio Pauli* are depicted in the Albi Cathedral where these strange scenes are quite original.[105] There is neither end nor hope in the torment. From the fifteenth-century Hans Memling workshop an image shows a demon standing on the backs of the damned in the mouth of hell (which is often shown in medieval iconography as the gaping jaws of a monster) holding a banner that reads "there is no redemption from hell."[106] The opinion of Émile Mâle, noted above, of slight relation between depictions of last judgements and the writings of the theologians simply cannot be sustained.

If the fresco cycles at San Gimignano and Albi are relatively unknown, the enigmatic work of the Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516) is not. In Bosch's hell, demons torment the damned specifically with their

former pleasures.[107] For example, minstrels are tormented by the instruments they used to play. Vain women are forced to view their reflection in a demon's rear end while sodomites are impaled by demon birds. Gluttons are themselves devoured by huge stomachs on legs and everywhere in hell humans are dwarfed by common material articles such as chairs and knives. Music is dominant in Bosch's hell. Viewed with some ambiguity in the Middle Ages as a seductive art either for good or ill, in the service of God or the Devil, music forms a crucial dimension in the post-last judgement abode of the damned. In life, the people in Bosch's place of torment must have enjoyed music; in hell they are tortured by it. An incessant clamour is countered by the feeble attempts of the sinners to cover their ears. One man has been trapped in a drum on which a demon pounds. Another is forced to carry a huge bassoon-like instrument while another of the wicked damned has a flute thrust into his anus. A red-faced fiend blows a trumpet. Another sinner is tortured by a type of crucifixion on a harp, his body pierced by the taut strings, while snakes bite him. A hideous fanged frog-demon conducts the hellish choir who are forced to read the score imprinted on a tortured man's rear end. Another is crushed beneath a giant music book and a lute.

Elsewhere in Bosch's hell, a young woman slumps at the base of Satan's throne where the Devil sits eating gluttons who become the Devil's excrement and are defecated into a gruesome pool. The young woman has a toad clinging to her chest (a sign of diabolism and witchcraft) as a demon embraces her. Their reflection is seen in a mirror embedded in the backside of another kneeling monster. The horror motif of severed heads and other body parts in the darker side of the last judgement reflects the horror of death itself, exacerbated after the Black Death, as well as the separation of body and soul in the connection between life and death viewed through the great divide symbolised and facilitated by the last judgement.[108] The horror of those in hell is experienced vicariously by the viewer through the medium of visual images. The ugliness, deformity, mutilation, and violence seen in the Last Judgement suggest one dimension to the theological notion of righteous punishment for transgressing God's law. Artistic perception formed these works, but it is facile to dismiss the influence of tradition and common conviction.[109] One goes to hell in these works of art with the theologians who created and promoted these ideas.

It should be noted Christianity was not alone in medieval religion in its understanding of hell. In Islam, hell was filled with black smoke, blasts of fire, scalding water, and torture.[110] A Persian manuscript of the fifteenth

century includes three images showing Mohammed, his winged horse Buraq, and the archangel Gabriel in hell. Here they observe the torture of women. In one scene a huge black demon torments women who exposed their hair to strangers, thereby inciting lust. These sinners are hanged by their hair and burn for eternity. A second scene features a large green demon hanging women on hooks inserted through their tongues. These offenders dared mock their husbands. The final scene shows a massive red demon torturing women on gallows by suspending them on hooks through their breasts. These are sexual transgressors.[111] According to Mohammed the majority of people in hell are female since women are incapable of perfection.[112] That assumption appears in other religious traditions. One of the traditional Jewish morning prayers in Orthodox liturgies included the line "Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, shelo asani ishah" praising God that one had not been created female.[113] This view of women can be found to varying degrees in Christianity in the Latin west. The opinions of the theologians are crucial. John Chrysostom asserted women did not reflect the image of God while Augustine of Hippo summed it up in commenting he knew nothing capable of bringing the human mind down from the heights quicker than a woman's caresses. Therefore females were a principle source of sexual temptation.[114] It comes as no surprise that women play a central role in Last Judgements and especially in hell.

Much of what can be seen in the hells of Last Judgements may be regarded as sadistic. Sadism, as a cognitive construct, is identified with torture, cruelty, and pain. Sadism is concerned with the living, not the dead. It is significant, indeed necessary, that those in hell are not dead, but alive, indeed alive forever to endure, without hope of remission, unrelenting torture, pain, and cruelty. At the end of the Middle Ages certain "Last Judgements" feature a profound appeal to sadism. One of these is the fresco cycle of the damned by Luca Signorelli in the Capella della Madonna di San Brizio in the Orvieto Cathedral between 1499 and 1503.[115] If eroticism exists in medieval art it does so, curiously enough, at the Last Judgement, especially in hell. Signorelli generates images of sadism, masochism, and bondage. "Cruelty and pain are not exceptional in Last Judgements, but Signorelli seems to have been the first to use the tortures as a frame for sexual and sadistic devil-rape fantasies."[116] The point is taken, but Taddeo di Bartolo nearly a century earlier and Giotto a hundred years before Taddeo should not be excluded from such categories, and Christian literary sources reflect similar ideas as long ago as the "Apocalypse of Peter" in the second century. There is plenty of sadism,

bondage, and devil rape in the Collegiate Church in San Gimignano and in the Arena Chapel in Padua. Unlike Taddeo's women, those portrayed by Signorelli are beautiful and sexually attractive without the nuances of sin that frequently and normally accompany voluptuous women in similar settings. "Anatomical exhibitionism infused with homo-eroticism and sexual sadism could be a concise description of this work."[117] In Signorelli's Last Judgement, muscular, middle-aged men inflict pain on bound and helpless beautiful women, most of whom appear passive and willing. This is a framework for the expression of sexual fantasy and sadism in this work. Signorelli is not alone in the infusion of these motifs into a Last Judgement. Theologians may have approved of sadism but it is doubtful such sexual fantasy would have garnered the same response. Still, these images were featured on church walls and we have noted sexual expressions in medieval carvings in religious space.

The monumental Last Judgement of the period is Michelangelo's on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel. Though the papacy expressed an interest earlier in a Last Judgement in the Sistine Chapel, it was only later that Michelangelo executed the work on the west wall between 1536 and 1541. This massive portrayal is a colossal forty-eight by forty-four feet. Christ appears as the judge, while around him the saved and the condemned rise and fall in a seemingly continuous cycle. The damned are not tortured as in Taddeo's fresco cycle, Albi Cathedral, or in Bosch. While demons do appear, the Devil is conspicuously absent. Though one or two lost souls can be identified unambiguously by the cringing expressions of fear, hopelessness, and horror, most of those present in Michelangelo's Last Judgement are locked in a struggle and it is not readily apparent who the blessed are and who the damned are. Rather than the strict separation normally seen in most Last Judgements, fierce battles attend the "four last things" in the Sistine Chapel. The outcome of these contests is not entirely clear. The blessed, who seem to rise into heaven, may do so with the help of angels or may even manage to that height under their own power. Elsewhere, demons and angels challenge one another as fiends attempt to drag souls downward. It is possible that Michelangelo did not believe in a real hell.[118] Be that as it may, Michelangelo did not escape serious criticism for his departures from a long-established tradition of Last Judgement orthodoxy. On 1 May 1545, Don Miniato Pitti of Monte Oliveto sent a letter to Giorgio Vasari in which he condemned the Last Judgement as containing a "thousand heresies."[119] Others were more specific in their denunciation, declaring the piece shameful, impious, and harmful to Christianity.

Such depictions were appropriate in a whorehouse but unacceptable in the house of God.[120] The pious horror at the nudity is curious in light of the content of older Last Judgements. One wonders what Aretino might have said about the work of Taddeo di Bartolo? Elsewhere, the Dominican, Ambrogio Politi Catarino, in 1551 railed against the depiction of naked bodies and their genitals. He argued against the indecency of nude figures everywhere, especially on altars and in chapels. He accused Michelangelo of engaging in artistic obscenities contrary to the apostolic spirit but clearly reminiscent of the shameful nakedness of heretics.[121] It was all too much for refined Renaissance sensibilities: nudes, angels without wings, the beardless, youthful Christ, genitalia, the ambiguity of the struggle, a far too attractive and sexually appealing St. Catherine, while the presence of Charon from mythology served to expand the boundaries of the traditional view of the Last Judgement. The nudity was ordered painted over, genitals covered, loincloths added, the provocative pose of the nude St. Catherine repainted, and the piece brought closer in line with traditional understandings of the Last Judgement.[122]

There is also evidence for identifying sexual sadism in the Sistine Chapel in the portrayal of a snake wrapped around the body of Minos that bites his penis. Some see this as an act of fellatio, but there seems little to suggest pleasure. The placement of the snake's mouth indicates biting rather than sucking. There are overtones of sodomy, bestiality, and anger in this corner of Michelangelo's Last Judgement. Minos is both sadist and masochist, a transgressor in the past and a sinner even in the last judgement. The violence of the snake on Minos is an expression of an unnatural and violent act.[123] Vasari tells us that the features of Minos are those of Biagio da Cesena, the master of ceremonies in the Vatican, wearing a pair of ass's ears.[124] Biagio had often complained to the pope about Michelangelo's fresco. Pope Paul III declined to take up Biagio's cause, apocryphally claiming he had no jurisdiction in hell.[125]

It is intriguing to note the tortures of hell are often a mirror of judicial cruelty in European society at the end of the Middle Ages. They are not, in the main, products of devious and ingenious imaginations. The punishments of hell are effectively real, which might help to explain why people perceived them in such frightening light. The close proximity of the Last Judgements as portrayed in art form and the realities of life in all its brevity, sorrow, and cruelty allowed the viewer to relate to the depiction on a fairly intimate basis. The question remains: were viewers horrified or fascinated by the Last Judgements that covered so many of their church

walls from the ninth century on? Having examined "last judgements" of Italian, Flemish, French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, German, and Czech provenance, the artificial distinction between northern Europe and art forms south of the Alps collapses when applied to hell. The graphic tortures sweep Europe.

In terms of medieval mentalities, "last judgements" reveal clues about theology and culture in the Latin west. Among these clues is an obsession, perhaps even anxiety, with sex and sexual activities expressed so vividly and graphically. There is considerable evidence of a preoccupation with good and evil (separated by clear lines of demarcation, though these lines are blurred in Michelangelo). There is an abiding interest in order and authority at all levels, and in hell no less so. The last judgement itself functions as the great arbiter of order and authority. Late medieval Last Judgements suggest an ongoing communal and individualistic search for stability and security amid uncertainty. That ambiguity, save in exceptional portrayals like Michelangelo's, is effectively mitigated and set straight at the last judgement. Beyond this, the depictions of the life of the world to come are set forth in amazing detail in an imaginative framework of the essentially unknown. Last Judgements throughout Europe at this time suggest a mostly uncritical acceptance of traditional ideas with respect to God, the Devil, heaven, hell, and retribution for miscreant deeds and sinful behaviour. Origen is conspicuously absent. Though judged by modern perspectives, Last Judgements indicate that the multiple worlds of later medieval Europe included communities of cruelty, torture, and essential inhumanity. These communities possess a strident propensity for vengeance, avenging, and revenge, all bordering on the fanatical. Moreover, Last Judgements, especially in the darker dimensions of that event, reflect and reinforce the full gamut of popular beliefs, including notions about monsters, punishment, animals, religion, the demonic, death, and the structures of power and authority. Most importantly, these images provide visual portrayal of the doctrines of theologians.

The art genre of the Last Judgements suggests doctrines of damnation in visual summary. These doctrines indicate Europeans were gripped by the certainty of damnation, by the realities of pain and torture, and by notions of what constituted sin and transgression. Hell amplifies the ambiguity about human sexuality. These scenes of hell and final judgement are suggestive of the violence of faith and living that encompassed so much of the European world; a world predicated on cruelty, viewed as an essential *modus operandi* for survival. Last Judgements speak also of the public

dimension of excrement and rear ends, with their attendant stench, in relation to hell as a place or circumstance of misery, degradation, and grossness. Last Judgements illuminate the preoccupation with doctrinal truths and heresies and their eventual incompatibility. The "five acts" of the final reckoning are portrayed in visual images: antichrist, judge, resurrection, judgement, and ultimate separation. These five acts parallel the pervasive belief and expectation in the "four last things": death, final judgement, heaven, and hell. Last Judgements likewise reinforce ecclesiastical doctrine that everything in life will be judged and at the end of life, death is inevitable. "Last Judgements" reflect ideas promoted by theologians and provide glimpses into the conceptual world of the Latin west illuminating the dark pathways of human anxiety attested so vividly in the *other* Middle Ages.

Notes

1. *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, Chantilly, Musée Condé MS 65, fol. 86v. Illuminations in the book were prepared principally by the Limbourg brothers from 1410 onwards. Prior to this, the same artists prepared for the Duke of Berry another prayer book called the *Belles Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry.* This work was begun in 1405 and completed in 1408 or 1409. Two illuminations feature Diocrès speaking. The first occurs to a group of astonished friars in the choir while the second shows the speaking corpse at the grave site. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, acc. no. 54.1.1., fols., 94v-95r. It should be pointed out that the canon is not actually named in the texts.
2. Cyprian, Epistle 73, "To Iubaianus, concerning the baptism of heretics", p. 795.
3. Hans Belting, *Bild und Kult: Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1990) devotes his first chapter to "the power of images and the powerlessness of theologians" arguing that images came before the words which gave them orthodox value. By contrast some experts view art through medieval texts. Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France: étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris: Libraire Armand Colin, 1925). Still others argue that images do not reflect texts but rather comment on them, altering them at times or even subverting them. See Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art.*
4. Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans., Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 24.

5. Ole J. Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346–1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004).
6. Huizinga, p. 241.
7. For example, Robert S. Kinsman, *The Darker Vision of the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 25–46.
8. See for example the surveys in Robert Hughes, *Heaven and Hell in Western Art* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968) and Richard Cavendish, *Visions of Heaven and Hell* (London: Orbis Publishing, 1977).
9. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, "Illustration as Commentary in Late Medieval Images of Antichrist's Birth" *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistsgeschichte* 63 (No.4, 1989), pp. 589–607.
10. Émile Mâle, *Religious Art in France: The Late Middle Ages: A Study of Late Medieval Iconography and its Sources*, trans., Marthiel Matthews (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 367–78.
11. Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1995).
12. Huizinga, pp. 30–1.
13. The Last Judgement was ordered by Emperor Charles IV and thus noted in FRB, vol. 4, pp. 541 and 544. See also Francesca Piqué and Dusan Stulík, eds., *Conservation of the Last Judgment Mosaic, St. Vitus' Cathedral, Prague* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2004), pp. 3–10 and 21–32.
14. Shinners, ed., *Medieval Popular Religion, 1000–1500: A Reader*, pp. 501–503.
15. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum quadruplex sive speculum maius*, volume 4, *Speculum historiale* (Graz: Akademische Druck -u. Verlagsanstalt, 1965), *epilogus*, chap. 120, p. 1329.
16. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, vol. 1, *Inferno*, *passim*.
17. Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, p. 378. For the original French edition see note 3.
18. A translation of the Ethiopic text of the "Apocalypse of Peter" is in *The New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols, eds., Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans., R. McLachlan Wilson (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991–2), vol. 2, pp. 672–9. There is no relation between this text and the Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1946. See also Richard J. Bauckham, "The Apocalypse of Peter: An Account of Research" *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung* 2.25.6 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1988), pp. 4712–4750.

19. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, vol. 1 *Inferno,* Canto 3, 7, p. 55.
20. See the important study by Alan E. Bernstein, *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). There are exceptions noted in Bauckham, pp. 4727–4733.
21. Eusebius notes that Clement calls Peter "Scripture" in his *Hypotoposes* and quotes from it several times in his *Eclogoe Propheticae*. Neither of these works are extant. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.14 in PG 20, cols. 550–1.
22. *Convivium decem virginum*, 2.6 in PG, vol.18, cols. 56–7.
23. *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6.19 in PG 67, cols. 1478–9.
24. Henry G. Meecham, ed., *The Epistle to Diognetus: The Greek Text* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1949), 1:7–8.
25. Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), *First Apology*, chapters 12, 17, and 45 and *Second Apology,* chapters 1, 8, and 9.
26. Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, chapter 30 in PL, vol.1, cols. 660–662. Even Augustine appears to acquiesce in this view. *De civitate dei*, 20.22 and 22.30 in PL 41, cols. 694, 801–804.
27. *Liber de spiritu sancto*, 40 in PG 32, cols. 142–3.
28. Henri Crouzel, "L'Hades et la Géhenne selon Origène" *Gregoriana* 59 (No. 2, 1978), pp. 291–331.
29. *De Principiis*, conclusion to 2.10.3 in the Greek text. *Origenis Opera Omnia*, in PL, vol. 11, cols. 235–6.
30. The letter is no longer extant but see Brian E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 58–9.
31. Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, "Origen on Free Will, Grace, Predestination, Apocatastasis, and Their Ecclesiological Implications" *Patristic and Byzantine Review* 9 (Nos. 2–3, 1990), pp. 95–121.
32. Quoted in Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale, epilogus*, chapter cxviii, col. 1328b.
33. Homilies 21 and 22 in PG 61, cols. 541–554. [Homily on II Corinthians 10].
34. *Ad Theodorum Lapsum* 1.9–10 in PG 47, cols. 287–91.
35. *Sermo I. in vig. Pentecost.* Sermon 265 in *De hist. sanct. imagin.* 2.23, PL 38, cols. 1225–9.
36. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale, epilogus,* chap. cxviii, col. 1328a-b.
37. Especially *De civitate dei* (410), 21. 9–18 in PL 41, cols. 723–733.
38. Jerome, Letter 124, in Isidore Hilberg, ed., *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* (Vienna: Tempský, 1918), vol. 56, pt. 3, pp. 96–117.

39. *Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Ephesios* 4:16 in PG 26, col. 503.
40. *Comm. on Isaiah* 14:2 in PL 24, col. 160.
41. J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 484.
42. Adalbert de Vogüé, ed., *Gregoire le Grand: Dialogues*, trans., Paul Autin, 3 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1978–1980), book 4, chapter 35 and PL 77, cols. 376–381.
43. *Dialogues*, book 4, chapters 43 and 58.
44. Adalbert de Vogüé, ed., *La Règle du Maître*, 3 vols [Sources Chrétiennes, vols 105–107] (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1964), vol. 1, p. 292.
45. "Duplex damnatorum poena est in gehenna, quorum et mentem urit tristitia, et corpus flamma iuxta uicissitudinem ut qui mente tractauerunt quod perficerent corpore, simul et animo puniantur et corpore." *Isidorvs Hispalensis Sententiae*, book 1, cap. 28, §1, ed., Pierre Cazier [Corpus Christianorum series Latina, CXI] (Turnhout: Brepols, 1993), p. 86.
46. Frank Burch Brown, "The Beauty of Hell: Anselm on God's Eternal Design" *Journal of Religion* 73 (No. 3, 1993), pp. 329–356, points out that in Anselm hell may be severe but it cannot be eternal.
47. *Summa*, supplement to part III., q.xcvii., a.ii. *Summa theologiae*, 3 vols., ed., Pietro Caramello (Rome: Marietta, 1952–1956), vol. 3, pp. 396–7.
48. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, [Leonine manual] (Rome: Apud sedem Commissionis Leoninae,1934), book 4, chapter 90, 1,5,7,9; 91, 2,3,8; 96, 3. See also *Summa Theologica*, supplement to Pt. III.
49. Heinrich Denifle and Émile Châtelain, eds., *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris: Delalain, 1891), vol. 2, docs. 970–87, pp. 414–442.
50. *Hortus deliciarum* of Herrad of Hohenberg, *c.* 1185, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, fol. 255r. This was a theological encyclopedia assembled and illustrated at the convent of Mont Sainte-Odile (1170–1205). Herrad of Landesberg, *Hortus Deliciarum*, ed., Aristide D. Caratzas (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas Brothers, 1977).
51. See as an example the collection of texts in Eileen Gardiner, ed., *Visions of Heaven and Hell Before Dante* (New York: Ithaca Press, 1989). There are easily 50 or 60 medieval "visions" of the afterlife.
52. See the text *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sancti Patricii* in Roger of Wendover, *Chronica, sive Flores historiarum*, ed., Henry O. Coxe, 3 vols (London: English Historical Society, 1841), vol. 2, pp. 256–271.
53. Albrecht Wagner, ed., *Visio Tnugdali Lateinisch und Altdeutsch* (Erlangen: Andreas Deichert, 1882).
54. Text in Roger Wendover, *Chronica*, vol. 3, pp. 190–209.
55. *The Pilgrimage of Human Life* (Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine), translated by Eugene Clasby (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992).
56. London, British Library MS CIV, fol. 39r.

57. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional MS Vitr. 14–2. London, British Library Add. MS 11695.
58. London, British Library Add. MS 47682, fol. 42v.
59. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library and Museum, MS M 917, fol. 168v.
60. *Speculum historiale, Epilogus speculi historialis contins Tractatus de ultimis temporibus*, cols, 1323a–1332b.
61. Rosalind and Christopher Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe 1100–1300* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984), p. 124.
62. "Canes muti non valentes latrare." The phrase appears in a letter dated 1200 in PL 214, col. 904.
63. The Rule of 1223 along with the papal bull of approbation was kept in the sacristy of the Sacro Convento in Assisi. Benen Fahy, ed., *The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1963), pp. 54–64 at p. 63.
64. H. J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1937), pp. 236–296. See Canons 21 and 33.
65. See Siegfried Wenzel, "Preaching the Seven Deadly Sins", in *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Ages*, ed., Richard Newhauser (Toronto: The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005), pp. 145–169.
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67. F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney, eds, *Councils and Synods with other documents relating to the English Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II, pp. 900–905.
68. Powicke and Cheney, eds., *Councils and Synods*, I, p. 172.
69. Siegfried Wenzel, ed., *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), pp. 698–701.
70. See Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols.
71. On this Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 211–40.
72. Dante, *Inferno*, Canto 28, verses 19–42, pp. 433–5. An early depiction of this is the anonymous manuscript illustration from the mid-fourteenth century in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Holkham misc. 48, p. 42. An early fifteenth-century fresco by Giovanni da Modena in the Bolognini Chapel in San Petronio Basilica in Bologna shows a naked, wild-eyed, terror-stricken, Mohammed lying on a rock just above a monstrous Satan

who devours one of the damned. "Machomet", whose hands are bound behind his back, is seized by a horned demon who takes the prophet with both hands around his head and appears to drag the prophet downwards into the depths of hell.

73. Mohammed and Ali appear in Canto 28 while Saladin turns up in Canto 4 of the *Inferno*, pp. 433–9 and p. 77.
74. "Praedicatio est, manifesta et publica instructio morum et fidei, informationi hominum deserviens, ex rationum semita, et auctoritatum fonte proveniens." Alain of Lille, *Summa de arte praedicatoria*, in PL 210, col. 111.
75. John Myrc, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, ed., Edward Peacock [Early English Text Society, no. 31] (London: Trübner & Co., 1868), pp.1–3.
76. G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1926), pp. 336–339.
77. A relevant extract appears in G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966), pp. 293–4.
78. Wenzel, ed., *Fasciculus Morum*, p. 113.
79. See for example the anonymous fourteenth-century Middle English poem *The Pricke of Conscience: A Northumbrian Poem* (Berlin: A. Asher, 1863). Its popularity may be attested in part by the no fewer than 177 surviving manuscripts.
80. For an account of this confrontation see T.S.R. Boase, *Boniface VIII* (London: Constable and Company, 1933), pp. 19–25.
81. See D.P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964) especially part one.
82. Aquinas' commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. *Scriptum super Sententiis Magistri Petri Lombardi*, 4 vols., eds. R.P. Mandonnet and Maria Fabian Moos (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1929–1947), III, 9,2,3.
83. Gregory the Great, letter to Serenus, Bishop of Marseilles, *Registrum Epistolarum*, book 11, letter 13 in PL 77, cols. 1128–1130.
84. William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 98–101.
85. Dirk Bax, *Hieronymus Bosch: His Picture Writing Deciphered*, trans., M.A. Bax-Botha (Rotterdam: A.A. Balkema, 1979), p. 29.
86. Bosch, *St Anthony Triptych*, left panel, 1501. Lisbon, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga.
87. Detail (lower right) of his predella of the Last Judgement for an altarpiece. Museo di San Marco, Florence.
88. Among many examples, the work of Nardo di Cione from the 1350s in the Strozzi Chapel of the Dominican Church of Santa Maria Novella in

Florence and the fresco cycle of Francesco Traini in the Pisa Camposanto (cemetery) from the same period.

89. For example, in the work of Andrea di Orcagna *c.*1360 in the nave of the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence.
90. The translation appears in Benton, *Medieval Mischief: Wit and Humour in the Art of the Middle Ages*, p. 60.
91. An excellent illustration of the various tortures by fire is the illumination by Henri Romain, *Compendium historical*, executed in Paris in the mid-1470s. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale MS Fr 9186 fol. 296v.
92. Peter Lombard reflects that lack of consensus in his *Sentences*, bk. 2, dist. 6.7 in PL 142, col. 664.
93. A comprehensive and sound study of this fresco cycle is Gail E. Solberg, "Taddeo di Bartolo: His Life and Work", unpublished PhD dissertation, New York University, 1991, 3 vols.
94. *De Principiis* 2.10.4. PG 11, cols. 236–7. However, it has to be said in fairness to Origen that he did not conceive of such fire as physical torture. Other theologians clearly did.
95. Wenzel, ed., *Fasciculus Morum*, p. 315.
96. This motif has precedents. For example, the mosaic of hell in the vault of the Florence baptistery by Coppo di Marcovaldo from the thirteenth century prominently features Satan devouring the damned.
97. Judas comes off badly in medieval iconography and is often shown in this manner. Among many examples, the fifteenth-century medieval roof boss in Southwark Cathedral in London shows Judas being swallowed by the Devil. His lower torso and legs are visible. Elsewhere a wild-eyed, winged Devil with mouth agape seizes Judas from behind. This full figure sandstone corbel, on the north portal (right side) of the St. Wenceslas Chapel in St. Vitus' Cathedral in Prague, dates to the 1370s. The Devil takes the soul of Judas depicted by the Devil tearing Judas' tongue from his mouth. The motif can be found elsewhere. For example, during an inquisition directed by Peter Zwicker in 1397, a penitent heretic at Steyr (Austria) was forced to remain in a pillory for a full week wearing a hat on which was depicted a demon pulling out the tongue of a peasant. Paul Bernard, "Heresy in Fourteenth Century Austria" *Medievalia et Humanistica* 10 (1954), p. 62. A 1492 fresco by Giovanni Canavesio in the Chapelle Notre-Dame-des-Fontaines near La Brigue, France, portrays Judas being disemboweled by a demon who tears the soul from the hanged man.
98. "Exposition of the Faith", in *Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera Omnia* (Prague: Academia, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 82–3. Elsewhere Hus used the same imagery in his treatise on spirituality. *Dcerka: O poznání cěsty pravé*

k spasení, chapter 8 in *Magistri Iohannis Hus Opera Omnia*, vol. 4, pp. 163–186, at pp. 180–1.

99. For example, his sermon for the sixth Sunday after Pentecost on the text I Peter 4:7–11 in his Latin postil the *Postilla adumbrata* in *Magistri Iohannis Hus, Opera Omnia*, vol. 13, p. 233.
100. Bonde, *Fortress-Churches of Languedoc: Architecture. Religion, and Conflict in the High Middle Ages* discusses the history of such churches.
101. Eric Jager, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) examines this historical motif.
102. Émile Mâle, *La Cathédrale d'Albi* (Paris: Paul Hartmann Éditeur, 1950), pp. 32–36.
103. The text of the "Visio Pauli" is in *The New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 2, pp. 759–798. Early versions existed in Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopic in addition to Greek and Latin. In the Middle Ages the *Visio Pauli* appeared in Middle English, German, Anglo-Saxon, Italian, Spanish, Provençal, Old French, and Anglo-Norman.
104. See Théodore Silverstein, "The Vision of Saint Paul: New Links and Patterns in the Western Tradition" *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 26 (1959), pp. 199–248 and Peter Dinzelbacher, "La 'Visio S. Pauli': circulation et influence d'un apocryphe eschatologique" *Apocrypha* 2 (1991), pp. 165–180. It should be noted that this is not the same text as found in the Nag Hammadi library with the same name.
105. Mâle, *La Cathédrale d'Albi*, p. 33.
106. Wing of a triptych in Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts.
107. Right wing of the "Garden of Earthly Delights" triptych, *c.* 1510, in Madrid, Museo del Prado.
108. Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death: The Arts, Religion and Society in the mid-Fourteenth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) stressed the change the Black Death brought to artistic expression. His thesis has come under revision on account of the exclusive attention on the plague.
109. Lynda Harris, *The Secret Heresy of Hieronymus Bosch*, 2nd edition (Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2002) and Peter S. Beagle, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (London: Pan Books, 1982).
110. *Q'uran* 44:43–58 and 56: 43–3.
111. The manuscript *Miraj-Nama* is in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. See Marie-Rose Sequy, *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet* (New York: George Braziller, 1977).
112. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, ed., *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhâri*, 9 vols (Riyadh: Dar-us-Salam Publications, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 28 and 301; vol. 2, p. 161; and vol. 7, p. 124.

113. Rather than misogynistic, the prayer can be understood to imply that men have greater religious obligations than women whom the Talmud exempted from performing certain duties at specified times. The prayer is controversial and the role of women in Judaism has also historically been debated.
114. For Chrysostom see homily 8 on Genesis in PG 53, col. 73. For Augustine *Epistulae* 243.10 in *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 57, ed., A. Goldbacher (Vienna: F. Tempsky, 1911), p. 577. Augustine is favourably quoted in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, 2–2, q.151,3.
115. Jonathan B. Riess, *Luca Signorelli: The San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto* (New York: George Braziller, 1995) and Creighton E. Gilbert, *How Fra Angelico and Signorelli Saw the End of the World* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2002).
116. Luther Link, *The Devil: The Archfiend in Art from the Sixth to the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), p.157.
117. Link, *The Devil*, p.157.
118. Leo Steinberg, “Michelangelo’s ‘Last Judgment’ as Merciful Heresy” *Art in America* 63 (Nov-Dec, 1975), p.53 and Bernadine Barnes, “Metaphorical Painting: Michelangelo, Dante, and the Last Judgment” *The Art Bulletin* 77 (No. 1, 1995), p. 64.
119. Karl Frey, *Giorgio Vasari: Der Litererische Nachlass* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1982), vol. 1, doc. 69, p. 148.
120. Paola Barocchi, ed., *Giorgio Vasari: La vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, 5 vols (Milan: Ricciardi, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 74–5.
121. “Disputatio de cultu et adoratione imaginum”, in *Enarrationes in quinque prioia capita libri Geneseos* (Rome: Antonius Bladus, 1552), pp. 130–40.
122. On Michelangelo’s “last judgement” see Marcia B. Hall, ed., *Michelangelo’s Last Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Valerie Shrimplin, “Hell in Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment*” *Artibus et historiae* 15 (No. 30, 1994), pp. 83–107; *Ibid*., “Sun-Symbolism and Cosmology in Michelangelo’s Last Judgment” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 21 (No. 4, 1990), pp. 607–44; Steinberg, “Michelangelo’s ‘Last Judgment’ as Merciful Heresy”; Jack M. Greenstein, “‘How Glorious the Second Coming of Christ’: Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment* and the Transfiguration” *Artibus et historiae* 10 (1989), pp. 33–57 and Loren Partridge, et al., *Michelangelo: The Last Judgment: A Glorious Restoration* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997).
123. Joseph Manca, “Sin, Sadomasochism, and Salvation in Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment*” *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 8 (No. 3, 1994), pp. 20–6.

124. Giorgio Vasari, *These Splendid Painters* (New York: J.H. Sears & Co., 1926), pp. 197–8.
125. Barocchi, ed., *Giorgio Vasari: La vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, vol. 3, pp. 1297–8.

CHAPTER 6

Sensuality, Spirituality, and Sexuality in the Religious Experience of Female Mystics

At the same time medieval people were seeing scenes of judgement and hell appearing on church walls practically everywhere in Europe, the religious were focused on avoiding that fate by pursuing the spiritual life. There is a riveting story told by Nikos Kazantzakis in his semi-biographical reflection about a monk on Mt. Athos whose quest for God and the ultimate spiritual experience was interrupted and unexpectedly enhanced by a woman.[1] Having taken vows resulting in holy orders as a cloistered religious, the monk practiced poverty, obedience, and abstinence from sensual pleasure. These vows were considered necessary aids for the pilgrim committed to the religious life and the pathway of spirituality. The monk assiduously avoided women. For twenty-one years, the solitary religious strove for God, pure religiosity, and spiritual fulfilment. Then, on a sudden, the monk was thrust into an unexpected encounter with a nameless woman. Seized by human weakness, the monk succumbed to what he considered temptation and broke his vow of celibacy. The woman reminded him of church on Easter. Thirty or forty years passed (the religious could not say for sure since time had stood still) and Ignatius the monk told his story to a man visiting the monastery. The monk confessed to having spent the years since that chance encounter formulating the religious, even theological, implications of the event. He confessed that his nocturnal dalliance had not disrupted his spiritual quest but quite the opposite, marked its apex. The monk experienced resurrection. Rather

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than finding the woman took him from God he had discovered that she brought him closer to the divine. For the first time in twenty-one years the monk had experienced the nearness of God. Despite having violated his vows, the monk stubbornly refused to repent. Living with the contradictions of sex and spirituality, shame and sacramental grace, sin and salvation only underscores some of the challenges for understanding the history of the religious life. This modern tale sheds important light on a particular medieval theme, which is the quest for God and the experience of the holy. The parallels have less to do with the monks of the Middle Ages but have considerably more in common with nuns of the same period.

The life of the medieval religious embraced to varying degrees the idea of mysticism or the element of the life of faith that transcends theology, liturgy, and institutional religious practice. Sixteen hundred years ago Augustine wrote: “human voices must be still, human thoughts must rest for they attempt to come to things that cannot be comprehended, not with the idea they can be grasped, but rather to share in them. And we can share in them.”[2] The concept of mysticism may be understood as the idea that the experience of direct or immediate consciousness or awareness of the presence of God, unmediated, is a possibility. In this sense, mysticism is a form of religious knowledge that may be derived directly from God. The expressed goals of Christian mysticism include union with God, a sense of inner peace, and the direct and personal experience of divine nature. It was Augustine once more in this vein who encouraged the religious and Christian pilgrim: “Do not go without, but instead turn within. Inside the inner person is where truth abides.”[3] That counsel had serious implications for it implied that personal truth might in fact trump the orthodoxy of the medieval Latin Church. On the other hand, it might be argued that personal truth never contradicts divine truth as codified by the church. That said, mysticism was an organic outgrowth of the medieval church amongst those who considered that religious practice had become institutionalized. Some of these Christians wished for a more personal, spiritual faith relationship. Coupled with this desire, we find that one of the great themes of the medieval mystical tradition is love. At the end of the Middle Ages, John of the Cross is representative: “Love never reaches perfection until the lovers are so alike that one is transfigured in the other. And then the love is in full bloom.”[4] This is the unity and union between God and the Christian pilgrim envisioned and sought for by the medieval mystics. In their writings, we discover that some actually claimed to have achieved that oneness. Their lives reflect three stages of spiritual progression: the

via purgativa, which is purification; the *via illuminativa*, wherein the soul is enlightened by God's will; and the *via unitiva*, whereby union with God is achieved.

In this pursuit it must be said that mystics did not leave the church, ordinarily, but rather sought for a more inclusive spirituality within the church. Indeed, some mystics physically lived in churches. Julian of Norwich lived in a church cell in England for decades.[5] Many of these female mystics were devoted to Jesus. A quantitative study of 864 saints establishes conclusively that devotion to the human Christ was a female theme.[6] We shall find that object of affection and piety a central theme in the thought and experience of many female religious. Mary Magdalene was also a useful symbol and example for medieval mystics. Her penitential tears and austere life provided an example to other sinners who had turned to God and now desired to achieve the fullness of the spiritual life. Inasmuch as Magdalene had been forgiven much, she in turn loved much. From about 1200 on, there seems to be many women who imitated Mary Magdalene, weeping penitentially as they sought union with Christ.[7] Mystics frequently had a reputation for being emotional. The fifteenth-century Margery Kempe was known for boisterous crying. In the fourteenth century, Birgitta of Sweden sobbed loudly while Angela of Foligno was known as a notorious screamer.[8] This was, however, what might be regarded in a modern sense as an extreme approach or expression of the religious life. In our own time those who behave in this manner in a religious context are usually considered either unbalanced or fanatical, yet similar behaviour is tolerated, even expected, at sporting events and regarded as normal. Categories such as madness, infinite longing, and annihilation are among the motifs that constantly frame the experiences of female mystics of the later Middle Ages. Like some of the desert ascetics, in the tradition of Simeon Stylites, some of the mystics practiced a radical approach to the experience of God and spirituality. Some barely made it to age twenty before succumbing to the exhaustion of their ascetic practices and food deprivation.

There were of course dynamic traditions of mysticism among both male and female religious in the Middle Ages. Some of these individuals were rather famous. Among the men we find John of the Cross, Thomas à Kempis, Meister Eckhart, Bernard of Clairvaux, Gerard Groote, Jan van Ruysbroeck, Johann Tauler, Henry Suso, Richard Rolle, Brethren of the Common Life, the *Gottesfreunde*, the *Devotio Moderna*, and a host of others. Notable female mystics of the Middle Ages include Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Genoa, Catherine

of Siena, Birgitta of Sweden, and numerous others.[9] This chapter focuses on the female religious on account of the fact they frequently exhibited an experience of God considerably more difficult to locate among medieval male religious and because their articulation of their religious experience appears to meld notions of spirituality with tactile sensuality and human sexuality.[10] The possibilities are extraordinary. Female mystics figure prominently in northeast Germany in the early thirteenth century and representatives include the Beguines Gertrud the Great (1256-*c*.1302), Mechthild of Hackeborn (*c*.1241–1299), Mechthild of Magdeburg (*c*.1208–1282), Jutta of Sangershausen (1220–1260), and Elisabeth of Thuringia (1207–1231). We also find considerable evidence for northern Italy as another main centre and here one thinks of Claire of Assisi (*c*.1194–1253), Angela of Foligno (1248–1309), and Margaretha of Cortona (1247–1297).

Scattered over the religious landscape of later medieval Europe were Beguine communities that could be found almost everywhere: in the Low Countries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but also in many other places. Many Beguines were personally *au fait* with family life and in some cases marriage.[11] Beguinages were sisterhoods founded in the Netherlands in the twelfth century. They had no common rule or hierarchy. Unlike their cloistered sisters, the Beguines were free to hold private property, to marry, and they did not take formal vows, save chastity, and they maintained emphasis on manual labour. The Beguines spread throughout western and central Europe during the later Middle Ages and one might characterize their communities as unofficial unenclosed convents. The statutes for a beguinage in Bruges are suggestive and they call our attention to an important theme when we read the statement that after their evening prayers the sisters are encouraged to "go to bed and sleep with God."[12] Sleeping with God draws attention to a factor within medieval Christian mysticism, and in so doing, underscores the historic hermeneutical challenge in dealing with the Song of Songs for the Christian tradition. Ultimately the problem of the physical and the sensual was resolved as metaphor. That solution does not seem to have been embraced by many female religious. Eschewing metaphor, they wrote as though the experience of the divine was one known principally through the flesh and the body with all of its attendant emotions, desires, and expressions. In doing so they recorded the "dangerous memory of women's spirituality."[13]

In order to get at the heart of our subject we turn to an examination of the spiritual life as practiced by many female religious in the medieval period. As an example, one might think of Beatrice of Nazareth (1200–1268), a

Beguine-trained Cistercian nun in what is Belgium today, who wrote a vernacular work called *The Seven Manners of Loving*.[14] The first manner was an active longing that served to drive the soul onward in its spiritual quest. The second manner features the totally disinterested nature of true love. The third manner describes the torture of love in which the soul cannot be satisfied because of the limitations of creation. The fourth manner involves great pleasure and great sorrow. In terms of the former, the idea of the "abyss of love" is developed: a kind of rapture involving the loss of consciousness. It is instructive to note that the word "abyss" comes from the Greek meaning "without ground." The search for the holy takes Beatrice from the firm ground of intellectual *terra firma* to a realm where knowledge is predicated on something other than learning, theological texts, or verifiable proofs. This created some apprehension and one can detect a growing concern among church authorities with the notion of proof. The fifth manner emphasizes the "madness and violence of love." According to Beatrice, "it seems to the soul that the veins are bursting, the blood spilling, the marrow withering, the bones softening, the heart burning, the throat parching, so that the face and all the members perceive the inward heat, and this is the madness of love. At this time, one feels an arrow piercing through the heart all the way to the throat and beyond to the brain, as if one would lose their mind." This state of being seems consistent with the entrance of the pilgrim into the realm of the abyss. The sixth manner enables the pilgrim to overcome all conflict and the mystic becomes the Lord's bride. At this stage, the soul nears oneness with God. The seventh manner finds the soul drawn upwards into the eternity of love, into the deep abyss of God. Put into practice, we find within the communities of medieval spirituality women who knew God in ways that go beyond the scriptorium, the manuscripts, the formal religious instruction, and the acquired theological harvest of Christianity. We look at several of these women in order to explore more directly the dimensions of sensuality, spirituality, and sexuality in the varieties of religious experience as witnessed in the Middle Ages, and in this examination we encounter other dimensions of medieval mentalities and anxieties.[15]

The first example is the German Beguine Mechthild of Magdeburg (*c.*1208–1282). The few facts about Mechthild's life come from her writings and need not detain us here.[16] Her visions of harmony between God and humankind are sensual, erotic, and exuberant.[17] Mechthild writes of taking Christ in her arms and describes how she eats and drinks him and then does whatever she wishes with him, claiming all the while this is impossible for the angels.[18] The imagery of eating and drinking goes well

beyond enthusiastic Eucharistic devotion, which was a female concern in the Middle Ages.[19] Patristic and medieval writers sometimes spoke of the visceral devouring of Christ, but it is clear that Mechthild is referring to something quite different from receiving the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. Her literary context immediately clarifies any initial misapprehension.

When speaking of divine caresses, Mechthild describes God as the pillow of her place of rest, her bed of love, her secret repose, her most ardent desire. She can then write in somewhat astonishing terms that God is "the lust of my divinity."[20] The language is daring, the concepts are at the edge of medieval theology, and the challenge to traditional religious practice seems almost unbearable. But Mechthild's book has an even larger objective. The imagery deepens and the pursuit of spirituality becomes merged with sensuality. Mechthild writes triumphantly that God will be exalted on account of the love that exists between them and God is made holy by her "lustful wonder."[21] Love creates greatness in God. Once again, we encounter the notional imagery of lust. Normally considered negative and generally numbered among the seven deadly sins, here lust is given a positive, indeed salutary, significance. Can lust produce a higher plane of spiritual existence? Mechthild of Magdeburg seems to indicate this is so. The progression of her religious vision of mystical union with God now moves from fairly strong indications of sensuality to unvarnished and overt expressions of sexuality. The greater God's desire increases, the more extravagant the celebration. It seems noteworthy to underscore that Mechthild draws attention to the increased desire of God. In her vision of spiritual progression, God is not merely a subject acted upon but a participant who now assumes an active role. When the coupling of the divine and human begins, the bed becomes increasingly narrow and this means the embraces of the lovers are more intimate and intense. No longer can the two occupy separate space but now must allow those spaces to merge and become as one. This is the creation of a new category of sacred space. The lovers look more passionately on the other while their mouth-to-mouth kisses grow ever more passionate and sweeter.[22] Fully aroused, Mechthild tells her spiritual lover to take off all garments so that not even the slightest bit of fabric is between the two that can separate them, even in the slightest degree.[23] The sacred space of the bed has been created and now the sacred space of two bodies about to become one is contemplated. With both lovers, Mechthild and God, naked and sharing the most intimate of sacred space, the consummation of mutual desire is achieved.

"He also embraces her in the noble comfort of his love. He greets her with his loving eyes when they earnestly gaze at one another with love. He kisses her passionately with his divine mouth. You are happy, more than happy in this most glorious hour. He caresses her, as well he can, on the bed of love. She rises to the heights of bliss and to the most exquisite pain when she becomes truly intimate with him."[24] There is some sense that pain may be, for these women, proof of God's presence.[25]

It is illuminating to draw a parallel between Mechthild and the canonical *Song of Songs*.[26] In the *Song of Songs*, the lover embraces the woman with one hand while the other hand is under her head. The kissing, the caressing, the love making described in the Hebrew Bible texts are recreated in *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*. In this medieval text, Mechthild experiences the bliss of spiritual orgasmic ecstasy and in that moment she calls God her lover and the object of her affection who is now like a stream flowing through her body. She begs God to love her passionately, frequently, and for the longest possible interval. The spiritual quest that takes on sensual dimensions now turns back towards an expression of more traditional spirituality. Mechthild's prose quite vividly reflects the fulfilment of her experience.

> The more passionately you love me,
> The purer I shall become.
> The more often you love, the more beautiful I shall become
> The longer you love me, the holier I shall become…
> 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…
> He surrenders himself to her,
> And she surrenders herself to him.
> What happens to her then—she knows—
> And that is fine…[27]

I prefer to read the *Song of Songs* as a secular love narrative that need not be understood as metaphor or allegory. Christianizing the *Song* tends to destroy its historical and literary context and does incalculable damage to

the text itself. The canonical text is a celebration of sexual love and these motifs were adopted by medieval female mystics who utilized the medium of physical love to convey a particular spiritual truth. Mechthild uses the phrase “to lay under the same bedspread” in writing about the love celebrated between her and God. In medieval parlance this language quite clearly implied sexual intercourse.[28] No legitimate reading of Mechthild can miss this aspect of her spirituality. She is quite forthright in claiming: “I am wounded to death by your fiery beam of love.”[29] This is language and imagery one finds especially in, but not limited to, Teresa of Avila. Such prose strikes the modern mind with forceful impression and the tendency has been to dismiss it as an exception to the rule in medieval spiritual writing. That argument cannot be sustained. To test that hypothesis, we turn from Germany to the Low Countries.

A second example of women who knew God can be found in the somewhat obscure Hadewijch who lived in a Beguinage in the Low Countries around the mid-thirteenth century. She wrote in Dutch and her literary remains consist of letters, poetry, and accounts of her spiritual experiences. There is no contemporary account of her life but it seems her work was read and remained influential for two centuries after her death. In one of her letters she speaks of how God is made known and she reveals that especially when it comes to the handmaidens of God, women should expect to be submerged in the divine essence. That submerging occurs when the two lovers “penetrate each other in a way that neither of the two distinguishes himself from the other.” The two remain as one “mouth in mouth, heart in heart, body in body, and soul in soul” and all the while the divine nature flows through the two and thus it remains forever.[30] Clearly, Hadewijch imagined herself physically embracing her lover.[31] She writes that her heart and soul, together with her senses, have not had a moment’s rest since she discovered this form of intimacy and her entire being now continuously trembles with desire and she longs for the fullness of knowing.

As we learned from Mechthild of Magdeburg, this form of knowledge has nothing to do with formal theology or scholastic learning. Hadewijch says that God comes to her in the form of a man “sweet and beautiful … He came himself to me, and took me entirely in his arms, and pressed me to him; and all my members felt his in full satisfaction, and in accordance with the desire of my heart and my humanity.”[32] The desires of Hadewijch’s humanity are crucial here. This narrative and imagery may be understood as an expression of mystical union or only a verbal expression that suggests the pleasure of orgasm.[33] More passages could be

extracted from the surviving corpus of the work of Hadewijch, but these only make the point more forcefully. Her thought on this subject is easily assembled. Human lovers can experience divine love and at the same time human lovers affect divine love. Applied to the spiritual quest, women like Hadewijch understood their experience of Christ as supernatural but they experienced Christ through bodily perceptions, bodily interactions, and bodily feelings that included holding, giving suck, eating, playing, and not least among these, orgasm.[34] The emphasis on the human female body is of fundamental importance. Apropos to the subject at hand, Hadewijch spoke of Christ penetrating her body until she lost herself in the ecstasy of love.[35] This experience seems to be a common occurrence among medieval female religious. It underscores the nexus of sensuality and spirituality and perhaps suggests the two are more intimately related than hitherto imagined in medieval religious thought with the sole exception of the French theologians Abelard and Heloïse.

The assumption that a sexual experience of God was fairly widespread among female religious in the Middle Ages finds additional confirmation in an examination of the Italian mystic Angela of Foligno (1248–1309). Almost all of the information we possess about her life must be gleaned from her writings. We pass by these details with one exception to concentrate on what further we can learn about the sensual dimensions of the religious experience of the divine.[36] Conventionally illiterate, she dictated her works to her confessor, a certain Brother Arnaldo. We might immediately suspect that her alleged experiences are more the imaginations of Brother Arnaldo than the thoughts of Angela. However, she tells us that what he wrote was faithful to what she had dictated and ostensibly drew this conclusion based on the fact that he read back to her what he wrote down. We might query the reliability or honesty of Brother Arnaldo but there would appear to be little reason to do that inasmuch as her narrative is consistent with the themes we have already described from the works of Mechthild and Hadewijch and there is no independent cause for suspecting the integrity of Brother Arnaldo. Moreover, male scribes often assisted female religious in recording their visions and experiences. In addition to Angela, Hildegard of Bingen, Margery Kempe and Catherine of Siena employed scribal help.

The idea of *Brautmystik* (bridal mysticism) or *Minnemystik* (love mysticism) appears to constitute a thematically dominant trend among Beguines and other female mystics of the later medieval period.[37] Angela claimed that the path to authentic spirituality was travelled by means of physical

ecstasy. Here we find parallels with female religious writers elsewhere. Angela writes that she first kissed her lover's breast, then his mouth, and when she did so she experienced the release of an indescribable fragrance. She pressed her cheek to his and he placed his hand on her other cheek. The joy she experienced was overwhelming and she tells us there are no words to properly describe what she felt.[38] In this joyous experience apparently God told Angela that he loved her more than any other woman in the entire valley.[39] The divine language is evocative and sensual. God speaks to Angela of Foligno calling her "my sweet girl …my loved one, love me for I love you, much, much more than you can love me … my sweet spouse, I love you very much."[40] In the experiences of Angelo of Foligno God becomes a human suitor seeking out the object of his affection with expressions of desire and entreaties that his longings mitigate unrequited love. This is a far cry from the *deus absconditus* of medieval theology and the type of divinity that requires the mediation of sacerdotalism.

As with many other nuns, Beguines, and mystics in the Middle Ages, Angela was deeply involved in the various facets of poor relief. This labour provided her and others with a concrete means of expressing to others the enormous love and grace of God that they had experienced physically and spiritually. Some of these expressions of solidarity with the children of God in the sense of becoming a Christ figure to the world assumed qualities bordering on the peculiar.[41] For example, Angela used to drink the water with which she washed the sores of the lepers and reported that it was "so extremely sweet that it was as if I had received communion." Physically sharing in the sufferings of humanity was seen by Angela as intimately connected to the sacrifice of Jesus and the sharing of his body and blood in the Eucharist. She further related how, on one occasion, she inadvertently ingested a leprous scab.[42]

Angela was not alone in this tactile experience of the holy. Later in the fourteenth century, Catherine of Siena undertook the care of an elderly nun who was afflicted with a cancerous sore on her breast. Being revolted by the stench, Catherine resolved to overcome it and did so by drinking the pus.[43] Even later, we find further examples of extreme devotion coupled with ideas of spirituality. Marie Alacoque cleaned up the vomit of a patient with her tongue and describes the great joy she felt when she filled her mouth with the excrement of a man sick with diarrhoea.[44] Such examples could also be expanded but these represent another dimension of the intersection between medieval spirituality and sensuality. Late in life when others tried to get her to speak more of her revelations and experiences, Angela

of Foligno refused with the terse rejoinder: “my secrets are mine!”[45] Her obituary rather tidily summarized her life: “The venerable spouse of Christ, Angela of Foligno, passed from the shipwreck of this world into the joys of heaven—promised to her a long time before—in the year of our Lord 1309, January 4, during the reign of Pope Clement V. Thanks be to God. Amen.”[46]

A final example, and perhaps the more famous and best known of those offered thus far, is Teresa of Avila (1515–1582). Teresa was a Carmelite but had been educated by Augustinian nuns. At mid-career she sought the life of perfection much in the same fashion as hundreds of medieval men and women before her. Not long after making this momentous decision, Teresa began to experience visions and divine language. Soon, she too had achieved remarkable experiences of ecstasy also latent with images of sexual longing and unmistakable sensuality. Some of her spiritual experiences have been memorialized in art.[47] A single quotation from the writings of Teresa of Avila, in this case *The Book of her Life*, demonstrates her participation in the continuity of medieval sexual spirituality.

> The angel was …very beautiful …His face [was] aflame … I saw in his hands a large golden dart and at the end of the iron tip there appeared to be a little fire. It seemed to me this angel plunged the dart several times into my heart and that it reached deep within me. When he drew it out, I thought he was carrying off with him the deepest part of me; and he left me all on fire with great love of God. The pain was so great that it made me moan, and the sweetness this greatest pain caused me was so superabundant that there is no desire capable of taking it away.[48]

The imagery here is clearly erotic and between Mechthild of Magdeburg in the thirteenth century and Teresa of Avila in the sixteenth century there remains an entire and largely unexplored field in the medieval study of Christianity. That investigation, of course, must come to terms with the variety of expressions of sensuality, spirituality, and sexuality among the female religious in pursuit of the holy and the experience of God. That there is a notional concept of spiritual eroticism cannot be denied. Before coming to spiritual eroticism, it is helpful to remember that women, sex, and the erotic were three ideas closely related in medieval and early modern Europe. That combination cannot be regarded as simply a worldly or secular matter. The writings of medieval female religious indicate the matter was also the province of those on pilgrimage who sought life’s meaning

by striving to participate in those divine realities that Augustine described as things neither to be comprehended nor grasped but realities the faithful could share in while still remaining in the flesh.

In the Heidelberg University Library there is a fourteenth-century book depicting a woman actively resisting the sexual advances of a priest.[49] Elements of medieval theology regarded women as the physical embodiment of temptation. We have previously noted how Augustine represented a wide swath of medieval opinion in his suggestion that nothing saps the strength of men and, by extension, inhibits the spiritual quest more surely than the caresses of a woman. Common opinion held that the religious possessed a form of godliness but lacked the substance thereof, and misbehaviour behind cloister walls was sometimes assumed to be a matter of course. Such popular views also found iconographical representation.[50] Other visual images in ecclesiastical space in later medieval Europe routinely placed women in situations of erotic intrigue. For example, we have already noted a gargoyle outside the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Marais in Villefranche-sur-Saône in France depicting a smiling woman being ridden by a goat, while inside the Bristol Cathedral in England a misericord shows a woman playing openly with an oversized penis. Questions of motivation and audience must be raised.[51] All of this leads us back to the subject of spiritual eroticism and to the question, is there really such a thing? Some of the foregoing certainly suggests it. As we have already seen, there was a predominance of spiritual eroticism among female mystics that has been illustrated by the writings of Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch, Angela of Foligno, Teresa of Avila, and others, but it can likewise be detected in some of the male medieval mystics like Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry, though admittedly to a lesser degree and intensity than their female counterparts.[52] Again, reference might usefully be made to the *Song of Songs*. In the case of Bernard, an entire tradition of iconography developed around the special relationship he had with the Virgin Mary, especially that of Bernard as a recipient of the lactating virgin.[53] There is an element of eroticism in these depictions that are based on a legend in which the Virgin sprinkles milk on Bernard's mouth indicating she is his true mother, and in a variant of the story the Virgin places her breast in Bernard's mouth in order to give to him divine wisdom.[54]

Prior to the twelfth century, the idea of sensual perception was downplayed. Origen claimed in this respect that there was a "sensuality that has nothing sensual about it."[55] This was a common device used to deal with the sensuous and anthropomorphic language of Scripture, especially a

troublesome text such as the Hebrew Bible *Song of Songs*. That said, from around 1100 onwards, mystics like Bernard of Clairvaux began to stress the necessity for full human experience in the path to union with God. This would include human sexuality even though one is hard-pressed to find medieval thinkers other than Peter Abelard and Héloïse who argued for the intrinsic goodness of sexuality.[56] Abelard argued that acts were neither sinful nor righteous but could only be determined according to the intention.[57] However, we find the very direct use of sexual images and language in the descriptions of union between Christ and the human soul in the writings of female religious. Hildegund said, "I was a martyr in fiery love."[58] The rhetoric cannot be dismissed as a medieval anomaly when we find such expressions as late as the seventeenth century. In 1622 Maria Domitilla said "He united His most blessed head to my unworthy one, His most holy face to mine, and His most holy breast to mine, His most holy hands to mine, and His most holy feet to mine, and thus all united to me very tightly … I felt myself totally aflame with the most sweet love …"[59]

At the end of the Middle Ages, Margery Kempe had visitations from Jesus that were explicitly sexual. Ostensibly he ravished her spirit and told her to call him "Jesus, your love, for I am your love." Christ insisted on being intimate with her and lay with her in bed "where she was to love him as a wife does her husband and kiss his mouth, his head, his feet."[60] In this situation, Margery Kempe describes an expression of spirituality in which she cuddled with Christ in bed and saw herself as a woman responding to a male Jesus.[61] It is pertinent to note that in Christian iconography Jesus was always made to look as handsome as possible by the prevailing standards of western European aesthetics. For the female mystic, Jesus had to be, at least subconsciously, an acceptable sex object. There is no avoiding the explicit sexual dimension in this concept of spirituality. This element within medieval mysticism and the experience of spirituality have not been studied enough. The physicality of spiritual experience among the female religious of the Middle Ages is striking.[62] The medieval nuns Lukardis of Oberweimar and Margaret of Faenza kissed their spiritual sisters with open mouths and spoke of feeling sweet delight flooding their members in the exchange. This experience and its commentary were revealed when the two women spoke in spiritual terms and described this sensation as receiving God's grace.[63] Where the modern reader might think of same-sex eroticism or lesbianism, the female medieval mystic conceived of God. There is evidence of intense desire for the Virgin Mary that some have taken

to imply similar themes as we have been discussing.[64] Likewise, it comes as no surprise that for Hildegard of Bingen love is a girl.[65] Hildegard actually dressed her nuns as brides when they went to receive communion.[66] The thirteenth-century Dominican Margaret of Ypres fell in love with a young man at the age of eighteen, later experienced transference with her confessor Siger of Lille, but eventually found psychological fulfilment in Jesus.[67]

Perhaps one of the most intriguing erotic stories about a female religious and Christ has to do with the Beguine Agnes Blannbekin who lived in Vienna in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. She has the distinction of having repeatedly swallowed the foreskin of Christ. The extraordinary tale takes its beginning when Agnes reveals that she was thinking about the foreskin. Suddenly, the foreskin appeared on her tongue. She swallowed it but it kept returning to her tongue and this process occurred about one hundred times. Agnes described the foreskin of Christ in her mouth as tasting as sweet as honey.[68] Agnes claimed that each time the foreskin entered her mouth and she swallowed it, all of her muscles and bodily organs were transformed by immeasurable pleasure. Later she confessed that she could replicate the orgasmic sensation by touching her finger to her tongue. One is tempted to understand such physical and tactile devotion as an act of spiritual fellatio. Would the female religious be scandalized? Medieval women committed to the spiritual quest and the religious life speak regularly of tasting God, of kissing him deeply, of going into his heart or entrails.[69] The sensuality of spirituality is palpable. As for the divine foreskin, when Catherine of Siena married Jesus, his foreskin was used as the wedding ring. The sensual stories of experiencing divine presence are so remarkably sexual in nature and expression that the possibility of masturbation cannot be ruled out. There was anxiety in the Middle Ages with respect to sexual activity in holy places.[70] It is no wonder some of these women and their experiences were censured.

Sensuality, spirituality, and sexuality, with their experiences rooted in forms of eroticism, have clear connections to the older Christian doctrine or idea of self-deification. This teaching was not medieval in origin and can hardly be assumed to have been a creation of the female mystics. The history of the doctrine is rooted in earliest Christianity. In the Patristic age the notion of salvation as deification took root as a principal theological understanding. It can be linked from St. John the Evangelist through many of the fathers up to Athanasius. The teaching is embedded in the Greek and Latin traditions. Athanasius wrote "the Word was made human in order that we might be made divine."[71] That idea was not unique.[72]

For example, Origen claimed the process was a general universal principle. "From him [Christ] commenced a union of the divine nature with human nature, so that through communion with the divine, humanity might be enabled to rise to the state of divinity. This was not in Jesus only, but likewise in everyone who believes and enters into the life taught by Jesus."[73] Early Christian theologians for the most part seem not to have balked or hesitated at the implications. These were stated unambiguously. "You will be a companion of God and co-heir with Christ … for you have become God … you have been deified and born into immortality … Therefore discover God within for God has made you in the divine image … God has fashioned you as God for the glory of God."[74]

Parallels are located with relative ease in the writings of the medieval female religious. Other theologians boldly went further in drawing out the implications of this theme. Some claimed that every saint of God, through participation in Christ, became Christ. Those baptised into Christ were made Christs through the agency of the Holy Spirit and in that relationship were transformed into the image of the Word.[75] Irenaeus stated it baldly when he wrote that Jesus Christ became everything that humans were in order that humans might become everything that Christ is.[76] Therefore, it seems clear that Christ became human for the purpose of deifying humankind.[77] The motif can be found as late as the seventh century where it continued to be vigorously promoted. The Son of God assumed the fullness of the poverty of humanity so that through such intimate identification humans could be made gods through grace. Since God dwells within humankind it is possible for humanity to become gods through divine transformation and imitation.[78] While deification was clearly not thought to exist within the purview or natural ability of humankind, early theologians believed that divine grace could deify humanity and this idea became a distinct theme in Patristic theology.[79] Between the first and the fifth centuries, one of the stable theological motifs evident in Christianity is the doctrine of salvation as deification.[80] What is missing is the apparent bridge between the ideas of early Christian thinkers and medieval mystics. It is ambitious to assert that religious women were reading patristic texts.

Female mystics in the later Middle Ages appear to have adopted this idea without reserve and some were clearly so committed to its veracity they were prepared to defend its validity even at the cost of life. For example, Marguerite of Porete was burned at the stake in 1310 at Paris following a lengthy trial on charges of self-deification.[81] Catherine of Genoa wrote "my me is God." Hadewijch wished "to be God with God." Angela of

Foligno wrote, “the Word was made flesh to make me God” and Angela saw a vision of herself in God. These expressions mirror the more densely articulated theologies of many writers in the Patristic age. Even Mechthild of Magdeburg refers to God as the lust of her own divinity.[82] None of this seems askance of the doctrinal statements advanced by Christian theologians in the late antique period. It is remarkable that prior to the twelfth century, the most widespread visions of the mystics seem to have involved a tour of heaven and hell.[83] From the twelfth century, it appears that considerably more visions focused on an ecstatic transport to the supernatural realm where revelation was communicated. This does not imply that ideas of judgement, heaven, and hell disappeared. But evidence for visions seems to have been added to the repertoire of the religious. The question of fraud must be raised. Did these women manufacture or embellish for ulterior motives? Sybil of Marsal in the Archdiocese of Metz simulated conversations with angels and demons by resorting to ventriloquism.[84] Aided by a priest who may have been her lover, Sybil is a case where doubt can be proven.[85] One may argue that visions seem to have occurred more frequently during the medieval period than today.[86] Questions persisted about these visions and experiences, and as the Middle Ages wore on the battle between suspicion and proof only intensified.

In some ways medieval mysticism appears to have given women the opportunity to forge pockets of resistance and a means of self-expression in the midst of patriarchy, hierarchy, and misogyny.[87] One might further suggest that medieval female mystics used the body as a deliberate strategy and metaphor for communicating and experiencing different dimensions of spirituality. In this way and through their spirituality, medieval religious women asserted and embraced their humanity. From Hildegard of Bingen and Elisabeth of Schönau to Catherine of Siena and Julian of Norwich, women in the later Middle Ages saw women as the symbol of humanity, where humanity was understood as physicality.[88] The philosophy espoused by Hildegard of Bingen was a specific sex identity that emphasized the complete integration of body and soul.[89] All of this together suggests that mystical visions and experiences played a key role for medieval women. They provided a means for the acquisition of power and made available the means for affirmation of themselves as women. Inasmuch as many of these women were revered and considered authentically spiritual, their visions were socially sanctioned and ratified by the Latin Church. This has several positive consequences. It freed women from their socially constructed conventional roles, it affirmed women as genuine religious figures, and it

enabled these women to acquire a form of public language and discourse whereby they could teach and exert both political and religious influence. Their experiences provided a theoretical foundation for social change and development. For example, some of these female religious built convents, founded hospitals, preached, attacked injustice, conferred with popes, and so on.[90] In these ways, one might argue that mysticism became public discourse in the sense that it was neither private nor passive. Of course, eventually some of the forms of female spirituality would be criminalized with devastating consequences.[91] During these centuries the lines between heresy and holiness were increasingly blurred and in some cases, including those involving female mystics, such categories simply evaporate in the heat of analysis.[92] If categories invented by western Christianity, like heresy and sainthood, are to be maintained then it becomes evident that some of these women were in fact, simultaneously, both.[93] Furthermore, it has been shown that the process of prosecuting heretics and canonizing saints has more in common than assumed at first blush.[94] That fact raises urgent questions about medieval taxonomies and invites another line of investigation.

Medieval society tended to put women away. They were married off and therefore found their primary expression in their homes as mothers, wives, and domestic managers. Alternatively, medieval women were put in convents where they may have received some form of education, were admitted into the religious life, took vows, and essentially disappeared from public view. Their identities were frequently subsumed in the face of Latin Christendom and they spent their lives in the service of God and the Christian religion. Other women were put in brothels, forcibly or voluntarily, where they spent the better years of their lives engaged in an occupation that was often little better than slavery.[95] Their essential identities were lost behind the categories of deviant, outcast, criminal, and whore. In each of these social perspectives, medieval thought generally treated women as bodies to be possessed and used. Whether domestic partners, nuns, or prostitutes, women were social utilities, and whether they were brides of Christ or the brides of village men, or hired by the hour, their bodies were indispensable. But these bodies were also dangerous, both to men as well as to society. Thus they had to be controlled.[96] As the writings of Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch, Angela of Foligno, Teresa of Avila, and many others reveal, medieval female mystics did not deny the body, generally, but rather we find striking evidence to suggest they embraced the body, their bodies, as a means for experiencing God.

The erotic devotion by mystics to their heavenly bridegroom or lover that we have examined briefly sometimes resulted in actual wedding ceremonies to emphasize the nature of their spiritual relations, but in certain other instances gave rise to overt sexual behaviour involving other people. Some of these affairs were cause for considerable scandal resulting in prosecution, subjugation, and incarceration. The case of the post-medieval Italian abbess Benedetta Carlini is one example.[97] Whether or not it was ever consummated, the mid-twelfth-century anchoress and prioress near St. Albans, Christina of Markyate, did have to fight the fire of lust that burst into flames over an unnamed priest. These dangerous flames were only extinguished after Christina had a vision and erotic experience with Christ.[98] Her erotic encounter with Jesus proved sufficient to sustain her for the remainder of her life. Of course it might be argued that sexuality is socially constructed and reflects its own context.[99] However all of this is understood, it seems ironic that some of the female medieval mystics became public figures of considerable influence and renown. Of course the obvious question remains: were medieval religious women typical women? The answer must be yes and no, but that consideration is another subject well worth exploring. The experiences of many female religious should inform additional inquiries into the nature of medieval mentalities.[100]

The experience of the medieval female mystic is consistently about desire.[101] The connection between devotion to Christ, the passion of the crucifixion, Eucharistic participation, and human sexuality yielded a distinctively female theology of Christian experience wherein redemption effected by the cross might be obtained generally by means of the body and specifically through orgasm. In this sense, the medieval female mystic represented the doctrine that women were saved in both a religious as well as a physical sense through the incarnation that was an event that occurred over and over in the life of the one on spiritual pilgrimage.[102] The violence of the crucifixion becomes erotic as the mystic is penetrated by her divine lover and the redemption of the sinner is ecstatically experienced repeatedly achieving a total integration of body and soul, the physical and the spiritual. Those who were unable to participate in the mysteries were failed mystics who became heretics.[103] Aspiring mystics who found themselves outside the safe boundary of non-challenging, non-threatening individualism often wound up there when they openly refused church authority and publicly persisted in their own views to the apparent disparagement of official doctrine.

The last word goes to Margaret Ebner, a Dominican nun of the fourteenth century, who brings our subject round full circle. "As I went into choir a sweet fragrance surrounded me and penetrated through to my heart and into all my limbs and the name *Jesus Christus* was given to me so powerfully that I could pay attention to nothing else. And it seemed to me that I was really in His presence. I experienced such great grace that I could not pull myself away."[104] This was the experience of God in the here and now; the mystical desire of the ages pursued relentlessly by men and women throughout history but one that rarely equalled the ardour or intensity of the medieval female mystic.

Notes

1. Nikos Kazantzakis, *Report to Greco*, trans. P.A. Bien (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), pp. 225–33.
2. *Exposition of the Psalms*, in *Corpus Christianorum Latina*, vol. 40, p. 2130.
3. *De vera Religione*, in *Corpus Christianorum Latina*, vol. 32, p. 234.
4. *The Spiritual Canticle*, 11.12, 12.7, 22.3, 38.3 et al. in Kieran Kavanaugh, ed., *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross* (Washington: ICS Publications, 1964), pp. 452–453, 455, 497 and 553–554.
5. Dennys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) and Liz Herbert McAvoy, ed., *A Companion to Julian of Norwich* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008) are both useful.
6. Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000–1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).
7. See Helen Meredith Garth, *Saint Mary Magdalene in Mediaeval Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1950), Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1993) and Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
8. Cristina Mazzoni, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender in European Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1996).
9. Among several important studies careful attention should be given to the many volumes in the *Classics of Western Spirituality* series and to the works of Bernard McGinn, *Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the Twelfth Century* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism, 1200–1350* (New York:

Crossroad, 1998) and *The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany* (New York: Crossroad, 2005).

10. There are exceptions. For example, Roger Corless, "The Androgynous Mysticism of Julian of Norwich" *Magistra: A Journal of Women's Spirituality in History* 1 (No. 1, 1995), pp. 55–71.
11. John Giles Milhaven, *Hadewijch and her Sisters: Other Ways of Loving and Knowing* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 117.
12. Ulrike Wiethaus, ed., *Maps of Flesh and Light: The Religious Experiences of Medieval Women Mystics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), p. 125.
13. Grace M. Janzten, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 347.
14. Roger De Ganck, trans., *The Life of Beatrice of Nazareth, 1200–1268* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991), pp. 289–345.
15. A somewhat dated historiographical survey, though without focus on female mystics, is Monica H. Green, "Female Sexuality in the Medieval West" *Trends in History* 4 (No. 4, 1990), pp. 127–58.
16. Mechthild von Magdeburg, *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*, edited and translated by Gisela Vollmann-Profe (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2003). There is an English translation in the *Classics of Western Spirituality* series *The Flowing Light of the Godhead By Mechthild of Magdeburg*, trans., Frank Tobin (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998). References are to the Tobin edition. For some of the larger questions see Sara S. Poor, *Mechthild of Magdeburg and her Book: Gender and the Meaning of Textual Authority* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
17. Wiethaus, ed., *Maps of Flesh and Light*, p. 18.
18. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk. 2, chap. 22, p. 87.
19. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), pp. 119–50.
20. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk.1, chap. 19, p. 48.
21. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk. 1, chap. 36, p. 56.
22. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk. 1, chap. 22, p. 50.
23. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk. 1, chap. 44, p. 62.
24. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk. 2, chap. 23, pp. 88–9.
25. Maureen Flynn, "The Spiritual Uses of Pain in Spanish Mysticism" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64 (No. 2, 1996), pp. 257–78.
26. A superior version of the text is Ariel and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and a short but incisive study is Helmut Gollwitzer, *Song of Love: A Biblical Understanding of Sex*, trans., Keith Crim (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

27. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk. 1, chaps. 23 and 44, pp. 52, 59, 62.
28. Wiethaus, “Suffering, Love, and Transformation in Mechthild of Magdeburg” *Listening* 22 (1987), p. 143.
29. Wiethaus, “Suffering, Love, and Transformation in Mechthild of Magdeburg,” pp. 143–4 and Emily Hunter McGowin, “Eroticism and Pain in Mechthild of Magdeburg’s *The Flowing Light*” *New Blackfriars* 92 (2011), pp. 607–22.
30. Milhaven, *Hadewijch and her Sisters*, p. 5.
31. Milhaven, *Hadewijch and her Sisters*, p. 15.
32. Milhaven, *Hadewijch and her Sisters*, p. 16.
33. Caroline Walker Bynum, Steven Harrell and Paula Richman, eds., *Gender and Religion: On the Complexity of Symbols* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), p. 271.
34. Milhaven, *Hadewijch and her Sisters*, p. 87.
35. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, p. 191.
36. There is adequate comment on her life in Cristina Mazzoni, ed., *Angela of Foligno’s Memorial*, trans., John Cirignano (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999) and in the introduction to Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, trans., Paul Lachance (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1993).
37. Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, pp. 142–4.
38. Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, p. 182.
39. Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, p. 64.
40. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans., H.M. Parshley (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), p. 708.
41. Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust*, pp. 158–63 incorporates some of the medieval mystics in his discussion.
42. Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, p. 163.
43. There is an artistic representation of it by M. Fiorini as an illustration of an episode detailed in Francesco Vanni, *Legenda Maior* (1597), Paris, Bibliothèque nationale.
44. Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 709.
45. Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, p. 78.
46. Angela of Foligno, *Complete Works*, p. 317.
47. *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*, by Gian Lorenzo Bernini in the Cornaro Chapel in the Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, 1647–52.
48. Teresa of Avila, *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, 2 vols., trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1976–1980), vol. 1, pp. 193–4.
49. The book is of German heraldry and was made in Zurich.

50. For example, the fifteenth-century, Hussite-inspired, Jena Codex, Prague, National Museum Library MS IV B 24, fol. 73r shows nuns and monks cavorting in a convent garden.
51. Martha Easton, "'Was it good for you, Too?' Medieval Erotic Art and its Audiences" *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art* 1 (September 2008), pp. 1–30.
52. On Bernard see Andriaan H. Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) and for William, Jean Déchanet, *William of St. Thierry: The Man and his Work* (Spencer, MA: Cistercian Publications, 1972) as introductions.
53. James France, *Medieval Images of Bernard of Clairvaux* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications 2007). Louis Réau has traced the lactating motif to the fourteenth century though it can also be found as late as the eighteenth century.
54. There are passages in the writings of Bernard which may have been the source of this tradition. See Léon Dewez and Albert van Iterson, "La lactation de Saint Bernard: Légende et Iconographie" *Cîteaux in die Nederlanden* 7 (1956), pp. 165–89. On the overall theme, France, *Medieval Images of Bernard of Clairvaux*, pp. 205–38.
55. *Contra Celsum*, 1.48 in PG, vol. 11, col. 750.
56. For the views of Abelard, which in his time were extraordinary, his treatise on ethics is illuminating. David E. Luscombe, trans., *Peter Abelard's Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). I am aware of only two others in later medieval Europe who openly opined a theological defence of marital sex for pleasure. For references see Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 185–6.
57. *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, p. 27. For his influence on twelfth-century thinking see Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, 2nd edition (Gembloux: Duculot, 1954), vol. 4, pp. 310–21.
58. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk. 2, chap. 20, p. 84.
59. Noted in Wiethaus, ed., *Maps of Flesh and Light*, p. 64. See also E. Ann Matter, "Discourses of Desire: Sexuality and Christian's Women's Visionary Narratives" *Journal of Homosexuality* 18 (Nos. 3–4, 1989–90), pp. 123–9.
60. See the discussion in Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler, eds., *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 301.
61. Bynum, Harrell and Richman, eds., *Gender and Religion*, p. 271.
62. Wolfgang Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*, trans., Bernard Standring (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 34–55, explores the sexual language of the medieval mystical experience.
63. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 86.

64. Bruce Wood Holsinger, "The Flesh of the Voice: Embodiment and the Homoerotics of Devotion in the Music of Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 19 (No. 1, 1993), pp. 92–125 while others have pondered Hildegard's interest in sexuality. Michela Pereira, "Maternità e sessualità femminile in Ildegarda di Bingen: Proposte di lettura" *Quaderni storici* 44 (1980), pp. 564–79. See also Jacqueline Murray, "Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages" in Vern Bullough and James A. Brundage, eds., *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 191–222.
65. Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua (†203) to Marguerite Porete (†1310)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 170.
66. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 134.
67. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 124–5.
68. See Ulrike Wiethaus, ed. and trans., *Agnes Blannbekin, Viennese Beguine: Life and Revelations* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), p. 35. When the text of her *Revelations* first appeared in print in 1731 it was denounced as blasphemous. A complete edition of the work of Agnes appears in Peter Dinzelbacher and Renate Vogeler, eds., *Leben und Offenbarungen der Wiener Beguin Agnes Blannbekin* (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1994).
69. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 190.
70. Dyan Elliott, "Sex in Holy Places: An Exploration of a Medieval Anxiety" *Journal of Women's History* 6 (No. 3, 1994), pp. 6–34.
71. *De incarnatione verbi dei*, 54.3, in PG 25, col. 191.
72. Maximus, in his work "Ascetic Book", in PG 90, col. 911 considers deification as constituting the chief objective of the incarnation.
73. *Contra Celsum*, 3.28, in PG, vol. 11, cols. 576–7.
74. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 10.34. 3–5. The treatise dates from *c.* 230. I quote from the critical edition of the Greek text. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, ed., Miroslav Marcovich (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), pp. 416–17.
75. Methodius, Symposium, or *Convivium decem virginum*, 8, in PG 18, col. 150.
76. "Jesus Christum dominum nostrum: qui propter immensam suam dilectionem factus est quod sumus nos, uti nos perficeret esse quod est ipse." *Adversus haereses*, 5, preface, in PG 5, col. 1014.
77. See for example Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos*, 1.11.38-9, in PG 26, cols. 34–5.
78. Sophronius (7th century monk) in his Christmas sermon. Quoted in Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans., Neil Buchanan, 7 vols (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1961), vol. 3, pp. 173–4.
79. Maximus, "Questions to Thalassius on the Scriptures," 22 in PG 90, col. 322.

80. Theodoret of Cyrrhus was one who held reservations about the idea of salvation as deification especially in his book *Eranistes*. Theodoret, *Eranistes: Critical Text and Prolegomena*, ed., Gerard H. Ettlinger (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), book 3. For a survey of the idea in the late antique Christian period see Thomas A. Fudge, "Concepts of Salvation in the Western Church to the Sixteenth Century" *Communio Viatorum* 45 (2003), pp. 226–35.
81. Sean L. Field, *The Beguine, the Angel, and the Inquisitor: The Trials of Marguerite Porete and Guiard of Cressonessart* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012).
82. Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, bk.1, chap. 19, p. 48.
83. Eileen Gardiner, ed., *Visions of Heaven and Hell Before Dante* (New York: Italica Press, 1989) and her *Medieval Visions of Heaven and Hell: A Sourcebook* (New York: Garland, 1993), Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) and D.D.R. Owen, *The Vision of Hell: Infernal Journeys in Medieval French Literature* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1970).
84. Richer, *Gesta senoniensis ecclesiae* in Georg Waitz, ed., *Monumenta germaniae historiae Scriptores* (Hannover: Hannische Buchhandlung, 1880), vol. 25, pp. 309–10.
85. Dyan Elliott, "Women and Confession: From Empowerment to Pathology" in Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds., *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), pp. 38–40.
86. Peter Dinzelbacher, ed., *Mittelalterliche Visionsliteratur: Eine Anthologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989), pp. 5–6.
87. Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of the Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen Seventy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) argues this thesis.
88. Bynum, Harrell and Richman, eds., *Gender and Religion*, p. 273.
89. Prudence Allen, "Hildegard of Bingen's Philosophy of Sex Identity" *Thought* 64 (No. 254, 1989), p. 240.
90. Wiethaus, ed., *Maps of Flesh and Light*, pp. 32–3.
91. Dyan Elliott, *Proving Women: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) is an important examination of this gradual process.
92. For the relationship between spirituality and heresy see Huguette Taviani, "Naissance d'une hérésie en Italy du Nord au XIe siècle" *Annales ESC* 29 (No. 5, 1974), pp. 1224–52.
93. Peter Dinzelbacher, *Heilige oder Hexen? Schicksale auffällinger Frauen* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 2001) and Richard Kieckhefer, "The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft, and Magic in Late Medieval Europe"

Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies 24 (1994), pp. 335–85 are two important studies which draw attention to this.

94. Elliott, *Proving Women: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 119–79.
95. See Jacques Rossiard, *Medieval Prostitution*, trans., Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), and Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
96. Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 205.
97. Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) is an account based on archival materials. For a critique and response by Brown see Rudolph M. Bell, "Renaissance Sexuality and the Florentine Archives: An Exchange" *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 (No. 3, 1987), pp. 485–511.
98. Ruth Mazo Karras, "Friendship and Love in the Lives of Two Twelfth-Century English Saints" *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988), pp. 314–16. See also Monica Furlong, ed., *The Life of Christina Markyate* (Berkhamsted: Arthur James, 1997).
99. Green, "Female Sexuality in the Medieval West", p. 130, which takes its point of departure from the work of Michel Foucault.
100. Jerome Kroll and Bernard Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind: The Psychology of Medieval Mystics and Ascetics* (London: Routledge, 2005).
101. Nancy F. Partner, "Did Mystics have Sex?", in Murray and Eisenbichler, eds., *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, p. 307.
102. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, p. 150.
103. Janzten, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*, p. 244.
104. Leonard P. Hindsley, ed., *Margaret Ebner: Major Works* (New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), p. 93.

CHAPTER 7

Demonizing Dissenters: Patterns of Propaganda and Persecution

This chapter and Chap. 8 represent a departure from the previous chapters in the sense that instead of examining a theme or topic across a wide chronological span or interdisciplinary approach, the focus is narrowly and specifically focused on the complications of the Hussite world of the fifteenth century. However, the subject matter of demonizing dissenters and subjecting them to censure, humiliation, social ostracism, and, in some cases, death is fundamental to understanding some of the anxieties found in medieval religion and in certain mentalities. It also raises questions about the persecuting society.[1]

Non-conformity seems to characterize the *other* Middle Ages. Dissent is rarely permitted amongst dissenters. There was plenty of dissent in medieval Europe but this was generally frowned on and not infrequently brutally suppressed. Among the chronicles of the Hussite uprising in Bohemia, we find the text of a letter written by an imprisoned heretic. He had been immured on the orders of other heretics. His name was Martin Húska. This letter reveals much about his thinking, his aims, and his frustrations.[2] His ruminations on morality and the essence of true Christian faith, in the hands of his enemies, spawned a heresy too terrible to be tolerated in any form and too baleful in implication to be ignored.

What follows is an analysis of a case study in persecution. There are three main players in the tale: the Roman church of the medieval Latin west, the emerging Hussite church, and a radical Hussite breakaway church. The first is largely irrelevant inasmuch as the tale is concerned

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with how the more mainline Hussites went after one of their own radical groups and why they were so determined to eliminate these dissenters. Theology and religious practices appear to be at issue. All Hussites were basically united around the "four articles of Prague" that affirmed free preaching, the Eucharist in both bread and wine, divesting the church of superfluous wealth, and the punishment of serious sins. The latter point was taken to extremes by some Hussites who exhibited a severe Puritanical streak. While theological diversity was evident, even toleration had limits. The Táborites found Adamite theology and practice insufferable. Violence and bloodshed followed.

Prior to writing his letter in 1421, Martin Húska had run afoul of the power structures in fifteenth-century Bohemia. According to contemporary accounts, within the upheavals of the early fifteenth century, a new heresy emerged that defamed and vilified all things good and proper, twisted the meaning of Scripture, and taught that the Kingdom of God was present in medieval Bohemia. Their doctrines were characterised as "heretical, misleading and scandalous."[3] In an age of heresy hunting, the characterisation was ominous. Martin, the disseminator of this "horrible heresy," was captured and imprisoned in a tower before being released after the Táborites actively interceded for him. Aware of the massive animosity mounting against him, Martin seems to have made plans to promptly leave Bohemia. He set out for Moravia accompanied by the priest Prokop the One Eyed, "a member of the same gang." When they arrived in Chrudim, they were arrested and remanded to the pillory. One official interrogating Martin became so upset with his offensive replies and being unable to "withstand such heresy against God struck him with his fist." Priest Ambrož from Hradec Králové intervened, and thereby, prevented the premature immolation of Martin Húska. The Chrudim authorities released Martin and Prokop into the custody of Ambrož who transported the heretical pair to Hradec Králové by means of a wagon. For two weeks, the troubling and contumacious heretical suspects were held in prison and despite concentrated efforts to convert them, the priests in east Bohemia eventually concluded that neither Martin nor Prokop would recant and abjure their heresies and be reconciled to the true faith. Reaching the conclusion that further efforts were useless, Priest Ambrož sent the two men to Roudnice where they were handed over to Konrad of Vechta, Archbishop of Prague, on the tendentious suspicion of being "infected with heresy." Here the two were ordered interrogated in accordance with prevailing custom, and thereafter, severely punished. Once they arrived

in Roudnice, they were locked up in a gloomy jail. The authorities went to some lengths to prevent common people from seeing them since it was thought their heretical ideas might cause serious injury to the faithful. Eight weeks passed. A request was made that the heretics be taken to Prague and publicly burned. However, the city councillors in the capital feared outrage from Martin's numerous sympathizers. Instead, the imprisoned heretics were handed over to an executioner who subjected them to severe torture ("by burning out their waists cruelly up to their lungs"). Confessions were exacted by this means. Soon Martin and Prokop revealed the identities of their companions and followers. However, they refused to recant their beliefs.[4]

Martin Húska, the heretic, slipped through the hands of his enemies in south Bohemia, Chrudim, Hradec Králové, and avoided being sent to Prague. His Waterloo came at Roudnice. He was never released. Despite his expressions of goodwill, his desire to see the church renewed and reformed, and his commitment to truth above all else, as outlined in his letter from prison, his eventual demise was predictable. On Thursday, 21 August, Martin and One-Eyed Prokop were taken from their cells and led to the pyre in the presence of a large crowd of people. At the place of death, they were urged to ask the people to offer prayers for them. Martin is reported to have declined the invitation on the grounds that neither he nor Prokop required such intercessions. Following this, the two heretics uttered such blasphemies that many were shocked and scandalized. The two were shut in a barrel and burned alive.[5]

Notoriously described as a seducer of people into monstrous heresy, Martin Húska became the alleged progenitor of heretical practices that shocked even the most hardened and radical of the Táborite heretics.[6] The teachings he disseminated were considered absolutely erroneous and his followers were accused of practicing overt immorality. The seeds of such behaviour ostensibly are located in the ideas expressed by Martin Húska. Commenting on what he regarded as the three principle errors of Christian morality, he underscored specific observations. The first mistake was assuming that perfection consisted in virtue constituted mainly in the unending Christian search for pain and suffering following in the example of Christ who taught that those who mourned, who were hungry, and thirsty or persecuted were blessed. Those carrying the cross of self-denial, having renounced one's self and one's possessions in favour of the poor and dispossessed, are unnecessarily praised according to Martin. Four years after his execution, one of the Hussites claimed that Martin

said if Christians were meant to suffer then he had no desire to remain a Christian.[7] The second error consisted in the excessive condemnation of vice and crimes worthy of eternal punishment, including those thoughts and desires that Martin declared salutary and not to be despised. The affections of the flesh that are the most natural, appropriate, and necessary for the survival of humanity are too often condemned absolutely, dismissed as irredeemable vice, and as crimes worthy of eternal punishment. Martin claimed that such judgement on men and women not legally joined together by the bonds of marriage according to prevailing laws and edicts was misdirected. Christian morality built on the condemnation of certain behaviour meriting eternal punishment in hell is a form of arrogance. The third error of such morality consists in the belief and practice that the observance of certain rules and precepts tends to create injustice and self-righteousness. Moreover, to take literally the words of Christ, who suggested that the persecuted ought to bear with such afflictions, is tantamount to allowing the wicked to do whatever they please. Such posture only encourages the subversion of law and order. According to Martin Húska, none of these things actually advanced true morality. There would be consequences to such speculations.

During the early years of the Hussite uprising, there were no particular allegations of immorality laid against one party or another by the heretics. Certainly, for centuries the church had used human sexuality and its alleged misuses as a means of denunciation and control.[8] Heresy hunters constructed an image of the dissenter as a sexual miscreant, a pervert, who possessed the terrifying ability to infect others.[9] The persecutors of heretics sought and located definite links with the Devil and sexual perversion. Defenders of God, social order, and revealed truth were not dilatory in demonizing heretics by engaging in propaganda campaigns.[10] These were tactics employed by the medieval church aimed at marginalizing and eventually eliminating dissent. Somewhere along the line, these ideas evolved into an organized, systematic program utilized by communities of heretics to deal with alternative and competing communities of heretics. We must wonder why people in fifteenth-century Bohemia started believing this. This is a crucial question. Once these notions were aired, codified, believed, accepted, and took hold of the popular and political imagination, then and only then could violent repression occur with absolute impunity. We possess extraordinary accounts, purporting to describe the beliefs and practices of certain heretics in Bohemia, ostensibly followers of Martin Húska. With the production of actual documents, mere tales and rumours

were transformed into established truths and accepted as irrefutable facts. Of course, we must wonder where the enemies of these detestable men and women got their information and we must also ponder whether or not any of it could possibly have been true. Stories of gross sexual misconduct have been alleged against Christians since earliest times.[11] But why apply such suspicions to other Christians in Hussite Bohemia? Our knowledge about the Adamites reveals patterns of thought and indications of social anxiety.

The Sources

Before attempting to make sense of the patterns of persecution and propaganda that led to the demonizing and destruction of the alleged followers of Martin Húska in the forests and rural reaches of southern Bohemia, let us look carefully at the sources purporting to outline the awful deeds of the heretics. There are six major sources. The first consists of several reports in the Hussite chronicle by Vavřinec of Březová. The second comes from the pen of the radical Hussite ideologue, Petr Chelčický. The third is an anti-Táborite polemic by the conservative Hussite Jan Příbram. The fourth is an anonymous verse composition. The fifth appears in an anonymous Czech chronicle. The sixth is a chapter in the famous history of Bohemia written by Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini. The texts reveal important and curious patterns that, taken together, present a startling profile of wickedness and inherent threat to the peace and well-being of the faith.

The first report is rather fulsome.[12] We learn that 400 Táborites were converted to such errors by Martin Húska. The main issue appears to be errors concerning the Eucharist. Moreover, the dissenters are rabid iconoclasts who practice offensive acts of desecration. Rules were established to prevent the further spread of these ideas, but to no avail. We are told those belonging to the dissenting faction that broke with the Hussite heretics were called Pikarts. We learn that the community of these Pikarts numbered more than 200. We are told they were nudists and practiced sexual libertinism while considering it holy. Our chronicler declines to say more on the grounds that recording the acts of these people for posterity would be quite improper. The Hussite military commander in charge of resisting the crusading armies sent to Bohemia to subdue the Hussites, Jan Žižka, burned fifty of the Pikarts including their presumptive leader, the priest Petr Káníš. Another twenty-five were dispatched by the Táborites. The narrative includes allusions to the many grievous heresies being promulgated by the dissenters.

We also learn that it was insufficient to have simply expelled these Pikarts from the community of faith. They are derogatorily called a gang, thus implying lawlessness. We might characterize them as religious outlaws of the hills in south Bohemia. We are told quite directly that Eucharistic irregularity featured in their religious practices. We are provided with a fairly detailed narrative of the suppression of the leadership of this sect that included the execution of Martin Húska. Elsewhere, the Pikarts were being hunted down like animals and a form of vigilante justice imposed. Building on earlier details, it is of interest to learn that among the leaders of this suppression was perhaps the most famous man in the Hussite Revolution, the military commander, Jan Žižka.[13]

The first report states without reservation that people in the Kingdom of Bohemia had been seduced by Martin Húska. We learn also that from a theological perspective the Eucharist seems to have been a point of contention. This is unsurprising. The history of religious practice in late medieval Bohemia is a sustained chronicle of innovation and controversy surrounding the sacrament of the altar.[14] In the 1370s Czech reformers like Jan Milíč of Kroměříž began to emphasize the virtues of frequent communion, thereby enlarging standard practice that over the two preceding centuries had witnessed a gradual decrease in Eucharistic observance by the laity until it was only necessary to take communion once a year. There is circumstantial evidence suggesting Milíč may have initiated a daily observance.[15] Of course, there was opposition to such radical practice. By 1414 breakaway Hussite heretics began to practice communion *sub utraque specie* by allowing the laity to receive the chalice, a practice that had also fallen into gradual disuse in the Latin Church. The main proponent of this innovation was the priest, Jakoubek Stříbro.[16]

The administration of the lay chalice became such a flashpoint of controversy that the Council of Constance formally banned it in 1415 and decreed that all who continued the outlawed practice were to be regarded as heretics. Not long thereafter, the Hussites began including all of the baptized in the Eucharist, including children and small babies.[17] It is quite possible that among the originators of this liturgical innovation was Václav Koranda, a priest from Plzeň, an important colleague of the now-martyred Martin Húska. The practice of including children and small babies in the celebration of the Eucharist was frowned on by some sectors of the Hussite movement and it likewise garnered condemnation from the official church. This short resume indicates that Eucharistic practice functioned at the centre of reformed religion in Bohemia, and indeed, it is

entirely sound to characterize it as the core of the Hussite faith. Given the tensions and debates over the Eucharist in Hussite Bohemia, it comes as no surprise to find that the followers of Martin Húska were scrutinized on this point. In sum, it appears that the Pikarts denied the real presence of Christ in the sacrament. For this, they were roundly condemned.[18]

Once again we find this group of dissenters referred to as Pikarts.[19] We also learn they had been expelled from the Táborite community, which is somewhat intriguing inasmuch as other Hussites considered the Táborites left-wing radicals willing to go to any extreme in their practice of religion. We find the expelled community living on an island. More troubling, we encounter accusations that these Pikarts were causing anxiety and unrest. We learn of a certain Mikuláš called Moses who appears to have exercised leadership and authority among the heretics thrust out of the larger heretical community. The plot thickens when our chronicler alleges that these Pikarts functioned under demonic inspiration. Previously we encountered Jan Žižka at the forefront of Pikart suppression. Now we are told he undertook this task on account of his commitment to the law of God. In other words, Žižka was motivated by a religious principle to liquidate the Pikarts.[20] The island dwellers are presented as antagonistic to the Hussite cause. In specific terms, this group of people practice sexual immorality. We are told they were committed to a form of religion that required complete nudity in all kinds of weather and that this included orgiastic dances and subsequent criminal activity. Žižka's efforts to counter the Pikart threat seem to have succeeded. He spared the life of one Pikart who was permitted to provide details of the activities of the sect. Upon this intelligence, Žižka filed a report with the authorities in Prague.

In the second report, Petr Chelčický makes the stunning causal connection between Eucharistic error and sexual immorality. [21] In these brief extracts he refers to sexual misbehaviour nine times. Six times he uses the term fornication, and in addition, he mentions "carnal and profligate lives," "lascivious incitements," and the fact that these people are prone to "fondling each other." All of this causes them to live as animals, copulating in the forests and in secret places. In addition to sexual misconduct, they are engaged in homicide and blasphemy. In addressing the Táborite bishop, Chelčický attributes radical Hussite doctrine as taught among the Táborites as the seedbed from which the Adamite practices sprang. The slippery slope of Táborite religion leads to riotous living, alcoholism, and sexual orgies. Chelčický insists that Eucharistic orthodoxy could have prevented the scandal.

The third report, which can be found within one of the most direct and sustained attacks on Táborite religion, was composed by Jan Příbram in his tract titled *Život kněží táborských* (The Lives of the Priests of Tábor) written in 1429.[22] Two years earlier, Příbram identified himself as a heresy hunter and, apropos to our topic, the "meticulous persecutor of all Wyclifite and Pikart heresies."[23] A great enemy of all things Táborite, Příbram used his "Lives of the Priests of Tábor" as an occasion to press the connection between Martin Húska and the priests at Tábor and to mount an argument for equating the Pikarts with the Táborites. While historically inaccurate, Příbram's effort was a successful piece of propaganda.[24] Most of the polemic is content to focus on the problem of Eucharistic irregularity among the followers of Húska, something already suggested in the second report by Petr Chelčický. The "Lives of the Priests of Tábor" presents an outline of Húska's thinking on the sacrament.[25] We learn from Příbram that Martin wrote at least two tracts on the Eucharist and sent these to Písek and elsewhere. Příbram identifies no fewer than six errors in the first tract alone. He reports that Martin claimed the Eucharist more highly esteemed (wrongly) in Bohemia than anywhere else and condemned the veneration of the sacrament.[26] Příbram refers to Martin as a heretic at least six times in his narrative.[27] There were two immediate consequences. First, his followers persisted in disseminating the errors of their master. Příbram tells of a priest named Pšenička who publicly taught the Pikart Eucharistic doctrine and though warned to cease and desist, refused to change his views.[28] This was in addition to a number of others who persisted in heresy and blasphemy. We learn further that the radical priest Václav Koranda carried copies of Martin's tracts around in his bag as though they were relics.[29] Second, Příbram notes that the Táborites glorified Martin as a "martyr of God."[30] It is somewhat peculiar that Příbram made no mention of any sexual misconduct or nocturnal orgies. Unlike the second report, he seems content to report on matters of theology and to assign blame for doctrinal misdeeds to Martin Húska.

The verse composition may have been written or recorded by Prokop the Notary (*c.*1390–1483).[31] As in reports two and three, we encounter allegations of Eucharistic irregularities as well as expressed fears concerning threats of violence stemming from Pikart religious practices. In our first report, we learned the number of these dissenters was about 200. In this composition we find the larger figure of more than 300. Nudist practices are underscored with the accompanying comment that these Pikarts had been deceived by the devil. In addition to living on an island, we now

find them on more than one island and they are also to be discovered dwelling in the forests. Criminal activities alluded to in previous sources are now fleshed out explicitly as homicide and arson. Another allusion to orgiastic dancing is recorded. The repression carried out by their enemies is characterised as successful and we are told that Pikarts in Bohemia have been wiped out.

The fifth report clearly relies heavily on the chronicle accounts found in Vavřinec of Březová. Differences are minute and the text is almost entirely redundant.[32] Here the group of people under discussion are presented as representing a strange and previously unknown religious practice. They reside on an island having been put out of Tábor. Once again, we encounter the nomenclature Pikart. The theme of Eucharistic irregularity is again enumerated and we read once more of murder committed by the nefarious heretics. If earlier we read about a leader named Moses, now we are presented with Rohan and Maria. Perhaps chillingly for the religious and secular authorities in Prague, Tábor, and elsewhere in southern Bohemia is the report that the Pikart heretics were responsible for the liquidation of the town of Prčice wherein they killed every inhabitant, men, women, and children, and then burned the town down. In several other locations, we read of similar atrocities. Demonic inspiration is underscored but the Pikarts are now presented as promoting a lifestyle and policy of murdering by night and fornicating by day. Forests and islands seem to be their principle dwelling places and in these areas the heretics are said to be naked. Their immoral conduct proceeds thence in terms of initiation into the community by sex, nude dancing persists, and we now read of sodomy.[33]

The final report tells us that these Pikarts came to the Czech lands from Belgium.[34] This is more specific but consistent with a comment found elsewhere. “The beginning and root of this confounded heresy came to the Czech kingdom from some Pikarts, who came to Prague in the year of our Lord 1418. They numbered about forty men with wives and children, saying that they had been expelled by their prelates on account of the law of God, and that they had heard that there was much freedom in the Czech kingdom in terms of reading the holy scriptures. Therefore, they said, they came to the Czech kingdom.”[35] The sixth report calls the heretics Adamites (as well as Pikarts) and we learn that their leader was named Adam, and from this, the nomenclature has been derived. Adam ostensibly claimed to be the son of God. We find the heretics residing once more on an island and the familiar allegation of nudity is repeated. In this account, linkages are drawn between the atrocities perpetrated by the renegade heretics and

their brutal repression at the hands of Jan Žižka and his men. Our source claims that the Adamites murdered more than 200 peasants in nearby villages on the grounds that they were followers of Satan. Whereas in the first report, Žižka had spared the life of a single witness, in our final source we are told that he allowed two of the Adamites to live in order that he might formulate a proper account of their beliefs and deeds. The report concludes with the statement that the Adamite heretics were annihilated.

Several questions immediately emerge about this remarkable chapter in the religious history of the later Middle Ages. What reliable evidence are these several reports based on? Are the reports and the statements contained therein true? If so, to what extent are the narratives accurate in reflecting reality? If the reports are untrue, what purpose do they serve? Who wrote these narratives? When were they written down? Who benefits from the repression of the Adamite-Pikart sect in Bohemia? Were these Pikarts sexual libertines? Did they practice a policy of violence towards their neighbours?[36] Were their practices theologically founded? Such questions beg to be answered. It is absolutely sound to consider chiliasm, Pikarts, and Adamites as "elements of a *single* thought-structure".[37] Fundamentally true in this fifteenth century was a near universal conviction within the Latin Church that heresy was, at its core, the work of the Devil. This was not a new idea. A theology of the Devil's work on earth precedes the fifteenth century by a rather wide interval. Above all, we find it articulated in the thought of Gregory the Great.[38] Applied to specific heretics, their words were often characterised as the language of multiple demons simultaneously speaking through them.[39] The commitment of dissenters to Satan constituted the ultimate conspiracy, a plot to undermine Christian faith and civilization. By the end of the Middle Ages, heretics were being associated with witches, and within that intellectual angst, an assumption began to emerge that witchcraft was the greatest heresy. The Pikarts of south Bohemia flourished before the rise of the witch hunts that convulsed Europe for more than 300 years, but the allegations and suspicions were not radically removed from that later history. Groups of other heretics were assimilated into that emerging matrix of godless association with the powers of darkness.[40]

If we examine the accusations against the Adamites, we find a recurring theme enumerating nocturnal orgies, orgiastic dancing, nudity, criminal behaviour, and the presence or inspiration of Satan. Such elements form the basic core of deviant behaviour associated with those who have turned

from the true faith to false idols and who have rejected truth in favour of falsehood.[41] Taking our sources on the outlawed and persecuted heretics of the Bohemian forests and islands, we can detect critical similarities as well as crucial differences. The acts of the Adamites reflect particular authorial perspectives and understandings of heresy and religious deviance. That said, it does seem clear that all six of our sources drew on a more traditional understanding of the concept of heresy that included conspiracy theories, folklore, ideas of the demonic and criminal behaviour that formed and informed their respective narratives but at the same time functioned as essential elements in the construction of a category that inspired propaganda and encouraged persecution. All of the sources are relatively close in terms of geography and chronology and they do argue in their respective presentations for a reasonably similar understanding and interpretation of heresy. None betrays any sympathy for the adherents of the so-called Pikart sect and each advocated, at least implicitly, repressive measures to ensure the continuation of properly reformed religion in medieval Bohemia.

At the centre of the allegations about the group of people expelled from Tábor are the allusions to sexual misbehaviour. Such accusations are by no means unique or unusual.[42] Given the suspicion that attended human sexuality with its expressions and practices in the western Christian tradition, it had long been almost expected to demonize one's enemies with extravagant claims of shocking sexual behaviour. The charges against the Templars in the early fourteenth century provide a good example.[43]

> A bitter thing, a lamentable thing, a thing horrible to think of and terrible to hear, a detestable crime, an execrable evil deed, an abominable work, a detestable disgrace, a thing wholly inhuman, foreign to all humanity, has reached our ears, striking us with great astonishment and causing us to tremble with violent horror. As we consider its gravity an immense pain rises in us, all the more cruelly because there is no doubt that the enormity of the crime overflows to the point of being an offense to the divine majesty, a shame for humanity, a pernicious example of evil and a universal scandal.[44]

The language conjures an image of gross impertinence, unparalleled horror, grave danger, and severe consequence. The Bohemian documents relating to the Adamites suggest nothing less. The transmission of the terms "Bulgarian" and "bugger" are again a demonstration of this tendency.[45] Sometimes the allegations of sodomy and heresy were politically

motivated. The case against the Count of Ampurias in 1311 and the process involving the baron-knight Reichart Puller von Hohenburg in 1482 illustrate the political use of sodomy as an instrument of royal and ecclesiastical power.[46] Once heresy hunting became institutionalized, the charges against the heretic became more or less uniform and sinful sexual activities remained an important aspect of such charges. Indeed, that helped to facilitate the horror of churchmen and the indignation of the church in general at the thought of unbridled sexual passion and expression. It was the perfect weapon for demonizing undesirables, for stirring up popular animosity, and for convincing the authorities that the present danger should be addressed immediately and eliminated.

The transition from rumour and innuendo to established fact often required little more than a formal document to gain credibility. There are numerous examples. In 1223, Pope Gregory IX published the bull *Vox in Rama*. It is an extraordinary document, purporting to describe the content of secret meetings of heretics and witches.[47] No one in the thirteenth century seems to have wondered where Gregory obtained his information. Even fewer seem to have pondered why none of these gatherings were ever actually uncovered and the perpetrators apprehended in the midst of their activities. The papal bull *Faciens misericordiam* of 12 August 1308, issued by Pope Clement V, turned the rumours about Templar misconduct into formal accusations.[48] Upon what basis did Clement believe the charges to be valid? In Bohemia, it was the first-hand report filed by Jan Žižka based on the confessions of a member of the sect that proved the allegations were true. Or did it? Vavřinec of Březová states that Žižka plundered the Pikarts "saving only one man who would tell about their acts." Aeneas Sylvius tells us that Žižka saved "only two of them to learn from them about their superstitions." Not a word has been preserved to tell us about the survivor(s) of the massacre or in what fashion he or she cooperated with Žižka or those assigned to interrogate the spokesperson for the Adamites. We do not know how this individual was selected. Was this a volunteer position? Did Žižka or another Hussite select the survivor and if so, on what basis? Moreover, we lack any information about how the alleged information was communicated. Did the survivor freely offer an account or was he or she persuaded to testify? Did Žižka use torture? Did the witness fear he or she might be tortured? We do not know. Žižka's letter, written on 21 October 1421 (or shortly thereafter), contained several points. Martin Húska was to blame for the atrocious behaviour of the Adamites. Did Žižka invent this or was he told by the witness? Was the

witness coached into making certain statements, were the inquiries merely leading questions, did the witness, out of fear for life or limb, say whatever was suggested or confirmed whatever he or she thought the interrogators wanted to hear? We have no way of knowing.

Our sources reveal that wherever Žižka found members of the Húska gang, he burned them alive or otherwise killed them. We know that Žižka had specifically requested that Martin Húska be transported from Roudnice to Prague for execution. The chronology is not easy to untangle, but our sources suggest that on one occasion Žižka came upon the heretics with an army of 400. On one occasion he killed forty of the Adamites. On a separate occasion he marched a group of them to Klokoty, a village near Tábor, and burned twenty-four of them alive. It is probable that the witness knew of these events. To what extent did such knowledge shape the testimony that Žižka based his report on? We do not know. Though our sources state that Žižka exterminated the brood of Pikarts, evidence suggests this may not have been as thorough a military exercise as some sources say. In the face of the brutal onslaught unleashed by Žižka, many of the dissenters fled to the hills of Bernatice, while others took refuge in the forest of Valov, while still more sought sanctuary on an island near Stráž. Examination of the testimony of the captured heretic is revealing. According to the written account submitted by Žižka to the authorities in Prague, the witness claimed his colleagues had no regard for the truth, at least as understood by the Hussites. The deposition revealed that the Adamites considered themselves invincible and as a consequence would live forever. Ostensibly, the prisoner witnessed that all girls were in fact violated as a condition of membership in the Pikart community. Naked dances, promiscuous sex, swimming in the river, and everyone sleeping together constitute the sum and substance of the testimony as reflected in Žižka's report. The veracity of the statements does not have the benefit of cross-examination. Moreover, it is puzzling that there is no corroboration of the several criminal activities recorded elsewhere, to wit, murder, arson, and other violence. Was the prisoner asked about these events or did Žižka choose to omit such testimony from his report? What happened to the Pikart prisoner after Žižka acquired the information he desired? Our sources are silent on each and every one of these queries.

In the case of the three separate accounts in Vavřinec of Březová's chronicle, we have unidentified hearsay evidence, Žižka's report, and possibly other anonymous forms of knowledge that Vavřinec had at his disposal. It is possible that Žižka's information was obtained without

duress on the part of the witness, but this does not seem likely. The report filed by Žižka has been considered essentially reliable inasmuch as it exists as one of those rare examples of reports not obtained by an inquisitor and is therefore void of the usual stereotypes.[49] On the other hand, there is also compelling opinion that none of the sources are salutary since they amount to slander and as such are unreliable.[50] At best, the evidence underlying the several reports is questionable. The allegations of sexual misconduct and misbehaviour constitute part and parcel of the *pro forma* assumptions about heretics in later medieval Europe, revealing both common mentalities and anxieties. The notion of nudity in south Bohemia in all kinds of weather seems incredulous. The climate itself would mitigate against the likelihood of such practices. We cannot be certain who composed several of these reports, and none save the document composed under the aegis of Jan Žižka can be regarded as contemporary with the events. Aeneas Sylvius wrote his history more than thirty-five years after the Pikart episode and indeed, Aeneas was not even in Bohemia for more than thirty years after these acts.

Turning to the purpose of the reports, it seems necessary to pose the query: *cui bono*? Who benefits from the repression of the Adamite-Pikart sect in Bohemia? The Roman Church certainly benefitted, but the larger struggle against the Hussite uprising was not relieved by the putting down of this sect. The repression of the Adamites did not serve the cause of the Prague Hussites either. Indeed, the existence of these notorious heretics in the hills and forests of south Bohemia was a weapon in the arsenal of the conservative faction, to be wielded against their more radical colleagues at Tábor and in the radical communities scattered throughout southern and eastern Bohemia. The existence of the Pikarts served as evidence to condemn the religious practices of the Táborites, even though the latter could argue they had expelled the Adamites. Nevertheless, there could be no gainsaying that the Pikarts had once been among the Táborite community. Had not the Táborites successfully interceded for the release of Martin Húska after he had initially been taken prisoner? The repression of the Adamites did not benefit the Praguers at all.

The demonizing of the dissenters in the forests and on the islands of south Bohemia did help the Táborite cause. The persistent presence of extreme radicalism connected to the Táborite faith and practice of religion hindered efforts at unity with the conservative Hussites in Prague, served as an insurmountable wedge in the reforming of the church throughout Bohemia, and in the end continued to cast a pall over the more legitimate

activities associated with Tábor. When the dissenters refused to hear correction, the Táborites resorted to persecution. The subjugation and eradication of Pikart religious and social practices under the aegis of the effective and efficient Jan Žižka most benefited the Táborites. The time had come to get rid of Martin Húska and his followers.[51] Rumours circulated that the Hussites in general had accepted the new heresy of the Pikarts.[52] Others claimed Pikart-Adamite practices represented Táborite religion. All of it was perfidious doctrine consisting of many ideas that had arisen like a sudden storm (*subita tempestate*).[53] The patterns of propaganda and persecution that befell the Czech Adamites were neither original nor unprecedented. Many scholars examining this chapter in medieval Czech history have been content to view the sources as more or less accurate in their presentation of the Pikarts. Even the most lurid description of the scandalous behaviour of the heretics is accepted as reliable.[54] Certainly there is a plethora of testimony that appears to corroborate the story. On the other hand, there are perspectives that dismiss entirely all of the sources as untrustworthy propaganda. Prominent examples include Josef Macek and Isaac de Beausobre.[55] While Macek is ever more discriminating and *au fait* with the sources, I do not think a sweeping dismissal of the evidence is the proper conclusion, though there are troublesome elements in that corpus of material. Like Mary Magdalene, Joan of Arc, or Hypatia of Alexandria, the Adamites have frequently been interpreted to suit a variety of assumptions. The inventing of the Pikart problem is both myth and history.[56]

In sum, none of our sources can be trusted implicitly. I think it is fair to accept that Martin Húska embraced a doctrine of the Eucharist that clearly departed from any of the orthodoxies held within the Hussite movement. Moreover, it is alleged that a form of anticlericalism allowed for any layperson to consecrate the sacrament. A priest was not essential.[57] There is little dispute that his followers were ultimately expelled from Tábor on the grounds of theological incompatibility and political expediency. Their suppression by Jan Žižka may be taken as historical. The doctrines promulgated by their leaders are, in general, not inconsistent with themes articulated by Húska. However viewed, the agenda of the Pikarts did not facilitate the larger ambitions of the Táborite community nor yet the goals of the Hussite movement. When they refused to leave, be silent, or recant, their enemies turned on them with ferocity and engaged in a brief but vicious campaign of propaganda aimed at solidifying a policy of persecution with the outcome that the dissenters were demonized. This was achieved most fully in the reports that insisted the Adamites were sexually perverted

and working towards the destabilization of law, order, and Hussite society. Once convinced of this threat, a pattern of persecution took form and the Pikarts were sacrificed on the altar of a more powerful agenda, one that claimed divine intervention. One of the chroniclers gave thanks to God who drove away the wolves desiring to invade the flock, pillage, and infect others with error and heresy.[58] Rumour led to repression and propaganda to persecution. If God scattered the wolves, who dared to defend the dissenter? Adamites really were part of the *other* Middle Ages. They were different, they were deviant, they were despised, and they were destroyed. The marginalizing of such outsiders was demanded and some of those policies are taken up in the next chapter.

Notes

1. R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950–1250*, expanded edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), and Michael Frassetto, ed., *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R.I. Moore* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).
2. Vavřinec of Březová, *Historia Hussitica* in *Fontes rerum bohemicarum*, vol. 5, p. 495. I do not agree with the idea that the letter sheds little light on Húska's particular views. Robert Kalivoda, *Husitská ideologie* (Prague: ČSAV, 1961), p. 458.
3. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 413.
4. *Historia Hussitica*, pp. 493–4. The torture must have been administered with hot irons that pierced the abdomens of Martin and Prokop.
5. *Historia Hussitica*, pp. 494–5.
6. A sound summary of Húska's Eucharistic doctrine and the suppression of his followers can be found in Kaminsky, *The History of the Hussite Revolution*, pp. 418–33. Of considerable value is also Ernst Werner, "Die Nachrichten über die böhmischen 'Adamiten' in religionshistorischer sicht" in Ernst Werner and Theodora Büttner, eds., *Circumcellionen und Adamiten: zwei Formen mittelalterlicher Haeresie* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), pp. 73–134, and more recently on the suppression of the group see Petr Čornej, "Potiže s adamity" *Marginalia Historica* 2 (1997), pp. 33–63.
7. Petr Chelčický, *Replika proti Mikuláši Biskupcovi*, in Eduard Petrů, ed., *Petr Chelčický Drobné spisy* (Prague: ČSAV, 1966), p. 178.
8. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe*.
9. Fudge, *The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure*, pp. 31–72.
10. See especially Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 35–78.

11. Epiphanius of Salamis' report in his *Panarion* 24. 4.1–5.1 in Frank Williams, ed., *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1987–94), vol. 1, pp. 85–6, is a notorious example.
12. *Historia Hussitica*, pp. 517–20.
13. The most comprehensive study of Žižka is Josef Pekař, *Žižka a jeho doba*, 4 vols (Prague: Vesmír, 1930–1935). More accessible is Frederick G. Heymann, *John Žižka and the Hussite Revolution*, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1969), which has been supplemented by Fudge, *Heresy and Hussites in Late Medieval Europe*, XIII, pp. 546–69. Victor Verney, *Warrior of God: Jan Žižka and the Hussite Revolution* (London: Frontline Books, 2009) should be avoided. Applying Boswell, Verney's book is both brilliant and original. Unfortunately, the brilliant parts are not original and the original parts are not brilliant. In sum, it is unreliable and a plagiarized version of Heymann.
14. David R. Holeton, "The Bohemian Eucharistic Movement in its European Context" *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 1 (1996), pp. 23–47.
15. For Milíč and his times see Olivier Marin, *L'archevêque, le maître et le dévot: Genèses du mouvement réformateur pragois années 1360–1419* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2005).
16. See especially Helena Krmíčková, *K počátkům kalicha v Čechách* (Brno: Masarykova Univerzita, 1997), Paul de Vooght, *Jacobellus de Stříbro (†1429), premier théologien du hussitisme* (Louvain, Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1972) and more recently Pavel Soukup, *Reformní kazatelství a Jakoubek ze Stříbra* (Prague: Filosofia, 2011). Most recently on the Council of Constance see Thomas Martin Buck, "Das Konzil von Konstanz (1414–1418): Ein Literatur- und Forschungsbericht" *Historische Zeitschrift* 302 (2016), pp. 703–30.
17. The authority on this subject is David R. Holeton, *La communion des tout-petits enfants: Étude du mouvement eucharistique en Bohême vers la fin du Moyen-Âge* (Rome: CLV Edizioni Liturgiche, 1989).
18. One example is Jakoubek Stříbro in his sermons on the Apocalypse at the same time these events were transpiring. František Šimek, ed., *Jakoubek ze Stříbra: Výklad na zjevenie sv. Jana*, 2 vols. (Prague: Nákladem Komise vydávání pramenů českého hnutí náboženského, 1932–3), vol. 1, p. 526.
19. On the broader topic with references to their immediate late medieval roots see Fudge, *Heresy and Hussites in Late Medieval Europe*, VI, pp. 1–30.
20. On the centrality and significance of this motif see Fudge, *Heresy and Hussites in Late Medieval Europe*, III, pp. 49–72.
21. The author is Petr Chelčický in his tract *Replika proti Mikuláši Biskupcovi*, in Petrů, ed., *Petr Chelčický Drobné spisy*, pp. 132–210, written around 1424. Biskupec means "little bishop" in Czech and was the nickname of Mikuláš of Pelhřimov who was the bishop of Tábor. These translated excerpts appear in Howard Kaminsky, "Peter Chelčický: Treatises on Christianity and the Social Order" *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 1 (1964), pp. 135–6.

22. *Jan z Příbramě: Život kněží Táborských*, ed., Jaroslav Boubín [Podbrdsko, Fontes 1] (Příbram: Státní okresní archiv Příbram a Okresní muzeum Příbram, 2000). References are to this critical edition.
23. *Apologia* in Prague Castle Archive MS D 49 fol. 333^{r}.
24. Fudge, *Heresy and Hussites in Late Medieval Europe*, X, pp. 115–32.
25. *Život kněží Táborských*, pp. 66–9.
26. *Život kněží Táborských*, p. 66.
27. *Život kněží Táborských*, pp. 39, 66, 69.
28. *Život kněží Táborských*, p. 86.
29. *Život kněží Táborských*, p. 70.
30. *Život kněží Táborských*, p. 70.
31. František Svejkovský, ed., *Veršované skladby doby husitské* (Prague: Československá akademie věd, 1963), pp. 161–3. This source is from an old Czech chronicle of the fifteenth century. These verses are considered in some detail with commentary on dating and authorship with reference to the relevant historiography in Svejkovský, ed., Veršované skladby doby husitské, pp. 40–43.
32. František Šimek and František M. Bartoš, eds., *Staré letopisy české z vratislavského rukopisu novočeským pravopisem* (Prague: Historický spolek, 1937), pp. 29–31.
33. This latter category seems to have become a standard component in anti-heretical initiatives in the later Middle Ages. See particularly Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* and Puff, *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, 1400–1600.*
34. Aeneas Sylvius, *Historia Bohemica*, (1458), Dana Martínková, Alena Hadravová and Jiří Matl, eds. (Prague: KLP, 1998), chapter 41, pp. 116–118. On this see the discussion in Fudge, *Heresy and Hussites in Late Medieval Europe*, VI, pp. 1–30.
35. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 431.
36. Martin Húska and some of his followers at least were chiliasts who believed the end of history was near. Such impulses frequently embrace violence. Robert E. Lerner, “Medieval Millenarianism and Violence” in Enrico Menestò, ed., *Pace e Guerra nel basso medioevo* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo, 2004), pp. 37–52.
37. Howard Kaminsky, “Chiliasm and the Hussite Revolution” *Church History* 26 (1957), p. 60.
38. For discussion see Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 61–5.
39. The twelfth-century apostate Benedictine monk Henry of Lausanne was described in this manner at Le Mans around 1116. The document is in R.I. Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (London: Arnold, 1975), p. 35.

40. Wolfgang Behringer, "How Waldensians became Witches: Heretics and their Journey to the Other World" in Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs, eds., *Demons, Spirits, Witches: Communicating with the Spirits* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), pp. 155–92.
41. Martine Ostorero, "The Concept of the Witches' Sabbath in the Alpine Region (1430–1440): Text and Context" in Gábor Klaniczay and Éva Pócs, eds, *Witchcraft Mythologies and Persecution* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), pp. 15–35, and more fully in her *Le diable au sabbat. Littérature démonologique et sorcellerie (1440–1460)* (Florence: Sismel-Edzioni del Galluzzo, 2011).
42. Gábor Klaniczay, "Orgy Accusations in the Middle Ages" in Mihály Hoppál and Eszter Csonka-Takács, eds., *Eros in Folklore* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 2002), pp. 38–55 and Jeffrey B. Russell and Mark W. Wyndham, "Witchcraft and the Demonization of Heresy" *Mediaevalia* 2 (1976), pp. 1–21.
43. Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
44. From the *Arrest Order* of 1307, in G. Lizerand, ed. and trans., *Le Dossier de l'Affaire des Templiers* (Paris: H. Champion, 1923), pp. 16–25.
45. Fudge, *The Trial of Jan Hus: Medieval Heresy and Criminal Procedure*, pp. 65–66.
46. James A. Brundage, "The Politics of Sodomy: Rex v. Pons Hugh de Ampurias (1311)" in Joyce E. Salisbury, ed., *Sex in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland, 1989), pp. 239–46. Hohenburg and Anton Mätzler were executed at Zurich on 24 September 1482 on charges of heresy (sodomy). There is a depiction in Diebold Schilling the Elder, *Große Burgunderchronik*, Zurich, Zentralbibliothek MS A 5, p. 994.
47. Edward Peters and Alan C. Kors, eds., *Witchcraft in Europe 400–1700: A Documentary History*, 2nd edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 48–9.
48. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 454, fols. 1r-7r, now in a critical edition. Helen J. Nicholson, ed., *The Proceedings against the Templars in the British Isles*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), vol. 2, pp. 7–11.
49. Kaminsky, *The History of the Hussite Revolution*, p. 431.
50. Josef Macek, *Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí*, 2 vols (Prague, ČSAV, 1955–1956), vol. 2, pp. 321–3.
51. Macek, *Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí*, vol. 2, p. 303.
52. Eberhart Windecke, *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds*, ed., Wilhelm Altmann (Berlin: R. Gaertners Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1893), p. 129.
53. Jan Příbram, *Contra articulos picardorum*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 4749, fol. 37v.

54. The most recent account is Petr Čornej, "Ráj je na ostrově aneb prostor pro adamity" *Táborský archiv* 13 (2007), pp. 37–46 but Kaminsky is willing to accept the essential veracity of the sources. See his "The Free Spirit in the Hussite Revolution" in Sylvia L. Thrupp, ed., *Millennial Dreams in Action* (The Hague: Mouton, 1962), pp. 166–86, especially p. 182, n. 58.
55. Macek, *Tábor v husitském revolučním hnutí*, vol. 2, pp. 321–3 and Isaac de Beausobre, *Dissertation sur les Adamites de Bohème* which was appended to Jacques Lenfant, *Histoire de la guerre des Hussites* (Amsterdam: Humbert, 1731), vol. 1, pp. 304–49. Beausobre was a French Protestant who offers a defense of the sect whom he tends to equate with the general piety of the Waldensians. In this, he can scarcely be accepted as creditable. His thesis strives to establish the relevance of the sect for an understanding of Táborite history specifically and the Hussite movement in general.
56. On myths and history of this sort see the careful academic detective work of Maria Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, trans., F. Lyra (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), an excellent case of how careful primary source analysis can dispel persistent misunderstandings.
57. Jan Příbram, *Ad occurendum homini insano*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 4937, fols 149v and 150v.
58. Vavřinec of Březová, *Historia Hussitica*, p. 495.

CHAPTER 8

The Stripping and the Shaming of Heretics

Medieval society was filled with people whose garments reflected their place in the world. Regular orders, levels of secular clergy, class distinctions, membership in guilds and fraternities, various trades and crafts, university students, along with royal and religious institutions had marks of identification, whether good or bad, reflecting either a badge of honour or one of opprobrium. These social indicators were often mandated by sumptuary law. Frocking-up or defrocking had definite implications. This chapter looks at formal defrocking and tales of general violence (especially within the context of the Hussite wars) wherein stripping people of their clothing played a ritualistic significance. When these acts progressed to killing the stripped victims, more than shame is at stake. In the case of heretics, this was war to the death. There were no efforts to evangelize, proselytize, or convert the enemy to the true faith. Coupled with this are the clear function of stripping as a form of public shaming and the function of clothing as a mark of punishment or alterity.

Medieval heretics were not summarily dismissed from the church of the later Middle Ages by means of a pro forma note informing them they were no longer welcome in the community of the faithful. The process of exclusion was rather more deliberate, intentional, and public. The church could not be considered dilatory in such matters. Stripping and shaming were deliberately devised. The process, sometimes displayed graphically and dramatically, may be related to formal statutes codified in canon law

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mandating exacting procedures wherein wicked priests were expelled from the priesthood. There is a close relationship between religion and criminal justice. The specific canon and procedure for defrocking priests are important enough to be summarized in some detail.[1]

The defrocking or removal of a priest from holy orders was to be carried out by a bishop with the help of the clergy according to legal constitutions and sacred canons. This could be accomplished by means of the sentence of a bishop without requiring additional ecclesiastical rulings. That process could be regarded as sufficient for the degrading of a miscreant priest. The cleric sentenced to such formal degradation was required to wear his sacred and consecrated vestments. He was to be brought forth, holding in his hands a book, a vessel, or some other object or ornament relating to his holy orders and considered essential to the solemn ministry of his office. An obvious example is the Eucharistic chalice. In this manner, he was ordered brought into the presence of the presiding bishop. The bishop was then expected to publicly remove from the priest in question each one of those articles, whether they be the garments of ordination and rank, a consecrated chalice, or a book of religion, and generally did so in the reverse order in which they had originally been given to the condemned priest or conferred on him by the bishop when he had been initially received into holy orders and ordained. The process of stripping began with the vestments or ornaments that the unworthy priest received last or most recently. The degradation continued by incremental degrees until the stripping reached the first garment given to the priest at the time when he received the tonsure as a sign of holy orders. In terms of the tonsure itself, there were specific rules. The head of the shamed priest was ordered shaved or the hair cut in such manner that no trace remained of the tonsure. During the ceremony of degradation of this kind, the bishop was permitted and encouraged to use carefully chosen words in order to deliberately strike fear into the hearts and minds of those who simultaneously had been brought forward for the conferring of holy orders. Such sentences might include saying words to the effect, "we take away from you the priestly garments, and you are deprived of the priestly honour of them." During the removal of the remainder of the distinguished vestments and objects of ministry, by order of canon law, similar words might likewise be utilized. The presiding bishop should pronounce orally, or put into writing, or proclaim by any similar method, this sentence: "By the authority of Almighty God, Father, Son

and Holy Spirit, we take from you the clerical habit, and also depose, degrade, strip and entirely cast you out from every order, and exclude you from the benefits of clerical privilege." The canonical procedure was quite precise. In practice, it tended to follow the letter of the law.

Early Saturday morning, 6 July 1415, a Czech priest named Jan Hus was found guilty on charges of heresy by an ecclesiastical court convened at Constance. As previously noted, before execution of sentence, the legal procedure mandated the stripping and shaming of the heretic. Ordered by seven bishops, Hus dressed as though preparing to celebrate Mass. Ironically, when donning the alb, Hus declared that Christ had also been mocked while wearing a white garment during the time he was led from King Herod to the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate. Dressed for liturgical ministry, the condemned was exhorted by the bishops to submit to the authority of the church by declaring that his teachings were erroneous. Forced to stand on a table in order that all might see him, the priest who was about to be stripped and shamed announced to the congregation gathered in the Cathedral of Our Lady (Münster unserer lieben Frau) at Constance that he was not prepared to recant or abjure anything. Prelates seated nearby expressed astonishment that Hus remained steadfast in sin and contumacious in heresy. On that account, he had to be stripped of his religious authority and publicly shamed as one neither faithful to God nor honourable to the church. Descending from the table, he was then defrocked in accordance with the provisions of canon law noted above. The chalice was removed and he was declared a traitor. Then the stole, the chasuble, and each of the several other vestments were in turn stripped from the heretic as appropriate curses were intoned. After each article of clothing had been removed the bishops then proceeded to desecrate his tonsure. Disagreements broke out with one party proposing the use of a razor while another group insisted on scissors. The latter prevailed and his tonsure was divided into four parts, and thus, obliterated. The bishops then declared that since the church had nothing further it could do with the convicted felon, the stripping and shaming indicated he was now deprived of all ecclesiastical rights and was therefore ordered turned over to the power of the secular courts for appropriate punishment. Completing the ritual of shame, the court ordered placed on Hus' head a round paper crown about eighteen inches high. Upon this crown were depictions of three terrifying demons shown in the process of seizing a soul and tearing it apart with their claws. An epigram announced the one wearing the crown was a heresiarch.[2]

Examination of the ritual process in Constance revealed that the desecration of Jan Hus followed traditional practice. While variations may be identified in the formal expulsion of Hus from the priesthood, none of these constitute the introduction of anything cruel or unusual. The stripping of the heretic as part of the church's campaign to eliminate serious dissent amounted to a process wherein the convict was publicly shamed. If the defendant was under holy orders, like Jan Hus, then he was defrocked in an elaborate ceremony of degradation as noted. Each act in the procedural degradation fulfilled a vital element in the dramaturgy. Inasmuch as the Eucharist functioned at the centre of the medieval practice of the Christian religion, the priest holds a chalice that is taken from his hands, symbolizing that he is ever after ineligible to celebrate mass, consecrate the Eucharist, or engage in the sacrament of the altar. He is cursed and given the moniker "Judas," identifying him ever after as belonging to those betrayers of Christ. The deepest part of hell, the ninth circle, was reserved in medieval thought for betrayers such as Cassius, Brutus, and Judas.[3] Heretics belonged to this fraternity and were regarded by the medieval church as offenders even worse than ordinary sinners.[4] Then the stole is removed, meaning such a one can no longer be regarded as a servant of the Lord. Following this, the chasuble is taken away, reinforcing his removal from the sacerdotal functions of the church. Then the rest of the priestly vestments are stripped from the prisoner, indicating that he has forfeited every claim to the priesthood. As each item is removed, an appropriate curse is intoned. We have seen this element recommended in the statutes of canon law. Liturgical cursing was not uncommon in medieval Europe. From the eleventh century, we find a strident example of comprehensive cursing in a bull of excommunication issued by Pope Benedict VIII.

> Benedict Bishop, servant of the servants of God … let them be accursed in their bodies, and let their souls be delivered to destruction and perdition and torture. Let them be damned with the damned. Let them be scourged with the ungrateful. Let them perish with the proud. Let them be accursed with the Jews who seeing the incarnate Christ did not believe but sought to crucify him. Let them be accursed with the heretics who labored to destroy the church. Let them be accursed with those who blaspheme the name of God. Let them be accursed with those who lie damned in hell; impious and sinners unless they amend their ways and confess themselves in fault… Let them be accursed in the four quarters of the earth. In the East, be they

> accursed, and in the West disinherited, in the North interdicted, and in the South excommunicate. Be they accursed in the daytime and excommunicate in the night time. Accursed be they at home and excommunicate abroad; accursed in standing and excommunicate in sitting; accursed in eating, accursed in drinking, accursed in sleeping and excommunicate in waking; accursed when they work and excommunicate when they rest. Let them be accursed in the spring time and excommunicate in the summer; accursed in the autumn and excommunicate in the winter. Let them be accursed in this world and excommunicate in the next. Let their lands pass into the hands of the stranger, their wives be given over to perdition and their children fall before the edge of the sword. Let what they eat be accursed, and accursed be what they leave, so that he who eats it shall be accursed. Accursed and excommunicate be the priest who shall give them the body and blood of the Lord, or who shall visit them in sickness. Accursed and excommunicate be he who shall carry them to the grave and shall dare to bury them. Let them be excommunicate and accursed with all cures if they do not make amends and render due satisfaction. And know this for truth, that after our death no bishop nor any secular power shall usurp the rights of [the monastery]. And if anyone attempts to do so, they shall be weighed down by all the foregoing curses and they shall never enter the kingdom of heaven …[5]

Sometimes there were disagreements over the proper procedure or the order of stripping and this is apparent when it came time to obliterate the tonsure. This is evident in the case of Jan Hus. Appended to the stripping and the shaming of the defrocked priest at Constance was an additional humiliation wherein the ex-priest was forced to wear a paper mitre adorned with demons and bearing letters indicating his crime while formal maledictions were pronounced by seven bishops over the condemned man. There are no known precedents for this practice and we may surmise it to be an invention of the court at Constance, perhaps the crude and malicious idea of one of Hus' resolute opponents like Michael de Causis.[6] There is some evidence that Joan of Arc wore one, and fifteenth-century frescos in the twelfth-century church of San Bernardino in Triora, Italy, show similar foolscaps worn by the damned in hell. Both examples postdate the Council of Constance. Whatever the origins of the heretical mitre, one of the consequences of the legal statutes *Ad abolendam* and *Vergentis in senium* in cases where priests or the religious came under condemnation for heresy was degradation from holy orders.[7] In 1420 Hennequin of Langle was expelled from the priesthood. This degradation was principally indicated by the "close-cropping of his hair with a

sharp fork, having a cloth around his neck removed" [i.e. the stole], while "appropriate sentences were intoned that he should no longer enjoy any privileges."[8] This was procedurally consistent with canon law that quite unambiguously enumerated this as part of the penalty for heresy. In practical terms, this meant specifically the loss of *privilegium fori*—the right to trial in an ecclesiastical court—and *privilegium canonis*—the right to special protection. No longer could there be privilege in terms of shielding from secular authorities. Hence, once the ritual stripping and shaming of the heretic was complete, he or she was relaxed to the secular arm for execution of sentence. The church was at this stage powerless to intervene or extend mercy to the condemned. Previous protections were now forfeit. Sanctuary from the full brunt of criminal consequences or the secular sword was quite impossible. Though not specifically enumerated in *Degradatio*, elsewhere canon law required the condemnation of a priest necessitated the presence of six bishops.[9]

The ritual of degradation was often carried out in the presence of secular officials indicating *privilegium fori* and *privilegium canonis* were now forfeit, and the convicted priest thereby stripped of holy orders and cast out of the church and handed over to Satan.[10] The latter clause may be considered particularly cruel and not sanctioned by canon law, but whether spoken or not the implication remained the same. To be cut off from the church was to be cut off from God and separation from the kingdom of God meant surrendering to the kingdom of Satan. Bishops would be present as important witnesses during this solemn assembly.[11] Convicted heretics like Hus were, in this fashion, degraded from the priesthood in general accord with the canonical decretal *Degradatio*.[12] Thus stripped and shamed, Jan Hus was defrocked from all holy orders and expelled from the priesthood. Sometimes these acts were incorporated into the memory of religious communities. A sermon preached in the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague by the Hussite priest, Jakoubek Stříbro, in 1416 recounts the gripping scene. "Then he was handed over to the secular authorities who led him to the place of his execution and death. On the way he shouted that false and twisted testimonies were submitted and that no one should believe that he advocated any heretical article. When he arrived at the place of execution, he knelt down and prayed with a joyful heart and a bright countenance. Then they stripped him down to his shirtsleeves, chained and roped him to a stake and piled wood around him to such a height that barely his head was visible – I omit other details. When the strong flames blazed up, he stopped singing and praying. But his spirit, as we devoutly

believe, reached with the flames to heaven, to the company of angels, just as Elijah did."[13] There are numerous witnesses to the ritual of degradation undertaken at Constance, both hostile and tendentious, and notably some mention that when he came to the place of death, Hus was "stripped of all his clothes."[14] The detail is both symbolically revealing and significant.

In some ways, this ritual stripping and shaming may be considered the reverse of the process of clothing and honouring that accompanied those taking holy orders and entering the religious life.[15] The habit symbolizes acceptance, rank, status, holiness, and commitment. Removal of the garment of holiness indicates rejection, a loss of rank and status, the forfeiting of separation, and thorough separation from Christ, the Christian community, and the fellowship of the faithful. It likewise presents a stark inversion of the medieval commonplace sentence "naked they follow the naked Christ." This allusion to spirituality has roots in the late antique Christian period and while defrocked or stripped heretics might embrace the dictum as applying to themselves, in truth, the medieval church saw them naked but hardly following in the way of Christ.[16] Taking the habit in life joined one to Christ in holiness. Taking the habit in death, as was fairly often the case in the Middle Ages when otherwise secular men and women faced the final curtain, was also symbolic of entrance into the presence of God.[17] Among notable instances, we find Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury counselling the Countess Matilda of Tuscany to keep a nun's dress nearby so that when death came she might put it on.[18] Kings and princes often were dressed in a monastic habit and received the tonsure as they passed from this life into the Great Unknown. William the Conqueror died in the Priory of St. Gervase in Rouen in 1087 with bishops, abbots, and monks standing nearby.[19] Frederick II, Roger II of Sicily, and Roger III died in Cistercian habits. Kings often were buried in cloisters. In the early twelfth century, Hugh of Cluny wrote to King Philip I of France to say that Cluny was the refuge for the penitent. The king, therefore, should resign his earthly kingdom while time remained and take hold of the heavenly kingdom by ending his days as a monk.[20] The king took this advice and at his death was interred in the Monastery of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire. When the Czech king Václav II died in 1305 he was wearing the poor cassock of a monk. He requested that Abbot Konrad of Zbraslav monastery should dress him in the plain garment of the Cistercians once he was gathered unto God.[21] By contrast, the stripping of heretics was a shameful dismissal from those comforts and normally indicated a prelude to death, both spiritual and physical.

An evaluation of reformed religious practices in Bohemia after the execution of Jan Hus reveals an inversion of the idea of stripping and shaming heretics. In this model, Hussite heretics (thus defined by the medieval church) took vengeance on adherents of the official church whom they decided were the real heretics, and in many cases, this resulted in the stripping both of those under holy orders as well as the laity who supported them. We have significant witness to these policies and practices once again from the very valuable and contemporary "Hussite Chronicle" written by Vavřinec of Březová who lived between 1370 and 1437.[22] By way of formal decree, according to the Táborites, "any priest with a tonsure and wearing a chasuble or cassock, who would serve God according to the established regulations and practice, is like that whore mentioned in the revelation of St. John. Such priests should be vilified by the people."[23] This reference to liturgical vestments indicates there was internecine conflict among the heretics over the matter of clothing. Radical Hussites noted with disdain their colleagues in Prague once again celebrating Mass "wearing sheets". The Táborites warned darkly that such conduct invited trouble.[24]

Such rhetoric escalated in 1421 when the Czech heretics took their aversion to ecclesiastical clothing one step farther. "Similarly, in the same year on Monday after St. Agnes' Day it was publicly announced by the Táborites in the town of Soběslav, that belonged to the Lord of Rožmberk, that any priest found by them officiating in a chasuble would be burned to death together with the chasuble."[25] That was the public position. What concrete results followed? Initially, this sentiment was confined to grumbling and discontent, but some Hussites "did not want to accept the sacrament from priests officiating in ecclesiastical clothing, which they called sheets, unless they took them off, and they obstructed those who officiated in them. This is what really happened in the church of St. Peter in Poříčí, where women, with the permission of their husbands, did not allow priests in chasubles to officiate at mass. And masters forced priests, those preachers who observed ecclesiastical regulations, advising them, defending it with Holy Scripture, vituperated them and called them hypocrites and false leaders and wanted to kill them or chase them away from the towns of Prague like mad dogs."[26] Here we see the liturgy disrupted, priests prevented from carrying out sacramental celebration, and threats uttered against the practitioners of traditional religion. All of this was premised on the conviction that heresy was latent in the religious practices of the later medieval church. The threats became

more overt. The aggressive heretics "marched out on Sunday, which was the vigil of St. Katherine (24 November), with some of their people, with cavalry and infantry and wagons, and also with some priests who were carrying the body of the Lord Christ, towards Říčany. When they arrived at the place and the priests of Prague began officiating mass in chasubles, some of the Táborites, sisters and brothers, came running and thundered at the priests saying: 'What are these sheets for? Get rid of them and celebrate the mass as Christ and his apostles established it, or we will tear to pieces those sheets you have on!'"[27] Congregated in the Castle of Konopiště in June 1423, Mikuláš Pelhřimov and Jan Jičín argued for the elimination of chasubles in the practice of religion.[28] The next year at a synod in Tábor, several theologians of the radical persuasion explicitly rejected chasubles.[29] More conservative Hussites accused their Táborite colleagues of error in assuming this posture.[30] Such remonstrance notwithstanding, leaders of the heretics at Tábor only renewed their attack on the use of liturgical vestments.[31]

The threats of violence escalated and soon victims of the urge to purge policies of reform promoted by the heretics were subjected to different sorts of shaming and stripping. During the battle below Vyšehrad Castle just south of Prague in 1420, the Bohemian and Moravian barons and knights who supported Emperor Sigismund and the medieval church against the Hussites "were butchered like pigs, stripped of all their armour as well as their clothing down to their underwear".[32] This incident might be put down to simple pillaging in the aftermath of a battle. However, during the conquest of the fortress of Říčany in November 1420, but after an agreement had been reached to allow the occupants of the fortress to depart, "the Táborite sisters waited for them [women residing therein], captured all of them, stripped them of their finer clothes and left them the worse."[33] Further evidence suggests this sort of behaviour was deliberate and strategic. From Easter Sunday, 16 March 1421, at Chomútov we have another report. "Villainous Táborite women committed a horrible crime. They took women and young girls out of the town, all of them crying out, with the promise of releasing them and allowing them to depart unharmed. However, when they got out of the town they stripped them, took their money and jewellery and locked them into a shed in the vineyard where the grapes are pressed and burned them, not even sparing the pregnant women."[34] This amounts to stripping, shaming, and slaying those deemed expendable based on subjective considerations of fidelity to God. Orthodox Hussites persecuted the Adamites and

the Táborites abused Catholics. Later Utraquists would repress the Unity of the Brethren (Jednota bratrská) and ultimately Roman Catholicism would suppress the survivors of all of these groups. In this way a culture of violence and intolerance characterised so much of religious practice in Bohemia between 1420 and 1620.

In the 1420s, members of the dominant heretical faction, following the rhetoric of the leadership in Tábor, seem to have engaged in ritual stripping for the shaming of the true heretics. These practices continued. On 13 May 1421 at Jaroměř "they stripped all people of the town, including women, leaving them only in their shirts, and after they left town, they drowned many of them, and others were burned by villains on the battlefield."[35] The leaders of the heretics had declared that those under the holy orders of the medieval church were particularly liable for punishment, especially on account of their offensive clothing. Though it reflects a bygone controversy, Hussite iconography visualizes the dispute. The legend of St. Martin is depicted wherein the saint, having given away his luxurious garment to a poor man, celebrates the Eucharist in an inelegant gown. He is contrasted with a procession of ecclesiastical officials clad in extravagant *pontificalia*.[36] The contrast in art was mirrored by conflict in reality. In July 1421 at the monastery of the virgins in Teplice, though the Hussites "were received warmly by the abbess and the virgins and supplied with many provisions," nevertheless the heretics "led the abbess with the virgins out of the monastery, occupied the monastery and some of the troops robbed them of their clothing."[37] Examples could be multiplied. The stripping of clothing emerges as a central theme. Such practices were condemned from within the movement. In a sermon preached in Prague's Bethlehem Chapel on the fourth Sunday of Advent, on 22 December, probably in 1426, Jakoubek Stříbro declared that "false priests and their followers concluded that it was legitimate to strip the clothes from people, kill them and practice other cruelties that happened in these times."[38]

Medieval society of course had its share of outcasts, those who had been thrust out of the community for various reasons.[39] Clothing, or lack thereof, figures into these categories. There were many attempts in medieval Europe aimed at regulating clothing both among the clergy as well as the laity. Such laws or customs are fundamentally different from the use of clothing for segregation and degradation.[40] Moreover, we find considerable evidence for clothing as a cause of social conflict.[41] Public shaming for various offenses was common in later medieval Europe. Clothing played a particular role in these spectacles. In 1248 at Aliermont a dozen

prominent community members were publicly shamed by being forced to make twelve processions to churches "barefoot in shirt and breeches, heads uncovered… in linen drawers and haircloth shirts… Each of you shall carry a wand in his hand and shall receive discipline from priests at the end of the processions …"[42] In cases where heresy did not end in the kinds of tragedies witnessed at stakes across much of Europe, its presence carried with it public humiliation and social shaming; shame that occasionally marked entire families and communities. Ecclesiastical authorities fairly often required penitents to march around churches barefoot, wearing a hair shirt. The Kent heresy trials in early sixteenth-century England, where the accused were not relinquished to the secular arm for execution of sentence by fire, were prescribed a penitential penalty; decisions which are the most detailed and complex penances known in Lollard heresy trials.[43] Thirty-three individuals were ordered to carry a faggot in their parish church in the procession and throughout the entire divine service. Many of these heretics were further ordered to appear with bare feet and lower legs, uncovered heads, and in one case several of the women were instructed to appear in their underwear.[44] Penances for others also included similar public rituals in the marketplaces at Canterbury and Cranbrook.[45] In the previous century similar penalties were also handed down.[46] For example, in 1251 one man was sentenced to appear in Carcassonne, barefooted, wearing only his underwear, carrying a rod and ordered to visit every church while being flogged as he went.[47] One form of the humiliating punishment of heretics was the *poena confusibilis* of wearing some symbol of infamy. The shame of heresy on the individual, his or her family, or in some cases entire communities, was unavoidable. The stripping was shameful and the shame functioned as an important component in societies based on concepts of honour. Stripping or wearing garments of shame was a form of punishment known as the penance of humiliation.[48]

Even before sumptuary laws were introduced mandating that a person's position in society be reflected in his or her dress, social order, moral order, and the regulation of appearances were reflected in certain kinds of clothing.[49] Jews, lepers, prostitutes, and heretics were required to adhere to dress regulations. Distinguishing marks meant to easily identify persons not belonging to the prevailing majority religious faith seems to have its origin within eighth-century Islam when the Umayyad Caliph of Damascus, Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz II (717–20), ratified an order wherein every *dhimmī* (non-Muslim residing in Islamic territory) should adhere to clothing regulations that bore a distinguishing mark separating members

of minority groups. The ordinance was subsequently reiterated in the ninth century (850) by the Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, Al-Mutawakkil ʻAlā Allā Jaʻfar ibn al-Muʻtasim (847–61), expanded into more stringent regulations in the early eleventh century by the Fatimid Caliph al-Hākim bi-Amr Allah (1005) and sporadically enforced until the thirteenth century and noted by the theologian Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (†1351). Such decrees called for distinctive clothing, the destruction of places of worship, and the nailing of demonic effigies to the doors of the outsiders. Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians were especially affected.[50]

The principle and practice inaugurated by medieval caliphs was adopted by Christian authorities and applied with some severity in different parts of Europe with respect to outsiders and outcasts, namely Jews, lepers, sodomites, prostitutes, heretics, and a variety of other groups, creating a visual image and community of shame.[51] Seventeen people in Kent were ordered to wear a conspicuous badge featuring a flaming faggot on their outer clothing for the remainder of their lives. Six others had dress restrictions imposed on them. Five women (Agnes Raynold, Alice Hilles, Joan Riche, Joan Lowes, and Julian Hilles) were forbidden to wear a smock on Fridays while John Grebill was ordered never again to wear a linen undergarment on either Wednesdays or Fridays. Both restrictions were to last in perpetuity.[52] Elsewhere we find at least twenty-five heretics condemned to wearing either a single or double yellow cross on their clothing indicating their transgression. Crosses were imposed on a further 275 individuals either as original penance or on those released from a prison term for heresy. Double crosses were imposed on those involved in more serious forms of heresy or those who had been uncooperative. The forced wearing of these ignominious crosses was a widespread practice. Their origins seem to stem from a practice instituted by St. Dominic who ordered recanted heretics to wear a small yellow cross on the exterior of their clothing as a sign of their crime and penitence.[53] At Douai and Cambrai in the early thirteenth century, the wearing of such crosses was imposed.[54] Thirteenth-century councils at Toulouse (1229) and Béziers (1233) specified the colour and dimensions of these symbols of humiliating penance. The psychological ordeal and the associated shame must have been severe.[55] Such sartorial signs promptly identified denizens of the medieval underworld.[56]

Wearing symbols of opprobrium made these people prey for abuse and public ridicule, which was precisely part of the strategic plan in shaming them in the first place.[57] Other areas preferred to see the heretic as an outsider in every respect, extending even to his or her ethnicity, language,

and costume.[58] These assumptions were seized on by unscrupulous zealots. Some heresy hunters claimed to be able to identify heretics by their speech while others thought they could detect heretics by the clothing they wore. In thirteenth-century northern France and Flanders, Inquisitor Robert the Bugger believed heretics spoke in a certain way and boasted he could tell a heretic in this manner and also by their peculiar gestures. Pope Gregory gave credence to the activities of Robert by declaring God had given this inquisitor a special grace.[59] Whatever the particulars, ostensibly he gained significant knowledge of heretics. Combined with zealous ambition, this made the "Bugger" a successful inquisitor, eventually earning the nickname "hammer of heretics."[60] Capital punishments meted out by Robert included the stake and being buried alive. Punishments short of the ultimate *animadversio debita* often involved immuring in prisons, but we also find evidence of public shaming that included the wearing of crosses and shaved heads. Notorious examples of identifying heretics by appearance include two thirteenth-century self-appointed inquisitors in Germany, namely Conrad Torso and Johannes (one-eyed and one-armed), who boasted they could detect a heretic on the basis of his or her appearance. Their hunt for heretics proceeded from town to town on this basis, asserting they would prefer to burn a hundred such heretics if only one among them were guilty.[61] Such claims need not be accepted and apart from the signs of shame, such assertions are grossly exaggerated.[62]

In 1215 the fourth Lateran Council ruled that non-Christians were obliged to wear some clothing distinction in order to identify themselves as religious minorities.[63] The papal inquisition under Gregory IX demanded that surviving Cathars who accepted the dictates of the ecclesiastical penance of humiliation wear on their clothing a yellow cross as a mark of shame indicating their conviction for the crime of heresy. Medieval thinkers regarded shame within the category of fear. According to Thomas Aquinas, such fear is linked to the notion of disgrace that touches on one's reputation or sense of self-worth. This is particularly potent in a society with strong values about honour. Such fear is connected to *erubescentia* (embarrassment), which produces *verecundia* (shame).[64] The stripping of clothes, the loss of symbolic attire, or the forced wearing of an opprobrious garment created such emotion.

There are some exceptions to the aforementioned general rule about the unique clothing sometimes worn by heretics. Ordinarily, heretics were not distinguishable from the general population. However, some male Cathars wore black robes with a cord. When persecution mounted against

them, these distinctive clothing features were worn under other clothes to avoid easy identification.[65] Waldensians were called "clog-wearers" on account of the fact that, in imitation of apostolic poverty, they often wore sandals or clogs.[66] Elsewhere, certain heretics wore red robes. Evidence for this practice in late thirteenth-century Swabia exists. Red habits were not worn by any official religious order and were regarded in some contexts as most irregular, banned elsewhere, thought by some to symbolize a future religious order, but were, ostensibly, worn publicly by some heretics.[67]

The depiction of heretics in art, woodcuts, broadsheets, and manuscript illuminations can neither necessarily be taken at face value nor regarded as historically accurate. Nonetheless, patterns of shame and public humiliation can be detected. Cathars expelled from Carcassonne in 1209 are shown stripped to their undergarments.[68] A late fourteenth-century Bolognese image reveals a heretic at the stake wearing a mitre and a short garment around his waist and upper legs. He stands to the left of an enthroned pope who sits judging heretical depravity.[69] Elsewhere a group of at least eight Templars, having been reduced to loincloths, are burned.[70] In the late fifteenth-century an oil panel painting in the sacristy of the Church of St. Thomas in Avila depicted two stages of the public humiliation meted out to ecclesiastical criminals: two heretics having already been stripped burn in the flames of the stake while two others await their fate clad in the garments of shame on which is written "condemned heretics."[71] Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Order of the Temple, along with his unrepentant colleague Geoffrey de Charney, is shown at the stake wearing nothing more than a loincloth.[72] The Hussite heretics Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague appear with little demons sitting on their heads, or wearing dunce caps with painted demons on them. Hus is shown assisting a priest at Mass wearing a mitre on which are demons. Elsewhere he appears between SS. Stephen and Laurence holding a chalice and wearing a mitre with demons.[73] More than a dozen examples of Hus wearing a mitre with demons can be found.[74] Most visual depictions of heretics are related to their demise. They were shown routinely in the later Middle Ages wearing either gowns, usually white or black, or, with the exception of some type of loincloth, naked. An unknown heretic by Sassetta wears a black gown as does Hus in several depictions, and also Joan of Arc. White gowns can be seen on Hus in several further depictions as well as on Savonarola and the English martyrs Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer.[75]

There were exceptions to these patterns. One heretic is shown wearing an odd little cap and dressed in a much more elegant gown kneeling in the flames surrounded by books.[76] Heretics reduced to the public humiliation of wearing only their underwear or a type of loincloth is reflected in the execution of the Templars, John Oldcastle, William Tyndale, John Hooper, John Lambert, and unidentified heretics (supposed to be Albigensians) before an inquisitorial tribunal. The extravagant case mounted against the Pappenheimer family in Bavaria showed their deaths with the men wearing underpants of different colours and the woman topless, wearing a long skirt.[77] In all cases, heretics were humiliated by these types of clothing while the ritual stripping and shaming was only increased by means of the public processional to the place of death. The conferring of shameful clothing was by no means occasional. In a single fifteenth-century case, 200 repentant heretics were ordered to wear garments of shame for an entire year while 1,200 others were sentenced to appear in this fashion for the remainder of their lives. Those daring to contravene these court orders were automatically considered impenitent and the penalty for relapsed heretics was then applied.[78]

Heretics were often stripped naked or down to an undergarment as part of their degradation. On 18 March 1314, on the île de la Cité in Paris, Jacques de Molay was stripped until he was naked save for his shirt.[79] The stripping of heretics, and the shame which that degrading procedure implied, also has connections to other elements of public ignominy. In twelfth-century France, William the Monk said to the apostate Benedictine Henry of Lausanne: "You too are a leper, scarred by heresy, excluded from communion by the judgement of the priest according to the law, bareheaded, with ragged clothing, your body covered by an infected and filthy garment; it befits you to shout unceasingly that you are a leper, a heretic and unclean, and must live alone outside the church."[80] Of course, the ritual public stripping and shaming was by no means restricted to heretics and we find iconography of other outcasts similarly punished. One of Philip the Fair's ministers, Enguerrand de Marigny, was accused of corruption and sorcery. Stripped to his underwear, Marigny was hanged on the public gallows at Montfaucon on the last day of April 1315.[81] Elsewhere at least twenty lepers are shown stripped and committed to the fire.[82]

In some cases, shame, heresy, and clothing were related in the public stripping of one's physical garments of honour. There are two primary examples. The first is the ritualistic defrocking of heretical priests that we have already noted rooted in canon law. The other example of ritual strip-

ping from prominence to shame was the public removal of the clothes of authority and aristocracy. Heretics driven from Oxford around 1163 had "their clothes publicly cut off as far as their belts …"[83] In June 1207, in exasperation and with the bold zeal of exterminating heresy, Pope Innocent III warned recalcitrant authorities in Languedoc. He wrote to Raymond VI in strident terms: "Therefore think about it, stupid person, think about it. Is not God who is lord of life and death not able to suddenly cut off your days … and in anger deliver you up to eternal torment?"[84] The consequences were fulfilled on 18 June 1209, when Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, notorious protector of heretics, "deceitful, cruel, torturous and perjured man" was finally reduced to submission in the face of relentless inquisition and crusade.[85] He was forced to hand over seven strongholds to the crusaders and submit to a public humiliation at the Benedictine Abbey Church at Saint Gilles. Before the cathedral, Raymond appeared naked, and in the presence of twenty-two bishops was forced to swear an oath of obedience. The papal legate placed a robe around Raymond's neck and then, while holding the robe, absolved him by whipping. The unfortunate and shamed count was then dragged into the church.[86] Many years later, on account of suspicion about his allegiance to ecclesiastical orthodoxy, Raymond was subjected to a humiliating death. A Hospitaller placed his cloak on the dying man but it was pulled away by another and a protracted squabble broke out. During the fracas, Raymond VI died. His body remained unburied for centuries and was left to rot while rats consumed his remains.[87]

In terms of penitential humiliation, a similar fate awaited his son Raymond VII on 2 April 1229 when he too was obligated to make peace with the church and the French crown. Like his father, Raymond VII was forced to undergo public penance at Notre Dame in Paris where he was made to submit to a ritual stripping and shaming when he was publicly scourged. These were noblemen. These acts of stripping and shaming were among the social implications of heresy, but in terms of dishonour to the knightly class, it was more shameful than execution.[88] It is also sobering to note that some heresy hunters and inquisitors, the fifteenth-century Nicholas Eymeric among them, believed that the imposition of shame even on repentant heretics must remain in perpetuity. Incarceration might come to an end and prisoners released from their cells, but the garments of shame were to remain worn for the rest of one's natural life. There were even post-mortem implications. There is evidence that once certain deviants died their garments of shame were hung up in churches as a perpetual

reminder of their heretical guilt. Others deemed heretical following death were sometimes exhumed, dressed in specific garments of ignominy, and thereafter burned. The idea of being seized and subsequently stripped was pervasive enough in some areas that, should a suspect within reach of the authorities not be treated in this manner, it was considered sufficient indication that the person in question would not be put to shame. In 1422 "Petr Rezek noting that the priest Jan was walking away and that no one had seized him or stripped him, said to me that they would do nothing to him."[89]

It is instructive to note that late medieval depictions of hell frequently show sinners nude. Generally, the only article of clothing permitted was a head covering signifying that person's rank or office, or their particular sin. For example, in Taddeo de Bartolo's reproduction of hell in the Collegiate Church in San Gimignano, fornicators, sodomites, and gluttons are identified by this means along with offenders such as Simon Magus and Cain. This art form is consistent with the use of hats and stripping as symbols of public shame and humiliation. Individuals convicted of fraud were sometimes forced to wear a certain coloured cap as indication of their character. Jews were obliged to wear black, grey, or yellow hats. This either was a substitute or an addition to the *rota* or the yellow badge of infamy.[90] Pointed hats (*pileus cornatus* or the *Judenhat*) were worn by Jewish men between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.[91] Red or brown hats often were symbols of respect. Persons appearing bareheaded either were slaves, peasants, or those shamed.[92] The bare-head represented yet another dimension of the stripping of heretics. Public stripping or being forced to wear the visible signs of shame provides powerful evidence attached to the meaning of clothing as symbol and identification. Stripping or shaming was not restricted to heretics but extended as punishment to other groups as well. Prostitutes were made to wear special indications of their trade, though there was no standard practice across Europe. The practice finds its roots in ancient Rome.[93] In areas under the control of the French king, usually they wore a red shoulder knot. In Toulouse, it was a white knot. At Leipzig, yellow cloaks with blue trim were the norm. In Vienna, a yellow handkerchief was attached to their shoulder. In Bern and Zurich, the shameful ornament was a red cap. At Parma, we find white cloaks, at Bergamo yellow cloaks, while in Milan, black wool cloaks appear to be the mandated attire. Any citizen had the right to strip a prostitute naked should one be encountered improperly clothed.[94] Clothing created perception and that perception shaped reality.[95]

The Church, through canon law, penitentials, and other means, legislated against same-gender sexual behaviour. Offenders were routinely fined, subjected to stripping and shaming that included public humiliation such as the pillory, flogging through the streets, branding on the forehead, being forced to wear a fool's cap that sometimes had a "B" painted on it (meaning bugger), being pelted with rotten fruit and vegetables, or made to process nude, holding candles, to the church. These harsh measures must be contrasted with the visual lewdness or similar acts depicted in sculpture noted in Chap. 4. Certain clothing also marked out the leper just as surely and clearly as it did Jews, prostitutes, and heretics. In some places lepers were ordered to dress in white. Elsewhere, it was mandated that a piece of red material appear on their clothing, while in France the specified clothing was grey or black embroidered with the letter "L" clearly indicating their affliction and separation from society. This symbolized the leper as a member of the underworld, a person apart, an individual shamed. Lepers were to be sequestered from the rest of the faithful, wearing uniform clothing, always carrying that shameful symbol of identification.[96] In effect, certain diagnoses or accusations resulted in exclusion from society.[97] Elsewhere in late medieval Europe we find that certain heretics, in this case Czech Hussites, willingly wore on their clothing deliberate symbols of their defiance, resistance, and religious practice. "In order to distinguish themselves these people wore a red and white chalice on their clothes, weapons, as well as on their banners."[98]

In the Basilica of Torcello at the northern end of the Venetian lagoon there are vivid medieval Byzantine mosaics. Under the Last Judgement can be seen an inscription begging the virgin to cover the naked sinner with her cloak. For the impenitent heretic, the prayer is of no avail. The rituals of stripping and shaming, together with the enforced wearing of certain clothes, were designed to publicly humiliate the heretic, offender, or other undesirable within the social community and in the community of the faithful. Extensions of these practices can be found in the early modern world, especially in the protocols and procedures of the inquisition.[99] Ritual stripping summons to remembrance the nakedness of Adam and Eve prior to the cosmic disaster in the Garden of Eden. After the fall only unrepentant sinners, like Jan Hus and other medieval heretics, felt shame when they were stripped publicly. The "mark of Cain" motif, found in the Hebrew Bible, was later applied by ecclesiastical luminaries, such as the fifth-century Bishop Augustine of Hippo and the thirteenth-century

Pope Innocent III, to certain groups as a means of identification as well as shame.[100] Particular clothing reveals the character of those who wear them.[101] The garments of shame reveal the character of the wearer. The stripping of the heretics indicates their depravity. The stripping and the shaming confirm their expulsion from the community of the faithful. The immediate and obvious indication appears related to clothing. This helps explain the emphasis on the stripping of heretics. In the case of Jan Hus, we read that once he was dead "they burned his clothes to ashes … so that nothing was left of his memory."[102] If certain mentalities demanded his burning, particular anxieties required his remains be obliterated.

Notes

1. Sext 5.9.2 *Degradatio* in Friedberg, ed., *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 2, col. 1090.
2. This paragraph is based on an eyewitness description by Petr Mladoňovice, *Relatio de Mag. Joannis Hus causa* in Václav Novotný, ed., *Fontes rerum bohemicarum*, vol. 8, pp. 116–7. On the opprobrious miter see Milena Kubíková, "The Heretic's Cap of Hus" *The Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice* 4 (2002), pp. 143–50.
3. Robert M. Durling, ed and trans., *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, 3 vols (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996–2011), vol. 1, *Inferno*, 34.61–7, p. 537.
4. Based on St. Jerome's tract "Against the Pelagians," in PL, vol. 23, cols. 544–8. Heretics occupy the sixth circle in Dante's concept of hell.
5. PL, vol. 139, cols. 1630–2. Lester K. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 43.
6. On De Causis see Thomas A. Fudge, *The Memory and Motivation of Jan Hus, Medieval Priest and Martyr* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 109–133.
7. X 5.7.9 and X 5.7.10 in Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 2, cols. 780–3.
8. The text appears in P. Augustin Neumann, ed., "Francouzská Hussitica" *Studie a texty k náboženským dějinám Českých* 3 (Olomouc, 1923), p. 74.
9. Erwin Jacobi, "Der Prozeß im Decretum Gratiani und bei den ältesten Dekretisten" *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Kanonistische Abteilung* 3 (1913), pp. 223–343, but especially pp. 241–4 where he delineates the relevant passages in legal sources.
10. C.11 q.3 c.32 *Omnis Christianus*, in Friedberg, vol. 1, col. 653.

11. On the cooperation of ecclesiastical and secular courts in this matter see Bernhard Schimmelpfennig, "Die Absetzung von Klerikern in Recht und Ritus vornehmlich des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts", in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law*, eds. Stephan Kuttner and Kenneth Pennington (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1980), pp. 517–32, but especially pp. 517–21.
12. Sext. 5.9.2. *Degradatio qualiter fieri debeat*, in Friedberg, vol. 2, col. 1090. See also Jacobi, "Der Prozeß im Decretum Gratiani und bei den ältesten Dekretisten", pp. 241–4.
13. The text of the sermon appears in *Fontes rerum bohemicarum*, vol. 8, pp. 231–43.
14. Vavřinec of Březová, *Historia Hussitica* in *Fontes rerum bohemicarum*, vol. 5, p. 343.
15. Giles Constable, "The Ceremonies and Symbolism of Entering Religious Life and Taking the Monastic Habit, from the Fourth to the Twelfth Century", in *Segni e riti nella chiesa altomedievale occidentale* (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1987), pp. 771–834.
16. On the phrase see especially Matthäus Bernards, "Nudus nudem Christum sequi" *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 14 (1951), pp. 148–51 and Giles Constable, "*Nudum nudem Christum sequi* and Parallel Formulas in the Twelfth Century" in F. Forester Church and Timothy George, eds., *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History: Essays Presented to George Huntston Williams* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), pp. 83–91.
17. Louis Gougaud, *Devotional and Ascetic Practices in the Middle Ages*, trans. G. C. Bateman (London: Burns, Oates, 1927), pp. 131–145, discusses the practice of donning the religious habit on one's deathbed.
18. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, ed., *S. Anselmi cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, 6 vols (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946–61), vol. 4, p. 257.
19. Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed., Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), vol. 4, pp. 78–109.
20. PL, vol. 159, col. 930–2. The letter is from the year 1106.
21. *Petra Žitavského Kronika Zbraslava* (Chronicon aulae regie), in FRB, vol. 4, pp. 92–5.
22. The Latin text has been edited in FRB, vol. 5, pp. 329–534. It covers the period from 1414 to early 1422.
23. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 405.
24. See the anonymous verse "Václav, Havel and Tábor" in František Svejkovský, ed., *Veršované skladby doby husitské* (Prague: Československá akademie věd, 1963), p. 144.
25. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 470.
26. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 407.

27. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 449.
28. Prague Castle Archive MS D 74, fol. 108[v].
29. The synod met between 23 and 30 April 1424. Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite* Revolution, p. 500.
30. Jan Rokycana, *De septem culpis Taboritarum*, Prague Castle Archive MS D 88, fol. 237[v].
31. For example, the *Confessio Taboritarum*, eds., Amedeo Molnár and Romolo Cegna (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1983), pp. 96–100.
32. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 441.
33. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 451.
34. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 477.
35. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 482.
36. Jena Codex, Prague National Museum Library MS IV B 24, fols. 28[v]–29[r].
37. *Historia Hussitica*, p. 505.
38. The sermon text has been preserved in Jan Rokycana, *De septem culpis Taboritarum*, Prague Castle Archive MS D 88 fols. 196[r]-198[v].
39. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols.
40. See for example, Thomas M. Izbicki, "Failed Censures: Ecclesiastical Regulation of Women's Clothing in Later Medieval Italy" in Robin Netherton and Gale R. Owen-Crocker, eds., *Medieval Clothing and* Textiles, vol. 5 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), pp. 37–53.
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42. Mary C. Mansfield, *The Humiliation of Sinners: Public Penance in Thirteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 126–7.
43. Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Kent Heresy Proceedings 1511–12* (Maidstone: Kent Archaeological Society, 1997), p. xvii.
44. See particularly the penance meted out to Joan Olberde of Godmersham and Elizabeth White of Canterbury on 3 June 1511 in Tanner, ed., *Kent Heresy Proceedings 1511–12*, pp. 71–2 and 74.
45. Tanner, ed., *Kent Heresy Proceedings 1511–12*, pp. 40, 64, and 71.
46. Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428–31* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), pp. 151 and 156.
47. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, p. 469.
48. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, pp. 462 and 468.
49. Françoise Piponnier and Perrine Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages*, trans., Caroline Beamish (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 83–6.
50. Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam*, trans., David Maisel, et al. (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985),

pp. 169–70, 179, 185–6, 189, 191, 193, 194, 196–7, 198, 199, 205, 207, 349–50, are Muslim documents from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries which reflect these ideas.

51. See Allan Cutler, "Innocent III and the Distinctive Clothing of Jews and Muslims" *Studies in Medieval Culture* 3 (No. 2, 1970), pp. 92–116 and Robert Jutte, "Stigma-symbole: Kleidung als Identitätsstiftendes merkmal bei Spätmittelalterlichen und Frühneuzeitlichen Randgruppen (Juden, Dirnen, Aussätzige, Bettler)" *Saeculum* 44 (No. 1, 1993), pp. 65–89.
52. Tanner, ed., *Kent Heresy Proceedings 1511–12*, *passim*.
53. Lea, *Inquisition*, vol. 1, p. 468.
54. Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *Albrici monachi Triumfontium chronicon*, ed. Paul Scheffer-Boichorst, *Monumenta Germaniae historica, scriptores*, vol. 23 (Hannover: Weidmann, 1874), p. 937.
55. The wearing of these yellow crosses by heretics is noted in Jean Duvernoy, ed., *Le Registre d'Inquisition de Jacques Fournier, évêque de Pamiers (1318–1325)*, 3 vols (Paris: Edouard Privat, 1965), vol. 2, p. 436 et al., Bernard Gui, *Liber sententiarum*, London, British Library Add. MS 4697 fols.17[v] and 19[v] and *The Sorcery Trial of Alice Kyteler*, eds., L.S. Davidson and J.O. Ward (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1993), p. 70.
56. Piponnier and Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages*, p. 86 and Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom*, pp. 44–5.
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58. Janusz Tazbir, "Obraz heretyka i diabla w Katolickiej propagandzie wyznaniowej xvi–xvii w" *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 88 (No. 4, 1981), pp. 939–53.
59. This in the bull *Quo inter ceteras*, 22 August 1235, sent to the archbishop of Sens. Text in Paul Fredericq, ed., *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis neerlandicae*, 5 vols (Ghent: Vuylsteke, 1889–1902), vol. 2, pp. 48–9.
60. Matthew Paris, *Chronicon majora*, iii, 361, 520. Other chroniclers like Philip Mouskes and Alberic of Trois-Fontaines made similar claims as Matthew Paris.
61. Konrad of Marburg reported in the *Annals of Worms* his willingness to burn a hundred suspects if this put an end to the career of only one heretic. *Annales Wormatienses*, ed. G.H. Pertz, in MGH, *Scriptores selectae* (Hannover: Hahn, 1861), vol. 17, p. 39.
62. See the study by Charles H. Haskins, "Robert Le Bougre and the Beginnings of the Inquisition in Northern France" *American Historical Review* 7 (No. 3, 1902), pp. 437–57 and (No. 4, 1902), pp. 631–65. Claims about cloth-

ing were made in England. See Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 145–7.

63. 4 Lat 68 in Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, p. 266.
64. *Summa theologiae*, II-1, 41.4.
65. According to the *Historia Albigensis* it should be noted that male Cathars did wear black robes with a cord. Peter of les-Vaux-de-Cernay, *Historia Albigensis*, eds., W.A. and M.D. Sibley (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), p. 12, Richard Abels and Ellen Harrison, "The Participation of Women in Languedocian Catharism" *Mediaeval Studies* 41 (1979), p. 237, and Milan Loos, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, trans., Iris Lewitová (Prague: Academia, 1974), p. 261.
66. Janet Shirley, trans., *The Song of the Cathar Wars: A History of the Albigensian Crusade* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 14, 41 and 136.
67. On this see Herbert Grundmann, *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Link between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women's Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, with the Historical Foundations of German Mysticism*, trans., Steven Rowan (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), pp. 173 and 376, n.117.
68. *Les Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis*, London, British Library MS Cotton Nero E 11, pt. 2, fol. 20^{v} dating to the mid fourteenth-century.
69. Among the collections of the Staatliche Museen der Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin.
70. *Les Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis*, London, British Library MS Royal 20 C. viii, fol. 44^{v}.
71. Pedro Berruguete's painting, "St. Dominic presides over an *auto-da-fé*", is now kept in Madrid, Museo del Prado, reference number P00618.
72. *Les Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis*, London, British Library MS Royal 20 C. viii, fol. 48^{r}.
73. Demons on the heads of Hus and Jerome can be seen in a manuscript version of Ulrich Richenthal's chronicle of the Council of Constance, *Buch vom Konzil zu Konstanz. Chronik*, Prague, National Library MS XVI A 17 fol. 123^{r}. Demons painted on the dunce caps of heretics are recorded in trial records. See for example Hus' trial in FRB, vol. 8, p. 117. Hus as a liturgical assistant appears on a folding altar panal in Roudnice. There is a reproduction of it in Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, p. 194. With the chalice he appears in the *Smíškovský kancional,* Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 15492 fol. 285^{r}. On Jerome, see Thomas A. Fudge, *Jerome of Prague and the Foundations of the Hussite Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

74. See Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia*, pp. 189–208.
75. "The Burning of a Heretic" by Sassetta dates from *c.* 1423 and was part of the predella of the Arte della Lana altarpiece. It is now in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Hus with a black gown appears in the aforementioned Richenthal chronicle, and Joan of Arc in *The Vigils of Charles VII*, 1484, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr. 5054, fol. 71[r]. Hus in a white gown is more frequent: Litoměřický Graduále, Terezín, Regional Archives MS IV C 1, fols. 43[r] and 244[v]; Jena Codex, Prague, National Museum Library MS IV B 24 fol. 38[r]; in the Martinic Bible, Prague, National and University Library MS 1 TB 3, fol. 11[v]; Malostranská Graduále, Prague, National Library MS XVII A 3, fol. 363[r]; among numerous others; "The Martyrdom of Savonarola in the Piazza della Signoria", anonymous *c.* 1500, in the Museo di San Marco, Florence. Depictions of the English martyrs can be seen in John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments. The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011). Available from: http://www.johnfoxe.org 1563 edition, book 5, p. 1572 and the 1570 edition, book 11, p. 1977.
76. Eberhart Windecke, *Historia imperatoris Sigismundi germanica*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 13975, fol. 129[r].
77. Templars, London, British Library MS Royal 20 C. vii, fol. 44[v]; Oldcastle in Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1563 edition, book 2, p. 329; Hooper in *Ibid*., 1563 edition, book 5, p. 1133, Tyndale and Lambert in *Ibid*., 1563 edition, book 3, p. 575, and 1563 edition, book 3, p. 625; Pedro Berruguete, *Auto da fé*, *c.* 1500. Prado, Madrid; Pappenheimers, Munich, Staatmuseum, Prints Collection, Inv. no. M. I/320.
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82. *Les Chroniques de France ou de St. Denis*, London, British Library MS Royal 20 C. viii, fol. 56[v].
83. The report appears in Robert I. Moore, *The Birth of Popular Heresy* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), pp. 82–4 at p. 84.
84. PL, vol. 215, col. 1166.

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98. Vavřinec of Březová, *Historia Hussitica*, pp. 389–90, a reference to groups of Hussites.
99. Shelomo Alfassa, "The Origins and Stigma of the Iberian Garment of Shame, the *San Benito*" *International Sephardic Journal* 1 (No. 1, 2004), pp. 5–18.
100. Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Mark of Cain* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981).
101. Miyuki Nakae, "Clothes in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century France: An Analysis According to the *Annales* School" *Shakai-Keizai-Shigaku* 44 (No. 4, 1978), pp. 40–59. The article is written in Japanese. I rely on a summary.
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CHAPTER 9

Surviving the Middle Ages: The Extraordinary Pursuit of Salvation

In the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt Sinai there is a twelfth-century icon inspired by a treatise entitled *Κλίμαξ* (Latin *Scala Paradisi*, meaning the "Ladder of Divine Ascent") written by John Climacus, who had been an abbot of Mt Sinai 500 years earlier.[1] The treatise had been written at the request of John, Abbot of Raithu, a Red Sea monastery.[2] The book describes the spiritual pilgrimage from the futility of human life to oneness with God by means of ascetic practice. There are thirty rungs on the ladder. The book is divided into three major sections. Steps one through seven discuss the essential virtues required for the climb. Steps eight through twenty-six instruct the pilgrim on strategies for avoiding destructive vices by means of salutary virtues. Steps twenty-seven through thirty outline the ultimate goal of the journey. The last rung on the ladder can only be achieved by attaining a state of being that transcends prayer (προσευχή), stillness (ἡσυχία), and all emotion (ἀπαθεία) and finds rest in love (ἀγάπη). The iconographical representation of the vision expressed by John Climacus shows monks ascending the ladder going up to heaven. On every rung there is the danger of demons pulling one off the ladder and down to hell. At the bottom, a group of monks pray for the salvation of their brothers. At the top, Christ and the angels wait to receive those who successfully resist the temptations and dangers of the world, the flesh and the Devil. In between God and perdition there stands an army of devils with pikes, ropes, and bows waging eternal warfare on humanity. Perhaps

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nothing was more central to the medieval mind and less a source of anxiety than the eternal fate of the soul.

The pursuit of salvation in the Middle Ages was not the aim only of the religious though often they were at the visible forefront of that preoccupation. Indeed, these men and women of peace who had retreated from life itself, or so it seemed, in deference to severe vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, often characterized their lives of spirituality in militaristic terms. As followers of Christ, these ascetic people were the "soldiers of Christ." As the Cappadocian father Basil of Caesarea put it: "many are his marches and vigils; his endurance of heat and cold, engagements with the foe, the worst and greatest of perils; often, perhaps, death itself … in the combat for the confession of the faith and in the triumph of martyrdom … Fight then like good soldiers."[3] The most important task facing the medieval religious seems best characterized in terms of the military. We find this expressed in a tenth-century monastic foundation charter. "The abbot is armed with spiritual weapons and supported by a troop of monks anointed with the dew of heavenly graces. They fight together in the strength of Christ with the sword of the spirit against the wiles of Devils. They defend the king and clergy of the realm from the onslaughts of their invisible enemies."[4] The Anglo-Saxon King Edgar issued the charter to monks of the New Minster at Winchester in 966. The conflict was spiritual, and survival hung in the balance, with salvation at stake. Late medieval religion was concerned, at least officially, with saving souls. That was the ultimate form of surviving the Middle Ages. This was not a once-for-all event, but rather a lifelong process: a cycle of sin, absolution, and penance—human sin and the forgiveness of sins. Hence, sacramental confession and penance evolved into the religious activity of the medieval church. Only the celebration of the Eucharist could rival the importance of confession and penance.[5] The fourth Lateran Council in 1215 declared that every "mortal" sin committed since the last confession had to be confessed to a priest at least annually.[6] There were those who taught that submission to the Roman Church entirely was assurance of the forgiveness of sins.[7]

Both sacramentalism and magic had at its core a belief that ritual actions performed in the material world had an impact in the supernatural world. Within that matrix, we find extreme examples of piety and devotion. The post-mortem instructions drawn up by Emperor Maximilian I at the time of his death in 1519 provide an exceptional example.[8] During the last years of his life (1514–1519), Maximilian travelled everywhere with his oak coffin.[9] In 1518, the emperor arrived in Innsbruck where he took ill. He set

out from the city for one of his castles in the mountains of Upper Austria. The journey proved too much. He reached Wels (one of the principal towns of the province above the River Enns) on 10 December 1518. It was soon apparent that the emperor's life was drawing to a close and that death was approaching. The attending physicians informed Maximilian that he did not have long to live. He was advised to make preparation for the final judgement. The emperor replied that he had already undertaken those preparations long ago knowing full well the brevity of time at the moment of death is often inadequate. "The man who makes no memory of himself during his lifetime will have none after his death and will be forgotten with the tolling of the final knell."[10]

At the end, Maximilian made very specific provisions about settling his affairs but most importantly instructed his staff on how his body should be treated once he expired. He was to wear a hairshirt. He ordered his hair hacked off, his teeth broken out and pounded into powder, and his body severely whipped. Why? He wished to appear before God as penitent. Thereafter his penitent body was to be shown publicly as an example of human mortality and penitential devotion. Following this, his remains were to be placed in a sack and filled with quicklime and ashes. Then the sack should be deposited into the coffin that for five years had traversed the boundaries of his domain. Gregor Reisch, prior of the Carthusian Charterhouse at Freiburg-im-Breisgau, took charge of the arrangements.[11] Reisch put a white Carthusian rosary in the dead hand of the emperor and, perhaps against Maximilian's wishes, placed other sacred objects alongside the body. Thereafter the decedent was sown into a coarse cloth. Four days later, the remains of the emperor were carried to the parish church for the funeral. Johannes Faber, vicar-general of the Dominican congregation in Upper Germany, gave the oration. Cardinal Matthäus Lang von Wellenburg (later prince-archbishop of Salzburg) followed the bier and said the prayers for the dead. The oak coffin was transported amid a great procession to Vienna and thereafter to Wiener Neustadt. Finally, on 3 February, the casket was ordered buried under the altar in the chapel of St. George in the Wiener Neustadt castle, positioned so that officiating priests ever after celebrating the divine liturgy and holy communion could not avoid trampling on his mortal remains in the duty of their sacred office. All of these careful instructions had one goal in mind: Maximilian died hoping that the desecration and humiliation of his physical body would merit the grace of God and be judged worthy of true penitence. The emperor expressed hope that his repentance at the hour of death might contribute

towards a sufficient atonement for the sins committed in the flesh with the outcome of gaining salvation for his soul.[12]

What may strike the modern reader as shocking or bizarre was not all that unusual. Violence and piety often went hand in hand.[13] More than a thousand years before Maximilian decided he wished to make the transition from earthly existence to life in the next world in a radically different way than normally reserved for kings and royalty, there were strange men living out lives of extreme spirituality in the deserts of Egypt and Syria. These individuals were intent on devoting their entire lives to ascending the ladder outlined by John Climacus. These men (and women) went to some lengths to live lives of religious devotion and spiritual pursuit.[14] They were ascetics and their influence produced an "ascetic movement" that could be found throughout the Middle Ages. This movement was concerned with the idea of inherent evil that the Latin Church taught was manifested in the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and these enemies stood between the Christian pilgrim and eternal salvation.

The word "asceticism" comes from the Greek meaning "training." These men were "training." They were committed to prayer, the contemplation of Christ, spiritual exercises, acts of charity, and abstinence from meat, alcohol, fancy clothing, marriage, and sexual intercourse. One of the more notorious was Simeon the Stylite or Simeon Stylites (390–459) who was called the "athlete and friend of God."[15] Simeon lived in Syria and can be located at the forefront of a quite fantastic cult of pillar-dwellers.[16] Simeon was trying to get away from people and worldly distractions. He escaped to the Syrian wilderness but was dismayed to find crowds of oglers coming and going, clearly fascinated by the extreme devotion of the holy men. So he went up. He lived on a pillar that he had workmen increase until the height eventually reached sixty feet with a platform about six square feet. He spent thirty-six years up there. The term "stylite" comes from the Greek *stylos* meaning "pillar." Simeon went to some lengths to practice what St. Paul called "crucifying the flesh" or in training himself "with fasting and prayer."[17] He originally ran away from his parents and joined a monastery when he was about sixteen years old. At this stage in his life he was tonsured, meaning he now bore the visible sign of the religious life. He tied ropes around his body so tightly they cut through to the bone until blood dripped from his body, his flesh rotted and his bed became full of worms. Clothing stuck to the wounds. Ostensibly it required three days of soaking in oil and water to separate the fabric from the flesh. Thereafter he dug a hole in which he stood up to his chest.

When this proved insufficient he lived in a dry well filled with spiders, snakes and scorpions and evil spirits and fought Satan.[18] The *Syriac Life* tells us that "in secret, he had many battles with the enemy of good."[19] He lived in the open air thereafter for four years. All of this transpired before he became a stylite.

The platform at the apex of the pillar had been deliberately constructed so that he could neither sit nor lay. Moreover, there was no protection from the elements. He preached daily to crowds who gathered. Over time his body began to exhibit signs of the brutal punishment he had passively inflicted on it. Simeon developed an ulcer on a thigh that oozed of pus, but he took no note of this affliction. His disciple Antonius tells us the tumour came from the Devil.[20] Simeon simply compensated for this disability by standing on one foot for two years. Worms collected on his sores but he refused to see them off. He merely instructed them to "eat what God has given you."[21] Due to the excessive standing, Simeon developed an ulcer on his foot that continually oozed pus. Simeon normally ate but once a week but during Lent he took no nourishment and chained himself to the pillar to prevent falling off, and thereby, prematurely terminating his training and the essential ascent of the ladder to salvation.

Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus tells us that one of his assistants observed Simeon bending over (head to toes) 1244 times before losing count![22] At length he came to resemble a skeleton. According to the *Syriac Life* Simeon ascended the ladder in an extraordinary quest for God.

> He stood like a valiant man and was brave like a combatant and trained like an athlete and armed like a warrior in the army of the Lord. He endured all afflictions …He held the evil one in contempt … he defeated Satan … he destroyed the whole army of the devil … In open view the flesh of his feet ruptured from much standing, but his steadfast mind was on fire for his Lord, a contest in secret. The vertebrae of his spine were dislocated … he did not become negligent from the severe bodily pains … He was not disheartened in the afflictions and perils… He did not fear his bodily wounds nor did holy Mar Simeon give relief to his body. His eyes wasted away from lack of sleep, but his mind was enlightened with the vision of his Lord … His body was with human beings, but his mind with spiritual beings … He chose affliction over relief, exhaustion over rest, and hunger over fullness … During forty years he stood on a pillar forty cubits high and a cubit wide. His feet were fastened and bound as if in the stocks so that he could not move them either to the right or to the left, with the result that their flesh was worn away from the frequent affliction and bone and sinew could be

> seen. His belly was ruptured from standing so long … These afflictions, and many more, the athlete of God endured both openly and in secret. For he withstood bravely and valiantly the heat of the sun in summer and the force of the intense cold in winter. For the sun was like a fire … then winter came with a blast … with snow … and the east wind with violence, and the south wind with its sultry heat. All of them combined forces together with a battering rain, they joined battle … the wind ceased and became calm, the ice and snow changed and melted, and the rain was absorbed, while Mar Simeon grew strong.[23]

There were assassination attempts but these failed spectacularly.[24] The histories of his life (of which there are three) suggest that his was a heavenly calling and he was regarded as the "consummate athlete of piety" who became a "holy man."[25] He performed many miracles, people came from far and near to see him and to listen to him. He passed judgements on various issues and gave out advice to the crowds who congregated. After more than twenty years his mother found him but she was not allowed to see him.[26] This is reminiscent of other holy men who declined the company of females even if those in question were blood relatives. Simeon made himself available to other visitors every afternoon. By means of a ladder, visitors were able to ascend and communicate with the holy man. He wrote letters and delivered addresses to those assembled beneath his pillar. In contrast to the extreme austerity that he demanded of himself, his preaching conveyed temperance and compassion, and was marked with common sense and freedom from fanaticism. Bishop Theodoret tells us that after Simeon finally died and his soul was gathered unto God, his body remained upright![27] Antonius tells us the Bishop of Antioch tried to detach a hair (as a relic) from the departed stylite but was smitten and his hand withered. Simeon apparently even performed posthumous miracles.[28] Evidently, it pleased God for Simeon to stand on his pillar, for he stood there year after year – thirty-six in all – fasting, praying, exhorting those who gathered, a sign pointing the way to heaven, to a higher, better, more holy life. According to Bishop Theodoret, his perch on the pillar expressed his desire to escape earth and soar to heaven.[29] After his death, his pillar was enclosed by a huge martyrion, the remains of which can still be seen to this day at Qal'at Sim'ān in Syria. Epitaphs from the *Syriac Life* refer to Simeon Stylites as "the genuine servant of the Lord," "wise pilot and helmsman of the ship of the world," a "reliable master-builder," a "winning athlete," a "stout-hearted warrior," and "our preserver and

nourisher."[30] The accounts of his life differ but remain unified. "Antonios gives us the worm and the pearl; the Syriac vita the prophet transfigured in the incense on the altar; Theodoret offers the achieved penitence of the philosopher. For each, the saint's actual vocation, practice, and activities are the same. At issue is the nature of devotion, its meaning and pursuit."[31]

The mentality and absolute commitment to holiness exhibited by Simeon the Stylite never truly faded entirely from the religious mindset of Christian Europe. Between Simeon and Emperor Maximilian, the twelfth-century English hermit Bartholomew of Farne (†1193) expresses the cogent conviction establishing linkages between the temporal, physical, body and the eternal, spiritual, soul. "We must inflict on our body all sorts of adversity if we expect to bring it to the purity and perfection of the soul!" When death came for him, Bartholomew told those around him he wanted to be buried there on the Farne Islands where he had fought and suffered in order to obtain the heavenly consolation.[32] The righteous who ascend the ladder gain the heavenly world in the company of God and the angels. Those who cannot or do not follow the pathways of asceticism and spiritual pursuit do not find salvation but instead find their journeys lead only to hell, to the Devil and his demons, where the souls of the damned, described in the visions of St. Birgitta of Sweden, are "putrefying, stinking and horribly deformed."[33] We find the prelude to all this vividly expressed in a late fifteenth-century image called *Les Amants trépassés* ("the dead lovers").[34] The two figures are dead but yet still alive. Both are naked, displaying their decomposing bodies, their bones are visible through the flesh, their faces severely emaciated. They wear sheets that have been blown back. The woman's withered flesh is fully exposed and a toad clings to her genitals.[35] Snakes are coiled around and within their bodies, biting the living dead. Flies feed on their flesh. They remain standing. The man covers his genitals with one hand while the other rests on his chest. The woman touches his shoulder with one hand. They have not survived but they have not yet expired. This is death. This is the inexorable process of decay and disintegration and pain. The dead lovers occupy the boundary between this life and the next and that line is blurred beyond distinction and they exist only to remind the viewer of that truth *memento mori*.[36]

Simeon Stylites and Bartholomew of Farne embrace the disintegration of the flesh and extol its virtues. They consider it a far better end than falling victim to the inevitable maggots that await once life has departed from the body. In a less dramatic scenario, Emperor Maximilian agreed with that perspective though he waited until the last possible moment to

eschew the flesh and make his pilgrimage to salvation. The vivid words of the eleventh-century Peter Damian provides an unapologetic contrast. “Come on, brother, what is this flesh that you take such care of and cover with clothes and gently nourish as though it were royal offspring? Is it not a mass of putrefaction? Is it not worms, dust and ashes? Is it appropriate that a wise man should pay attention to what comes hereafter and what it will be like then? Pus, discharge, stench, decay and obscene corruption. What sort of thanks will these worms give to you, who are about to consume the flesh that you have nourished with such gentle care?”[37] Medieval people saw beyond the frailty and temporality of the flesh as depicted vividly by Peter Damian and grasped hold of the eternal significance of the soul. Simeon Stylites ascended his pillar in the Syrian desert while the medieval religious turned their faces to the ladder of life. The posture echoes the many historical exhortations to martyrdom (whether literal or substitute) from the early and patristic periods of the church.[38]

There were other pathways to salvation. The desire to survive likewise assumed less startling proportions and sometimes extended into areas of curiosity. Among medieval sources we read popular stories from the thirteenth century of spectacular Eucharistic devotion. In one case a woman took a communion host home and put it in her beehive. She did this in hopes it would preserve her bees and save them from dying off. The next day she discovered that the bees, having recognized the sacral nature of the body of Christ present among them, had out of great piety built a chapel in the hive, complete with windows, roof, altar, a porch, and a bell tower. Once the construction of the miniature chapel was completed, the bees reverently placed the host on the altar.[39] The woman became an unwitting witness to an extraordinary quest for salvation.

Stories like these were often repeated in the religious life. The piety of members in the animal kingdom and their innate recognition of those higher values can also be illustrated by a similar story related by the thirteenth-century Dominican Étienne de Bourbon. Unlike the female keeper of the beehive who wanted to ensure the continuation of her bees, the second tale concerns a farmer simply desiring to gain wealth. Listening to the advice offered by a friend, the farmer contrived to secure a consecrated host from the parish church that he placed into his own beehive. What happened next was a parallel response as found in the tale told by Caesarius of Heisterbach. Once more the pious bees with great reverence and devotion constructed a miniature church that contained an altar. Upon this sacred space they too placed the consecrated host. As though

to celebrate the presence of the body of Christ among them, bees from all over the neighbourhood were attracted and together they sang beautiful hymns of praise to God. When the farmer returned to inspect the hives hoping to discover them overflowing with honey he was astonished to find them completely empty except for the hive wherein the bees had built a church and where the sacred host rested. The pious bees promptly attacked the impious farmer who was forced to withdraw. Having consulted with his ordinary, the local parish priest led a procession to the holy hive and carried the little bee church back to the parish church in the village. During this transition and procession, the bees continued to sing songs. Once the little church was safely inside the parish church, the bees flew away.[40]

One of the means whereby people survived and facilitated their quest for God was through deliberate association with the objects and places deemed holy by the church. These holy objects were often associated with power and miracles.[41] Derived from the Latin *reliquus* (meaning "left behind"), these relics were venerated, collected, traded, stolen, mass-produced, occasionally lost, and sometimes deliberately destroyed. They functioned as instruments of power, politics, and propaganda. Their use and appropriation can be located throughout Europe. One cannot speak of religion and the quest for salvation in the later Middle Ages without referring to relics. It has been argued with persuasive force that relics represented one of the most important features on the religious landscape of medieval Europe. Practically every church, every altar, many noblemen, kings, queens, and religious houses possessed relics and often these collections were in great number. The second Council of Nicaea in 787 decreed that every altar should possess a relic and that a church could not be consecrated without at least one.[42] That directive seems to have been taken quite literally by the end of the Middle Ages. In practical terms, relics were matters of state, possessed legal implications, and performed important social functions. Relics often featured in military matters. The discovery of the alleged holy lance of Antioch in 1098 during the first crusade was credited with inspiring the crusaders to break out of the besieged city, and therefore, enabling the Christians to succeed.[43] By contrast, when the relic of the true cross, carried by the bishop of Acre, was lost during the battle at the Horns of Hattin in 1187 the crusaders were demoralized and suffered total defeat.[44] Elsewhere we read of consecrated hosts, carried in monstrances by priests when armies went into battle. Sometimes both armies went out to confront the other under the sign of the body

of Christ.[45] More than this, relics contributed to perceptions of individual identity. Relics were also commodities of enormous commercial value. For example, Louis IX spent a small fortune buying relics for Saint Chapelle.[46] Despite claims about papal authority, spiritual dominion, and functioning as the vicar of Christ, when it came to the practice of papal rule, it seems clear that the occupants of the highest office in Christendom owed their lion's share of authority to the undisputed fact that popes were the guardians of the mortal remains of St. Peter. This reality caused powerful men and women to make the journey to holy Rome where they were inclined to take heed to the mediated voice of St. Peter himself as facilitated through his nominated personal representative on earth.[47]

By the end of the Middle Ages, collectors of relics could be found across Europe. Perhaps one of the most devoted relics collectors of the period was Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony. In 1493 the elector spent five days in the city of Jerusalem. This experience seems to have shaped his spirituality, and thereafter, he went to enormous lengths to procure as many holy objects as possible. In order to preserve his vast collection, Frederick spent a fortune refurbishing the Castle Church in the Saxon capital of Wittenberg. In this holy space, Frederick amassed his collection of more than 19,000 relics. Within this German repository one might find the body of a holy innocent slain by the henchmen of King Herod in his futile quest to destroy the young Jesus. Frederick's collection of relics included a sample of breast milk from the Blessed Virgin Mary and some straw ostensibly taken from the stable of the Nativity on which the baby Christ had slept. Extending the boundaries of his piety, Frederick employed no fewer than eighty-three priests to say or sing almost 10,000 masses for him during the year 1520 alone. Elector Frederick the Wise was not alone in these extreme acts of piety and religious devotion. Rivalling Frederick's collection of relics in Wittenberg was another vast collection belonging to Albrecht of Brandenburg, the electoral archbishop of Mainz. Albrecht's relics were of sufficient spiritual force that viewers of these holy objects could obtain release from up to thirty-nine million years in purgatory.[48] That promise was a powerful incentive for men and women to come and piously view the relics. Such collections were both enormous and extraordinary, to say nothing of their rarity.

Medieval relics included such interesting holy objects as the cloth in which Thomas à Becket blew his nose, bones from Balaam's famous talking ass, and a very rare piece of Noah's pre-historic ark. Found among these vast collections of relics were drops of sweat from the brow of Christ

during that anxious night spent in the Garden of Gethsemane. Incense offered by the Magi was reported to have survived the vicissitudes of time, as well as the foreskin of baby Jesus (Charroux). There were entire bodies of saints to be viewed or milk from the Virgin Mary's breasts (Walsingham and Orvieto). Hair of the virgin was displayed (Laon). Moreover, there were several of the pots used at Cana by Jesus wherein water had miraculously changed to wine. There was dirt extracted from the very field wherein God had created Adam. Other collections featured pieces of the manna that had sustained the Hebrews during their long desert sojourn. Thorns from the very crown of thorns that had been placed on the head of Christ (Saint Chapelle) and an actual piece from Mt. Calvary could be seen. Collections of relics featured a piece of the table at which Christ and his friends had eaten the Last Supper. Mary's girdle also turned up in these collections (Prato Cathedral) as well as various arms, legs, skulls, and other body parts of various and sundry persons, and one of Jesus' diapers was also claimed by one of the inveterate collectors of relics in these extreme acts of devotion and piety, to say nothing of the foreskin of the son of God (Conques).

Entire theologies supported the brisk and pious trade. Distinctions were drawn. Technically, the relic is not what is worshipped but rather the essence of what the relic represents. Such holy objects prompt the heart of the faithful to greater devotion and by this means the intercession of the saint is moved by the fervent desire of the penitent to effect forgiveness for sin.[49] So valuable were these objects that possession of them was seen as a definite aid to those wishing to survive the Middle Ages, and the drive to collect and keep relics frequently crossed lines of modern concepts of morality and legality. Robbers often stole sacred objects in their quests for power, prestige, and perhaps even for salvation.[50] Monks were not averse to breaking open tombs, crass thieves raided church treasuries, and unscrupulous traders ransacked cemeteries.[51] Pilgrims were prone to thieving relics.[52] According to his medieval biographer, Bishop Hugh of Lincoln went to great lengths to obtain a relic of Mary Magdalene, "the most blessed lover of Christ." In 1190 he visited the Benedictine abbey of Fécamp in Normandy. He was shown the greatest treasure of the monastery, an arm bone wrapped in three layers of silk and linen apparently belonging to Mary Magdalene. In his excitement, Bishop Hugh cut open the wrappings, first kissed the bone, then tried to break off a fragment. When this failed, he bit the bone first with his incisors and then with his molar teeth. At length he succeeded and was able to escape with two

splinters while stunned and mortified monks and their abbot protested in vain. Hugh's response was to say that if he had handled the sacred body of Christ with unworthy fingers, partaking of it with lips and teeth, (during the sacrament) why should he be reluctant to treat the bones of the saints any differently.[53]

Warnings were issued against the raiders of sacred relics. At Conques, seven thieves were caught in a "divine storm" as they robbed relics and the roof caved in and the blasphemers were killed. Lest anyone think this episode was mere coincidence, the chronicler noted the bodies were hurled from a window a considerable distance. The narrative warned other such criminals that should they avoid a similar fate now they could expect to be remanded eventually to harsher punishment in the eternal fire of hell.[54] Among the raiders of sacred objects was the aforementioned Bishop Hugh of Lincoln. At the shrine of St. Nicasius (in Meulan), the bishop broke a bone from the head and took it away. At St. Denis, near Paris, he failed to extract one of the teeth, but managed to secure "a delicate little bone" from between the eye sockets. At Peterborough, Hugh took a knife and cut out a sinew from the arm of the king and martyr, Oswald. Elsewhere, when robbery seemed less an option, the intrepid collector prevailed on the religious at Fleury until they provided him with a tooth from the skull of St. Benedict.[55]

Fraud, theft, and opportunism characterized the relics industry. The bones of Mary Magdalene were brought to the Abbey Church of Vézelay from St. Maximin la Ste Baume by the early eleventh century. Two hundred years later, her entire body was discovered at St. Maximin. That noted, her body was also advertised as being simultaneously in Senigallia, Rome, and Constantinople. Moreover, multiple skulls, arms, fingers, and other parts were scattered across Europe. John Calvin ruefully noted that if all the fragments of the true cross were collected it would be sufficient to build a ship.[56] When Francis of Assisi died, armed guards were posted around the building to prevent the theft of his body and when Thomas Aquinas expired, his massive corpse was divided into several precious relics and distributed. There are composite relics wherein are contained objects from several sources. For example, in the shrine of St. Boniface in the hermit church in Warfhuizen in the northern Netherlands one can find bone fragments of St. Boniface as well as bone fragments belonging to SS Benedict and Bernard. Relics were extraordinary objects that were seized on with much enthusiasm by ordinary people who found in them solutions to the problems of life, power for spiritual needs, and remedies with

which to confront and combat the dire threats of social crisis, disease, and the impending perils of hell. The shape of Christian Europe was formed in part by the preoccupation with relics.[57] But there was always the danger of corruption and contamination when the unholy breached sacred space and such lines had to be vigorously defended. Forty-four years after his death, the posthumously condemned John Wyclif was ordered dug up and removed from the consecrated ground at Lutterworth. The remains of the notorious heretic were ordered exhumed at the Council of Constance in 1415 because Wyclif's memory had also been condemned. The order was not immediately fulfilled but was delayed until 1428 when Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, acted. He took this step after being reminded of his duty on 9 December 1427 when Pope Martin V ordered Fleming to proceed against the remains of Wyclif.[58] So it came to pass that in the spring of 1428 John Wyclif was disinterred, his remains burned, and thrown into the River Swift in accordance with the will of the pontiff and in fulfilment of medieval canon law.[59]

Connected to the cult of relics and the preoccupation with purity and holiness was the medieval practice of going on pilgrimage. This common occurrence in the Middle Ages was the expression of pious Christians to actually go and see relics. In the twelfth century Abbot Suger described a great crowd pressing into the Abbey Church of St. Denis, characterised by howling men and screaming women, whom the abbot thought were about to give birth, all shouting and struggling to get in to see the collection of relics. Many were unable to gain entry, those inside were literally crushed together, and some were trampled.[60] These pilgrim sites were often marked by some miraculous phenomena like bleeding statutes, blood-spattered hosts, or other supernatural occurrences.[61] Pilgrims in the hundreds of thousands took to the roads in hope of finding remedy for their ills and ailments whether physical or spiritual.[62] More than 60,000 in one week were recorded at Munich in 1392 and in 1466 more than 130,000 pilgrim badges were sold in a two-week period at Einsiedeln and over 100,000 pilgrims annually came to Wilsnack.[63]

Pilgrimages always ended in places where miracles had happened previously and where it was imagined further miracles might transpire. Pilgrimages were voluntary, unless prescribed as penance. At the pilgrim's end, one might obtain souvenirs, indulgences, or in fact the forgiveness of sins just for having made the trip. In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII declared a jubilee year, announcing all who came to Rome would receive an indulgence.[64] Hundreds of thousands made the trip.[65] Pilgrimages

also attracted numerous teenagers. In the 1450s thousands of German boys and girls made long pilgrimages to shrines like Mont St. Michel in Normandy. Town chroniclers recorded their suspicions of these troops of young people, numbering in the hundreds, loudly singing their songs of pilgrimage.[66] Pilgrimages often involved relic collecting. Felix Fabri (c. 1441–1502), a Dominican from Ulm in Swabia, made two trips to the Holy Land and tells much of interest with respect to pilgrimages and relics.[67] Sometimes pilgrims returned disenchanted, disadvantaged, or never reappeared, having vanished without trace on the pilgrims' journey. Fabri reports scandalous practices like the seizing of the bodies of stillborn children that were then carefully wounded, embalmed, and sold to unsuspecting Latin princes as bodies of Holy Innocents worthy of veneration.[68] As for the milk of the virgin, Fabri scoffed that all the cows in Lombardy together could not produce as much milk as that volume shown around the world ostensibly belonging to the Blessed Virgin Mary.[69]

Notwithstanding these allegations, the public criticism of relics and miraculous objects constituted a dangerous undertaking. That said, peasants were not all gullible. The German knight, Arnold von Harff, who went on pilgrimage near the end of the fifteenth century, was bothered by the obvious duplication of sacred relics.[70] He noted on his pilgrim journeys that he had seen many arms of St. Thomas. These were displayed at the Church of St. Mary Major in Rome, in the Church of St. John on Rhodes, and at Mackenon (Madras) in India. Arnold noted another arm in the sacristy of the Church of St. Servas in Maastricht. While at St. Denis near Paris, Arnold notes he was shown yet another hand of Thomas the Apostle, drily adding, "but I have already seen this in lesser India …and in Maastricht."[71] The body of St. Matthew was not only seen at St. Mary Major in Rome, in Padua, but also in Lombardy.[72] The head of St. James could be seen in Venice at St. George's Monastery, and also at Santiago de Compostella. At Compostella the impertinent Arnold made inquiries. Noting that the body of St. James was reported to rest in repose near the high altar in Compostella but also rumoured to be at Toulouse, Arnold requested he be shown the holy body. However, officials at Santiago de Compostella told the inquirer that anyone who did not truly believe that the holy body of St. James lay in the high altar, but entertained doubts and wanted to see the body "would immediately become mad like a mad dog." Arnold facetiously wrote that the reply gave him precisely what he needed to know.[73] He decided to leave such matters to God to sort out the errors of the priests, the keepers of sacred relics. Still, these doubts and

efforts at mass manipulation did not deter the faithful from their spiritual quests, and pilgrims crowded the roads leading to Jerusalem, Rome, Canterbury, Cologne, Santiago de Compostella, and dozens of other sacred destinations. Extreme acts of piety and devotion could be detected all along those roads, but even on these sacred journeys all was not holy and plenty of danger lurked. Poor road conditions, high tolls on many roads, inadequate, incorrect, or non-existent signage, inclement weather, challenges of food and shelter, especially in remote areas, other travellers with less honourable motives, violence, and bandits together made pilgrimages rather risky.[74] Those perils noted, pilgrimages figured in the fabric of the medieval quest for salvation. Ecclesiastical and civic authorities profited from the popular imagination and turned the cult of the pilgrim into great economic advantage.[75]

For many medieval people intent on successfully ascending the ladder of spirituality, acts of extreme piety and devotion were sometimes even more evident and immediate in the form of deliberate forays into violence and into practices aimed at imitating what St. Paul called the daily crucifixion of the flesh in order to bring the body into subjection.[76] The discipline of the spiritual life or self-flagellation (*disciplina*) seems to have become common practice in the high Middle Ages. The Benedictine monk, papal legate, and Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, Peter Damian (1007–1072), promoted the idea that true spirituality should be regulated and enforced by physical discipline.[77] He recommended that those truly committed to following the pathway marked out by Christ should practice self-flagellation on a daily basis for as long as it took to recite forty psalms. He suggested that on special or holy days, this might be significantly increased.[78] As justification for the mortification of the flesh, Peter Damian argued that only those who participated in the sufferings of Christ could be partakers of the promise that the faithful, one day, would inherit the kingdom of God and thereby join with Christ in glory.

This idea of physical or earthly self-punishment leading to spiritual or heavenly reward was outlined in a short treatise titled "In praise of the whip and speaking of discipline," which Damian addressed to Abbot Desiderius at the monastery at Monte Cassino around 1070. Abbot Desiderius was later elevated as Pope Victor III. In this address, Peter Damian rails on the community at Monte Cassino for having neglected the previous Friday tradition of public flagellation. It is in this context where, as noted above, Damian suggests that those unwilling to share in the sufferings of Christ by consequence will not share in the glories of Christ. It has been shown

that many saints in the later medieval period embraced this teaching and engaged in various acts of self-punishment. By the thirteenth century, there is sufficient evidence to suggest the practice had become normative in religious houses. There are cases of men and women striving for a higher rung on the ladder to salvation who abused themselves in this manner privately but we also know of instances wherein the practice was undertaken collectively. In Dominican houses in south Germany, we find evidence where the admonition of Peter Damian had become institutionalized as part of the religious practice of those seeking the survival of their souls somewhere other than in the flames of hell. Nor was this form of discipline limited to the religious and practiced only in monasteries and convents. Outside the walls of abbey houses, devout lay men and women punished their bodies. Numerous flagellant movements from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth centuries sprang up in various parts of Europe.[79] Eyewitness accounts record the scourging they administered to themselves and to each other.[80] Such behaviour sometimes was a response to the fear generated by the Black Death and disease but also in reaction to the growing conviction that the end of the world was near. Eschatological terror inspired numerous penitential brotherhoods (*penitenti*) prepared to undertake appalling penance on behalf of entire communities. Examples of vicarious penance can be traced into the late antique period of Christianity and by the Middle Ages was practically a way of life.[81]

There is some merit to the observation that only when people ceased to take an eschatological world view seriously were the Middle Ages truly at an end.[82] But before that cultural and intellectual frontier was crossed, many continued to believe that all humans are equally weak in the face of the evil represented by the end of the age.[83] One response was the vision of Peter Damian.

Self-flagellation was a means of combating evil with the terrors of eschatology in view but it was also an act of piety and devotion that sought to emulate the suffering of Christ. On this latter point, the monastic theologian Ludolph of Saxony (*c*.1295–1377) suggested that the truly penitent should take up the whip with the conscious intent of replicating the scourging of Christ, at least in the imagination of the flagellant. In order to more perfectly follow Christ in such acts of piety, those attempting to advance up the ladder of divine ascent should stretch out their arms in the form of a cross, whereby physically replicating the form Christ assumed on Calvary during the crucifixion. Ludolph invited his readers to engage fully in the life of Christ by moving from observer to participant. In this

symbiosis, each person's sins should be visualized as the instruments of torture that formed the passion of Christ. Entering into that suffering meant embracing (from a distance) the torment and crucifixion of Jesus.[84] This raises the question, that seems not to have been considered in medieval theological or religious thought, of whether God enjoys the suffering of the penitent sinner as he or she struggles to survive the onslaught of the world, the flesh, and the Devil.[85] The thirteenth-century anchorite, Wilbirg of St. Florian, practiced this self-abuse with the help of an iron girdle that caused serious injury. However, her rationale was simple: "In this way I have harshly afflicted my flesh and through this affliction I have won a not inconsiderable reward."[86] There is evidence that Thomas Becket wore a hair shirt and had himself flogged on a regular basis as a sign of penitence.[87]

In the practices advocated by Peter Damian we find the quest for surviving the Middle Ages at the absolute extremes of piety in the devotion manifested by the pilgrims of faith. Sisters belonging to the Dominican Convent at Unterlinden kept the tradition very much alive. According to a fourteenth-century source these women whipped their bodies in the severest manner with various sorts of scourging instruments until they bled and with such intensity that the sounds of the lashing resounded throughout the entire convent.[88] The gruesome penitential theatre may be traced from Simeon Stylites through the religious devotees of the medieval centuries to the extreme funeral instructions of Emperor Maximilian. The extraordinary pursuit of salvation seemingly knew no limits. A legend from the later Middle Ages records an incident at the Church of St. John (Svētā Jāņa baznīca), which was built in the thirteenth century in Riga, Latvia. Formerly a chapel of a Dominican Abbey founded in 1234, two monks decided to be walled up in the southern wall where they were fed through a small hole for the duration of their long lives. The spot where the monks were immured can still be seen to this day behind a cruciform-barred aperture in the wall. Elsewhere on the Church of St. John, two open-mouthed heads can be seen high up on the outer wall facing Skarnu Street. It is believed the monks used to sit and preach behind these mouths. During restoration in modern times, skeletons were discovered in the walls. This represents yet another variation of the spiritual desire of the Middle Ages, a quest to obtain the security of salvation.

From a modern point of view, much of this might be dismissed as the blind following of blind people in the darkness of religious excess or a morbid preoccupation with various types of pain and suffering. The medieval

experience of pain was theologically considered. Those unable to forebear the trials of adversity and suffering and whose pain was exhibited in great torment and screams clearly were guilty of sin or faithlessness. These were the heretics, the criminals, the sinners. To them belonged eternal punishment. The fortitude and endurance displayed by such people (heretics and other social undesirables) were explained as rooted not in God but instead was a result of demonic illusion.[89] On the other hand, those who bore suffering with stoic fortitude were thought to be able to do so by virtue of divine assistance. God's gift of grace enabled the tormented to achieve impassibility in stunning displays of defiance, joy, courage, and fortitude. Witness the martyrs of the faith who finished their earthly pilgrimage with serenity. These were the saints, the holy men and women, who had fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith. To them belonged the kingdom of heaven.[90]

The forms of religious expression noted in this chapter signposted various routes to salvation. Some were only for the few, like Simeon on his filthy pillar, others were for the many, like the faithful who took to the pilgrim roads. Not many adopted the flagellation of others and even fewer embraced self-flagellation. But many Christians were aware of, went to see, kissed, and doubtlessly believed in the alleged spiritual benefits of relics. The sceptics tended to engage in iconoclasm as a theme of dissent, contempt, and criticism. It is difficult to imagine that more than a few Christians pursued forms of extreme piety.

In the medieval spiritual economy, extreme acts of piety and devotion were considered strong bargaining chips to have on one's resume in advance of the day of judgement. Collecting and venerating relics, pilgrimage, ascetic practices that led to despising the body, mortifying the flesh, and embracing pain as a means of oneness with Christ were considered important components in the calculus of salvation. Each were deliberate strategies aimed at completing the ladder of divine ascent, overcoming the trials of life and reaching glorious renaissance in heaven.

Notes

1. *Scala paradisi*, in PG, vol. 88, cols. 631–1164 (Greek and Latin texts) and an English translation in Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, eds., *John Climacus: The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998).
2. PG, vol. 88, cols. 624–8 contains the correspondence on this matter.

3. *An Introduction to the Ascetical Life*, in M. Monica Wagner, trans., *St. Basil Ascetical Works* [Fathers of the Church, vol. 9] (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), pp. 9–12.
4. Quoted in R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp. 224–5.
5. Recent studies include Abigal Firey, ed., *A New History of Penance* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) and Ian Christopher Levy, Gary Macy and Kristen Van Ausdall, eds., *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). On the latter the classic study is Josef Andreas Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia: Eine genetische erklärung der römischen messe*, 2 vols (Vienna: Herder, 1948).
6. Canon 21 *Omnis utriusque sexus* in Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1, p. 245.
7. Notorious here is the bull *Unam sanctam* promulgated by Pope Boniface VIII in 1302. Latin text in Carl Mirbt, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums* (Freiburg: Mohr, 1895), pp. 88–90.
8. On his life see Gerhard Benecke, *Maximilian I (1459–1519): An Analytical Biography* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2004) but especially the massive and definitive work by Hermann Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I: Das Reich, Österreich und Europa an der Wende zur Neuzeit*, 5 vols (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1971–86).
9. Benecke, *Maximilian I (1459–1519): An Analytical Biography*, p. 10.
10. Conclusion of Maximilian's autobiography *Weißkunig*. H. Th. Musper, Rudolf Bucher, Heinz-Otto Burger and Erwin Petermann, eds., *Kaiser Maximilians Weisskunig*, 2 vols (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer-Verlag, 1956), vol. 1, p. 302.
11. Robert von Srbik, "Maximilian und Gregor Reisch" *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 122 (No. 2, 1961), pp. 235–40.
12. Recent studies have shown that Maximilian retained considerable interest in representations and exploited the propagandist power of the visual image. Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian: The Visual Ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). The definitive study is Wiesflecker, *Kaiser Maximilian I*, see especially vol. 4, pp. 420–32.
13. Caroline Walker Bynum, "Violent Imagery in Late Medieval Piety" *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* 30 (Spring 2002), pp. 3–36.
14. Benedicta Ward, *Harlots of the Desert: A Study of Repentance in Early Monastic Sources* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987) and Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
15. Robert Doran, *The Lives of Simeon Stylites* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1992) contains translations of three accounts of Simeon's life: the Syriac *vita* composed by followers of Simeon shortly after he expired, and the narratives

by Theodoret of Cyrrhus in chapter 26 of his *Historica Religiosa*, written during the lifetime of Simeon, and a Greek text produced by Antonius, a monastic disciple of the Stylite.

16. S. Ashbrook Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon the Elder" *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), pp. 376–94 and Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient*, 3 vols (Louvain: Peeters, 1958–88) but above all Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les Saints Stylites* (Brussels: Meester, 1923).
17. *The Syriac Life*, p. 109.
18. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*, p.71, *Antonius' Life*, p. 89 and *The Syriac Life*, p. 114.
19. *The Syriac Life*, p. 119.
20. *Antonius' Life*, p. 94.
21. *Antonius' Life*, p. 94.
22. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*, p. 81.
23. *The Syriac Life*, pp. 129–31.
24. *The Syriac Life*, p. 172.
25. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*, p. 71.
26. *Antonius' Life*, pp. 92–3.
27. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*, p. 83.
28. *Antonius' Life*, p. 98.
29. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus*, p. 82.
30. *The Syriac Life*, pp. 187–8.
31. Harvey, "The Sense of a Stylite", pp. 387–8.
32. *Lives of the English Saints*, vol. 3 (London: Toover, 1844), pp. 128–52 at p. 151.
33. Scribner, *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400–1800)*, p. 58.
34. "The Dead Lovers" (oil on panel), falsely attributed to Matthias Grünewald, (*c*.1470), Musée de l'Oeuvre de Notre Dame, Strasbourg, France.
35. The Last Judgement at Albi, discussed in chapter four, shows the lustful in the torments of hell, which include snakes and toads clinging to the genitals of the damned.
36. The front panel of this image features a standing bridal pair, a young married couple, and is the opposite of the deceased lovers. Oil on wood, 62.2 × 36.5. The Cleveland Museum of Art.
37. Peter Damian, Opusculum 43, *De laude flagellorum et ut loquuntur disciplinae*, addressed to Abbot Desiderius of Monte Cassino, dated May or June 1069, in PL, vol. 145, cols. 679–686 at col. 684.
38. For example, Origen, *Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Text in Paul Koetschau, *Origenes Werke* in *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899), vol. 1, pp. 1–47.
39. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus magnus visionum atque miraculorum, libri XII*, vol. 2, pp. 170–3.

40. *Anecdotes historiques légendes et apologues tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon*, ed., A. Lecoy de la Marche (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1877), pp. 266–7.
41. See the medieval tales collected in the Golden Legend and the works of Caesarius of Heisterbach. On the former there is a critical Latin edition. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, ed., *Legenda aurea/Iacopo da Varazze*, 2 vols (Florence: Sismel, 1998) and an English translation. William Granger Ryan, ed., *Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and the latter Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus magnus visionum atque miraculorum, libri XII*, which has also been translated by H. von E. Scott and C.C. Swinton Bland as *The Dialogue on Miracles*, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1929).
42. This decree is in Canon 7 in Erich Lamberz, ed., *Concilium Universale Nicaenum Secundum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008) which is the critical edition.
43. Rosalind M. Hill, ed. and trans., *Gesta francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum: The Deeds of the Franks* (London: Nelson, 1962), pp. 29–38.
44. Peter W. Edbury, ed., *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade: Sources in Translation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), pp. 158–66.
45. The practice of carrying the sacrament in a monstrance into battle became standard procedure during the Hussite wars. Occasionally, both sides marched out against each other "ark against ark". There is a specific account of a battle at Strachův Dvůr recounted in the late medieval chronicles of Czech history. Palacký, ed., Staři letopisové češti od r. 1378 do 1527, p. 57.
46. Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, 7 vols, ed., Henry Richards Luard (London: Rolls Series, 1872–1884), vol. 3, p. 518 and vol. 4, pp. 75, 90.
47. R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970), p. 30.
48. Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation*, second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 15.
49. The eleventh-century chronicle of Bernard of Angers, *Liber miraculorum sancte Fides*, ed., Auguste Bouillet (Paris: Picard, 1897), chapter 12. *The Book of Sainte Foy*, trans., Pamela Sheingoran (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), letter of Bernard to Fulbert, Bishop of Chartres, pp. 39–41, in the English edition.
50. Richard Allen Landes, R*elics, Apocalypse, and the Deceits of History: Ademar of Chabannes, 989–1034* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
51. Patrick J. Geary, *Furta sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, revised ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 56–86.
52. Abbot Suger, *De consecratione* in Erwin Panofsky, ed. and trans., *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis and its Art Treasures*, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 89.

53. Decima L. Douie and David Hugh Farmer, eds., *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis: The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 169–70. The writer was Adam, subprior (and later abbot) of the Benedictine Eynsham Abbey.
54. Bernard of Angers, *Liber miraculorum sancte Fides*, book 1, chapter 11, p. 72, in the English edition.
55. *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, vol. 2, pp. 153, 168, 170.
56. John Calvin, *Traité des Reliques* (1543) in Guilielmus Baum, et al., eds., *Ioannis Calvini opera Omnia quae supersunt omnia*, 59 vols (Brunswick: Schwetschke, 1863–1900), vol. 6, pp. 405–52.
57. Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust: How Relics Shaped the History of Medieval Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).
58. Odoricus Raynaldi, ed., *Annales ecclesiastici* (Barri-Ducis: Guerin, 1874), vol. 28, p. 55.
59. X 33.40.7 *De homine*, in Friedberg, *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. 2, col. 640.
60. Abbot Suger, *De consecratione*, pp. 86–89.
61. See the very fine study by Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
62. It has been estimated that half a million people each year went on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. George Courtes, *Les Chemins de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle* (Bordeaux: Editions Sud-Ouest, 1999), p. 4.
63. Brian Spencer, "Medieval Pilgrim Badges" in *Rotterdam Papers: A Contribution to Medieval Archaeology*, ed. J.G.N. Renaud (Rotterdam: Coordinate Commissie van Advies Inzake Archaeologisch Onderzoek Binnen het Ressort Rotterdam, 1968), pp. 137–53 at p. 137.
64. Gary Dickson, "The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII: Pilgrimage, Crusade and the First Roman Jubilee (1300)" *Journal of Medieval History* 25 (No. 4, 1999), pp. 279–307.
65. The estimates range from 200,000 to two million. Jonathan Sumptian, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975), p. 235.
66. Noted in Richard Wunderli, *Peasant Fires: The Drummer of Niklashausen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 65.
67. *Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terræ Sanctæ, Arabiæ et Egypti peregrinationem/The Book of the Wanderings of Felix Fabri (circa 1480–1483 A.D.)*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, 2 vols (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1893–96).
68. *Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terræ Sanctæ*, vol. 1, pt 2, pp. 565–7.
69. *Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terræ Sanctæ*, vol. 1, pt 2, p. 564, relates the legend of a cave in which a stone yielded Mary's breast milk.
70. Malcolm Letts, ed. and trans., *The pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff, knight: from Cologne through Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia, Nubia, Palestine,*

Turkey, France and Spain, which he accomplished in the years 1496 to 1499 (London: Hakluyt Society, 1946).

71. Letts, ed., *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*, pp. 19–20, 87, 134, 162–5, and 292.
72. Letts, ed., *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*, p. 19.
73. Letts, ed., *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff*, pp. 67, 262, and 275.
74. William Melczer, ed., *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* (New York: Italica Press, 1993), a translation of book five of the twelfth-century *Liber Sancti Jacobi* or Codex Calixtinus is a good example.
75. Adrian R. Bell and Richard S. Dale, "The Medieval Pilgrimage Business" *Enterprise & Society* 12 (No. 3, 2011), pp. 601–27.
76. I Corinthians 9:27, 15:31 and Galatians 5:24.
77. The critical edition of his important letters is Kurt Reindel, ed., *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, 4 vols (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1983). There is a translation. Owen J. Blum, ed., *The Letters of Peter Damian*, 6 vols (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989–2004). Two studies are worth examining for understanding the thinking of Damian. Jean Leclercq, *Saint Pierre Damien: Ermite et home d'Église* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1960) and C. Colt Anderson, "When Magisterium Becomes Imperium: Peter Damian on the Accountability of Bishops for Scandal" *Theological Studies* 65 (2004), pp. 741–66.
78. Letter 161, previously *opusculum* 43, *De laude flagellorum et loquuntur disciplinae*, PL, vol. 145, cols. 679-86.
79. Richard Kieckhefer, "Radical Tendencies in the Flagellant Movement in the Mid-Fourteenth Century" *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1974), pp. 157–76.
80. Several examples include Edward Maunde Thompson, ed, *Robertus de Avesbury de Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii* (London: Roll Series 1889), pp. 406–10. This account is from 1349 London. Hugh of Reutlingen, *Chronicon ad annum MCCCXLIX*, in *Die Lieder und Melodien der Geißler des Jahres 1349: Nebst einer Abhandlung über die italienischen Geißlerlieder* (Heinrich Schneegans). *Und einem Beitrage zur Geschichte der deutschen und niederländischen Geißler* (Heino Pfannenschmid), ed. Paul Runge (Hildesheim: Olms, 1969), pp. 24–9, reveals details from Central Europe and we have details of Flagellant activity in Tournai from Giles Le Muisit, abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Martin in Tournai in *Chronica Aegidii li Muisis*, in *Corpus chronicarum Flandriae*, ed. Joseph-Jean de Smet (Brussels: Hayez, 1841), vol. 2, pp. 346–61 and from Straßbourg in Fritsche Closener, *Straßburgische Chronik* (Stuttgart: Litterarischer Verein, 1843), pp. 89–95. See also Christine M. Boecki, *Images of Plague and Pestilence: Iconography and Iconology* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000).
81. André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, trans., Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), p. 122.

82. McGinn, "Apocalypticism in the Middle Ages: An Historiographical Sketch," p. 285 referring to a comment made by Marjorie Reeves.
83. John Wright, trans., *The Play of Antichrist* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), p. 64.
84. *Vita Jesu Christi: ex evangelio et aprobatis ab ecclesia Catholica doctoribus sedule collecta, editio novissima*, ed., L. M. Rigollot, 4 vols (Paris: Palmé, 1878), vol. 4, p. 158 and elsewhere. See also Charles Abbott Conway, *The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony and Late Medieval Devotion Centred on the Incarnation: A Descriptive Analysis* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1976).
85. Giles Constable, *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 143–248.
86. Liz Herbert McAvoy, ed., *Anchoritic Traditions of Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), p. 55.
87. Michael Staunton, *Thomas Becket and His Biographers* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006) and Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
88. The manuscript source has been edited in Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, "'Les *Vitae sororum* d'Unterlinden': Edition critique du manuscript 508 de la bibliothèque de Colmar" *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 5 (1930), pp. 317–509, with the relevant passages on pp. 340–1. Founded in the thirteenth century, the convent had its origins with Agnes of Mittelheim and Agnes of Hergheim, who decided to devote themselves to the religious life at a place known as "Unterlinden" (under the linden trees) in Colmar. They were formally received into the Dominican Order in 1245 and began building their convent in 1252. Albert the Great consecrated the choir of the convent's chapel in 1269. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the religious community at Unterlinden expanded considerably and acquired prominence, the convent becoming a focal point of Rhineland mysticism. The use of whips at Unterlinden has been noted in Niklaus Largier, *In Praise of the Whip: A Cultural History of Arousal*, trans. Graham Harman (New York: Zone Books, 2007), p. 36, and placed into a larger context.
89. Jean Gerson, "De distinction verarum visionum a falsis", in Palémon Glorieux, ed., *Jean Gerson Oeuvres complètes*, 10 vols (Tournai, Desclée, 1960–1973), vol. 3, pp. 36–8.
90. This response to pain is explored in Esther Cohen, *The Modulated Scream: Pain in Late Medieval Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 227–56, with references to cases in the ecclesiastical history of Eusebius and others: Agnus of Rome, Agatha of Catania, Vincent of Saragossa, Laurence of Rome, Perpetua, and the myriad of martyrs in the Golden Legend.

CHAPTER 10

The Fickle Hand of Fate

Long ago, when the writing and recording of history was yet in its infancy, a Greek poet noted that of all the terrors, marvels, and wonders in the world, none was more terrifying or stranger than the men and women who occupied its pages.[1] In the Bodleian Library at Oxford, there is a medieval manuscript bearing an inscription: "This book belongs to St Mary of Robertsbridge; whosoever shall steal it, or sell it, or in any way alienate it from this House, or mutilate it, let him be anathema-maranatha. Amen." Just below that inscription we find another. "I, John, Bishop of Exeter, know not where the aforesaid House is, nor did I steal this book, but acquired it in a lawful way."[2] The *other* Middle Ages, like so much of the rest of human history, is filled with the follies and foibles of men and women and there is much that remains inexplicable, curious, possibly even meaningless, but all of that reflects to some extent the nature of medieval mentalities and its anxieties.

Medieval theologians sometimes spoke of divine providence in world events and daily life but perhaps time and chance happened without plan and fate intervened to change the course of history more often than not. "One should not multiply explanations and causes unless it is strictly necessary… Everything is explained, using a smaller number of causes."[3] In Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, in the poems comprising the *Carmina Burana*, and in numerous other medieval works, we encounter the *Rota fortunae*, or the idea of a wheel

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of fortune.[4] There are numerous iconographical representations of this concept in medieval sources. The wheel perpetually turns and each person rises on the arc of the wheel but eventually falls off. The historian struggles with notions of causal factors and the unsolvable "what ifs" of the past. What if William the Conqueror had not injured himself in battle? What if Frederick Barbarossa had not fallen from his horse into a Turkish river? What if Humphrey of Bohun had not led the assault on a heavily guarded bridge in northern England? What if the gate had not closed so suddenly behind Joan of Arc at Compiègne? Were these happenings acts of God or random turns on the wheel of fortune?

The death of William the Conqueror occurred on 9 September 1087. The victor of the famous 1066 Battle of Hastings died six weeks after being seriously injured at the Battle of Mantes fighting the French during the last week of July 1087. During the battle, the extremely corpulent William fell heavily against the pommel of his saddle, seriously injuring his intestines. A contemporary chronicler records the mayhem that followed the king's demise. Pillagers looted the royal residence, stealing almost everything and leaving the corpse practically naked on the floor. During the funeral, a fire broke out and almost all the mourners left to help fight it. Only a few monks remained behind. The stone sarcophagus into which the decedent was to lie unfortunately had been ill prepared by the masons and could not contain the king's girth. When the desperate monks attempted to squeeze the body into the coffin, "forcibly doubled up," the king's bloated bowels burst and an "intolerable stench assailed the nostrils" of all those present.[5] Various perfumes failed to mask the offensive odour so the putrid mess was quickly interred in the abbey of St. Stephen in Caen, Normandy. Had William not been violently pitched into his saddle horn, how different might the later eleventh century have looked? There is no way to tell and all hypotheses are exercises in speculation.

During the third crusade in 1190, and unwilling to wait in the congestion to cross a narrow bridge, Frederick Barbarossa elected to ford the Goksü River (known then as the Saleph). Unfortunately, his horse stumbled and the heavily armoured Barbarossa was thrown into the water. "The veins of his body opened, and he drowned."[6] The death of the charismatic leader threw the crusading forces into chaos. If Frederick had been more patient, had taken his turn in the queue, and proceeded on, would his presence have altered the outcome of the crusade? The question is unanswerable. His men put the body of Barbarossa into a vat of vinegar

in hopes of preserving it, his exploits passed into legend, but the German king was no more.[7]

A century and a half after William the Conqueror, some of the English barons were in open revolt against their king, Edward II. Humphrey of Bohun, the fourth Earl of Hereford, was among them. Fighting on a small wooden bridge, on 16 March 1322 during the battle of Boroughbridge, Hereford was felled by an unworthy skulker lurking beneath the bridge who either deliberately or by sheer chance thrust a spear into Hereford's anus, immediately disembowelling him.[8] Humphrey of Bohun "led the fight on the bridge, but he and his men were caught in the arrow fire. Then one of de Harclay's pikemen, concealed beneath the bridge, thrust upwards between the planks and skewered the Earl of Hereford through the anus, twisting the head of the iron pike into his intestines. His dying screams turned the advance into a panic."[9] While this version of events claims more than the sources allow, the death of the Earl altered the struggle against King Edward. What if the wheel of fortune had afforded Humphrey another day or another year? What if he had evaded that spear and won the Battle of Boroughbridge?

On 23 May 1430, at the height of her influence, the tide turned rather dramatically for Joan of Arc. She and her men were fighting at Compiègne. The fight was hot and when reinforcements appeared for the Burgundians the French withdrew towards Compiègne. Joan protected their retreat. Suddenly and without warning the drawbridge to the city and to safety was closed and Joan was left outside with a few of her men. Guillaume de Flavy, the military captain in charge of that town, shut the gate ostensibly to prevent the Burgundians and English from taking the town. There are two versions of events. Either Flavy betrayed Joan or she was overwhelmed by enemy forces. There are suspicions that Joan was betrayed: the gate that was closed was not the main gate and one not essential to the defence of the city and its closing was premature. Her fear was fulfilled. She fell into the hands of the hostile Burgundians. A careful study of the city's defences indicates there was no imminent danger to the city if the gate had been left open for Joan to gain refuge. Even if the gate was taken, the city could have remained secure. It is an historical puzzle, but it appears that she was deliberately betrayed.[10] What if the gate had remained open a few more moments? How might the Hundred Years' War have been altered had Joan survived? The question cannot be answered. The fickle hand of fate intervened.

If the wheel of fortune turned against William the Conqueror, Frederick Barbarossa, Humphrey of Bohun, and Joan of Arc, it may have rewarded Pope Clement VI as well as the Hussite military commander Jan Žižka. Clement VI survived the horrific ravages of the Black Death in Avignon in 1348–1349 by sitting between two roaring fires in the heat of summer while many of his staff died along with countless citizens of the town. About 400 died each day and in one six-week period a single cemetery received 11,000 corpses. Two thirds of the Avignon population was affected and nearly all of those died. The graveyards could not hold the dead and so the survivors took to throwing the bodies of plague victims into the Rhône River.[11] Why did the pope survive? How might the fourteenth century church have been different had a different pontiff taken the See of St. Peter? In the summer of 1420, armed soldiers from three dozen nations marched on Prague in a crusade directed at Christian heretics. The fight should have been over in short order with a victory for the crusaders. Žižka's army was small by comparison and while he had selected a strategic vantage point for defence, it was guarded only by two women, one girl, and twenty-six men. During the main onslaught, Žižka himself was nearly killed and we are told that the entire city of Prague was certain the crusaders would overwhelm the Hussites. All were praying with tears and lamentations, asking God for divine intervention. What happened next was extraordinary. A priest came out of the city holding a monstrance. The crusaders paused. Seeing the sacrament and hearing the tolling of a small bell, the crusaders took fright and fled. Žižka's men pursued and slaughtered them.[12] What if the priest had not ventured out past the city walls? What if the crusaders had taken no note of him? Why were seasoned military men put on their heels by a relatively common occurrence? How might the history of central Europe at the end of the Middle Ages been different had the crusaders stuck to their mettle? We have no way of knowing.

In addition to the wheel of fortune, there were other factors in the conceptual Middle Ages thought to be responsible for otherwise inexplicable acts. A thirteenth-century Cistercian prior referred to an unnamed demon as the agent of scribal faux-pas who was thought to haunt monastic scriptoria and was to blame for scribal errors in manuscripts.[13] This demon was considered the cause of annoying inkblots, the almost obligatory line skipping associated with medieval copyists, and the reason why certain letters looked different to various scribes, thereby creating otherwise inexplicable errors and variant readings in manuscript sources. We learn this demon's

name was Titivillus and the earliest use of this name occurs in the work of the thirteenth-century Franciscan John of Wales.[14] The literary curriculum vitae of Titivillus has been carefully compiled.[15] The efforts of Titivillus can be illuminated by means of a modern example. A joke of uncertain origin tells the tale of a young monk arriving at the monastery. He is given the job of assisting other monks in copying manuscripts. After a time, he notices that the copies are all being prepared from earlier copies, not from original manuscripts. The new monk tells the abbot that such practices may perpetuate scribal errors. The abbot agrees and goes off to the monastic archive to retrieve the original manuscript that no one had studied in hundreds of years. Hours pass and finally one of the monks goes to see what has happened to the abbot. The visibly distraught abbot is revealed to have discovered that the word transcribed "celibate" was actually "celebrate" in the original text. There are legitimate historical precedents. There is an iconographical tradition within Christian art depicting Moses with horns. In preparing the Latin Vulgate at Exodus 34:29, Jerome translated the Hebrew word *qeren*, that can mean either "horns" or "rays of light", as the Latin *cornuta* that can only mean "horned." Thus, instead of his face reflecting rays of light, or glowing, Jerome's Moses has horns! It is thought that this translation error is responsible for the iconographical tradition of Moses with horns.[16] Some medieval writers, had they commented on the matter, might well have ascribed the horned Moses to the nefarious work of Titivillus. What if Jerome had chosen another Latin word?

Perhaps even more pertinent than introducing scribal errors, the work of Titivillus seems to have been one of keeping records. John of Wales noted that Titivillus gathered up the fragments of misspoken words and filled a sack with them a thousand times every day.[17] In other words, Titivillus was associated with *acedia* (sloth), one of the seven deadly sins. As the recording demon, he made notes about practically everything he heard or saw. These notes were submitted to his higher authorities in hell to await Judgement Day when they would be used against the guilty parties. Both Caesarius of Heisterbach and Jacques de Vitry (the latter in his *Sermones Vulgares* of the 1220s) point out that Titivillus made note of all prayers that were mumbled or said improperly and these errors were recorded and placed into a sack and likewise conveyed to storage to await the end of time.[18] In an anonymous fifteenth-century English devotional treatise, Titivillus introduces himself and outlines explicitly his daily work: "I am a poure dyuel, and my name ys Tytyuyllus …I muste eche day … brynge my master a thousande pokes full of faylynges, & of neglygences in

syllables and words … else I must be sore beten."[19] The demon was characterized as bearing a heavy sack "full of the syllables cut off, syncopated, or skipped over" by careless clerics in the practice of religion.[20] Étienne de Bourbon claimed that Titivillus recorded the foibles of careless priests who "truncated verses, evacuated them of their sense, skipped pronunciations and obliterated letters".[21] Clearly, Titivillus was a hard taskmaster. But had not even the meek and gentle Jesus warned that every careless or idle word would be taken into consideration on the day of judgement?[22] Later, St. Ambrose made it even more stringent by suggesting that not only would men and women be held accountable for every idle word but also for every idle silence.[23] According to some medieval sources, Titivillus was a horrible and deformed creature who kept both eyes riveted on his target so as not to miss a single slip.[24] Others claimed he carried an inkhorn over his shoulder, held parchment in his left hand, and a pen in the right as he went about recording.[25] Literary sightings of Titivillus in the Middle Ages are numerous, including one wherein a monk happened on a demon scribbling away. The religious asked: "What are you writing?" To this the demon replied, "your sins."[26] What if people had not believed in such things?

The persistently revolving wheel of fortune, the unpredictable appearance of the fickle hand of fate, and the incessant errors caused by the recording demon are examples of constructs within medieval mentalities that sought to explain the mysteries of the Middle Ages. If Titivillus caused monks to introduce errors into manuscripts, might he not likewise be responsible for prompting the beetles of Saint Julian and the woodworms of Mamirolle to eat away certain crucial parts of judicial records as noted earlier? What was the real reason behind the unfinished coat of arms in a Latin Gradual of 1552 prepared by Jan Táborský of Klokotská Hora? The coat of arms had been drawn but not coloured. Below the drawing, written in Czech, we find these words: "I was not able to finish it because I was very busy. I intend to complete it at some other time." Jan Táborský never found the time.

The wheel of fortune sometimes made unexpected revolutions producing outcomes no one could predict. In late May 1424, Jan Žižka and his men were trapped along the Labe River near the Czech village of Kostelec, fifteen miles northeast of Prague. Backed up along a small bend in the river on an escarpment, the only escape route was blocked by a superior military force. The siege lasted a week. On the morning of 5 June, just when the armies loyal to King Sigismund were prepared to pounce,

they awoke to discover that Žižka and his men had vanished, seemingly into thin air. Somehow, in the middle of the night, they had managed, with considerable stealth, to move their wagon fortress, supplies, horses, weapons, and personnel down the embankment and across the previously considered uncrossable Labe River.[27] Had the crusaders waited too long? Charlemagne certainly had. The great medieval monarch of the ninth century, for all of his accomplishments, could not write. Later in life he made a concerted effort. His biographer tells us that Charlemagne attempted to learn to write and we read that his pillows were covered with notebooks and tablets and when he couldn't sleep he would practice. "But he met with little success in these efforts for he had started too late in life."[28] What if he had learned to write at a young age?

Sometimes medieval people failed to take things seriously enough. King Berengarius I, though aware of threats against his life, in the year 924 chose to sleep one night in a little cottage near the church in Verona and posted no guards since he did not think he was in harm's way. During the night he was murdered on the instigation of a scoundrel named Flambert.[29] On other occasions, it appears that potential threats may have been taken too literally and too seriously. Once more, crusaders invading Bohemia in 1431 seeking to suppress heresy came out wanting, having been weighed in the balances. Prepared for battle, the formidable crusade force heard the approach of the Hussites, perhaps a mile away, and were filled with fear, broke rank, and ran pell-mell through the Bohemian forest for the relative safety of the German territories.[30] In an epic song of victory written immediately after the debacle at Domažlice, we find this account. "They completely forgot their honour, both poor and rich, abandoned their battalions and did not wait for the attack of our army. They were so afraid, they did not see us and they ran – even though our enthusiastic fighters were three miles away. The Germans were startled by the rattling of the wagons and the neighing of the horses, and the rumble that sounded all over the region. When our people were noisily getting ready for the fight, they [the crusaders] were frightened by the sound of the bugles, as well as by the song of our brotherhoods."[31] What if the crusaders had held firm? They outnumbered the Hussites by a two or three to one ratio. How are we to explain their desperate flight?

An old Middle Eastern tale of unknown origin, but possibly either from a ninth-century Sufi source or the Babylonian Talmud, compiled in the third to fifth centuries, sets out the idea of the *Rota fortuna* admirably.

There was a merchant in Baghdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions. Shortly thereafter, the servant came back, pale and shaken, and reported that while in the marketplace he had been jostled by a woman in the crowd and when he turned he saw that it was Death. The ominous woman looked at the man and made a threatening gesture. The servant asked his master to borrow a horse in order to escape and thereby avoid his impending fate. He determined to go to Samarra, about seventy-eight miles north of Baghdad, hoping to evade Death. The merchant lent him a horse, and the servant rode away as fast as the horse could gallop. Later, the merchant went down to the marketplace and saw Death. He asked why she had made a threatening gesture to his servant that morning. Death replied, the gesture had not been threatening but instead a bit of surprise seeing him in Baghdad, for they had an appointment that night in Samarra.[32]

The *other* Middle Ages in many ways was not terribly different from the mainstream of medieval history. Rich and poor, young and old, men and women were subject to the same vicissitudes of life. They had similar concerns and fears, and were as quick to accept many of the same explanations and remedies. At the dawn of the Middle Ages the bombastic and disagreeable Bishop Cyril of Alexandria died. In a controversial letter attributed to Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, and addressed to Bishop Domnus of Antioch, found among the Acts of Chalcedon, we read that "at last and with difficulty the villain has gone." The gravediggers were advised to place "a very large and heavy stone" on the grave of "this wretch" lest he provoke the dead to such extent and they being "annoyed at his company" seek to return him to the land of the living.[33] If heavy stones could prevent the dead from returning to the material world, then the idea of Titivillus causing an ink smear on vellum was not thought ridiculous. Mentalities ranged from a consciousness of the demonic in the rhythms of everyday to a preoccupation with the foolish. Hence, when a ring was dropped on the stone floor of a German church during a wedding, the priest might loudly tell the devil to stay out of the matter while in an English church in 1330 the vicars laughed and amused themselves throughout the service by dropping melted candle wax on the bald heads below in the choir.[34] How can we reconcile such divergent approaches to religion?

We find strict concern for law and order as well as unlikely evidence indicating the hatred and fear of heretics. In the former, we read that in 1499 a French woman who had committed suicide by hanging was ordered taken down and rehanged properly by the executioner of Évreux.[35]

Elsewhere we read that the will of John Werke, drawn up in 1463 in the Parish of SS Anne and Agnes in London, included a specific bequest of 6 s. 8d. for the purchase of faggots to be used for the burning of heretics.[36] Even in the midst of the utterly mundane, we encounter evidential bits of hostility towards outsiders. For example, in the Annals of Xanten we read that in 838 the winter was very wet and windy. On 21 January there was thunder. On 16 February there were loud thunderclaps. Five days before Christmas, during the night, there was a great crash of thunder. Yet in the midst of these unremarkable meteorological observations the chronicler recorded, without explanation, that "in the same year a wicked heresy arose."[37] At other times, we find the sympathizers of dissenters recording their disdain for the establishment. In a medieval Czech manuscript we find in a capital letter a caricature of a monk bound in fetters and shouting in pain. A second example is a drollery of a monk beneath a capital letter on a lower margin with the inscription "Ha Ha Monachus veritas vincit" (ha ha, monk, truth will prevail) while a third image depicts a monkey wearing a tonsure walking away from another capital letter carrying Czech bagpipes.[38] Elsewhere, the medieval religious establishment is inexplicably portrayed by a monk lifting his habit to reveal his backside [see *frontispiece*]. His right hand spreads his buttocks to reveal his asshole, huge testicles, and long, dangling penis. All the while, he looks over his shoulder at the viewer.[39] Here is the perfect depiction of medieval religion and its anxieties.

Critics of the Middle Ages maintain that "the Gothic cathedrals exist for the shame of those who made them".[40] That is opinion, nothing more. And yet, the parody "holy gospel according to the Mark of Silver," which exults greed, opulence, and wealth to the highest levels of the church promised salvation to those who were not led astray with empty words but who practiced the gospel of greed to the extent of refusing to allow the Son of Man to enter unless he was able to make generous gifts to the doorkeepers, chamberlains, cardinals, and popes. Though this was never official ecclesiastical policy, it appeared to be practiced in certain times and places.[41] At least that was the opinion of the church's critics.

As the wheel of fortune turned inexorably, there was magic, or at least a semblance thereof. A sermon preached somewhere between 1415 and 1420 tells a story about a Lollard heretic living near Oxford. The fellow went to church to mock and during fifteen celebrations of the Eucharist that day, the man placed a small stone in his pocket each time he observed the consecration of the sacrament. Later he ran into a fellow heretic and

told him the tale and asked if he would like to know how many gods he had seen that day. Reaching into his pocket, where he expected to find fifteen stones he discovered but one. Amazed and shaken out of their stubborn disobedience to God and the church, the two heretics promptly reconverted.[42] Was it divine intervention to save these erring souls? What if the heretic had found fifteen stones in his pocket?

The story can be contrasted with the problems of the thirteenth-century papacy. The papal throne lay vacant for twenty-seven long and acrimonious months. Finally, a pious hermit sent word that should the cardinals fail to elect a pope, divine judgement was likely to occur. The hermit turned out to be the 85-year-old Pietro del Morrone who was then promptly elected pope without the usual conclave. Morrone vigorously protested, and attempted to flee, but in the end was persuaded to become Pope Celestine V. His pontificate was an abysmal failure and a study in ineptitude. Administratively incompetent and politically naïve, Celestine blundered about in much apparent confusion and even appointed more than one applicant to the same benefice. After five disastrous months he resigned. He desired to return to his former life as a hermit but was imprisoned by his successor Boniface VIII and died seventeen months thereafter.[43] What if he had never sent that letter of admonition? Celestine's later life was a tragedy. An unwilling pope, a reluctant pawn of powerful forces, and a gloomy prisoner, the fickle hand of fate surely played a key role in the downfall of Morrone.

Aspects of the Middle Ages, especially in terms of religious reform and renovation, can be illustrated to some degree by the well-known twelfth-century tale of how a council of mice decided to deal with their sworn enemy the cat.[44] The wisest mouse suggested they place a bell on the cat that would signal the cat's approach and being warned, the mice could better avoid the snares set by their feline enemy. The mice agreed. It was a splendid plan. But then the question arose: who would volunteer to put the bell on the cat? One by one each mouse demurred. The tale's recorder, Odo of Cheriton, drew out the metaphorical implications noting that many priests, monks, and ordinary people who wished to rise up against their prelates on account of irregularities or abuses, or misuses of power, could all agree that something should be done to eliminate whatever problem existed. But no one was willing to file charges, confront the prelate, or otherwise lead a proper revolt. In the end, the prelates continued as always. Undoubtedly, Titivillus made copious notes and filed reports in hell on all these perfunctory councils to await the day of judgement. Those depicted in the Last Judgement fresco at Albi

each carry a book clutched to their chests. The books of the damned are filled with notations of their sins, crimes, and faults.[45] Could these be the records made by Titivillus? What if there had been no consciousness of sin, punishment, or salvation?

The Middle Ages are filled with ghosts. Alfred the Great died on 26 October 899 and was buried in Winchester Cathedral. According to legend, his ghost wandered the cathedral precincts and distracted the priests during their nightly prayers. At length, Alfred's mortal remains had to be moved elsewhere.[46] Most former residents of the Middle Ages were more benign, having been dispatched by the wheel of fortune or subjected to the vanity of vanities and went silently and whose passing caused neither a ripple nor made a sound. From a religious or theological perspective, existing in the Middle Ages meant living life in eschatological time. The world hastened onward to its pre-determined Christian consummation. The lives, thoughts, hopes, and perspectives of these men and women were shaped by the forces of the medieval world. Yet even in the hallways of the *other* Middle Ages were the seeds of change. Indeed, there can be no such thing as motionless history.[47] Despite the randomness, violence, human striving, and questing throughout the medieval period, and the apparent thrusts of the fickle hand of fate, the hopes, humour, and histories of those fascinating times remain right up to the present. Traces of it are found in the unlikeliest places. On 5 October 1904, Dr. Samuel F. Upham, a theologian at Drew Theological Seminary in New Jersey, lay dying. Friends and family had gathered around the bed and at length the question arose if Upham was still alive. The suggestion was advanced that someone feel his feet on the assumption that no one ever died with warm feet. At that precise moment, Upham opened one eye and drily said, "Jan Hus did." Those were his last words.[48]

What if one of the greatest theological minds of the Middle Ages had yielded to temptation? Or what if another towering figure had been a poor gambler? In the case of the former, the 19-year-old Thomas Aquinas was locked in a room with a beautiful prostitute. His family hoped to dissuade him from taking holy orders and becoming a Dominican friar. The Italian whore used her beauty, caresses, and enchantments to no avail. Thomas chased her from the room with a burning firebrand in hand and went on to become the "angelic doctor" of the medieval church.[49] What if the fair courtesan had succeeded in seducing Thomas? Presumably, there would have been no *Summa theologica*. In the latter case, a man challenged Bernard of Clairvaux to a game of chance. The bet was either Bernard's

horse or the man's soul. Bernard won. The fervent gambler set aside his material pursuits, took up the spiritual path, lived a life of great sanctity, and ended his days in heavenly reward.[50] But what if the winning bet of the day had been the horse? The fickle hand of fate played an imprecise role in the shaping of the medieval centuries and in the determination of what I have elaborated as the *other* Middle Ages. What if the wheel of fortune had turned in different ways?

Peter of Blois declared in the twelfth century that he relied on the past in the sense that he was really just a dwarf standing on the shoulders of giants and from that elevated position was able to see farther than they could.[51] Even earlier, using the same metaphor, Bernard of Chartres claimed the dwarfs could not only see farther but could see even more.[52] What did they see? What if the giants were looking the wrong way? And what determines right and wrong, either now or in those Middle Ages? What if the ancients pointed mainly to errors, misconceptions, and ideas no longer useable? But by what calibration are such judgements decided? Thompson was right. We must be wary of the tendency to condescend. From the end of the European Renaissance, we find the suggestion that wherever there was desire for learning there would be much arguing and opinions. Yet there was only one viable response: Let truth and falsehood grapple together. Who ever knew truth to be put to the worse in a free and open encounter?[53] As students of the medieval world, one way to learn from the past is to take seriously the inexplicable factors that form the *other* Middle Ages. This includes paying attention to visual images, heretics and deviants, laws and lawbreakers, mentalities and anxieties, as well as religious practices, along with the likes of Titivillus and the wheel of fortune too. Only in this way can the past be empowered to speak once more.

Notes

1. Sophocles, *Antigone*, Scene 2, lines 332–3 in Diane J. Raynor, ed., and trans., *Sophocles' Antigone: A New Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 17.
2. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 132. The house in question may well have been the twelfth-century Cistercian abbey of St. Mary while the episcopal signatory belongs to John Grandisson, bishop of Exeter from 1327 to 1369. I cite the inscriptions from G.G. Coulton, *Life in the Middle Ages*, 4 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), vol. 2, p. 118.

3. Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), p. 91.
4. Bothius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. V.E. Watts (London: The Folio Society, 1998), book 2, Chap. 1, p. 59, F.N. Robinson, ed., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, 2nd ed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 195 and for the *Carmina Burana* see the poems *Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi* and *Fortune Plango Vulnera*. Benedikt Konrad Vollmann, ed., *Carmina Burana: Text und Übersetzungen* (Berlin: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 2011).
5. Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed., Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), vol. 4, pp. 78–109. The battlefield injury was recorded by William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, 2 vols, ed., Thomas Duffus Hardy (London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1840), vol. 2, book 3, § 282, p. 460.
6. The Old French Continuation of William of Tyre, in Peter W. Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 87–8.
7. Another source says that Frederick drowned while attempting to swim across the river. Ansbert, *Historia de expedition Friderici imperatoris*, in *Quellen zur Geschichte des Kreuzzuges Kaiser Friedrichs I*, ed., Anton Chroust in MGH, SRG, n.s. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1928), p. 91.
8. Friedrich W.D. Brie, ed., *The Brute or the Chronicles of England* (London: Early English Text Society, 1906), part 1, p. 219.
9. Ian Mortimer, *The Greatest Traitor: The Life of Sir Roger Mortimer, Ruler of England 1327–1330* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2003), p. 124.
10. There are several accounts of the event including Joan's, Perceval de Cagny, *Chronique des ducs d'Alençon*, Engerrand de Monstrelet, *Chroniques*, and Georges Chastellain, *Chronique de ducs de Bourgogne*, in Jules Quicherat, ed., *Procès de condemnation et de rehabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc dite la Pucelle*, 5 vols (Paris: Société de l'histoire de France, 1841–9), vol. 1, pp. 207–8 and vol. 4, pp. 34, 401–2, 446–7.
11. Information on the particulars come from two papal physicians Gui de Chauliac and Raymundus Chalmelli de Vinario. Noted in Hans Zinsser, *Rats, Lice and History* (New York: Little Brown, 1935), p. 89 and Ole J. Benedictow, *The Black Death 1346–1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), pp. 97–8.
12. Vavřinec of Březová, *Historia Hussitica*, pp. 383–91.
13. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum* (*c.*1230) in Strange, ed., *Caesarii Heisterbacensis monachi ordinis cisterciensis Dialogus miraculorum*, dist. 4, Chap. 9, vol. 1, p. 181.
14. Johannes Galensis, *Tractatus de penitentia*, *c.* 1285 in London, British Library MS Royal 10 A. ix, fol. 40v, also MS Royal 4 D. iv, fol. 257r; Paris Maz 295, fol. 86v; and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 402, fol.

336v. I owe the references to Margaret Jennings, "Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon" *Studies in Philology* 74 (No. 5, 1977), p. 16.

15. Jennings, "Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon", pp. 1–95. See also Paula L. Pressley, "The Revenge of Titivillus" in Robin B. Barnes, ed., *Habent sua fata libelli, or, Books Have Their Own Destiny: Essays in Honor of Robert V. Schnucker* (Kirksville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1998), pp. 111–120.
16. Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Horned Moses in Medieval Art and Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).
17. Johannes Galensis, *Tractatus de penitentia*, London, British Library MS Royal 10 A. ix, fol. 40v.
18. Thomas Frederick Crane, ed., *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones vulgares of Jacques de* Vitry (London: Folk-Lore Society, 1890), p. 100 (Latin text) and pp. 233–4 for comment. This appears to be the earliest discernable literary appearance of Titivillus.
19. John Henry Blout, ed., *The Myroure of Oure Ladye*, reprint (London: Early English Text Society, 1898), pt. 1, Chap. 20, p. 54.
20. Jennings, "Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon", p. 8.
21. Marche, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apologues, tirés du recueil inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon*, p. 184.
22. Matthew 12:36.
23. "Deinde si pro verbo otioso reddimus rationem, videamus ne reddamus et pro otioso silentio." Ambrose, *De officiis* 1.9, in PL, vol. 16, col. 26. The critical edition is Ivor J. Davidson, *Ambrose: De officiis*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), vol. 1, p. 122.
24. Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, book 7, Chap. 118, vol. 4, p. 265.
25. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *Dialogus miraculorum*, p. 181.
26. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud. misc. 315, fol. 91r for which I rely on Jennings, "Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon", p. 24. There are many variant spellings of the demon's name in medieval sources while Jennings notes the numerous medieval texts in which Titivillus appears. See pp. 86–7, 90–1.
27. Windecke, *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds*, pp. 197–8.
28. Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ed., G.H. Pertz in MGH SRG, vol. 25 (Hannover: Hahn, 1911), p. 30.
29. Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, in MGH SRG, vol. 41, ed., Joseph Becker (Hannover: Hahn, 1915), p. 69.

30. There are several accounts of the fifth crusade which was engaged near the Czech town of Domažlice in southwestern Bohemia. These have been translated in Thomas A. Fudge, *The Crusade against Heretics in Bohemia, 1418–1437: Sources and Documents for the Hussite Crusades* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 314–319. See also Mark Whelan, "Walter of Schwarzenberg and the Fifth Hussite Crusade reconsidered (1431)" *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 122 (No. 2, 2014), pp. 322–35.
31. FRB, vol. 5, p. 545 and a newer edition in Bohumil Ryba, ed., *Vavřinec z Březové: Píseň o vítězství u Domažlic* (Prague: Orbis, 1951), pp. 48–9 with Latin and Czech versions.
32. The Muslim source is Fudail ibn Ayad, *Hikayat-I-Naqshia* and the Jewish story is found in the Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah, 53a. The story was popularized in W. Somerset Maugham, *Sheppey: A Play in Three Acts* (London: Heinemann, 1933), p. 112.
33. Theodoret, Ep. 180, in PG, vol. 83, cols. 1489–90. There is a new edition in Théodoret de Cyr, *Correspondance*, vol. 4, ed., Yvan Azéma [*Sources Chrétiennes*, vol. 429] (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1998) which I have not consulted.
34. *The Register of John de Grandisson*, vol. 1, pp. 586–7. Grandisson was the bishop of Exeter.
35. Noted in Esther Cohen, *The Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), p. 142.
36. William McMurray, ed., *The Records of Two City Parishes: A Collection of Documents Illustrative of the History of SS. Anne and Agnes, Aldergate, and St. John Zachary, London* (London: Hunter & Longhurst, 1925), pp. 199–200.
37. *Annales Xantenses*, in MGH SRG, vol. 12, ed. B. de Simson (Hannover: Hahn, 1890), p. 10.
38. Mladá Boleslav, Regional Museum MS 1/70 olim II A 1, now referenced as 091.885.223/1. Latin Gradual from the third quarter of the fifteenth century, fols.109v, 115v and 176r.
39. Gorleston Psalter (14th century), London, British Library MS Additional 49622, fol. 61r.
40. Jean Jacques Rousseau quoted in Mâle, *La Cathédrale d'Albi*, p. 32.
41. Mark of Silver, from the *Carmina Burana*, a thirteenth-century manuscript collection of some 254 poems gathered in Austria possibly near Steckau. Preserved in the Benedikbeuren Abbey in Bavaria until 1806 and since that time kept at Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS clm. 4660/4660a. The text, translation, and commentary of poem 44 appears in Jill Mann, "Satiric Subject and Satiric Object in Goliardic Literature" *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 15 (1980), pp. 63–86, at pp. 75–7.

42. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 649, fols. 89v–90r. I owe the reference to Anne Hudson.
43. Francesco Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* in *Opere Latine* (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1904), pp. 110–112 and Jon M. Sweeney, *The Pope who Quit: A True Medieval Tale of Mystery, Death, and Salvation* (New York: Image Books, 2012).
44. Odo of Cheriton, *Parabolae*, *c.* 1200, in *Les Fabulistes Latins*, vol. 4, ed., Léopold Hervieux (Paris: Libraire de Firmin-Didot, 1896), pp. 225–6. Odo was previously thought to have been a Cistercian or Praemonstratensian monk but this has been an unproven assumption and it is more likely he was never a religious.
45. Mâle, *La Cathédrale d'Albi*, p. 33.
46. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, vol. 1, book 2, §124, p. 194.
47. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, "*L'histoire immobile*" *Annales ESC* 29 (1974), pp. 673–92 and reprinted in Ladurie's *Le Territoire de l'historien*, 2 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1973–8), vol. 2, pp. 7–34.
48. Editorial, *The Christian Century* 71 (7 July, 1954), p. 817.
49. William of Tocco, *Hystoria beatii Thomae*, Chap. 2, in *Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur*, ed. J. Bollandus, vol. 1 (Antwerp, 1643), col. 659. The history was written between 1316 and 1321.
50. Charles Swan and Wynnard Hooper, eds., *Gesta Romanorum* (New York: Dover, 1959), pp. 321–2.
51. Letter 92 in PL, vol. 205, col. 290.
52. This according to John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, iii, 4. The best edition is J.B. Hall and K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, eds, *Ioannes Saresberiensis, Metalogicon* [Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, vol. 98] (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991).
53. John Milton, *Areopagitica*, ed., John W. Hales (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1875), pp. 51–2. Originally published in 1644.

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