

**MEDIEVAL FEMALE SPIRITUALITY AND THE WOUND OF CHRIST
IN FOLIO 331r OF BONNE OF LUXEMBOURG'S PRAYER BOOK**

by

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I, Paige Walker, affirm that the following thesis
represents my original scholarly work.

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
Description.....	7
II. Virginitv and Spirituality	9
The Secular Setting for a Spiritual Image.....	11
Female Spirituality and the <i>Song of Songs</i>	13
Christ's Divine Corporeality and <i>Imitatio Christi</i>	17
The Confluence of Nuns and Laywomen.....	24
Physical and Spiritual Virginitv.....	30
III. Maternity	32
Christ's Partuition.....	29
The Side Wound as a Healing Indulgence.....	33
IV. Dynastic Anxiety	36
V. Conclusion	42
VI. Endnotes	44
VII. Appendix	57
VIII. Bibliography	58
IX. List of Illustrations	64
X. Illustrations	65

I. INTRODUCTION

In the late Middle Ages, female devotion incorporated and exalted the interrelated ideals of virginity, maternity, and spirituality in a complex manner. One may appreciate the multifaceted play of these ideals by examining a woman's prayer book. Since women were the primary patrons of these prayer books, their content catered toward specifically female spirituality. The books themselves were frequently illuminated with images that commented and elaborated on the texts. But while these books were alike in many ways, they differed most drastically in their personalized selection of prayers and images. The relationship of text and image, as well as that of text and the personal preferences of female patrons, offer an entryway into both medieval female spirituality and the individual interests of the books' patrons.

Bonne of Luxembourg's prayer book, produced between 1345 and 1349,¹ exemplifies the blend of broad trends in female spirituality with the private aspirations of its patron. Since Bonne was married to Jean of Valois, the heir to the French throne, she had the financial and social means to acquire a very personalized prayer book of fine quality rather than an inexpensive mass-produced version. Like many medieval prayer books, Bonne's codex contains three major sections: a liturgical psalter, a book of hours, and a compilation of accessory prayers. While the components of the psalter and hours were roughly standardized in the Middle Ages, the accessory prayers could be personalized.² In accordance with this established practice, the Latin texts of the psalter and the hours in Bonne's codex are similar to the medieval standard, while the section of accessory prayers is the locus of individualization. As with other prayers books, Bonne's accessory prayers contain idiosyncratic and unique subjects. The final miniature of the

accessory prayers of Bonne's prayer book encapsulates this personalized mechanism of devotion.

Folio 331r, attributed to the established artist Jean le Noir,³ depicts a crimson slit that dominates the composition with its enlarged scale (pl. 1). The *arma Christi*, or instruments of the Passion, that flank the slit help identify it as the wound of Christ. A poem accompanies the image and exalts the wound in Christ's side that Longinus inflicted upon him during the Passion.⁴ Unlike the selection of psalms and other prayers, this poem is in the vernacular French,⁵ a language which the medieval reader in France would have easily understood.⁶ The choice to conclude the prayer book with a text and an illustration related to Christ's Passion comes as no surprise. In the late Middle Ages, theological emphasis on Christ's Passion increased in popularity,⁷ and contemplation of the wounds of Christ was thought to reduce sins.⁸ While the vernacular poem falls within medieval convention, the miniature that illustrates it does not. This study examines the iconography of this unconventional illustration in two ways: it situates the folio in the context of female spirituality in the Middle Ages, and it also illuminates its relevance for Bonne of Luxembourg's personal history.

I propose that the illuminated depiction of the wound of Christ in Bonne's Parisian prayer book and psalter integrates themes of chivalric virginity, carnal spirituality, and altruistic maternity to stimulate the viewer's devotional process. The miniature, in other words, effectively synthesizes secular and sacred themes through the inclusion of iconographic motifs that bridge the profane – sacred divide. One such motif is the garden, the place of romantic love and an image of paradise. Another motif is that of the wound itself, present in this folio as a bloodless image of Christ's suffering, and a

slit reminiscent of the vagina. I argue that this iconographic fluidity allowed the wound to act as a devotional site at which the viewer, Bonne of Luxembourg, first meditated upon Christ's torment and then contemplated herself in relation to him. Through its artistic style, the miniature allowed her to embody the chivalric, virginal heroine and to identify with Christ, whose suffering she imitated in the sacrificially framed act of childbearing.

The miniature thus resonates with contemporary treatises on female spirituality. These works encouraged nuns to unite themselves with Christ via his side wound in order to attain spiritual purity. The mystical union with Christ could be realized through *imitatio Christi*, in which they imitated Christ in order to progress closer to him. In Bonne's physical and imagined acts of *imitatio Christi*, Christ came to signify a mother figure that rebirthed and redeemed humanity in his act of self-sacrifice. One may explain the currency of this monastic view of female spirituality for Bonne, a French aristocrat and a mother of many children, through the interactions between noblewomen and nuns as they were integrated both within the monastery and in the community.

In addition to this spiritual significance, the wound of Christ offered to Bonne a means to protect her own lineage. Medieval records demonstrate that women utilized the wound of Christ as a healing indulgence to ward off the grave possibility of death in childbirth. By harvesting these properties, Bonne hoped to protect herself and her lineage. The wound of Christ in folio 331r thus engaged with current discourse on female spirituality and at the same time invoked Bonne's personal interests. I demonstrate how this illustration allowed the reader, Bonne of Luxembourg, to restore her virginity and attain union with Christ.

By analyzing the iconographical traditions of this folio and providing essential historical and literary context, one can see how both its traditional and personal components interrelate to amplify spirituality. Although scholars have analyzed this folio previously, no one has yet elucidated the rationale behind its efficacy as a personalized mechanism of medieval female devotion.

My analysis of the miniature begins with a brief history of the intersection of divine and profane themes. I focus on the transmission of significant secular and sacred themes between the laity and monasteries such as those in chivalric literature and the *Song of Songs*, a biblical series of love poems attributed to King Solomon.⁹ This fusion of popular themes then prompts an investigation of the consequential rapport between physical and spiritual virginity. Using contemporary religious writings, I then investigate the primary theological philosophies and practices employed in the practice of female spirituality. To demonstrate these practices, I pay particular attention to the appropriation of the *Song of Songs*, Bonaventure's ladder of ascent, and the custom of *imitatio Christi* to express unification with Christ. Next, I study the medieval representation of Christ as a mother. I address how the association of Christ with the laywomen as both the redeemer and the redeemed imbues the wound with healing functions. After this analysis of medieval female devotion, I study how the folio conveys anxieties surrounding dynastic lineage. To do so, I analyze the illumination in the more specific context of its original owner, Bonne of Luxembourg.

Description

As the final miniature, the tempera, grisaille, ink, and gold leaf illumination on folio 331r bookmarks the final devotional poem. Like the first miniature, it was therefore singled out for its importance. Its blend of heraldic and theological images visually synthesizes chivalric and religious ideologies into a new language of spirituality that appealed to the aristocratic woman reader. The compositional focus of this miniature is an unconventionally abstracted and magnified image of Christ's side wound, the bloodless state of which presents itself as a threshold between the physical and imagined.¹⁰ A border of ivy leaves and birds frames the icon in a gardenlike realm, the conventional setting of lost virginity in secular literature and the scene of union in the *Song of Songs*. The blended vocabulary of this composition, then, presents a scene in which spiritual devotion to Christ takes place within a setting of love and union. Erotic mystical experiences of contemporary nuns attest to this dual characterization, since the authors expressed themselves as virginal heroines and lovers of Christ as they united with him at the locus of his side wound. Such chivalric and spiritual iconographies allowed Bonne to enact the role of the courtly maiden while she unified herself with Christ via her devotion.

Composite creatures at the margins of the folio also demonstrate the fusion of the sacred and profane. Marginal figures appear throughout secular and sacred medieval codices.¹¹ In the upper left corner, a hybrid bird-man wearing a black garment angles a ladder downward toward the central wound, his head pushed between two of the six rungs. This ladder alludes to Bonaventure's ladder of ascent, in which the believer climbs six rungs to reach Christ by achieving the Six Degrees of Charity. Near the bottom of the

folio, two women ride beasts backwards, and represent the sinners who have not yet attained spiritual purification. By deciphering figures that are secular in form and spiritual in significance, Bonne could recognize that by ascending the devotional ladder toward Christ via acts of *imitatio Christi*, she could atone her sins and unify with Christ.

The miniature facilitates several modes of *imitatio Christi*, acts of suffering in which the devotee imitates Christ through bodily or emotional agony. One of these modes is the act of bearing children, during which the mother endures great physiological pain akin to Christ's suffering on the cross. Like similar depictions of the wound of Christ, the artist of this work stylized the wound with a large scale, abstract form, and vertically oriented composition. Some of these comparable works state the measurements of the side wound alongside the wound itself, and functioned as healing indulgences that ward off the dangers of death in child labor.¹² Although Bonne's prayer book does not state the dimensions of the wound, its size, centrality, and frontality follow the conventional representational style of indulgences that imbued their beholders with protection. One may observe this stylistic connection between earlier depictions of the side wound and later examples of the side wound that include written indulgences. Medieval religion further connected Christ's wound to maternity, since theologians viewed Christ as the maternal redeemer of the humanity. By devoting herself to this painted wound, Bonne could protect her own maternity as well as imitate Christ, and ascend toward him. The wound itself, then, speaks two languages. As an indulgence, it protected Bonne's earthy role as a mother, and as a devotional icon, it encouraged her spiritual role as a bride of Christ who imitates him in her maternal acts. Since Bonne gave birth to ten children in

her lifetime, the dual functions of this healing and spiritual tool would have been particularly resonant.

On this folio, the conflation of secular and sacred exists on a very personal level. Jean le Noir further appealed to the patroness's individual interests by visualizing the motif of the Valois dynasty throughout the miniature. The coat of arms in the lower portion of the miniature proclaims the union of Luxembourg and Valois blood, with the blue and gold *fleur-de-lis* of the royal French dynasty on the heraldic right side. This royal color scheme recurs in the blue and gold leaf ornamentation behind the *arma Christi* that flank the wound. On a formal level, this composition connects the royal family to divinity through its replicated color scheme. This connection is physically realized as well, since a collection of relics of the *arma Christi* resided in the Valois chapel, Sainte-Chapelle. As one of the first depictions of the *arma Christi*, this miniature likely referred to this more intimate collection.¹³ By illustrating the association between the holy *arma Christi* with the French crown, the miniature demonstrates how the monarchical and religious vocabularies interact to convey a highly evocative multivalent mechanism of devotion to Bonne of Luxembourg, the woman next in line to become queen of France. Progressing from this point, we will see how spiritual and secular languages help construct and define medieval female spirituality.

II. VIRGINITY AND SPIRITUALITY

In the fourteenth century, the theme of virginity as a cherished ideal for all unmarried females was amended to recognize the reality of a famine that raged in Europe from 1315 to 1322 and devastated the population.¹⁴ As a response to this natural disaster,

the church began to emphasize the importance of earthly marriage in order to encourage the laity to procreate and restore the diminished population.¹⁵ Consequently, female religious devotion shifted its focus from physical chastity to spiritual virtue. The concept of virginity thus came to be understood less as a physical state of purity but, rather, as a mental state attained through spiritual devotion.¹⁶ I argue that the composition and iconography of this folio facilitated the viewer's acquisition of this spiritual virginity, which restored her Christian value and, at the same time, enabled her to bear more children. The miniature, in other words, suggested the possibility of reconciling spiritual purity with the secular ideal of bearing children.

In outlining the attainment of spiritual purity, theological writing combined the language of passionate love and biblical psalms to inspire female devotees to worship Christ as if they were his maiden lovers. This amorous relationship with Christ spiritually referenced the language of Late Antique interpretations of the *Song of Songs* such as those by Origen (184/185 – 253/254) and Saint Jerome (c. 347 – 420). The twelfth-century Cistercian abbot Bernard of Clairvaux and other later mystics revitalized these spiritual analyses in more contemporary readings of the *Song of Songs* at the same time that the state of virginity and the language of love resonated within courtly romances. Since the heroines of these tales were usually uncorrupted virgins, the assimilation of chivalric literary motifs into medieval spirituality likewise emphasized the chastity of the devout females. As we shall see, this new mode of spirituality, filtered through the lens of secular romances, also functioned as a means to restore the virginity of women who had consummated their earthly marriages.

The Secular Setting for a Spiritual Image

The iconography of folio 331r (pl. 1) visually exemplifies this new language of spirituality with its combination of a secular setting and the mystical wound of Christ. The frame of the miniature suggests the resonance between courtly romances and spiritual pursuits. The wound of Christ is surrounded by the paradigmatic place for romance: a garden. A conventional fourteenth-century frame of ivy outlines the miniature and the text, instilling a sense of nature in the didactic devotional image.¹⁷ Jean le Noir expanded upon this environmental motif by adding skillfully lifelike birds that interact with the leaves.¹⁸ These birds, common to the French countryside and garden,¹⁹ transport this image into the domain of the natural world. To a literate aristocratic female viewer, this garden-like imagery may have recalled a trope of secular courtly literature in which the garden is the site of love and loss of a woman's virginity.²⁰ The ornithological diversity augments the viewer's sense of the garden experience through recreating the activity of bird watching. The viewer would have observed the birds' interactions with the ivy leaves as if she were observing them in real life, in her own garden. Ivy leaf borders such as the one in this manuscript were common ornamentations in the late Middle Ages. Placing birds in the margins of illuminations was also a convention of the period.²¹ Had these decorative borders appeared separate from each other, one could consider them unremarkable. The combination of the two traditions of ivy leaves and birds, however, is particular to this manuscript. It is through this pairing that the artist gives the reader a sense of viewing in a garden.

In order to decipher a bird's symbolic meaning, the viewer must first recognize its species. For instance, the Chaffin near the upper left corner signifies happiness, and the

Little Owl in the right margin signifies wisdom.²² According to Charles Vaurie, the goldfinch in the center of the right margin was of particular importance to the medieval French viewer. An iconographic trend that began in the mid-thirteenth century frequently depicts Christ holding a goldfinch in representations of the Madonna and Child.²³ In addition to the association with Christ's childhood, the goldfinch was also associated with Christ's death. A traditional French tale attributed the goldfinch's red face to its role in the Passion, during which it wounded itself when plucking out the thorns of Christ's crown.²⁴ Thus, the dual significance of the goldfinch connects Christ's Passion to his childhood. This vernacular meaning may reinforce a woman's dual duties: to maintain her piety by devoting herself to Christ's Passion and to preserve her lineage through reproduction. By placing the wound, representative of Christ's Passion, in a gardenlike realm, the illuminator connected Christ to the conventional heroine of secular literature and simultaneously suggested her union to Christ, the chivalric lover of her soul.

While the female protagonist submitted herself and her virginity to love, Christ sacrificed himself due to his love for humanity. It would have been easy for a courtly female like Bonne, who had surrendered her virginity to her husband, to identify with the earthly female protagonist in secular fiction. In viewing this folio, then, the reader would have in turn identified herself not only with the implied courtly heroine, but also with Christ. To Karma Lochrie, this female spirituality was an inversion of the "terms of courtly love", which traditionally placed the male in the role of the chivalrous protagonist.²⁵ This mode of devotion enabled the female reader to exert her own agency via her dedication to Christ. Through his use of the *topos* of the garden, the artist linked Christ's sacrifice of his life and body to Bonne's own sacrifice of her virginity. It assured

her that she was imitating Christ in an act of devotion through which she ensured the preservation of her spiritual virtues.

Female Spirituality and the *Song of Songs*

Contemporary medieval spiritual language explains the iconography of the folio and the mechanism behind its success as a devotional image. In the *Song of Songs*, the male protagonist describes his lover as a “secret...walled garden”,²⁶ a woman with virginity intact. They also consummate their love on a “*lectulus...floridus*”, a bed [covered] with flowers.²⁷ To medieval theologians, Christ himself adopts the gardenlike imagery as the allegorical lover in the *Song of Songs*. In the Middle Ages, then, this psalm transported sacred figures to the secular realm of the garden. The fourteenth-century mystic Walter Hilton described Christ’s wound—the site of union for the *sponsa* and *sponsus*, or bride and bridegroom—as a “gate of Paradise”.²⁸ Thus, both Christ and his lover personified gardens, symbols of virginity in secular literature and of immortal divine perfection in sacred literature. The imagery of the garden again exemplified that by restoring her spiritual virginity, Bonne of Luxembourg imitated Christ and thereby could ensure her eventual spiritual union with him in paradise.

In the middle and late Middle Ages, the correspondence that existed between secular and sacred love was so prevalent that it expanded into medical beliefs and practices. For instance, in the twelfth century, the mystic Richard of St. Victor identified the symptoms for carnal and spiritual passionate love as exactly identical.²⁹ Thus, eroticized imagery that propelled spirituality also provided a means of restoring virginity. According to John Bugge, Bernard of Clairvaux stressed that carnal knowledge of God

“restores the soul’s virginity [...] to the condition of [maidenhood] required for its final union with Him”.³⁰ Furthermore, Bonaventure added that the site of this cleansing union was the side wound, “the visible wound [by which] we may see the invisible wound of love”³¹ which “for this cause [...] of cleansing [...] was pierced”.³² Comparably, the female protagonist of the *Song of Songs* described herself as “black but beautiful”.³³ Medieval theologians such as the twelfth-century mystic Hildegard of Bingen,³⁴ Walter Hilton,³⁵ and the eleventh- and twelfth-century philosopher Peter Abelard³⁶ interpreted this character as a woman who, despite the evil blackness of her carnal sins, attained spiritual beauty in her devotion to God. This carnal imagery existed in female-authored texts as well. Hildegard of Bingen reiterated this motif of sexual redemption in a meditative song, in which women who possess “carnal knowledge of man” abandon their earthly lovers and chant to “most glorious, and most beautiful Christ,” exclaiming:

And now, we embrace You
In divine love
Through the virginal branch of Your nativity.
And we have joined ourselves to You in a way
Different from the way we coupled in the flesh.³⁷

This lyrical imagery demonstrates the fusion of religious secular conventions, for Christ becomes the archetypal lover who surpasses the ideal of the earthly lover, and consummates his relationship with divine love and virginity.

In addition to connoting Christ’s sacred Passion, the shape of the wound alludes to the organ of the heart. The convention of the heart today is very different from that of the Middle Ages.³⁸ Instead, artists represented the vital organ in various abstract modes. For example, on an ivory mirror case, a man presents a teardrop-shaped heart to his beloved (pl. 2). This abstract organ is not unlike the pointed oval form of the wound in

Bonne's prayer book. In fact, at least one scholar has identified the wound as the heart itself.³⁹ This double meaning strengthens the significance of the wound as the locus of Christ's heart and divinity. The tradition of lovers uniting via the heart found in secular literature and art, like the scene on the ivory mirror case, parallels the Christian tradition of uniting with Christ via the heart. This union is most explicitly apparent in the *Song of Songs*. Unsurprisingly, since the amorous themes of the *Song of Songs* are similar to popular courtly love literature, the *Song of Songs* itself increased in popularity during the Middle Ages. Bernard of Clairvaux contributed to its resurgence through his many sermons on the *Song of Songs*.⁴⁰ Whereas previous theologians had interpreted the psalm allegorically, Bernard reinterpreted it mystically.⁴¹ Seeking to revitalize Origen's third-century readings, Bernard viewed the relationship between male lover and female lover in the *Song of Songs* as a metaphor for Christ as the Bridegroom for the soul. In doing so, Bernard shows indebtedness to one of Origen's earlier commentaries on the *Song of Songs*.

Origen, an early Christian theologian, identified both the Christian church and the individual soul as the Bridegrooms of the Holy Word, and verbally represented the institution and the individual with sexualized imagery.⁴² While scholars regard Origen's commentary as the first mystical text,⁴³ it declined to acknowledge Christ's own sexuality as later mystical texts did. It did, however, provide the basis for theological demand for the Christian Bridegroom's virginity. This return to Origen's interpretation replaced the prevalent Aristotelian ideal of monastic *asexuality* with an ideal of monastic *virginity*.⁴⁴ However, in the late Middle Ages, the virtue of virginity before marriage had been primarily relegated to the female domain.⁴⁵ By then, the bridal motif had already been

adopted to symbolize the relationship between nuns and incarnate Christ.⁴⁶ Thus, Origen's Late Antique interpretation of Christ as the Bridegroom for both male and female Christian followers had come to apply primarily to females in the Middle Ages.⁴⁷

In his sixty-first sermon on the *Song of Songs*, Bernard interprets the rock as the body of Christ and clefts in the rock as his wounds.⁴⁸ He deems the body to be a place of refuge for the soul, where "open Wounds lay bare the secret of his Heart, that mighty mystery of love".⁴⁹ Bernard initiated the mystical devotion to the wounds by sensationalizing them. For at the wounds, there "gushes forth [a] spring" from which one may drink the "exhilarating" love that overcomes and controls the senses.⁵⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux's successors elaborated upon this new mystical emphasis. Medieval nuns interpreted the *sponsa – sponsus* motif from the *Song of Songs* in a literal and erotic fashion, applying it to their own mystical experiences with the divine. To the Beguine nun Mechthild of Magdeburg (c. 1207/10 – c. 1282/94), the *sponsa Christi* was "wounded through love...[and] pierced to the heart by constant union" with her Bridegroom.⁵¹ With texts like this example which focus on the spiritual and carnal perception of union, it was only a small step for nuns to further eroticize this extant sensual imagery of union to resemble more explicit imagery of copulation.

The increased emphasis on the *sponsa Christi* and Christ's Passion is evident in contemporaneous devotional art. For instance, on folia 18v and 19r of a manuscript commonly known as the *Rothschild Canticles*, the *sponsa* points her lance toward a crucified Christ as he gestures toward the wound in his side (pl. 3). The text preceding the folia is Song of Songs 4:9-10: "[You] have stolen my heart [...] my sweetheart and bride".⁵² This illuminated diptych demonstrates the iconographical origins of the wound

of Christ in Bonne of Luxembourg's prayer book. With the increasing interest in the *Song of Songs*, the *sponsa's* injury to the *sponsus* came to be identified with—and identical to—Christ's side wound from the Passion. As Jeffrey Hamburger states, "The two meanings of *passion*—suffering and ecstatic love—fuse[d]".⁵³ With this intersection of the *Song of Songs* and the Passion, the wound adopted a dual meaning. It signified both the *sponsa's* act of love through her wounding of her lover and Christ's act of love through his corporeal sacrifice on the cross. Although the physical actions themselves differ, both the *sponsa* and Christ commit acts of love. The *sponsa* thereby imitates Christ. In identifying with the *sponsa*, the medieval female viewer became the protagonist of her own romance,⁵⁴ uniting herself with Christ through her amorous act of wounding and her pious act of imitation. The viewer's love of Christ was thus eroticized through the *sponsa's* sensual relationship with Christ as Bridegroom and also divinized through her devotional imitation of Christ.

Christ's Divine Corporeality and *Imitatio Christi*

In keeping with the contemporary overarching cultural focus on corporeality, medieval spirituality concentrated on Christ as a human being. When medieval Christians intensified their theological devotion to Christ's Passion, the five wounds of Christ—one on each hand, one on each foot, and one on his side—became the central objects of piety. In fact, new masses arose to establish liturgical worship of the wounds.⁵⁵ The wound in Christ's side eventually became the primary subject of medieval devotion, particularly in central Europe.⁵⁶ Scholars have recognized this new attention to the Passion as the derivative of an increased attention to Christ's humanity⁵⁷ that enabled the devotees to

“not simply [observe,] but [experience]” his physical suffering.⁵⁸ Yet alongside this emphasis on Christ’s corporeality, medieval Christians also maintained his divinity. In his thirteenth-century treatise *De perfectione vitae ad sorores*, Bonaventure instructed nuns to:

Draw near, O handmaid, with loving steps to Jesus wounded for you, to Jesus crowned with thorns, to Jesus nailed to the gibbet of the Cross. Gaze with the Blessed Apostle St. Thomas, not merely on the print of the nails in His hands; be not satisfied with putting your finger into the holes made by the nails in His hands; neither let it be sufficient to put up your hand to the wound in His side; but enter by the door in His side and go straight up to the very Heart of Jesus. There, burning with love for Christ Crucified, be transformed in to Christ. [...] Look for consolation in nothing else except in dying with Christ on the Cross.⁵⁹

With this text, Bonaventure urged the nuns to surpass Thomas’s means of consummating his faith.⁶⁰ According to Bonaventure, one conveys true devotion by uniting with Christ in his heart.

One can discern this attention to the somatic and the sacred in the illustrated wound of Christ on folio 331r (pl. 1). The pointed oval contour alludes to the contemporaneous artistic conventions of a mandorla,⁶¹ a shape which medieval sculptors and painters alike frequently employed to signify Christ’s sacredness.⁶² Although typical examples of this convention explicitly depict Christ’s body inscribed within the mandorla, viewers may also have read an isolated mandorla as a synecdoche for Christ’s divinity.⁶³ Medieval artists frequently sculpted and painted the mandorla form in depictions of the Last Judgment and other biblical scenes as a general demarcation of divinity. The form of the wound as a signifier, then, alludes to sacredness by employing these stylistic conventions. Simultaneously, the biblical subject it represents also emphasizes Christ’s humanity, for through his wound he suffered and bled during his Passion on the cross.

Medieval theologians reiterated this dual evocation of spiritual and physical. For instance, the twelfth-century English abbot Aelred of Rievaulx stated that when the side wound was opened, its blood transformed into wine.⁶⁴ Late medieval piety embraced this notion to such an extent that contemporary icons of Christ incorporated monstrances—vessels that contain the consecrated Eucharist—at the locus of the side wound.⁶⁵ This transformation from blood to wine was commonplace in both medieval religion and medieval secular medicine. In medieval Christian belief, Christ’s blood was transfigured into wine with the sacrament of the Eucharist and possessed the potency to revitalize the spirit. In the same way, the bleeding wound of the Passion became a threshold between human and divine, nourishing the spirit through its Eucharistic salvific properties and healing the body with its medicinal properties. It was thus the quintessential devotional icon: it inspired communication between the viewer and Christ as a symbolic mediator between corporeality and divinity. Furthermore, the iconic wound became a symbol of salvation and redemption. Since medieval medical doctrines stressed that any form of bleeding purifies the body,⁶⁶ Christ’s bloodshed during the Passion was “analogous to a purging of the collective body of Christianity of its impurity; through his sacrifice humanity [was] redeemed”.⁶⁷ The mandorla silhouette in Bonne’s prayer book would have reiterated to the viewer the potent combination of divinity and physicality inherent in Christ’s corporeal wound.

This dual emphasis on divinity and corporeality visually exemplifies the religious notion of *imitatio Christi*, through which the worshipper strengthened devotion through procedural imitation of Christ. As I have demonstrated, Bernard of Clairvaux popularized this theological emphasis on the imitation of Christ in his twelfth-century sermons,

especially those on the *Song of Songs*. Mystics such as Mechthild of Magdeburg revisited this theme, and combined it with the *sponsa Christi* motif to emphasize the bride's love for her Bridegroom as she imitates his Passion cycle. In Mechthild's writings, the desire-stricken *sponsa* "bears her cross along a pleasant way because in all her suffering she gives herself utterly to God...pierced in her side by one blind to innocent love" as a soul "truly penetrated by the love of God."⁶⁸ The imagery of penetration here fuses the emotions of suffering and desire that the bride endures. It refers to both the wounding penetration of the spear of Longinus as well as the sexual act of consummating union that follows marriage. As a spiritual mechanism, the practice of *imitatio Christi* encouraged Christian believers to endure their individual Passion cycles, for in doing so they suffered like Christ, and hence were spiritually reborn to unite with him.

The compositional style of folio 331r aids in the interpretation of Christ's Passion and facilitates the act of *imitatio Christi*. Behind and beside the minimalistic mandorla, the ornate delicacy of the *arma Christi* and blue background offsets and exalts the abstracted wound. The *arma Christi* provide the narrative and visual context that the isolated wound lacks. Without them, one could not assuredly recognize that this red abstracted mandorla was the wound of Christ. As instruments used to torture Christ in his Passion, the *arma Christi* allow the viewer to recognize the wound for what it is: the evidence of the spear's penetration into Christ's side. This easy recognition results from the layout of the *arma Christi*. The artist arranged the weapons in neat, even rows, as if to present specimens for orderly analysis. The display of these instruments facilitates the miniature's function as a devotional image; it aids the viewer's meditation upon and devotion to the Passion of Christ. The reader could perceive clearly every instrument of

torture: the spear of Longinus, the crucifix, the crown of thorns, the holy sponge, the hammer used to drive in the nails, the coffin, the three nails themselves, the two whips, the vessel that held the bile and vinegar, the column and cord of flagellation, and the pincers used to remove the nails.⁶⁹ The specimen-style layout presents the instruments of Christ's torture to the viewer in a didactic fashion so that she could identify each instrument and the pain it inflicted. With this recognition, she could realize the extent to which Christ loved and suffered for humanity, then meditate and pray upon each weapon for a long period of time. This sets a righteous example for the female reader and also justifies her own suffering. Through his love, Christ commits the ultimate act of charity and sacrifices himself to redeem humanity. Through this didactic demonstration, this devotional image encourages the viewer to sacrifice herself via acts of *imitatio Christi* in order to restore her soul.

The marginal figure occupying the top left corner also encourages this charitable sacrifice. This male hybrid, dressed in a black robe, points a six-runged ladder downward toward the central wound. Out of context, this figure seems enigmatic and incongruous to the composition. However, the preceding few folia depict Bonne and her husband ascending the Six Degrees of Charity associated with the Throne of Solomon in Bonaventure's text *De triplici via* (pl. 4, 5).⁷⁰ According to this medieval devotional tradition, the faithful protagonist must enact charitable deeds in increasingly devoted stages. At the final step, the faithful Christian sees God face-to-face, unites with him, and reaches eternal paradise.⁷¹ The ladder with its six rungs recalls the preceding Six Degrees of Charity in an abstracted and abridged form. The presence of this ladder reminds the Bonne that her own acts of charity as wife and benefactress will ultimately unite her with

her true Lord. Through the sacrifice of her virginity, she imitates Christ's sacrifice for humanity, increases her devotion to God, and advances herself up the steps toward her union with him. She thus enables her own ascent to eternal glory in heaven.

The ladder is also associated with many other theological exegeses, which it may also have conjured to the contemporaneous devotee. As the last instrument of the Passion, the ladder transports Christ's body up to heaven.⁷² Since the ladder does not lie among the other *arma Christi* in the central miniature, its more prominent placement augments and distinguishes it from the other instruments. Consequently, it becomes a point of entry and a locus of visual access to the miniature. This visual representation parallels medieval theology, in which the Christ's step-like descent to humanity and ascent to divinity resemble a ladder.⁷³ To Bernard of Clairvaux, man can also imitate Christ in this process and ascend to heaven himself.⁷⁴ In a sermon on John 3:13, he states:

There are, therefore, steps in [Christ's] descending as there are in ascending. In fact, in descending, the first step is from the height of heaven all the way to the flesh; the second, all the way to the cross; the third, all the way to death . [...] As we have seen the descent, so we shall see the ascent. But that too is threefold, and its first step is the glory of the Resurrection; the second, the power of judgment; the third, admission to the right hand of the Father. [...] Anything more sublime than this ascent, anything more glorious than this honor can neither be said nor imagined. For through the mystery of his Incarnation the Lord descended and ascended, leaving us an example so that we might follow in his footsteps.⁷⁵

Thus, the ladder becomes a means of metamorphosis from divine to human and also from human to divine. Furthermore, contemporary illustrations and theological glosses associate the soul's step-like ascent to God with Song of Songs 7:8: "I will climb the palm tree and pick its fruit".⁷⁶ Although the motif of the ascent has here acquired a moral meaning, it is interwoven with an erotic text, for the tree in the Song of Songs is really the man's description of the woman. He states in Song of Songs 7:6-8, "How pretty

you are, how beautiful; how complete the delights of your love. You are as graceful as a palm tree, and your breasts are clusters of dates. I will climb the palm tree and pick its fruit".⁷⁷ Thus the illustration of the ladder in Bonne's prayer book becomes multivalent. Like the wound, it acquires both moral and erotic undertones in the context of contemporary theology. With these diverse interpretations, the reader could understand the ladder to be an instrument of spiritual ascent, obtained through charitable deeds of the soul and resulting in an act of erotic pleasure. Through her earthly morality, her soul ascends to marry Christ her Bridegroom. In this, she consummates her devotion and she restores her spiritual virginity via her act of *imitatio Christi*.

The two marginal hybrid figures at the *bas-de-page* contrast this moralizing role model. These two women each sit backward on an animal and hold the Valois – Luxembourg coat of arms between them. The woman on the left wears a blue sheet of fabric that covers her head in a fashion reminiscent of a nun's habit. She is mounted backward upon a red fox, who turns his head around to snap at the fabric that encloses her body. The second woman sits upon a composite creature with a blue dog-like head and leonine hind legs. The woman herself is dressed in a taupe sheet that seems to shimmer. Its color blends in with her flesh, adopting the effect of transparency that reveals the form of her body. Her long wavy hair flies free down the back of her neck. Although to the modern viewer this may appear to be a strange scene of erotic bestiality, to medieval audiences these figures represented sinners. Beginning in the high Middle Ages, artists began depicting sinners as riding backwards on beasts.⁷⁸ This action functioned to disgrace and penalize the sinner for his or her wrongdoing.⁷⁹ Although one scholar has interpreted these figures as references to Bonne's supposed adultery,⁸⁰ a study

of medieval illumination conventions reveals just the opposite. According to Michael Camille, the margins often serve as sites of social inversion and negative self-image.⁸¹ This scene, then, proposes a counterexample for the reader to study and react against. It provides a visual incentive that propels her toward her act of devotion. The woman on the right sits upon a dog-lion composite creature while the leftmost woman rides a fox, which some have read as a symbol of the Devil's slyness.⁸² With their twisted hybrid figures, these animals and their riders clearly represent the Other. These figures, then, are truly marginalized. Their strategic position at the bottom margin encourages the pious viewer to shift her gaze upward toward the devotional wound. As representational Others, they provide undesirable alternatives to the viewer's goal, inspiring her to ascend toward the locus of spiritual union.

The Confluence of Nuns and Laywomen

One may account for this literary and visual confluence of the sacred and the secular in the analysis of the societal confluence of the sacred and the secular. In the later Middle Ages, privileged laywomen inundated and subsequently greatly influenced religious establishments.⁸³ Monasteries limited this membership of laity to the wealthy because the religious orders relied upon endowments, which they attained from the nuns' dowries⁸⁴ and from external gifts.⁸⁵ For those women who could afford it, lay convents became a means of escape from conventional life, which often included an arranged or undesirable marriage.⁸⁶ At these crossroads between noblewomen and nuns, residents often transferred the obedience they would have owed a secular husband to Christ. Contemporary literature attests to this shift in devotion. For instance, the anonymous

thirteenth-century treatise on virginity *Holy Maidenhood* idealizes the beauty and nobleness of Christ, describing him as a lover whose beauty and nobility surpasses that of all earthly men.⁸⁷ Mechthild of Magdeburg, too, mixes religious imagery with secular ideals of beauty. In *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*, the holy Bridegroom addresses his bride, “*Vide mea sponsa!* See, my Bride! how beautiful are My eyes! How comely My mouth! How fiery My heart! How delicate My hands! How swift My feet! And follow Me!”⁸⁸ In literary imagery, Christ became the exemplar of noble chivalry and a divine champion of courtly ideals.⁸⁹ This is realized most explicitly in the *Ancrene Riwe*, which describes Christ as “a noble lover” who “gave proof of His love, and showed by knightly deeds that He was worthy of love” by entering a tournament where “His shield [was] pierced through for love of His lady”.⁹⁰ The aristocratic ideals of chivalry latent in courtly literature merged with the mystical ideal of Christ as a passionate lover like the protagonist in the *Song of Songs*.

Before the wound entered the iconography of the laity like Bonne, mystical nuns primarily employed it in their devotional exercises. Bernard of Clairvaux’s mid-twelfth-century attempt to revitalize the Christ as Bridegroom motif really only flourished in the devotions of nuns. Since these mystical devotional texts originated in monasteries,⁹¹ the first illustrations of this phenomenon also originated in monastic devotional prayer books. Depictions of the wound even induced mystical visions on their own. For instance, after Gertrude of Helfta (1256 – c. 1302) implored the Lord to “transfix [her] heart with the arrow of [his] love,” she received the Eucharist (through which she drank the transfigured blood of Christ and thereby united with his body), and returned to her book. This book contained an illumination of Christ’s body, and from his side wound Gertrude of Helfta

mystically saw “a ray of sunlight with a sharp point like an arrow came forth and spread itself out for a moment and then drew back”.⁹² The arrow-like light repeated this action for a duration of time, affecting Gertrude “gently but deeply”.⁹³ Since the arrow resembles a spear, one may read this imagery of penetration as both the conventional arrow of love and as another visualization of the *sponsa Christi* motif. Indeed, after this vision, Christ returned to Gertrude to “fully satisf[y]” her by “inflicting a wound in [her] heart,” the very site of spiritual union.⁹⁴ Clearly, the illustrations of the wound acquired a potency of their own: the ability to stimulate not only devotion and meditation, but also mystical visions of union.

A folio from one codex reveals the beholder’s somatic relationship with illustrations of the wound (pl. 6). The worn paint may be a witness to a devoted owner kissing or stroking the pictorial wound “to the point of effacement”.⁹⁵ If this is indeed the cause for the illumination’s physical deterioration, the pious medieval reader of these prayer books treated the illustration of the wound as if it were the material wound itself. She physically enacted the role of the *sponsa*, uniting herself with Christ through her tactile relationship with his wound. Through this devotion, the reader also obtained the healing qualities of the wound. The smaller-sized format of prayer books like that of Bonne facilitated the sensual intimacy necessary for these mystical and pleasurable experiences.⁹⁶ These somatic and often erotic visions existed primarily in the realm of women; female mystics acted as the protagonists in most extant records of these mystical encounters.⁹⁷ According to scholars, these visions provided monastic women with a sense of authority.⁹⁸ This feminine specialization, then, enabled the devotional iconography to facilitate powerful mysticism.

Many scholars have interpreted this phenomenon as the female's circumvention of male power. During the high and late Middle Ages, monks disparaged their fellow nuns,⁹⁹ a resentment that, once enacted, sparked the women to undermine both "patriarchal expectations"¹⁰⁰ and "priestly authority"¹⁰¹ by devoting themselves to Christ's corporeality. This shift in ritual emphasis from Christ's spirit to his body stresses the significance of female gender in devotion, and gave women a role of agency. In the monasteries, this circumvention of male dominion incited palpable female empowerment. Medieval nuns derived this spiritual power through the mode of vision, for as women, they were thought to be the more visually malleable of the sexes.¹⁰² This characteristic enabled them to receive divine revelations and act as vessels of such visions better than their male counterparts could.¹⁰³

In the cities, however, this new convention of female religious agency was probably expressed more delicately. Since laywomen like Bonne were bound to their husbands in duty and religion, they could not seek to undermine male authority like their monastic counterparts. Instead, they turned to Christ not to annul their marriages and replace their husbands with him, but to use him as a supplementary spouse whom they married in spirit, not body.¹⁰⁴ For the medieval female, viewing her own miniature of the wound of Christ would incite her to contemplate her own spiritual marriage with Christ. The tradition of the *Song of Songs* allowed her to maintain her piety by uniting with her divine spouse in this erotically expressed spiritual marriage.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, the new conventions of the feminized Christ allowed her to realize her earthly purpose as a mother. It thus became possible for the female reader to lose her physical virginity and

give birth to children and still preserve her spiritual virginity, for in doing so she imitated Christ in an act of procreative sacrifice.

One noble female who preferred the nunnery to her marriage was Lady Kunigunde of Bohemia, Bonne's great-aunt.¹⁰⁶ After a brief political marriage, Kunigunde became the abbess of the Saint George Convent in Prague, where she commissioned mystic artists to make books.¹⁰⁷ One of these codices, known as the *Passional of Abbess Kunigunde*,¹⁰⁸ combines courtly literary imagery with mystical imagery of the wound of Christ. Kunigunde commissioned the mystic Kolda of Koldice to write one of the texts inside the codex: the parable *The Brave Knight* (fol. 2-9),¹⁰⁹ in which a knight rescues his lover from his rival. This narrative is an allegory for Christ, who rescues the soul from the Devil.¹¹⁰

The parallel between this secularized text and the *Song of Songs* is made more blatant by the text's accompanying miniatures. In one illumination situated in the middle of *The Brave Knight*, Christ presents his wound as a lover's gift to Abbess Kunigunde (pl. 7). Furthermore, the miniature just following the parable is one of the first depictions of Christ's isolated wound surrounded by the *arma Christi* (pl. 8).¹¹¹ Remarkably, in this context the instruments of the Passion could embody what Caroline Walker Bynum defines as the "complex overtones" of the word *arma*, including "chivalric identification, weapons of defense and offense, [and] instruments and effects of execution".¹¹² Here, the wound acts as a metonymy for Christ in his capacity as both divine husband and chivalrous nobleman, as well as a meditative icon through which Bonne could contemplate the body and spirit of her holy lover.¹¹³ As Margaret Manion suggests, this mystical imagery in the devotional book of Bonne's great-aunt may explain the presence

of the isolated wound in Bonne's prayer book.¹¹⁴ This hypothesis, however, is unprovable without concrete evidence of Bonne's relationship with her great-aunt. Fortunately, one may account for the iconography of Bonne's miniature without ascribing it to her biological lineage.

Just as the laity influenced monastic religion, monastic religion also influenced the laity. Instead of confining themselves to nunneries, the majority of medieval nuns practiced a "mixed life."¹¹⁵ This entailed performing acts of charity in the community in addition to acts of private devotion. It was only through this duality of active service and inward piety that the believer could achieve mystical union with the divine.¹¹⁶ This ideal mirrors the ideal represented by the wound of Christ in Bonne of Luxembourg's prayer book. Through the influx of privileged women into monasteries and their subsequent influence on communities through their charitable deeds, the mystical iconography once confined to monasteries entered the realm of the laity.

The connotations these icons carry must have resounded in aristocratic female laymen like Bonne, for it helped resolve a paradox in their lives. Like the medieval nuns, the devout laywoman attained this mystical union by committing charitable acts and devotional acts. Her charity was the sacrifice of her virginity for the perpetuity of her husband's lineage. This act of *imitatio Christi*, or imitation of Christ, paralleled Christ's own suffering and rebirth of humanity. In addition to this act of charity, the medieval reader demonstrated her devotion through meditation upon prayer books such as this one. Through this combination of charity and devotion, she attained spiritual marriage. In this, she shed her "blackness"—the sin she committed by losing her physical virginity—and became "beautiful" as God restored her spiritual virginity. Thus, the isolated wound of

Christ offered to its female reader the ability to strengthen her piety and serve her husband. Its iconography undoubtedly derives from contemporaneous nuns, who strove for the same objective: unity with Christ through charity and devotion. Consequently, this miniature demonstrates the transference of monastic iconography and spirituality to the laity.

Physical and Spiritual Virginity

Just as the boundary between secular and sacred literature blurs, so does the distinction between physical and spiritual virginity. In fact, what the modern reader interprets as erotic and almost sinfully carnal also symbolized the utmost piety to the medieval reader. For instance, the isolated contour and saturated red color of the wound in Bonne's prayer book cause it to resemble the vagina (pl. 1). This association connotes the feelings of ecstatic sensual pleasure that mystical women felt when they united with Christ.¹¹⁷ Although some scholars submit that this is an erroneous modern interpretation of the medieval devotional image,¹¹⁸ contemporaneous artifacts with a more explicit visual context represent the vagina in a similar fashion. For example, a parody pilgrim badge depicts three phalluses carrying the same mandorla-shaped vagina (pl. 9).¹¹⁹ Although we do not know the original function for this bawdy badge, it surely demonstrates that vaginas were indeed represented as vertical, mandorla-like slits during the Middle Ages. It is thus plausible that the medieval laywoman viewed the similarly shaped wound of Christ in relation to the vagina as well.¹²⁰ Here, I do not wish to claim that this erotic reading of the wound as a vulva was the definite interpretation of medieval readers.¹²¹ Rather, I would like to suggest that since the mandorla shape of the wound

may play with extant vaginal iconography, this could be a potential reading that adds another layer of meaning to the miniature, and augments the spiritual contemplation of the wound. This threshold between divinity and eroticism existed in mystical writings as well. Because theologians had already provided nuns with the imagery of union, they perhaps unsurprisingly eroticized this devotional imagery. These mystics built upon the *Song of Song*'s bedroom setting¹²² as a place where they consummate their mystical marriages by drinking from Christ's side. The Benedictine nun Mechthild of Hackeborn (1240/41 – 1298) describes her love with Christ:

Love took the soul [that of Mechthild of Hackeborn] and led her to the Lord. And the soul bent herself over the wound and the sweet Heart of her only Saviour, and drank therefrom deep draughts of all deliciousness and sweetness. She also drew forth from the Heart of Christ an exceeding sweet fruit, which she took from the Heart of God and placed it in her own mouth[.]¹²³

The female mystics' devotional texts attest to this somaticized act of devotion in which mystical women "touch[ed], kiss[ed], suck[ed], and enter[ed] the wound of Christ".¹²⁴

Although the explicitly erotic *vulnus* – *vulva* imagery that the mystical women employed may appear incongruous to medieval ideals of female chastity, the contemporary viewer would not have read these viewings as improperly carnal. In fact, these quasi-profane mystical texts ironically worked to maintain the devotee's virginity. Since virginity became a completely spiritual state that facilitated union with the divine, even married women had the power to attain this spiritual virginity.¹²⁵ Texts throughout Europe document this notion. For instance, the thirteenth-century English *Ancrene Riwe* states, "in however many mortal sins His beloved may have prostituted herself, as soon as she comes back to Him He makes her a maiden again. [...] a man turns maiden into wife, but that of God, wife to maiden".¹²⁶ In pledging herself to God in mind and spirit, the

heroine unites her maidenhood with the “seal”—the wound—of Christ.¹²⁷ His wound is eroticized as a vagina and divinized as a site of holy union.¹²⁸ Thus despite the explicit sexual carnality of mystical imagery, these female devotions in fact functioned to facilitate the woman’s spiritual union with the divine, which in turn restored and preserved the woman’s spiritual virginity. In resembling the vagina, then, the wound in Bonne’s manuscript demonstrates the pleasurable and spiritual act of union with the divine. To her, it could have symbolized the potential to regain both spiritual and physical purity and virginity.

III. MATERNITY

Christ’s Partuition

The pervasiveness of carnal metaphors for spiritual love in particularly female devotional literature can be attributed in part to the medieval association between femininity and corporeality. According to Caroline Walker Bynum, the female was a symbol of Christ’s humanity.¹²⁹ Contemporaneous theologians feminized Christ, portraying him as the figure whose suffering during the Passion resembled the pangs of childbirth. Not only could it generate spiritual rebirth, but the wound of the Passion was also physically procreative. Medieval devotees often analogized Christ’s bleeding wound to a lactating breast,¹³⁰ which provided the nutritive sustenance for physical nativity. In this extended metaphor for Christ’s rebirth of humanity, Christ becomes a mother figure.¹³¹ Walter Hilton strengthened this maternal connection, stating, “[Christ’s] wounds are always open, and by *them* I will enter his womb...”.¹³² Moreover, medieval

religious figures such as the thirteenth-century Carthusian prioress Marguerite of Oingt compared his suffering during the Passion with a woman's pain in childbirth. She wrote:

Are you not my mother more than my mother? The mother who bore me labored at my birth for one day or one night, but you, my sweet and lovely Lord, were in pain for me not just one day, but you were in labor for more than thirty years. Oh, sweet and lovely Lord, how bitterly were you in labor for me all through your life! But when the time approached where you had to give birth, the labor was such that your holy sweat was like drops of blood which poured out of your body and onto the ground. [...] Oh, Sweet Lord Jesus Christ, who ever saw a mother suffer such a birth! But when the hour of the birth came you were placed on the hard bench of the cross. [...] And truly it surely was no wonder that your veins were broken when you gave birth to the world all in one day.¹³³

Through his love for humanity, Christ's death redeemed and re-birthed the world. These identifications of the wound of Christ with the womb of Christ symbolically demonstrate Christ's rebirth of humanity through his Crucifixion.¹³⁴ Clearly, the late medieval devotion to the Passion generated a model for the female Christian. This new theology increased the woman's devotion and allowed her relate to Christ through the shared act of giving birth. Jean le Noir's abstracted contour of the wound, then, represents the holy site to which Bonne of Luxembourg could piously devote herself for inspiration and strength during childbirth.

The Side Wound as a Healing Indulgence

The wound should also be understood as a healing indulgence. The Middle Ages witnessed increased devotion to the salvific properties of measurements.¹³⁵ According to medieval beliefs, physical contact with this quantified parchment-and-tempera wound would impart its protective properties upon the beholder. As previously stated, the formal composition of the side wound in Bonne's prayer book conforms to similar compositions

employed in other medieval depictions of the wound. Some of these illustrations pair the vertically oriented wound with inscriptions that explicitly describe its healing nature and instruct the beholder to attain the powers. For instance, David Areford extensively analyzes a printed 1484 – 1492 indulgence that depicts a similar rendition of the wound of Christ beside two inscriptions (pl. 10).¹³⁶ One of these inscriptions reads, “This little cross standing in Christ’s wound measured forty times makes the length of Christ in his humanity. Whoever kisses it with devotion shall be protected from sudden death or misfortune”.¹³⁷ Although such images representing the wound alongside written testaments to its healing powers do not exist until the fifteenth century, there is reason to believe this mode of thought existed in earlier medieval iconography.

A miscellany produced in 1320 in the Brabant monestary of Villers also depicts an isolated, vertical wound of Christ surrounded by the *arma Christi* and an inscription (pl. 11). This text outlines the wound with the words, “Hec est mensura vulneris lateris domini nostri ihesu christi. Nemo dubitet quia ipse apparuit cuidam et ostendit ei vulnera sua”, which translate to, “This is the measure of the wound in the side of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let no one doubt that he appeared to a certain person and showed his wounds”.¹³⁸ This inscription does not state explicitly that the wound serves as a healing indulgence. However, since it claims to be the exact measurement of the wound, it may be an indulgence in a more implicit form. Additionally, contemporary devotional artworks document tactile devotion in what remains of their illuminations. The aforementioned miniature in a 1320s manuscript entitled *Image du Monde* bears witness to the procedures of piety its reader practiced (pl.6). Although the side wound is located at the center of the folio, it shows signs of heavy abrasion while rest of the illumination remains relatively

intact. Indeed, the edges of the folio—typically subject to the most everyday wear—are in quite good condition. Thus, one may deduce that the reader intentionally targeted the wound with his or her tactile action. This pattern of wear implies that the owner used the wound as a type of contact relic, and either stroked it with his fingers or kissed in the aforementioned tradition. One cannot know for certain that the reader who performed this ironically destructive act of piety was the original fourteenth-century owner of the book. However, it does reveal that readers did touch the material painted wounds of Christ without an accompanying explicit written instruction. Keeping in mind contemporaneous practices of Christian material devotion,¹³⁹ it can be deduced that the reader performed such acts with the intention of garnering the wound’s healing powers. This folio provides evidence that religious procedures involving the devotion of the wound to harvest its protective properties existed in Bonne’s time.

The medieval reader may have valued such healing powers for interrelated reasons. As a mother, she could have employed this painted wound as a protective indulgence against the ubiquitous danger of famines, plagues, and childbirth that consumed late medieval Europe. Such measured representations of Christ’s wound—in which the proportions of the drawn figure possess a certain agency—derived their power from the medieval notion that “a measure of the person is in some literal sense the person”.¹⁴⁰ Just as touching the hem of Christ’s cloak instantly heals a sinful woman,¹⁴¹ by venerating this measurement of Christ’s body, Bonne’s faith also “[made] her well”.¹⁴² This illumination thereby possessed the power to protect Bonne from harm during her repeated encounters with the high risk of death in childbirth.¹⁴³ With this curing wound of

Christ, she could thus secure both her own health and the health of her by bearing multiple children. Bonne's devotion to it would fortify both her faith and her health.

As a healing tool, the wound did more than bestow physical strength upon the beholder. Not only did medieval Christians consider a replicated measurement of Christ to represent the figure himself, but they also believed that contact with this measurement would transfer part of his power to them.¹⁴⁴ This is yet another form of the female viewer's spiritual unification with Christ. With this divine protective power, she would strengthen her mind and spirit in addition to strengthening her body. This empowerment would then aid her in the fulfillment of her domestic duty as a vessel of lineage by protecting her body as she perpetuated her family's lineage with offspring. It would also aid in the fulfillment of her religious duty as a pious, virginal noblewoman by providing her with another means of unifying herself with Christ.

IV. DYNASTIC ANXIETY

In order to comprehend the full significance of the miniature, one must also understand its function from the perspective of a medieval reader. The prime candidate for such a case study is the prayer book's original patroness, Bonne of Luxembourg. By contextualizing folio 331r in terms of her life, one may understand more fully the function of theological beliefs at the time. In doing so, it becomes clear that the aforementioned conceptions of virginity, maternity, and spirituality serve as the context to understanding the dynastic anxiety surrounding the legacy of the Valois family.

Bonne was born in Prague as Guta or Jutta in 1315 to John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, and his wife Elizabeth.¹⁴⁵ From then on, Bonne spent her adolescent life at

the mercy of her father's tumultuous political strategies. Before marrying Jean of France in 1332 at age seventeen, she had already suffered through two broken political betrothals and a stint in exile. In the interim between engagements, she was educated at the Convent of the Holy Spirit in Prague and later lived in an abbey of *Clarisses-Urbanistes*, a type of monastery for noble ladies. This lifestyle was not uncommon in the late Middle Ages, for monasteries traditionally educated children belonging to layfolk.¹⁴⁶ Although the primary language of instruction in the later Middle Ages was typically the vernacular instead of Latin, convents continued to educate girls in devotional readings.¹⁴⁷ At these religious settlements, Bonne may have at least encountered devotional beliefs and methods similar to those of female mystics if not practiced them herself. As mentioned above, her own great aunt practiced female mysticism and supported its monasteries. This awareness of popular theological beliefs such as *imitatio Christi* would have provided Bonne with justification for her obedience to father, husband, and Christ.¹⁴⁸ Similar to Christ, Bonne committed acts of self-sacrifice in a form of devotion, which ultimately unified her with him. She sacrificed her physical virginity in her marriage to Jean, and her frequent partuitions were seen to parallel the physical agony of Christ's Passion. Indeed, by the time she received this prayer book between the years 1345 and 1349, Bonne had already borne Jean between seven and ten children, eight of whom survived past childhood. This abundance of progeny helped to ensure the survival of Valois blood during the episodic infestations of the bubonic plague. By interpreting Christ as a virtuous model of maternity that inspired her own deliveries, Bonne helped to quell dynastic anxieties regarding the continuity of Valois reign.

This apprehension surrounding the Valois lineage were particularly fervent during Bonne's lifetime. At the time of this prayer book's manufacture, Philippe VI was the king of France. Yet as the first French king of Valois blood, Philippe's succession to the throne was contentious.¹⁴⁹ The later tension between him and the other claimant to the French throne, Edward III, caused the Hundred Years' War.¹⁵⁰ As Philippe's first son, Bonne's husband Jean was next in line. Thus, the Valois dynasty depended on the success of Bonne's procreation. The illumination of the wound of Christ in Bonne's personal prayer book helped her to alleviate dynastic anxieties with the aid of religious devotion.

The blue and gold background behind the wound and the *arma Christi* reiterates the connection between divinity and the state. Blue and gold, colors conventionally associated with divinity, form an opulent ornamental pattern of swirling foliage behind the central subjects. This composition not only visually glorifies the wound and weaponry through its fine detail, but also identifies it with the Valois side of the coat of arms below. The color scheme of the background of the miniature and the Valois family crest are identical: a base of royal blue lavishly accented with gold leaf. Another connection between the Valois family and Christ lies in the form of the coat of arms itself. Some later medieval woodcuts portray a crucifixion scene in which a shield bearing the five wounds replaces Christ's body on a cross. Caroline Walker Bynum has identified the shield in this trope as a coat of arms.¹⁵¹ The coat of arms as an object, then, may have been endowed with sacred meaning. The simultaneous allusion to the coat of arms of Christ and that of the Valois family implies that they share a sacred identity. Favored by God as the *Rex Christianissimus*, the Valois kings ruled by divine right.¹⁵² Furthermore, it shows Bonne that by sacrificing her virginity and uniting with the Valois

family, she adopts this familial sacredness and becomes Christ-like in her act of charity for the French kingdom. Indeed, her coat of arms is fused with that of the Valois throughout her prayer book.

This association of Valois lineage with the *arma Christi* would have been especially resonant to Bonne. When she married into the French royal line, she gained access to the Valois chapel: Sainte-Chapelle, in Paris. This Gothic chapel housed a collection of the relics of the *arma Christi*, which Louis IX of France acquired in the thirteenth century. With this act, he equated the kingdom of France with the imperial authority of the relics' previous influential owners: Venice, Constantinople, and Jerusalem.¹⁵³ Since folio 331r depicts no instrument unique to the Valois collection, one cannot say with certainty that the miniature represents this particular collection rather than a generic assemblage of the *arma Christi*. However, because this illumination predates the majority of medieval *arma Christi* representations, it could indeed signify the Valois collection to Bonne. In fact, most later depictions of the *arma Christi* visually associate the instruments with the Man of Sorrows. By contrast, those on Bonne's manuscript imitate the compositional display of relics that facilitates individual devotion upon each item.

Another representation of *arma Christi* that is associated with the Valois family mirrors this display style (pl. 12). This reliquary, known as a *reliquario del libretto*, states on the back that it was a gift from Bonne's son, King Charles V to his brother Louis, Duke of Anjou (pl. 13). This inscription also mentions the relics found in Sainte-Chapelle, and thus directly connects the *arma Christi* on the interior of the reliquary with those belonging to the Valois. Due to this similarity in compositional style and a roughly

contemporary date, it is plausible that Bonne's miniature refers to the *arma Christi* relics in the royal chapel as well. Additionally, French royal tradition connected the *arma Christi* with national loyalty, for when a man was knighted—as Jean of France was in 1332—his peers swore an oath of loyalty to him on the relics.¹⁵⁴ Thus, by devoting herself to the weapons of the Passion on a background of blue and gold, Bonne swore obedience to Christ as well as obedience to Jean and the French crown.

The implications of the miniature also extend to the formal aspects of the text. Between the miniature and the coat of arms, the text of the folio reads, “Nous monstre tues dous diec vostre tresgrant largesce. Quant vousistes pour nous souffrir tant de destresce”. It translates from the Old French as: “You show during all these sweet days your very great largesce. At the time when you yourself suffer for us such destitution”.¹⁵⁵ The content of the text further reiterates the connection between Bonne and Christ since both commit acts of charity despite personal suffering. As a literary device, the second person perspective enacts a dual role. As Bonne would have read this text to herself or aloud, she would enact the role of the speaker addressing Christ as the one who shows “great largesce” amidst acts of personal suffering. Yet the text also adopts its own agency, addressing Bonne as the subject of the second person pronoun and recipient of the prayer's praise. In its very prose, then, the folio reiterates the connection between Bonne and Christ. They are unified not only in their acts of *imitatio Christi* but also in their status as virgins, mothers, and lovers.

The lettering of the script is written in a specific hand: gothic textualis formata, the finest and rarest handwriting style in the contemporary period.¹⁵⁶ Of the gothic scripts, it requires the highest level of execution, and its goal is to induce calligraphic

aesthetic pleasure.¹⁵⁷ Scholars have noted that the angularity of this particular script alludes to contemporary gothic architecture¹⁵⁸ such as that of Sainte-Chapelle. This lavish design of this folio requires its viewer not only to read the text, but also to experience it visually. The angular exactitude of the letterforms' perpendicular minims and regular spacing constructs an exquisite and highly skilled script. The scribe heightens this sense of gothic luxury with extensive line fillers, the illustrative decoration that completes remainders of lines void of script.¹⁵⁹ In fact, the gothic script emerged in the later Middle Ages largely due to the high expense of parchment. Because the compressed standardization of letterforms saved space on parchment,¹⁶⁰ the script defrayed the cost of manuscripts. In light of this cost, the extensive ornamentation at the end of lines attests to the monetary value of this tome. The formal characteristics of the text heighten the visual splendor of the folio as a whole. Clearly, the attention to opulence in the manuscript emphasizes vision as essential to piety.

This aristocratic commission shows that the ideal devotional book is not so much dependent upon the text for its success as it is on its aesthetics. It is through this gaze that Bonne unites her heart with the heart of Christ. This "penetrating vision"¹⁶¹ is a common trope in medieval literature.¹⁶² For instance, in the *Roman de la Rose*, Love's arrow of beauty strikes the lover's heart by first piercing his eye.¹⁶³ Likewise, when Bonne sees devotional image of the wound of Christ and reads its accompanying text, this beautiful symbol of his loving sacrifice for humanity enters first her eye and then her heart. Furthermore, since this wound represents Christ's heart, her visual meditation upon this miniature directly unites her heart with his. With this devotional union, facilitated by the

aesthetics of the text and image, she spiritually marries Christ and preserves her noble virginity despite the sacrifice of her physical virginity.

V. CONCLUSION

The illuminated wound of Christ in Bonne of Luxembourg's prayer book engages contemporary perceptions of virginity, maternity, spirituality, and dynasty. In doing so, it succeeds as an efficacious devotional icon. The late Middle Ages blended the secular and sacred, integrating chivalric tropes into religious literature and laywomen into monasteries. This tradition often accentuated the virginity of the pious female, and offered her a means to maintain her spiritual virginity as a bride of Christ even as she married her earthly husband. Since the wound of Christ is the locus of this union that restores virginity, the vaginally shaped wound recalls spiritual purity. As a vagina, it also draws upon maternity. By conceptualizing Christ as a corporeal mother, the female reader would have identified with Christ in her own act of childbirth. At the same time the wound of Christ presents her with a model for maternity, it protects her from the dangers of childbirth with its healing properties.

Additionally, this illumination provides the viewer with inspiration to perform acts of *imitatio Christi* in order to attain her union with Christ, the most holy Bridegroom. At the physical culmination of her prayer book, the devout reader spiritually unites with Christ through his wound. Thus, the illumination renders the process extremely personal for its female audience by incorporating aspects of feminine virginity, maternity, and spirituality. The folio spoke to its original patroness on an even more personalized level by displaying her coat of arms and alluding to multiple facets of French history. With its

multivalent iconography, this folio offers Bonne a means of very personal stimulation to enact her earthly and spiritual duties in the midst of the surrounding dynastic anxiety.

Endnotes

1. One can date this manuscript to 1345-1349. Since this manuscript is attributed to Jean le Noir and because Bonne of Luxembourg died in 1349, the manuscript must have been commissioned during this time (Margaret Manion, "Woman, Art, and Devotion," 25).

2. It was fairly common for patrons of prayer books to request that personal accessory texts be attached to the end of the book. For more on the general structure of books of hours and their derivatives, see John Harthan, *Books of Hours*, 13 and Roger S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers*, 10-11.

3. Although the painting was originally attributed to Jean Pucelle (see, for example, Florens Deuchler, "Looking at Bonne of Luxembourg's Prayer Book," 267-78), Francois Avril has since authoritatively revised this attribution in *Manuscript Painting at the Court of France*, 21-23.

4. John 19:31-37. Vladimir Gurewich briefly outlines the iconography of the wound of Christ in art, focusing on its move from the left side of Christ, as stated in the Bible, to the honorable and blessed right side in "Observations on the Iconography of the Wound in Christ's Side," passim. A. A. Barb attributes its move to the emergence of a now traditional Easter Anthem (A. A. Barb, "The Wound in Christ's Side," passim).

5. According to Margaret Manion, members of the European courts were familiar with the Latin prayers commonly rehearsed in church services. However, they relied on the vernacular to understand less common texts (Manion, 35).

6. Flora Lewis, "From Image to Illustration," 87.

7. David Areford, "The Passion Measured," 214; John Bugge, *Virginitas*, 82; Gurewich, 360; Flora Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side," 209; Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages*, 24.

8. Silke Tammen, "Blick und Wunde – Blick und Form," 85.

9. *Good News Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 1992), 605.

10. Tammen, 101.

11. For more on the significance and iconographical tradition of composite creatures in the Middle Ages, see Janetta Rebold Benton, *The Medieval Menagerie*, 51-52. For more on the phenomenon of marginalia in general, see Michael Camille, *The Image on the Edge*, passim.

12. Although Flora Lewis misidentifies these indulgences as talismans, they still were thought to possess “magical” healing powers. Lewis, “The Wound in Christ’s Side,” 217.

13. On the iconography of the *arma Christi*, see *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, vol. 1, 183-87.

14. Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 68.

15. Karras, 69. For more on the general increase in marital and matronly metaphors in religion throughout the later Middle Ages, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, passim.

16. Karras, 28-86 and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints’ Lives and Women’s Literary Culture c. 1150-1300*, 47-48. In Late Antiquity, Jerome also reiterates this reverence of spiritual virginity in his letter to Eustochium (Jerome, “Letter 22 to Eustochium,” *The Letters of St. Jerome*). The emphasis flourished during the later Middle Ages, when married women such as Margery Kempe reverted to chaste lifestyles in order to more fully dedicate themselves to Christ (Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, passim).

17. John Harthan identifies this ivy-leaf border as a conventional development in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscript illuminations (Harthan, 20).

18. These representations of birds are indeed true to life, painted by “a man who knew birds well in life” (Charles Vaurie, “Birds in the Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg,” 280).

19. Vaurie, 280.

20. For more on the *topos* of the garden in medieval art and literature, see Michael Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love*, 73-81.

21. William Brundson Yapp, *Birds in Medieval Manuscripts*, passim.

22. Vaurie, 281.

23. Vaurie, 281.

24. For more information on the goldfinch, see Vaurie, 280-281.

25. Karma Lochrie, “Mystical Acts, Queer Tendencies,” 185.

26. Song of Songs 4:12 (Good News Version).

27. Song of Songs 1:15 (William Riehle, *The Middle English Mystics*, 38).

28. Walter Hilton, *Stimulus divini amoris* 1.1. Translated by B. Lewis Augustine in *Stimulus Divini Amoris: That is the Goad of Divine Love*, 8.

29. Richard of St. Victor differentiates carnal love from spiritual love only after he enumerates the four grades of violent love and their symptoms. While carnal love differs from spiritual love, they both cause the same basic physiological effects (Richard of St. Victor, *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis* 18. Translated by Manuela Sanson in *Il Quattro Gradi della Violenta Carità*, 93).

30. Bugge, 95.

31. Bonaventure, *Vitis mystica* 3. Translation by W. R. Bernard Brownlow in “*Vitis Mystica*” or *The True Vine*, 21.

32. Bonaventure, *Vitis mystica* 3. Translation by W. R. Bernard Brownlow in “*Vitis Mystica*” or *The True Vine*, 21.

33. Song of Songs 1:5 (Good News Version).

34. In a more exegetical reading of the *Song of Songs*, Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179) interpreted this woman to be the synagogue, who had transgressed and “followed the desires of her flesh” before she “pant[ed] zealously and [put] herself upon her bridegroom who is clearly the Word of God.” Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, Fifth Vision of the First Part: 1-4. Translated by Bruce Hozeski in *Hildegard of Bingen’s Scivias*, 59-61.

35. According to Hilton, the soul is “Foul withouten as it were a beste, faire witinne like to an aungel....Foul for [the] flesch(h)ly appetite, faire for [the] good wil” (Riehle, 37-38).

36. In instructing Heloise to behave like the “bride in the Canticles,” Abelard says, “She is lovely [...] with virtues within which the bridegroom loves, and black outside from the adversity of bodily tribulation” (Peter Abelard and Heloise, *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, 73-75).

37. Hildegard of Bingen, “Letter 75: A Meditation,” in *The Personal Correspondence of Hildegard of Bingen*. Translated by Joseph L. Baird, p. 171-72.

38. Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love*, 111. Indeed, later medieval representations of the side wound emphasized its direct relation to the Sacred Heart (Gurewich, 360-62).

39. Lucy Freeman Sandler, “Jean Pucelle and the Lost Miniatures of the Belleville Breviary,” 85-86.

40. John Bugge notes this resurgence of interest in the *Song of Songs* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in relation to Bernard of Clairvaux's sermons (Bugge, 91).

41. Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles*, 71-72.

42. "The Scripture before us, therefore, speaks of this love with which the blessed soul is kindled and inflamed towards the Word of God; it sings by the Spirit the song of the marriage whereby the Church is joined and allied to Christ the heavenly Bridegroom, desiring to be united to Him through the Word, so that she may conceive by Him and be saved through this chaste begetting of children, when they—conceived as they are indeed of the seed of the Word of God, and born and brought forth by the spotless Church, or by the soul that seeks nothing bodily, nothing material, but is aflame with the single love of the Word of God—shall have preserved in faith and holiness with sobriety" (Origen, *Commentaria in Canticum Cantorum*, trans. R.P. Lawson in *Origen: The Song of Songs, Commentaries, and Homilies*, 38-39). See also J. Christopher King, *Origen on the Song of Songs as the Spirit of Scripture*, 15 and Bugge, 66.

43. Bugge, 61.

44. Bugge, 135.

45. Bugge, 4. Here, I do not wish to suggest that the Middle Ages did not condone celibacy for monks as well (although this celibacy was highly debated). However, it is true that society as a whole stressed female virginity before marriage to a greater degree than it stressed male virginity before marriage. For more on the medieval sociology of sexual partners, see John W. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 49-63.

46. Bugge, 90-91.

47. Bugge, 107-108.

48. The verses pertaining to Bernard's interpretation are Song of Songs 2:13-14, in which the man says, "Come then, my love; my darling come with me. You are like a dove that hides in the crevice of a rock. Let me see your lovely face and hear your enchanting voice" (Good News Version).

49. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones in Cantica Cantorum*, 28.1. Translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V. in *St. Bernard on the Song of Songs*, 195.

50. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones in Cantica Cantorum*, 28.1. Translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V. in *St. Bernard on the Song of Songs*, 196-97.

51. Mechthild of Magdeburg, *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* 1.29. Translated by Lucy Menzies in *The Revelations of Mechthild of Magdeburg or The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, 16.

52. Song of Songs 4:9-10 (Good News Version.) See also Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles*, 72.

53. Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles*, 75.

54. Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary*, 124.

55. R. W. Pfaff, "Incipient New Feasts: The Five Wounds," *New Liturgical Feasts in Later Medieval England*, 84-85.

56. According to Martha Easton, Christ's side wound received the most attention in fourteenth-century Europe (Martha Easton, "The Wound of Christ, the Mouth of Hell," 396). R. W. Pfaff states the central European devotion to the side wound originates from the first liturgical celebration of the Five Wounds in central Europe (Pfaff, 84-85). David Areford also recognizes the "widespread devotional trend" of the side-wound in relation to the imagery it inspired (Areford, 213).

57. Caroline Walker Bynum, for instance, attributes the increased focus on the blood of the Passion due to its emphasis on Christ's similarity to humans: just as humans suffer, he too suffers (Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 92).

58. Jill Bennett, "Stigmata and Sense Memory," 9.

59. Bonaventure, "The Remembrance of Christ's Passion," *De perfectione vitae ad sorores*, translated by Laurence Costello, O.F.M., 63-64.

60. John 20: 24-29.

61. Multiple scholars have identified this wound as mandorla-shaped (Areford, 220; Easton, 407; Lermack, 108-09).

62. Fred S. Kleiner defines "mandorla" as "[a]n almond-shaped *nimbus* surrounding the figure of Christ or other sacred figure. For more on the beginnings of this iconographical evolution, see Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages*, 209-58.

63. Annette Lermack, for instance, reads this mandorla-shaped wound as a synecdoche for Christ as Judge during the Last Judgment (Lermack, 108-109). Although medieval artists do frequently sculpt and paint the mandorla form in depictions of the Last Judgment, it is also commonly employed in other biblical scenes. Thus, it is more likely to be a general demarcation of divinity and not specifically a symbol of the Last Judgment. By contrast, David Areford states that the mandorla shape of the wound is a

synecdoche for Christ's body (Areford, 233). Again, however, in art the mandorla serves to differentiate Christ from other humans by demarcating his *divinity*. It is Christ's divinity that must be emphasized, and thus the mandorla would not function as a sign of corporeality.

64. "Then one of the soldiers opened [Christ's] side with a lance and there came forth blood and water. ... The blood is changed into wine to gladden you, the water into milk to nourish you." Aelred of Rievaulx, *De institutione*, chap. 26, *Opera omnia* 1:658; transl. M. P. Macpherson in *The Works of Aelred of Rievaulx*, 73.

65. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 120.

66. Bleeding was essential to medieval health. While women bled regularly due to their menstruation, men were bled with leeches to maintain regular purification (Easton, 398).

67. Easton, 398.

68. Mechthild of Magdeburg, *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit*, 3.10. Translated by Lucy Menzies in *The Revelations of Mechthild of Magdeburg or The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, 78-79.

69. Dee Dyas and Esther Hughes, *The Bible in Western Culture*, 240.

70. Bonaventure, *De triplici via*. Translated by José de Vinck in *The Works of Bonaventure*, vol. 1, 59-94. For a complete analysis of these folia, see Lermack, 97-111.

71. Christian Heck attributes this tradition to Bonaventure's *De triplici via* (Christian Heck, "L'iconographie de l'ascension spirituelle et la dévotion des laïcs, 9-22). For details on how this process relates to pilgrimage and spiritual redemption, see Lermack, 98-99. This ladder could also be an iteration of John Climacus's (c. 570 – c. 649) ladder of ascent. However, it is more likely to be Bonaventure's ladder of charity since it has six rungs.

72. Lermack, 108 and Thomas, 38.

73. For extensive analysis of the iconography of this ladder – Passion motif, see Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, 101-14.

74. Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, 106-08.

75. Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermon 60, "De Ascensione Domini," in *S. Bernardi Opera*, Rome, 1970, vol. VI/1, 291. Translated and reproduced in Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, 107-08.

76. Song of Songs 7:8 (Good News Version). See also Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists* 112-13. For a complete analysis of the iconography of this verse, see Hamburger, *The Rothschild Canticles*, 35-42.

77. Song of Songs 7:6-8 (Good News Version).

78. Ruth Mellinkoff, "Riding Backwards," 166.

79. Mellinkoff, 166.

80. William G. Land, *The Prayer Book of Bonne of Luxembourg: A Personal Document*, 152.

81. Michael Camille, *The Image on the Edge*, 75.

82. Land, 152.

83. For more on the role of aristocratic and bourgeois women in religion during the Middle Ages, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 55-77.

84. A nunnery in Germany, for instance, required its members to financially support themselves for thirty-three years (John B. Freed, "Urban Development and the 'Cura monialium' in Thirteenth-Century Germany," 323-24). For more on the conditions of nunneries, see Freed, 311-27.

85. One more famous benefactress is Blanche of Castile, the wife of Louis VIII, who donated large sums of money to the Cistercian nunneries of Sainte-Antoine and also constructed another abbey (Constance H. Berman, *Women and Monasticism in Medieval Europe*, 41-57).

86. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 20.

87. "Now, then, seely maiden, [...] if thou wishest for a husband that hath much beauty, take him at whose beauty the sun and the moon are astonished, to look upon whose countenance the angels are never satiated, for when he giveth fairness to all that is fair in heaven and in earth, much more he hath, without all conjecture, retained for himself", *Hali Meidenhad*, modernized by Oswald Cockayne in *Holy Maidenhead*, 38.

88. Mechthild of Magdeburg, *Das fließende Licht der Gottheit* 1.29. Translated by Lucy Menzies in *The Revelations of Mechthild of Magdeburg or The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, 16.

89. Rebecca L. R. Garber analyzes Christ's medieval role as both holy bridegroom and courtly lover in *Feminine Figurae*, 127-30.

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90. *Ancrene Riwe* 7, transl. by M. B. Salu in *The Ancrene Riwe*, 173.
91. Unlike the modern era, medieval monasteries housed both males and females (Bugge, *passim*).
92. Gertrude of Helfta, *Legatus* 2.5. Translated by Margaret Winkworth in *Gertrude of Helfta: The Herald of Divine Love*, 102.
93. Gertrude of Helfta, *Legatus* 2.5. Translated by Margaret Winkworth in *Gertrude of Helfta: The Herald of Divine Love*, 102.
94. Gertrude of Helfta, *Legatus* 2.5. Translated by Margaret Winkworth in *Gertrude of Helfta: The Herald of Divine Love*, 102.
95. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 64.
96. The Metropolitan Museum of Art approximates Bonne's manuscript to be 5 3/16 x 7 11/16 x 2 13/16 in. when opened. According to Martha Easton, "almost all of these images of the isolated and vertically oriented wound were located in manuscripts, particularly in books of hours, vehicles for private devotion and study. Private perusal of such images could best ensure the mystical effects of the contemplation of the wound, but perhaps the somewhat prurient or problematic associations were acknowledged" (Easton, 408). For more general information on the viewer's bodily reading experience as she interacts with the codex as a tangible object, see Martha Dana Rust, *Imaginary Worlds in Medieval Books*.
97. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 184.
98. Bynum categorizes a nun's mystical vision as an alternative to the official monastic authority of which she is deprived (Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 135-39 and 195). This is also evident in theology. According to Bynum, when Gueric, the Cistercian abbot of Igny "contrasts "fathering" and "mothering" [he] associates engendering and authority with father, nursing and loving with the mother" (Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, 121-122). The nuns expanded upon their femininity by utilizing their feminine attributes—nursing, loving, etcetera—as vehicles for mystical devotion. In this way, they undermined the authority of monks, for it was expressly their *femininity* that enabled them to unite with Christ. See also Elizabeth Petroff, *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, 34.
99. James France, *Medieval Images of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, 159.
100. Andrea Pearson, *Envisioning Gender in Burgundian Devotional Art*, 25.
101. Pearson, 32.

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102. Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women*, 73.
103. For examples of this phenomenon of feminine visuality and male scepticism of it, see Park, 39-76.
104. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 55-60.
105. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 171.
106. Margaret Manion states the biological relationship of Kunigunde and Bonne (Manion, 38).
107. Alfred Thomas, *Anne's Bohemia*, 35.
108. Passional of the Abbess Kunigunde, ca. 1321, Prague, National and University Library, MS XIV A 17.
109. Thomas, 35.
110. Thomas extends this allegory to represent a biography of Kunigunde's own life, during which she fluctuated from her adolescence in the nunnery (with Christ) to her political marriage (with the Devil) and back to her life at the nunnery (reunited with Christ) (Thomas, 36).
111. Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side," 205; and Manion, 38-39.
112. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 101.
113. Silke Tammen argues that in the *arma Christi* miniature of Kunigunde's Passional, the inscription that encircles the wound makes the reading a transgression from reading the textual inscription to reading the flesh of Christ (Tammen, 93).
114. Manion, 38-39.
115. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 69.
116. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 74. This charity and humility parallels Christ's own suffering and strengthened the nuns' relationship with the divine (Lester, 117-146).
117. Martha Easton contrasts this image of the wound-like holy vagina with contemporary imagery of the Mouth of Hell. According to her, the vagina was a common metaphor for the mouth. Devout, pious, quiet women with closed mouths therefore maintained their virginity. By contrast, those with "large mouths" lived sinful lives. Thus, hell is associated with lack of virginity. In depictions of the Mouth of Hell, a large

toothed feline mouth that devours sinners has also been analyzed as a symbol of the vagina dentata (Easton, 401-403). Knowledge of this iconographical contrast may further venerate Christ's wound as a site of spiritual virginity.

118. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 133-34; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 248. For Karma Lochrie's counterargument, see Lochrie, 180-200.

119. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 197-205.

120. For more on the possible implications of the wound as a vagina, see Hollywood, 105-25. Karma Lochrie analyzes the vagina-like wound in relation to queer vision in Lochrie, 180-200. William Riehle comments on the pun between *vulva* and *vulnus* (wound) in the medieval text *Stimulus Amoris*, and analyzes how through this association, the wound becomes a site of physical ecstasy and union (Riehle, 45).

121. Silke Tammen warns against reading the side wound of Christ as a vulva, since doing so relies too strongly on a non-ambivalent reading of the mandorla shape that does not merely denote a vulva (Tammen, 90). I believe, however, that it is still important to acknowledge the vagina as a possible connotation of the wound, albeit not its primary signification.

122. In Song of Songs 1:4, the woman tells the man, "be my king and take me to your room" (Good News Version). William Riehle states that this bedroom setting became "a favourite topos in Western mysticism" (Riehle, 38).

123. Mechthild of Hackeborn, *Das Buch der besonderen Gnade* 2.4. Trans. by a Secular Priest in *Select Revelations of S. Mechthild, Virgin, Taken from the Five Books of her Spiritual Grace*, 126-26.

124. Lochrie, 190.

125. Petroff, 34.

126. *Ancrene Riwle*, Part 7: "Love." Translated by M.B. Salu in *The Ancrene Riwle*, 174-75.

127. "Break not thou that seal that sealed you together." See *Hali Meidenhad*, modernized by Oswald Cackayne in *Holy Maidenhead*, 10. See also Lochrie, 190-192.

128. Although this feminization of Christ's wound may seem blasphemous to the modern reader, medieval culture conceptualized gender based on a one-sex model. The visualization of Christ's wound as a vagina, then, does not an attempt at sexual inversion that undermines the legitimacy of Christ (Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 25-62).

129. She supports this theory in noting that Mary's birth of Christ associates him solely with female flesh (Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 210). Furthermore,

contemporary scientific theories of conception attributed the human fetus to the mother and the soul to the father (Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 214).

130. Easton, 399.

131. For extensive analysis of this medieval theological phenomenon, see Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*.

132. Walter Hilton, *Stimulus divini amoris* 1.1. Translated by B. Lewis Augustine in *Stimulus Divini Amoris: That is the Goad of Divine Love*, 7.

133. Margaret of Oingt, *Pagina meditationum* 33-36. Translated by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski in *The Writings of Margaret of Oingt*, 31.

134. Caroline Walker Bynum extensively analyzes the implications of the wound as the womb in *Jesus as Mother*, 110-69. Flora Lewis notes that the most popular image of the womb in the Middle Ages is identical to the wound in Bonne's prayer book: "a pointed oval, often with a border running around it" (Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side," 215).

135. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 98.

136. Areford, 211-38. Although he analyzes a woodcut now located in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., another copy of this indulgence exists in the Yale University Art Gallery. I have decided to include in this paper the image of the Yale woodcut, because it is a color photograph. Since the Washington, D.C. image was reprinted in greyscale, one could not observe the handpainted colors that provide a comparison to those in Bonne of Luxembourg's prayer book. Nonetheless, since the woodcuts in both galleries are of the same print, Areford's analysis and translation of the Washington, D.C. woodcut still pertains to the one at Yale.

137. Areford, 225.

138. Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side," 208. Translation in footnote 20, page 225.

139. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, passim.

140. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 98.

141. Luke 8:40-48.

142. Luke 8:48 (Good News Version).

143. Lewis, "The Wound of Christ," 217.

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144. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 98.
145. All dates and life events made available in Land, 1-17.
146. Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran Cruz, "Education, Lay," 240-41. See also Shulamith Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: A History of Women in the Middle Ages*, 140-41.
147. Cruz, 240-41.
148. While William G. Land accuses Bonne of committing adultery, his argument is both unverifiable and feeble, as he himself oscillates between designating various noblemen as her lovers (Land, *passim*).
149. Graeme Small, *Late Medieval France*, 96.
150. Although Philippe VI and Edward III were initially on good terms during Philippe's reign, conflict regarding Edward's lands eventually started the war. As Graeme Small aptly observes, "Throughout [previous] events, the matter of Edward's claim to the throne played no apparent role. Now it re-emerged, and in circumstances which suggest it was the product, rather than a cause, of the war." Small, 100.
151. Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 101.
152. For more on the "key ideas which lay behind royal authority in late medieval France," including the notion of *Rex Christianissimus*, see Small, 7-52.
153. Charles Freeman, *Holy Bones, Holy Dust*, 133. For more on Louis IX's intent to present Paris as the new Jerusalem with the erection of Sainte-Chapelle and his repeated Crusades, see Daniel Weiss, *Art and Crusade in the Age of Saint Louis*, *passim*. For a thorough description and history of Saint-Chapelle, see Jannic Durand and Marie-Pierre Laffitte, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, *passim*.
154. Lermack, 110.
155. Transcription and translation courtesy of Frank Bezner.
156. Bernard Bischoff, *Latin Paleography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, 134-35.
157. Frank Bezner, lecture for "Gothic Scripts," University of California, Berkeley, 16 March 2012.
158. Frank Bezner, lecture for "Protogothic," University of California, Berkeley, 9 March 2012.

159. Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts*, 80.

160. Warren Chappell, *A Short History of the Printed Word*, 30-31.

161. I borrow this term from Jeffrey F. Hamburger. For more on the power of visual penetration, see Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, 118.

162. Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love*, 112.

163. Wack, 102; Camille, *The Medieval Art of Love*, 112; *Roman de la Rose* lines 1679-1718. For more on the role of the eye in medieval love, see John V. Fleming, "The Garden of the *Roman de la Rose*," 219-22.

Appendix¹

- 1315: Bonne born in Prague as Guta or Jutta to John and Elizabeth of Luxembourg. Educated at the convent of Saint-Esprit during childhood.
- 1321: Guta betrothed to Casimir of Poland for a short period of time.
- 1319-22: John of Luxembourg, skeptical of wife, forces his wife and daughters to live away from him in Melnik.
- 1322: John of Luxembourg sends Bonne to Meissen.
- 1322: Guta betrothed to Frederick of Meissen for less than a year.
- 1323: Guta sent back to Prague and probably raised in the convent of Saint George.
- 1326: Brought to Luxembourg to marry Henry of Bar, but cut in 1329 due to a break in political alliances.
- 1329-30: Lives in an abbey of *Clarisses-Urbanistes*.
- July 28, 1332: At age 17, Guta (perhaps now known as Bonne) married to thirteen-year-old Jean of France, Duke of Normandy and Count of Anjou and Maine.
- 1335: Bonne gives birth to first child, announced as stillborn but perhaps raised unbeknownst to her by foster parents.
- 1338: Bonne gives birth to second child Charles, to become Charles V of France.
- 1339: Bonne gives birth to son Louis, to become Louis Duke of Anjou.
- 1340: Bonne gives birth to son Jean, to become Jean de Berry.
- 1342: Bonne gives birth to fifth child Philippe, to become Philippe of Burgundy.
- 1343: Bonne gives birth to first daughter Jeanne, to marry Charles d'Evreux, King of Navarre and eventually King of France.
- 1344: Bonne gives birth to daughter Marie, to become wife of Robert, Duke of Bar.
- 1345: Bonne gives birth to daughter Agnes, who dies in 1348.
- 1345: Bonne's husband Jean named as heir to the kingdom of France.
- 1347: Bonne gives birth to fourth daughter Marguerite.
- 1348: Bonne gives birth to fifth daughter Isabelle, who marries Gian Galeazzo Visconti.
- September 11, 1349: Bonne dies of the Black Death.

¹ Dates after Land, *passim*.

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List of Illustrations

- Plate 1. Prayer Book and Psalter of Bonne of Luxembourg, New York, Cloisters Museum, MS 69.86, fol. 331r. From Paris, c. 1345-49. Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Plate 2. The offering of the heart. Ivory mirror case from Paris, c. 1320. London, Victoria and Albert Museum. Image courtesy of University of California, San Diego on ARTstor.
- Plate 3. Rothschild Canticles, New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, MS 404, fols. 18v-19r. From Flanders, c. 1320. Image courtesy of Yale University.
- Plate 4. Prayer Book and Psalter of Bonne of Luxembourg, New York, Cloisters Museum, MS 69.86, fol. 315r. From Paris, c. 1345-49. Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Plate 5. Prayer Book and Psalter of Bonne of Luxembourg, New York, Cloisters Museum, MS 69.86, fol. 329r. From Paris, c. 1345-49. Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Plate 6. *Image du Monde*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS fr. 547, fol. 140r. From France, c. 1320s. Image courtesy of University of California, Berkeley on ARTstor.
- Plate 7. Passional of Abbess Kunigunde, Prague, National and University Library, MS XIV A 17, fol. 7v. From Bohemia, c. 1314-21. Image courtesy of University of California, San Diego on ARTstor.
- Plate 8. Passional of Abbess Kunigunde, Prague, National and University Library, MS XIV A 17, fol. 10r. From Bohemia, c. 1314-21. Image courtesy of University of California, Berkeley on ARTstor.
- Plate 9. Three phalluses carrying a crowned vagina. Lead pilgrimage badge found in Bruges, Belgium, c. 1375-1425. H.J.E. van Beuningen Collection. Image courtesy of University of California, Berkeley on ARTstor.
- Plate 10. Indulgence woodcut from Germany, 1484-92. Yale University Art Gallery. Image courtesy Yale University Art Gallery.
- Plate 11. Villers Miscellany, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 4459-70, fol. 150r. From Brabant, c. 1320. Image reproduced in Flora Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side," *Women and the Book*, 205.
- Plate 12. Paolo di Giovanni Sogliani, Reliquiario del libretto from Paris, c. 1360s-1380s. Florence, Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore. Image courtesy of Beate Fricke.
- Plate 13. Paolo di Giovanni Sogliani, Reliquiario del libretto from Paris, c. 1360s-1380s. Florence, Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore. Image courtesy of Beate Fricke.



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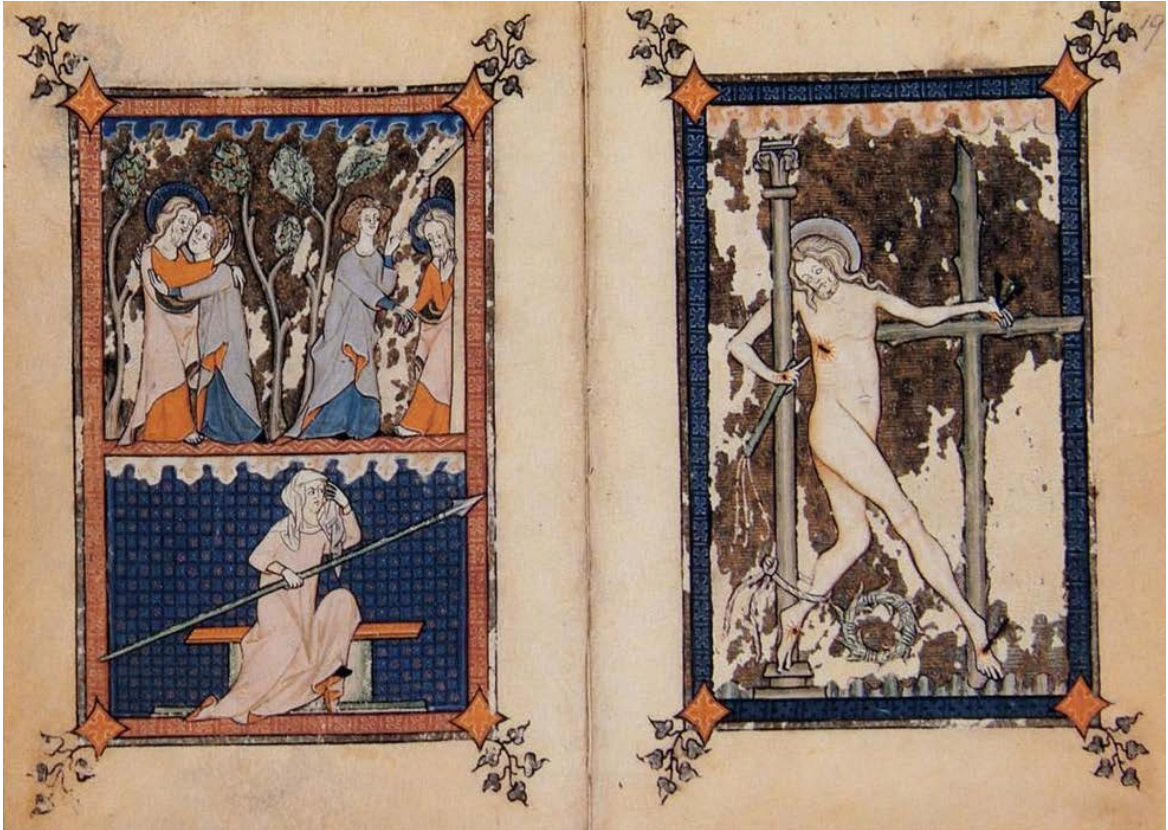


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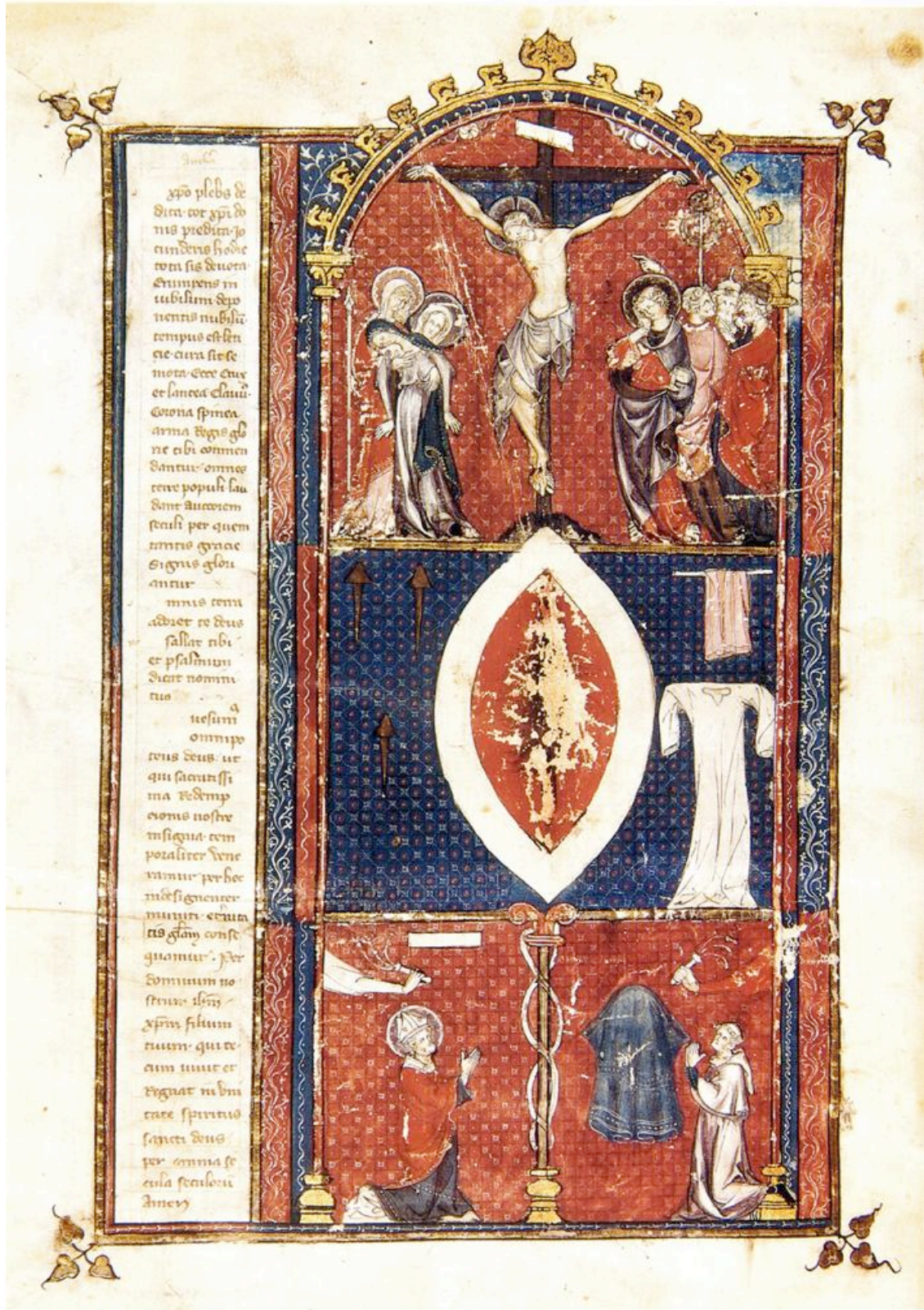


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Plate 10. Indulgence woodcut from Germany, 1484-92. Yale University Art Gallery. Image courtesy Yale University Art Gallery.

attritis membris omnibus. Quia hoc condie insperit in memo-
 ratione passionis et armorum ihu x. habet. xl. dies indulgentiarum
 datus a leone papa et ab eod
 of. matas.



Alue plaga latente nri reape-
 tons na ex to fluxit un-
 ta rosos coloris et uera me-
 cina mans coloris

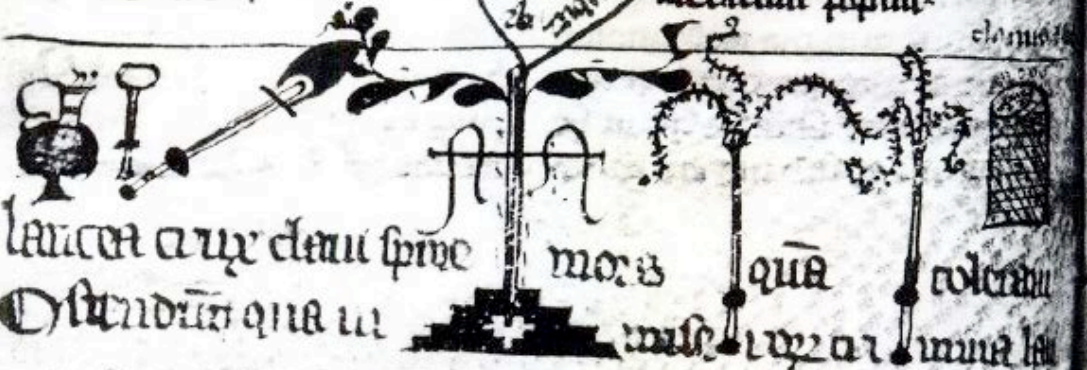
Alue plaga sacra sal-
 peccator. Tu es ois

Et uera relectio
 uia bonoz ac pacis
 a iusto porta qz celoz

Alue plaga reame
 qz et foanda emanabit
 ex to saluatis vnda.
 p qua uilant a morte scda
 amicti ser-uitentes tibi in
 te munda

Alue plaga scdm refoi tu-
 tutu refugiu anchora fidei p-
 to iam purgati a diu neu-
 et in ducant respectu m

Ofons aquo paradisi. a q
 qz diuisi dulces flu-
 uia riuuli p que
 mones nisi curi ost-
 a tedi et effecti
 a riuuli du lre
 ualuis later ale
 m fources nllm
 tale noctu unqz pculi
 Aue salue graue uale
 contra venenu letale
 medicina populi.



Cetera penalia que p' duo folia

Plate 11. Villers Miscellany, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 4459-70, fol. 150r. From Brabant, c. 1320. Image reproduced in Flora Lewis, "The Wound in Christ's Side," *Women and the Book*, 205.

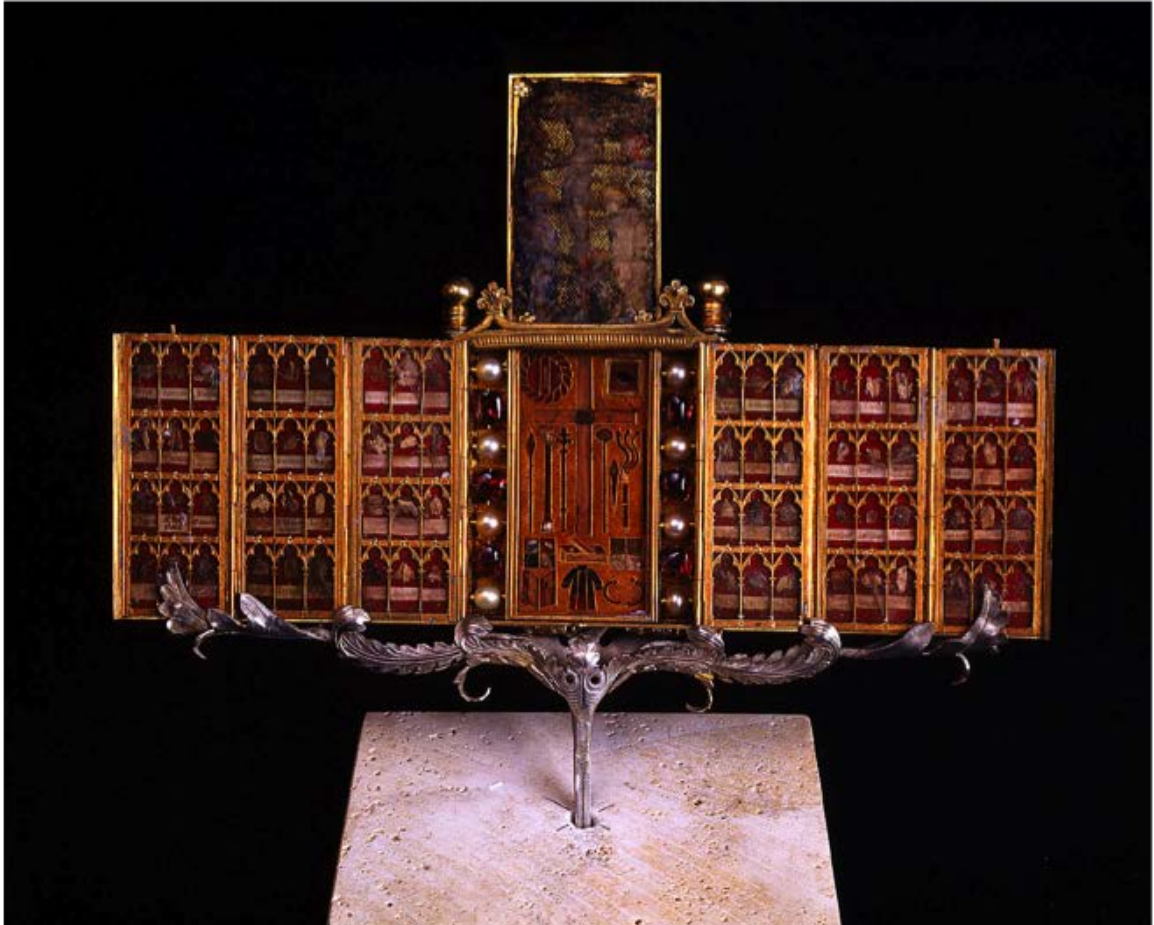


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