Women and the written word : textual culture in court and convent during the twelfth-century Renaissance

Somers, J.A.

Chapter Three:

BOOKS MADE FOR WOMEN IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY – CONVENT

During the twelfth century, the convent remained the primary location for the education of medieval women, a place where noblewomen and nuns learned alongside each other how to read, and possibly to write Latin and vernacular texts.[1] In this chapter I address the books belonging to women living in a convent milieu during the twelfth century, first discussing the books written in Latin, highlighting instances where Latin endings have been altered to reflect a female reader, and how the manuscripts may have been read in a convent context. I supplement this discussion with examples of books written in a vernacular language or with vernacular commentary used during the twelfth century within a convent. To this end, I have garnered evidence from booklists, catalogs, and databases, utilizing research tools both medieval and contemporary, which help to identify twelfth-century manuscripts held in convent libraries.[2]

Women's religious communities across monastic orders display similar reading preferences toward genres both devotional and memorial in nature. Living under a monastic rule required books for the Divine Office and Mass, such as liturgical manuscripts, traditional patristic works, Bibles, Gospels, and psalters.[3] These were essential books across monastic orders, and women's religious communities throughout Western Europe would endeavor to obtain this core collection. During the twelfth century, in contrast to books of romance which were prevalent at court, the convent milieu displayed a strong reading interest in sermons. In addition, nuns' reading practice included chronicles, saints' lives, and schoolbooks, read for purposes of historic commemoration, spiritual emulation, and most practically,

---

[1] Jo Ann McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns Through Two Millennia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 199–200.

[2] This list includes books recorded in various scholarly articles and books, for example, David Bell's *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1995).

[3] Jeffrey F. Hamburger, Petra Marx, and Susan Marti, "The Time of the Orders, 1200–1500, An Introduction," in *Crown and Veil: Female Monasticism from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, eds. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Susan Marti (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 70.

for advancing literacy in Latin grammar.[4] Convent book collections also included works directed toward pastoral care, which reflected a twelfth-century resurgence of a genre specifically aimed at a convent reading culture.[5] The manuscripts belonging to women in the convent milieu demonstrate the types of books that supported monastic learning throughout Western Europe based on four genres: historical writings, educational texts, religious works, and guidebooks for spiritual care.[6]

During the Middle Ages, women moved from court to convent, and back again, sharing and exchanging reading habits influenced by the books held in the convent libraries of the twelfth century. As this chapter will show, women living within a convent setting received books in dedication, were patrons of authors, and commissioned manuscripts they deemed valuable for reading. From abbess, prioress, canoness to nun, women used their social and pious status to acquire manuscripts, thus contributing to the textual culture of the "long twelfth century" as readers and patrons.[7]

1. CONVENT BOOK COLLECTIONS

In his foundational work on books once held in the convent libraries of medieval England, David Bell has cataloged the extant manuscripts from women's religious houses spanning a period from the twelfth to the sixteenth century.[8] Bell's results show 144 manuscripts belonging to English convent libraries, with at least twelve manuscripts dating from the twelfth century, and another twenty from either the late eleventh or early thirteenth century margins.[9] For example, the Benedictine nuns of Barking Abbey in Essex

[4] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 34–36.
[5] For a more in-depth look at the role of pastoral care works and women in the twelfth century, see *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and trans. Vera Morton (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003). Also, Beth Allison Barr, *The Pastoral Care of Women in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008), 12, 22, and 78.
[6] Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 154–155. Leclercq lists four genres in monastic milieus: "history, the sermon, the letter, and the florilegium."
[7] Karl F. Morrison, *History as a Visual Art in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 176. Also, Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy, and Power in the Twelfth-Century Norman Realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 39. Nuns' contribution as scribes will be further discussed in chapters four and five of this study.
[8] David Bell, *What Nuns Read*: *Books & Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1995).
[9] Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 34. Another possible booklist from Wilton Abbey is noted by Cynthia Turner Camp, "Edith of Wilton and the Writing of Women's History," in *Anglo-Saxon Saints Lives as History Writing in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015), 27 n.10; "A list of some of Wilton's lost or unidentified books, written on the last folio of BL, Cotton MS Faustina B. iii and including primarily liturgical texts, has been printed by Richard Sharpe et al., eds. *English Benedictine Libraries: The Shorter Catalogues* (London: British Library, 1996)."

had built a multilingual book collection, which included manuscripts from a range of centuries. According to Bell, the nuns' library included a copy of the Gospels from the late tenth or early eleventh- century, along with an early thirteenth-century copy of the Song of Songs together with the Lamentations, with gloss.[10] The abbey's book collection also held several non-service books, including vernacular works. Bell notes that the abbey library held a manuscript of saints' lives written in French prose, the *Vie des Peres*, originally made for Blanche of Navarre.[11] The varied book collection at Barking Abbey shows that nuns could read in both Latin and French, with an interest in genres beyond the needs of the liturgy. Although there is no catalog from the twelfth century listing the books used by the nuns of Barking, scholars have pieced together what book collections in wealthy convents in England during this period may have held.[12] As Mary C. Erler notes, "the evidence for substantial collections comes from the largest and best-known women's houses."[13]

Rodney Thomson's research on book collections held at monastic houses in Germany during the twelfth century has uncovered booklists from five women's communities during this period: Augsburg (OSB), Lippoldsberg (OSB), Muri (OSB), Schäftlarn (O. PREM), and Wessobrunn (OSB).[14] Of particular interest is the fact that these booklists are from houses which followed the rule of female claustration, and thus can tell us something about the diverse reading repertoire of an enclosed nun, such as classical authors, liturgical books, and didactic works. Thomson argues that the evidence from women's book collections in Germany, especially at women's communities with scribes, have been overlooked as representing a significant contribution to manuscript production during the twelfth century.[15]

[10] *Gospel Book*, **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 155 (c. 1000**). *Song of Songs with gloss*, **Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud lat. 19 (c. 1300)**. Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 111. Mary Jane Morrow, "The Literary Culture of English Benedictine Nuns, c. 1000–1250," PhD diss., Duke University, 1999. Morrow (94, n. 42) states this Gospel book was "designed to accommodate office use through marginal notes or gospel selection listings."
[11] *Vitae sanctorum/Vies des peres*, **Paris, BnF, Fr. 1038 (1200–1225)**; Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 115. See also, Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 6 and 7.
[12] Jane Stevenson, "Anglo-Latin Women Poets," in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, eds. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 94. Morrow, "Literary Culture," 20–22. Barking Abbey was the third richest house in England by 1066.
[13] Mary C. Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 31.
[14] Rodney M. Thomson, "The Place of Germany in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Books Scriptoria and Libraries," in *Turning Over a New Leaf: Change and Development in the Medieval Book*, eds. Erik Kwakkel, Rosamond McKitterick, and Rodney M. Thomson (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 141–144.
[15] Thomson, "The Place of Germany," 140.

When consulting medieval booklists, it remains important to remember that they may reveal only a portion of the books owned by women in convents, similar to the cataloging practice of male monastic houses.[16] As a result, the surviving catalogs or booklists from medieval convent libraries can leave us with an incomplete picture, most often listing only the first, or most substantial title of texts within volumes. Also rarely mentioned are books that were used daily, such as liturgical books or copies of the monastic rule, which were often kept separate in the sacristy or chapter room and therefore not recorded as part of the *armarium*, or library collection.[17] Nor do they provide detailed descriptions, making it difficult to identify titles, especially if there are many texts by the same author.[18] Thus, most scholarship has been much like putting together a puzzle without having seen the picture on its box.

It is fortunate for scholars that a booklist from twelfth-century Wessobrunn was created specifically to document the textual production of the nun Diemut (Diemud) shortly after her death.[19] Diemut (d. 1130/1150) is believed to have produced at least forty-five manuscripts for the library of the double-house of Wessobrunn, including twelve service books, approximately twenty works by patristic authors, three books by Cassiodorus and Eusebius, and an alphabetical glossary of "unfamiliar names from sacred writings."[20] The booklist was written down by another nun of Wessobrunn, who likely worked with Diemut and knew the extent of her work. This unnamed nun writes: *Isti sunt libri, quos scripsit et sancto Petro tradidit Diemot, ancilla Dei*.[21] A second booklist from Wessobrunn was written in the thirteenth century and confirms that a number of the books made by Diemut were still part of the library a century later. Booklist A, owing to the close proximity in time to its compilation and

[16] Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library, Medieval Books in Early Modern England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008). Also, Jennifer A. Weston, "Taking Stock: Booklists as Evidence of Medieval Reading Culture," in *Fruits of Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. and Kees Dekker (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), 75–93.
[17] Julie Hotchin, "Women's Reading and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Library of the Nuns of Lippoldsberg," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture, Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, ed. Alison I. Beach (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 139–189.
[18] Christoph Egger, "The Scholar's Suitcase: Books and Transfer of Knowledge in Twelfth-Century Europe," in *The Church and the Book*, ed. R. N. Swanson (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), 90.
[19] *Booklist A*, **Münich, BSB, Clm. 22001[d] (1130–1150)**. Written by Nun-Scribe 2 of Wessobrunn. *Booklist B*, **Münich, BSB, Clm. 22059, fol. 72v (1200–1300)**. See Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 43.
[20] The year of her death is unknown, but speculated as sometime during the middle of the century. For a complete list of the books copied by Diemut, see Beach, *Women as Scribes*, Table 2.1, 40–42.
[21] Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 41. Latin is quoted from Beach.

the work of Diemut provides a rare look at the books deemed important enough to read, collect, and copy by the nuns at Wessobrunn, which can lead to further comparisons to other convent book collections.

Alison Beach, in her study on women's scribal contributions in twelfth-century Bavaria, provides an extensive reconstruction of the convent library held by the Benedictine nuns at Admont.[22] Although no inventory from any century regarding the Admont nuns' specific book collection has survived, Beach has compiled the books which likely derived from the nuns' library. Building upon the work of Jakob Wichner, who cataloged the manuscripts of Admont's library in 1888, and the fourteenth-century list of the monk's book collection made by Peter of Arbon, whose list neglects to include a number of manuscripts that were uncovered by Wichner, Beach has carefully assembled the puzzle pieces.[23] The "reconstructed" nuns' library from Beach's account includes forty-seven books that may have belonged exclusively to the nuns' collection.[24] At least eight manuscripts were copied, and perhaps even illustrated, by nuns at Admont during the last decades of the twelfth century, thus they could shape the contents of their book collection and reading practices.[25] Further, the library of books the nuns would possibly have had access to through borrowing and exchange would have been quite large if we include those books in possession of the monks of Admont. According to Beach, "approximately two hundred twelfth-century books survive from the monastery," kept mostly intact since the Middle Ages, which gives an opportunity to study a large monastic book collection which was accessible to both monks and nuns.[26]

However, as Marjorie Woods points out, "we must be particularly cautious when inferring ownership of texts by one-half of a double monastery from those owned by the other half."[27] Constant Mews

[22] Alison I. Beach, *Women as Scribes, Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Beach, "Listening for the Voices of Admont's Twelfth-Century Nuns," in *Voices in Dialogue, Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, eds. Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005). John Van Engen, "The Voices of Women in Twelfth-Century Europe," in *Voices in Dialogue, Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).
[23] Jakob Wichner, *Handschriften Katalog*, Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Admontensis (handschriftlich), Admont 1888. Also, Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 79, 87, n. 86.
[24] Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 79–84.
[25] Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 140.
[26] Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 77.
[27] Marjorie Curry Woods, "Shared Books: Primers, Psalters, and the Adult Acquisition of Literacy Among Devout Laywomen and Women in Orders in Late Medieval England," in *New Trends in Feminine Spirituality: The Holy Women of Liege and Their Impact*, eds. Juliette Dor, Lesley Johnson, and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 188.

comments that the library at Zweifalten was shared by the men and women of the community, while in contrast, Beach states that the access to books was minimal for the women of the double community at Schäftlarn.[28] Beach argues that the nuns at Schäftlarn experienced limited access to the library at best, since "female reading was merely tolerated, with special concessions sometimes made for those who arrived at the monastery better educated."[29] Use of books by the nuns at Schäftlarn, as perhaps at other Premonstratensian double monasteries, was complicated by the order's strict claustration of professed sisters.[30]

Another important example of a contemporary record is the booklist from the Benedictine abbey of Lippoldsberg in the Saxon region of Germany. In 1151, the Prioress Margaret created an inventory of its books.[31] (Fig. 15) The record lists fifty-five manuscripts (four are extant), which "contained a core of standard works common to any monastic library aiming for a comprehensive collection, complemented by a significant number of contemporary texts."[32] The classic works of the Church Fathers are represented by Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory, while contemporary authors such as Hugh of St Victor and Rupert of Deutz demonstrate the convent's interest in current works of biblical exegesis.

The Lippoldsberg booklist itself makes up part of an account book for the convent, which also contains the Chronicle of Lippoldsberg. Although the manuscript is a sparse fourteen folios, it provides a wealth of information about which texts the nuns of Lippoldsberg had access to

[28] Constant J. Mews, "Virginity, Theology, and Pedagogy," in *Listen Daughter: The Speculuum virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 20. Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 115.

[29] Alison I. Beach, "Claustration and Collaboration between the Sexes in the Twelfth-Century Scriptorium," in *Monks and Nuns, Saints and Outcasts: Religion in Medieval Society*, eds. Sharon Farmer and Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 2000), 57–75, at 68. Beach notes the lack of evidence such as *ex libris* entries, lending lists, or other records of a canoness' library.

[30] For an alternate view that sees nuns in Premonstratensian communities as "teachers and learners, with the aim to educate *verbo et exemplo*, and enjoyed considerable freedom," see Reghina Dascal, "Constructing a Vantage Point from Which to Regard Women and History: Christine de Pizan and the Querelle De Femmes," *Didactica* 2, no. 2 (2009): 18. Not all "double-houses" followed the Order of Premontré (O. Prem), for example, the Gilbertines.

[31] *Chronicon Lippoldsbergense*, **Marburg, Hessisches Staatsarchiv, H77 (c. 1151)**. Hotchin, "Women's Reading,"149–151. See also, Susan El Kholi, *Lektüre in Frauenkonventen des ostfränkisch-deutschen Reiches vom 8. Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg: Konigshausen and Neumann, 1997), 8.

[32] For a complete list of the manuscripts, see Hotchin, "Women's Reading," 153. Aliza Cohen-Mushlin, *Scriptoria in Medieval Saxony: St. Pancras in Hamersleben* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 18.

and the network of textual transmission they were part of.[33] The booklist shows the variety of manuscripts they used for devotional and educational purposes, and further tells of the nuns' concern with documenting the extent of their collection. These valuable twelfth-century booklists reveal the variety and quantity of books that were available for monastic women at these communities (in Germany) to read.

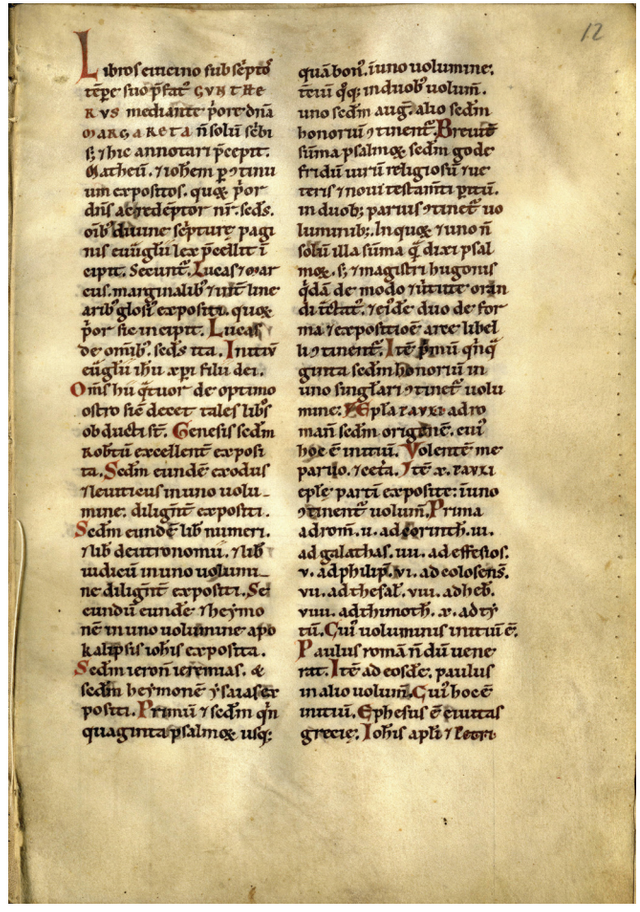

Figure 15: Booklist, *Chronicle of Lippoldsberg*, Marburg, Hessisches Staatsarchiv, H77 (1151), fol. 12r.

[33] Hotchin, "Women's Reading," 139. The scribal activities of the Lippoldsberg nuns will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Beyond the medieval booklist, descriptions in convent necrologies of a female community member as librarian, sacristan, or *armarius* can indicate that a convent held a book collection large enough to be documented and cared for.[34] For example, the Benedictine nuns of Admont assigned a member to oversee the collection of manuscripts held in their convent library. As stated in a late twelfth-century necrology of the community, the nun Adelheit is recorded as the keeper of the *armaria*.[35] This role was part of the many jobs nuns fulfilled living within a religious community. She would have ensured that the books needed for the daily practice of the Divine Office, the books required for liturgy, as well as books for personal reading (especially during Lent), were available, cared for, and replaced or added to when necessary.[36]

As Erler points out, although most of a medieval convent's core collection of books was shaped by liturgical needs, many communities did expand their collections to include other types of non-service books; reading which addressed educational needs beyond the daily recitation of the Psalms.[37] This is witnessed by the extra-liturgical books used by nuns, including histories, plays, poetry, theological treatises, and schoolbooks, along with contemporary works of Biblical exegesis.[38] Erler suggests the extent of this expansion of reading interests relied on several factors such as "the house's date of foundation, its wealth, (and) its characteristic spirituality."[39] The catalog of books kept in convent libraries lends to a consideration of where and when nuns read. During the twelfth century, the "scene of reading" would have taken place in

[34] Cynthia J. Cyrus, *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009). Geertuida De Moor, "The Role of the Female Sacristan prior to Trent," *Vox Benedictina: A Journal of Translations from Monastic Sources* 10.2 (1993): 307–321. Mariken Teeuwen, *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 156.

[35] See Alison I. Beach, *Women as Scribes, Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 44 and 79. Also, Wybren Scheepsma, *Medieval Religious Women in the Low Countries: The "Modern Devotion," the Canonesses of Windesheim, and their Writings*, trans. David F. Johnson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004), 36 and 84. Cyrus, *The Scribes for Women's Convents*, 30.

[36] Susan Boyton, "Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 12.

[37] Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, 31. Jesse D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597–c. 1000* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2014), 3.

[38] Fiona J. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 71. Also, Nigel J. Morgan, "Books for the Liturgy and Private Prayer," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, eds. Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 291–316.

[39] Erler, *Women, Reading, and Piety*, 31.

three primary areas within the convent.[40] First, the convent church would have been the main location, owing to the required daily attendance of Mass and performance of the Divine Office. The reading practice of nuns was shaped by their participation in the liturgy, and as Morrow has pointed out, "the expectation of devotional services, especially the daily office…would be accomplished by the women themselves."[41] Nuns would read from a variety of liturgical books such as evangeliaries, breviaries, or psalters. Next, nuns used books during the daily chapter meeting. Morrow states that this was the time where "concerns about financial or social issues were discussed. The format of each meeting was to include readings from the Benedictine Rule appropriate for the day's topics as well as selections in celebration of saints' feast days."[42] Finally, readings in the refectory during mealtime "were typically chosen from saints' lives, patristical sermons or commentaries."[43] Within the religious community the role of the *cantrix* was to select the weekly chants and readings, where "the task of reading rotated among the members of a community, and the reader received privileges of early dismissal from services, eating a meal before others, etc. The only voice permitted during meals was that of the reader."[44] The following section presents examples of books made for nuns during the twelfth century which reveal that convents held the books needed for these "scenes of reading," and demonstrate a variety in format, content, and production.

2. BOOKS WRITTEN IN LATIN FOR NUNS

2.1 History

Similar to aristocratic laywomen, the reading interests of nuns reflected a keen interest in history. Women within the convent context used books, such as chronicles and *vitae*, as way to secure their religious foundation and the financial benefits that patronage of a benefactor provided. As Jane Stevenson writes, "the functions of a royal convent included consolidating and commemorating the memory of the dynasty

[40] Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*, 41. For a discussion on the physical make-up of a convent complex and the structure of the buildings, see Hamburger, Marx, and Marti, "The Time of the Orders, 1200–1500, An Introduction," 45–46.

[41] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 68. Also see C. H. Lawrence, "Sisters or Handmaids," in *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1984), 30 and 199–212. Susan Boynton, "Training for the Liturgy," 9.

[42] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 82. "The meeting was to take place every morning either after the office of terce (approx. 8 a.m.) or the celebration of the morrow mass (approx. 9:00 a.m.)."

[43] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 82.

[44] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 82.

with which it was connected."[45] Since many nuns during this period came from a noble background, works that connected their religious house to its noble and sacred ties remained popular topics for reading.

SAINTS' LIVES

Vitae of saints, especially those linked to their own convent, fulfilled the need of memorializing both pious and political connections. The biographical story of the founding abbess or female noble benefactor would act as historical reading, providing edifying examples of piety for the nuns to emulate. For example, in the late eleventh- century, the nuns of Wilton Abbey commissioned the monk Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, known for his composition of legends and *vitae*, to write for them an account of the life of the community's revered holy woman, St Edith.[46] He produced the *Vita Edithae* (c. 1080) written in Latin verse and prose.[47] Goscelin's work, both the text and the physical manuscript itself, would have acted as a reminder of Wilton's shared heritage with Anglo-Saxon holy women, who were still venerated well into the twelfth century, along with promoting the political affiliations Edith held to the English throne and the status that would bestow to the convent community where she once resided.[48] Additionally, the Abbess Ælfgyva (Elfgiva, Ælfgifu) of Barking Abbey commissioned from Goscelin a series of *vitae* of the community's early holy women, Æthelburh, Hildeth, and Wulfhild, to be written for the occasion of the translation of their relics in c. 1086.[49]

Compositions on the lives of Anglo-Saxon holy women in England remained of reading interest to the nuns of Barking. According to Bell, the convent library included a "collection of seven *vitae sanctorum*"

[45] Jane Stevenson, "Anglo-Latin Women Poets," 91. Also see the work by Anne Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing about Women and Reform in Late Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

[46] George Whalen, "Patronage Engendered: How Goscelin Allayed the Concerns of Nuns' Discriminatory Publics," in *Women, the Book, and the Godly: Selected Proceedings of the St Hilda's Conference, 1993, vol. 1*, eds. Lesley Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 123–136, at 123 and 130. Whalen points out, it is important to "… discern how gender affected the politics of the commissioning of hagiographic writing," for example, "Goscelin's *vitae* of women total closer to 40% of his production…Of his hagiographic oeuvre 25% was written for women's monasteries." at 134, n. 47.

[47] Elizabeth M. Tyler, "From Old English to Old French," in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100–c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), 174.

[48] Stephanie Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber Confortatorius* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004). Also, Barbara Yorke, "The Women in Edgar's Life," in *Edgar, King of the English, 959–975: New Interpretations*, ed. Donald Scragg (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008), 150.

[49] Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, "Recovering the Histories of Women Religious in England in the Central Middle Ages: Wilton Abbey and Goscelin of Saint-Bertin," *Journal of Medieval History* 42, n. 3 (2016): 285–303, at 291, n. 26.

datable to the twelfth century.[50] This extant manuscript includes most notably copies of the *Life of St Ethelburga*, and the *Life of St Edith of Wilton*, both works composed by Goscelin. Moreover, the nuns of Barking translated and copied their own manuscript works of *vitae*, of which three are known, yet no longer survive from the period.[51] First, the *Life of St Edward the Confessor* was translated from Latin to Anglo-Norman verse by an anonymous nun of Barking sometime between 1163–1170.[52] In addition, the Life of *St Æthelthryth (Audrée)* and the *Life of St Catherine* were translated into Anglo-Norman by the nuns' Marie and Clemence of Barking, respectively.[53] The production of these *vitae* demonstrates a reading preference toward works in vernacular, as well as the nuns access and ability to read the Latin exemplar manuscripts needed to produce these translated copies; the nuns either owned them or were able to borrow them from another religious house in their network.

The evidence from Wilton and Barking reveal a strong reading interest in hagiography that exemplified the historical foundations of these wealthy English convents.[54] Perhaps owing to the divide between the Anglo-Saxon past and the new Anglo-Norman culture after the conquest of c. 1066, the *vitae* manuscripts reveal a significant reading trend in these convents toward stories of foundation history, rather than a focus on martyrs or miracles. Further, the interest of female readers in hagiographical accounts of holy women shows a reading preference for books that provided an emulation of piety, and indicates an interest in reading about other nuns to which they could relate.

Another twelfth-century example of the political and memorial motivations behind the commission and reading of *vitae* comes from France. The abbess Petronilla of Fontevraud requested from Baudri of Dol (Bourgueil) an account of the life of Fontevraud's founder, Robert d'Arbrissel.[55] At the time of the commission, sometime between 1118–

[50] **Cardiff, Public Library, MS 1.381, fols. 81–146 (1100–1110/1200**). Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 108. Also, Bugyis, "Recovering the Histories of Women," 291, n. 30. The manuscript includes copies of *Vita Æthelburge* and *Lectiones Hildelithe*, *Life of St Edward the Martyr*, *Life of St David* by Ricemarch, a metrical *Life of St Mary of Egypt* by Hildebert of Lanvardin, and the *Life of St Ebrulfus*.

[51] See, *Campsey Manuscript*, London, British Library, Add. 70513 (1250–1299).

[52] Ian Short, "Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XIV, Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1991*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992), 236–237. The vernacular Life of Edward is a re-working of Ælred of Rievaulx's Latin text.

[53] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Marie de Chatteris, and not Marie de France, has been posited as the writer of the *Life of St Audrée* by Wogan-Browne and others.

[54] Bugyis, "Recovering the Histories of Women," 285–303.

[55] Jacques Dalarun, *Robert of Arbrissel: Sex, Sin, and Salvation in the Middle Ages*, trans. and

1120, Baudri was at least seventy years of age. Petronilla's request shows her recognition of the status and respect that a work composed by one of the well-known writers of the time would lend to her community's standing. However, when Baudri's version proved unsuitable, for whatever reason, Petronilla requested a second *vita*, likely written by a male member of Fontevraud, known as Andreas.[56] According to Dalarun, the second commission by Petronilla may have been an attempt to bolster the pious record of Robert as well as the future of the community, as the second version is longer and focuses on the concerns of governing the community.[57] Perhaps read during chapter meetings, the *vita* would have been used as a book of commemoration of the founder, and documentation of how the political structure of the community was to be maintained.

Thus, the genre of saints' lives spoke to the dynastic, political, or spiritual heritage of a female monastic community.[58] The production of manuscript *vitae* would offer a tangible, physical object allowing for the readers to come into contact with the sanctity of the saint's life told therein. Nuns were aware of the power of the written word to support continued veneration to a saint which provided financial benefits to the community.

CHRONICLES

Chronicles represented a manner of reading history which appealed to nuns for memorial and educational purposes.[59] The manuscripts made for them reflect interest in both a broad historical past in addition to focused historical narratives of their own community. For example,

intro. by Bruce L. Venarde (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 4. Baudri of Dol, *Vita Prima B. Roberti de Arbrisello*, in *Patrologia cursus completus, Series Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris 1844–1864)162: 1043–1058.

[56] Dalarun, *Sex, Sin and Salvation*, 4.

[57] Dalarun, *Sex, Sin and Salvation,* 5.

[58] From Germany, the *Regnante domino*, made c. 1100 for the Nuns of St Ursula in Köln, was also read by Elisabeth of Schonäu. *The Passion of Saint Ursula, Regnante Domino*, trans. Pamela Sheingorn and Marcelle Thiébaux (Peregrina Publishing, 1990).

[59] For more on chronicles and reading by monastic women, see Cynthia Turner Camp, *Anglo-Saxon Saints' Lives as History Writing in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015), 25–42. Juliana Dresvina and Nicholas Sparks, *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012). Anne Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing About Women and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). K. J. P. Lowe, *Nuns' Chronicles and Convent Culture in Renaissance and Counter-Reformation Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Powers of Record, Powers of Example: Hagiography and Women's History," in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages,* eds. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 71–93.

Margaret, abbess of Lippoldsberg, initiated the production of a chronicle (c. 1151) regarding her own community, setting down its history for posterity.[60] The work describes the first one hundred years of the convent, and was combined with the booklist of Lippoldsberg's convent library, discussed above. This manuscript gives a rare glimpse into the way that Margaret wanted to be remembered by her community: the nuns' connection to their historical foundation, and the books they used to continue the convent's sacred purpose.[61] It is likely that this book's "scene of reading" was part of the chapter meeting, as a reference for the community to consult if needed, answering questions about the convent's foundation and the way the house was managed during the contemporary period of Provost Gunther (c. 1139).[62]

In contrast to the focused history of Lippoldsberg, most convents requested chronicles that spoke to a broader history of the Church or Scripture, which was meant to educate the nuns as well as to offer spiritual emulation. For example, the abbess of Elstow Abbey, Cecily de Chanvill, commissioned a copy of Peter Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, and Richard of St Victor's *Allegories on the Old Testament*.[63] Within the manuscript, an inscription on fol. 197 states that the scribe, Robert of Bedford, made the book for her between 1191–1192.[64] (Fig. 16) This personal request by an abbess to a professional scribe shows the convent's connection to the developing commercial book trade.[65] The resulting manuscript includes an inscription stating, "for the instruction and advancement of her convent, and of others who consult it," and is large enough to be viewed by groups of nuns, indicating its use for education within the convent.[66] The abbess likely requested these texts to be compiled together to serve as a book of sacred history for her nuns.

[60] *Chronicon Lippoldsbergense*, **Marburg, Hessisches Staatsarchiv, MS H77 (c. 1151)**. Thomson, *Turning Over a New Leaf*, 132. Fionna Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 71.

[61] Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*, 41.

[62] Hotchin, "Women's Reading," 149. The Lippoldsberg Chronicle also includes a description of changes made to the administration of finances introduced by Gunther.

[63] Peter Comestor, *Historia scholastica*, Richard of St Victor, *Allegories*, **London, British Library, Royal 7 F III (1191–1192**).

[64] British Library's online catalog description identifies Robert of Bedford as a professional scribe. See British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, "Detailed Record for Royal 7 F III," http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7474&CollID=16&NStart=70603 (accessed 11 November 2017).

[65] Erik Kwakkel, "Commercial Organization and Economic Innovation," in *The Production of Books in England 1350–1500*, eds. Alexandra Gillespie and Daniel Wakelin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 173–191, esp. 185–186.

[66] This manuscript measures 355 x 250mm. For a discussion of large-format manuscripts, see George D. Greenia, "The Bigger the Book: On Oversize Medieval Manuscripts,"

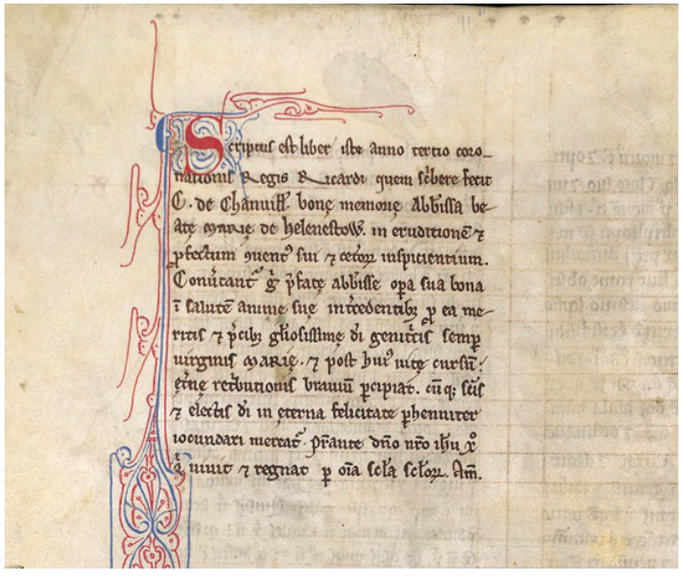

Figure 16: Inscription. *Historia scholastic and Allegories*, London, British Library, Royal 7 F III (1191–1192), fol. 196v, detail.

SCHOOLBOOKS

In addition to the books of history that were used for education, there are a number of manuscripts which show nuns' engagement with the *trivium* and *qudrivium* within their monastic community.[67] For example, the booklist from Lippoldsberg lists four books that represent teaching texts of the *trivium*; two classical works of Cicero and Boethius, and two instructions on grammar.[68] The *quadrivium* is evidenced by a treatise on music.[69] On account of their contents, these books were not part of

Revue Belge de Philologie et d'histoire 83, no.3 (2005): 723–745. Other instances of "histories" include two manuscripts made at Wessobrunn, Germany; Cassiodorus, *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita*, **Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 22015 (1125–1150)**, and Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, **Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 22014 (1130–1150)**. Both manuscripts were copied by Diemut, discussed above. They are also of a large size, easily read and viewed by a group; **Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 22015** measures 345 x 230mm, and **Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 22014** measures 340 x 230mm.

[67] Hotchin, "Women's Reading," 171.

[68] Boethius' *Commentary on the Isagogue of Porphyry*, and Cicero's *De inventione*. The two instructions on grammar are unidentified. Hotchin lists them as no. 48 Boethius, no. 49 Cicero, no. 54 grammar, no. 55 grammar.

[69] Hotchin, "Women's Reading," 171. The treatise on music is no. 52.

the liturgical reading common to the nuns' daily life at Lippoldsberg, but were used as part of their education in Latin and to increase their literacy levels.

According to Bell's study, an eleventh-century copy of Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae*, "with marginal commentary and interlinear glosses," belonged to the twelfth-century Benedictine nuns of St Wolfrida in Horton (Dorset).[70] Not only the content, but the addition of gloss and commentary placed in the margins illustrate the educational context of use. This didactic genre is further evidenced at the Benedictine abbey of St Amor, Münsterbilzen, near Maastricht, where a group of five nuns made their own copy of Isidore's *Etymologiae* in c. 1134.[71] Isidore's text was known as a foundation for learning since Antiquity, and the choice for adding this manuscript to the nuns' reading practice at Münsterbilzen shows a concern toward education in their community.[72] Therefore, as indicated by the evidence, a preference for reading which advanced the literacy of twelfth-century nuns was sustained by manuscripts that were outside of the common core of books needed by a monastic community, thus revealing a reading interest by women that scholarship has yet to fully explore.

Other non-service books that were part of convent collections are evidenced by manuscript copies of contemporary theological authors, especially found in women's communities from German regions. Exegetical works by the Benedictine monk Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129) were part of the convent libraries at Schäftlarn, Lamspringe, and Lippoldsberg during the twelfth century. Rupert's work, *De divinis officiis* (On Divine Office), was read, requested, and copied by nuns relatively close to the time the work was written, suggesting that nuns were aware of, and interested in, the developments in theological study. For example, at Schäftlarn, Rupert's *De divinis officiis* was copied by the nun Irmingart c. 1164–1200.[73] Also during the last quarter of the century, a copy of Rupert's "Divine Office" was made by a nun at Lamspringe.[74] Finally, the convent library at Lippoldsberg evidently held a copy of the "Divine Office," now lost, yet known from a letter by the librarian

[70] Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, **Spain, Real Biblioteca, El Escorial, e.ii.1 (1000–1025)**. David Bell, *What Nuns Read*, 143.

[71] *Etymologiae of Isidore of Seville*, **London, British Library, Harley 3099 (c. 1134)**.

[72] Annette Iggulden, "Women's Silence: In the Space of Words and Images," PhD Dissertation, Deakin University, 2002: 12.

[73] Rupert of Deutz, *De divinis officiis*, **Münich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 17116 (1164–1200)**.

[74] Rupert of Deutz, *De divinis officiis*, **Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 510 (1100–1200)**.

of Rheinhardsbruun, who requested the nuns of Lippoldsberg to make for him a copy from the manuscript in their library.[75] The manuscript evidence of this important work by Rupert of Deutz reveals that reading of contemporary theological studies which addressed the situation of monastic reform was of interest to women's monastic communities in twelfth-century Germany. In addition, manuscript copies of works by Hugh of St Victor are found in the Lippoldsberg booklist entries, further attesting to a regional interest in exegetical reading.[76] Susan El-Kholi points to a copy of Honorius of Autun's *Elucidarium* which belonged to the nuns at the Abbey of Neuss/St. Quirin, located in the lower Rhine region. El-Kholi notes that this is the only twelfth-century instance of this manuscript in a women's religious community besides the copy made by Abbess Herrad of Hohenburg.[77]

Under the guidance of Abbess Herrad (d. 1195), a similar reading trend toward contemporary works of theology was demonstrated by the Augustinian canonesses at Hohenberg, Alsace. Herrad and her community began the compilation of the *Hortus deliciarium*, an encyclopedic work or *florilegium*, around c. 1175 and "finished" sometime around c. 1191.[78] Griffiths has argued that the manuscript represents a well-planned teaching tool based around salvation history.[79] Herrad (and her nuns) selected works of verse, prose, dialogue, and song from a large variety of sources, including Rupert of Deutz, Honorius of Autun, Peter Lombard, and Peter Comestor; all roughly contemporary authors of both monastic and scholastic works. Griffiths suggests that Herrad

[75] Fiona J. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights, Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 71. Herrad of Landsberg, abbess of Hohenburg Abbey (OSA) also included excerpts from Rupert's work in her *Hortus Deliciarum*.

[76] Hotchin, "Women's Reading," 178–189. Hotchin argues that the connection between Hugh of St Victor and the Provost Gunther to the monastery of Hamersleben is what brought this work to the convent library.

[77] Honorius, *Elucidarium*, **Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ms. 1999 (1100–1200)**. Susan El-Kholi, *Lektüre in Frauenkonventen des ostfränkisch-deutschen Reiches vom 8. Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg: Könighausen & Neumann, 1997), 138 and 400. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights*, 279, n.78.

[78] Herrad of Landsberg, Abbess of Hohenburg, *Hortus Deliciarum*, ed. Rosalie Green et al. (London and Leiden: Warburg Institute/University of London and Brill, 1979). The *Hortus Deliciarum* manuscript was destroyed during the Prussian War in 1870. Images made in the 1800s for Count Auguste de Bastard survive as well as a facsimile reconstruction by the Warburg Institute in 1979.

[79] Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 71 and 113. According to Griffiths, Herrads' work differs from Lambert of St Omer due to the manner of her work, which was done in stages, where she pre-planned her manuscript texts and arrangement through extensive notes. For more on the *florilegium* of Lambert, see Albert Derolez, *The Autograph Manuscript of the Liber Floridus: A Key to the Encyclopedia of Lambert of Saint-Omer* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998).

"must have worked with full copies of many of her sources, and certainly all of her most important ones."[80] It is likely that Herrad acquired the numerous books she must have consulted from nearby monastic communities, perhaps the Augustinian monastery of Marbach.[81]

Networks of book exchange between convents during the twelfth century show a shared interest by monastic women readers in works that represented learning emanating from the universities. The examples I have highlighted above indicate a reading preference by nuns and canonesses which specifically addressed a desire for books that advanced their Latin literacy, as well as their intellectual and spiritual interests. They accomplished this by commissioning, or copying, the manuscripts they found valuable to read for intellectual pursuits beyond the books needed for the Liturgy, as well as private devotional reading.

2.2 Religious Works

Moving to the books that reflected the daily liturgical needs of women living within a convent setting, here I introduce examples of books such as Gospels, psalters, prayerbooks, and sermons. These manuscripts represent the way nuns used books to practice their piety. Liturgical books needed for the Divine Office and Mass within monastic communities included evangeliaries, homilaries, hymnals, and antiphonals or breviaries which brought together a number of these individual texts.[82] Service books, such as sacramentaries and missals, were primarily used by priests to guide the rituals of the Mass. However, there are a few instances where these books were part of a convent library, likely used by the abbess or prioress. Highlighted below are the books made for nuns which were used for the purpose of performing the Divine Office, as well as those books read at other periods throughout the day, such as private or communal reading. Among the manuscript evidence, there is a large number of sermon and psalter books belonging to women's monastic communities throughout Western Europe.

[80] Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 113. Herrad set up a new religious foundation at nearby Truttenhausen and St Gorgon for pastoral care of the nuns of Hohenburg, see Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 51.

[81] Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 49 and 76. Griffiths states that the *Hortus* is "firmly placed within the intellectual milieu of northern France in the late twelfth century," 53. See also Carolyn Muessig, "Hildegard of Bingen and Herrad of Landsberg" in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 94.

[82] Daniel Sheerin, "The Liturgy," in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, eds. Frank Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press), 157–182.

LITURGICAL BOOKS

It would not be a representative account of the books made for and used by nuns without the inclusion of the books used for the Liturgy held in their collections. Although it can be argued that Gospel books and psalters were part of the liturgy, they also represent a book used at different "scenes of reading" for various purposes. In contrast, most liturgical books, such as the breviary, antiphonary, or gradual were relevant only to the liturgy itself. As discussed above, booklists and surviving collections suggest that most convents during the twelfth century "contained a core of standard works common to any monastic library aiming for a comprehensive collection."[83] This standard collection of books within a monastic community was represented by the classic works of the Church Fathers, such as Augustine and Gregory the Great, a copy of the Rule that governed the order, complemented by books used for religious ritual, guided by the liturgical needs of each female monastic community.

Because across monastic orders, nuns and canonesses alike were required to participate in daily liturgy, there are a number of surviving twelfth-century liturgical manuscripts which can be attributed to women's communities in Western Europe. Here, I present evidence of liturgical books used by nuns from Spain and Italy, regions where scholarship regarding the contributions of women to medieval textual culture has recently become of interest.[84] For example, from the abbey Santa Maria de Vallbona in Catalonia, Spain, five liturgical books have been attributed to the use of twelfth-century nuns from this wealthy Cistercian convent.[85] Dated to 1173–1175, the manuscripts include a Gospel book, a lectionary, a gradual, also a sacramentary, and a breviary.[86] Michelle Herder argues that these five books were produced when the community adopted the customs of the Cistercian order, and thus represent the essential liturgical books needed by the nuns for their daily practice.[87] Herder further suggests that the production of these manuscripts may have been aided by Cistercian nuns from Tulebras, where the nun "Oria Ramirez might have brought appropriate material

[83] Hotchin, "Women's Reading,"153. Cohen-Mushlin, *Scriptoria in Medieval Saxony*, 18.
[84] Mary M. Schaefer, *Women in Pastoral Office: The Story of Santa Prassede, Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 150 and 163.
[85] *Monastic Matrix, A Scholarly Resource for the Study of Women's Religious Communities from 400 to 1600 CE*, "S. Maria de Vallbona, #1230," https://monasticmatrix.osu.edu/monasticon/s-maria-de-vallbona (accessed 11 November 2017). Michelle Herder, "Liturgy: The Experience of Religious Women at Santa Maria de Vallbona," *Viator* 40 (2009): 171–196.
[86] **Vallbona, Archivo del Monasterio de Santa Maria, Ms. 1; Ms. 16; Ms. 26; Ms. 13; Ms. 18**, all dated to 1173–1175.
[87] Herder, "Liturgy: The Experience of Religious Women," 176.

or exemplars with her" when visiting the new foundation.[88] In addition, during the first quarter of the century at the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria, in the province of Lucca, Italy, the abbess Humbrina directed a scriptorium within her community which produced a missal and two antiphonaries (c. 1124) for the use of the nuns.[89] As a further example, convent libraries in twelfth-century Germany also held liturgical books. At least three manuscripts can be attributed to the double-house of Zweifalten, and specifically to the production of one nun, Matilda of Niphen (Nifen).[90] She worked as the scribe of a gradual with sacramentary, an epistolary, and a collectary with illuminations.[91] However, it is unclear if the books were kept in the monks' or nuns' book collection at this double-house.

Of the various types of liturgical books, the breviary represented an important compendium of texts used to guide the ritual of the Divine Office, and thus would be useful for a women's monastic community where the daily devotional services were performed by the women themselves.[92] In the collection of books belonging to the nuns of Admont is an illustrated breviary made in c. 1180 for the nuns by Admont's prior, Johannes, and the scribe Udalricus.[93] An annotation names the nuns as owners of this book, yet they were more than just recipients of a manuscript, they also continued the book's production. Stefanie Seeburg argues that the breviary was likely received by the nuns unfinished, stating that the decoration of initials "was started but not completed and empty spaces were later filled in by other hands,

[88] Herder, "Liturgy: The Experience of Religious Women," 176.
[89] *Antiphonary*, **Lucca, Biblioteca Capitolare, Ms. 603 (c. 1112)**. See Loretta Vandi, "Redressing Images: Conflict in Context at Abbess Humbrina's Scriptorium in Pontetto (Lucca)," in *Reassessing the Roles of Women as Makers of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. Theresa Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 783–822.
[90] Constant J. Mews, "Monastic Educational Culture Revisited: The Witness of Zwiefalten and the Hirsau Reform," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 185–186. Alison I. Beach, "'Mathild de Niphin' and the Female Scribes of Twelfth-Century Zwiefalten," in *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Hull Dialogue*, eds. Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2013), 33–50.
[91] *Gradual and Sacramentary*, **Stuttgart, Wuttembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. brev. 123 (1100–1200)**; *Epistolary*, **Stuttgart, WLB, Cod. brev. 121 (1100–1200)**; *Collectary*, **Stuttgart, WLB, Cod. brev. 128 (1100–1200)**. These instances of scribal activity will be further explored in chapter four.
[92] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 68.
[93] *Liber matutinalis*, **Admont, Stiftsbibliothek MS 18 (1180).** The impetus behind the production of this breviary can only be speculated. The nuns may have requested this manuscript for their use when monks were not available to perform the daily devotional services, or possibly the monks recognized that the nuns' role in directing the Office for their community required their own breviary.

using mostly historiated initials."[94] Seeberg theorizes that it was the Admont nuns who completed the decoration of the book, with at least twenty-nine historiated initials that display a "thematic orientation towards the female audience."[95] (Fig. 17) Further, many of these images were complemented with banderoles, a feature which explicated the text, guiding the reader between image and the written word. Nuns may have added these *tituli* "to provide explanations of the text while it was read at matins or in the refectory."[96] The continued production of the manuscript by the nuns shows a preference for decorated features which expanded on the text in a visual manner, likely conceived and designed by the nuns themselves, thus making the book their own.

Figure 17: *Breviary*. Austria, Admont Stiftsbibliothek, MS 18 (1180), fol. 224v; detail of historiated initial.

Each of the examples presented above shed light on the core collection of books a convent library owned: Bibles, patristic authors, devotional works, and guidance manuals. Although there is sparse extant evidence, the large number of women's religious communities established during this period would suggest that each house also owned a similar collection of books needed for the liturgy. When considered as a whole, the need for liturgical books used by nuns in the daily reading practice of their convents reflects a substantial contribution to manuscript production during this century.

[94] See Stefanie Seeberg, *Die Illustrationen im Admonter Nonnenbrevier von 1180: Marienkrönung und Nonnenfrömmigkeit: die Rolle der Brevierillustration in der Entwicklung von Bildthemen im 12. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2002); Seeberg, "Illustrations in the Manuscripts of the Admont Nuns from the Second Half of the Twelfth Century: Reflections on their Function," in *Manuscripts and Monastic Culture: Reform and Renewal in Twelfth-Century Germany*, ed. Alison I. Beach (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 99.
[95] Seeberg, "The Manuscripts of the Admont Nuns," 106.
[96] Diane J. Reilly, "The Bible as Bellwether: Manuscript Bibles in the Context of Spiritual, Liturgical and Educational Reform, 1000–1200," in *Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible*, eds. Eyal Poleg and Laura Light (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 28.

GOSPEL BOOKS

Added to the books used for the liturgy are evangeliaries, which held an important place in the reading culture within a monastic setting. These books contained Gospel texts in liturgical order, to be read during Mass. At the beginning of the "long twelfth century," the well-established convent of Essen in Germany owned a Gospel book (1073–1075) produced at the request of the Abbess Svanhild.[97] The manuscript's dedication page includes images of Abbess Svanhild and the nun Birgid, who have been variously identified as the patrons, or perhaps scribes, of this Gospel book.[98] (Fig. 18) The manuscript originally included a treasure binding of gold and gems, and is described as used in processions within the church during feast days.[99] The quality and workmanship of the manuscript reflects the value of owning a Gospel book, which in turn supported the status of the women's monastic community at Essen for which it was made.

Figure 18: Dedication page, *Gospel Book of Abbess Svanhild of Essen*, Manchester, John Rylands, Latin ms. 110 (c. 1073), fol. 17r.

[97] *Gospelbook of Svanhild of Essen*, **Manchester, John Rylands, Latin ms. 110 (c. 1073–1075).** See Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 98. Also, Helene Scheck, "Mathilda and the Monastery at Essen," in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Margaret C. Schaus (New York: Routledge, 2006), 549. Other early examples of Gospel books of high quality made for nuns are the Hitda Codex (c. 1000), and the Uta Gospels (c. 1025).
[98] Rainer Kashnitz, "The Gospel Book of Abbess Svanhild of Essen in the John Rylands Library," *Bulletin of the John Rylands* 53 (1970): 122–166. Kashnitz discusses twenty surviving manuscripts once held in the Essen convent library, dating from the eleventh century.
[99] Kashnitz, "The Gospel Book of Abbess Svanhild," 157.

The surviving evidence from Germany in the twelfth century also includes two Gospel books from Lamspringe, held in the convent by the last half of the twelfth century. However, each book demonstrates a different "scene of reading". The first is a Gospel book with extensive marginal commentary of ps.-Hieronymous' *Expositio evangeliorum*, and includes the popular apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus.[100] The large size and inclusion of marginal glosses could indicate its use as a book for the liturgy, as well as reading in the refectory or chapter. In contrast, the second Gospel book in the nuns' collection is significantly smaller in size, indicating a private reading context, perhaps a personal copy of the larger manuscript.[101] The smaller book holds a close connection to the previous Gospel book in that it retains the commentary of ps.-Heironymous. However, in this instance the commentary is not presented in the margins, but within the historiated initials, guiding the reader between text and image. As a final example, although lost during WWII, we know the convent of Lippoldsberg held a finely illustrated Gospel book.[102] The dedication image depicts the prioress Margaret receiving the book from the scribe, while the provost Gunther, along with other nuns of the abbey, are portrayed in the roundels in an act of offering the book to Jesus, the holiest of recipients. (Fig. 19)

Figure 19: Dedication image: *Lippoldsberg Evangeliary*, Kassel, LB Ms theol. 2* 59 (1150–1170), fol. 73r.

[100] *Evangelia. Hieronymus, Expositio evangeliorum. Evangelium Nicodemi*, **Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 447 Helmst. (1175–1200).** This manuscript measures 280 x 185mm. Helmar Härtel, *Geschrieben und gemalt: Gelehrte Bücher aus Frauenhand, Eine Klosterbibliothek sächsiser Benediktinerinnen des 12. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 43 and 73–74.
[101] *Evangelia quattuor*, **Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 1012 Helmst. (1175–1200).** This manuscript measures 190 x 125mm. This manuscript likely produced at Hamersleben. Härtel, *Geschrieben und gemalt*, 60 and 92–93.
[102] *Gospel Book*, **Kassel, Landesbibliothek, MS theol. 2⁰ 59 (1150–1170)** fol. 73r. This manuscript was lost during World War II. For images, see Klosterkirche Lippoldsberg, "Lippoldsberger Evangeliar," http://www.klosterkirche.de/touristisches-highlight/evangeliar/galerie (accessed 11 November 2017). Also, Cohen-Mushlin, *Scriptoria in Medieval Saxony*, 18.

This manuscript represents the high quality of production that was accorded to a Gospel book, and the inclusion of images of the prioress and nuns tells us they possibly held a role in commissioning the manuscript to commemorate the piety and status of the community at Lippoldsberg.[103] These examples show that the Gospels were not only read as part of the liturgy, but that nuns were aware that the production of Gospel manuscripts was a way to memorialize the piousness of their members, as well as to address the devotional reading needs of their community.[104]

SERMONS

Like Gospel books, sermon collections represent a type of book used for liturgy and communal reading, often for educational purposes whether spiritual or intellectual. Sections (lessons) were read during mealtimes in the refectory, at chapter meetings, and as part of the private meditations of nuns, representing a varied "scene of reading."[104] For example, at the beginning of the twelfth century, a female scribe from the abbey of Nunnaminster in Winchester, England, produced a manuscript useful for various engagements of reading. The manuscript includes a number of texts: a copy of the *Diadema monachorum* of Smaragdus, which is an early Carolingian commentary on monastic life, along with a collection of fourteen sermons, eleven of which are attributed to Caesarius of Arles, and an anonymous treatise known as *De superbia et fornicatione*.[106] P. R. Robinson has argued that this manuscript, the only extant copy of Smaragdus' *Diadema* found in an English convent, was copied in a manner "in which it would have been easy to find one's place in the text," and is of a size intended for reading to a group.[107] To understand how this manuscript may have been read by the nuns of Nunnaminster, Morrow suggests that "the sermon collection could have supplied the lessons for the offices of vespers and compline," while the "*Diadema* and *De superbia et fornicatione* both could have been used for refectory

[103] Known as the "Hamersleben Gospel Book."
[104] I follow the definition of "liturgy" and "devotion" as given by Susan Boynton. Liturgy to mean the "designated acts of structured communal worship (such as the Mass, Office, processions, and other ceremonies in which clergy preside) and "devotion to refer to more flexible practices that can be performed by an individual and do not involve clergy". Susan Boynton, "Prayer as Liturgical Performance in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Monastic Psalters," *Speculum* 82 (2007): 896–931, at 896.
[105] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 96.
[106] *Sermons*, **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 451 (1100).**
[107] P. R. Robinson, "A Twelfth-Century Scriptrix from Nunnaminster," in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers: Essays presented to M. B. Parkes*, eds. P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1997), 73–93, at 76–79.

readings, especially the latter, given its pronouncements on compliance with the attractions of the seven deadly sins."[108]

By far, a significant number of surviving sermon and homily manuscripts used by nuns derive from regions within twelfth-century Germany. At Admont, Lamspringe, Schäftlarn, and Wessobrunn, sermons filled a large part of nuns' book collections, with a combined total of surviving manuscripts numbering more than twenty dating from the twelfth century.[109] The quantity of sermon manuscripts in convent libraries during this period demonstrates the importance this genre held. The works of Augustine, Gregory, and Bede are represented in the collections alongside the sermons and commentaries of contemporary authors, such as Irimbert of Admont. For example, the sermon corpus from the convent library at Admont, known as the "Admonter Predigtsammlung," is a manuscript collection consisting of five copies of anonymous homilies, together with five of sermons written by Irimbert of Admont.[110] Moreover, in this sermon collection, two of the books of homilies for feast days display clear visual indications of their use by the nuns, portrayed on beginning folios in a posture of preaching.[111]

PSALTERS

Psalter manuscripts used in medieval convents fulfilled a number of reading purposes, from liturgical and devotional, to educational. Foremost, psalters were used as part of the daily practice of the Divine Office. Known as the canonical or liturgical hours, the day was divided into matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none(s), vespers, and compline; each period with a corresponding cycle of reading Psalms and prayers. These readings were arranged so that the whole of the 150 Psalms would be read each week. Both canoness and nun generally followed the same formula, where the cycle was directed by the appropriate feasts and stages of the liturgical year. Monastic communities during the Middle Ages ideally committed the Psalms to memory, and toward that purpose the psalter became a book used as the primary guide for both learning Latin and learning how to pray. As discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, young girls of royal and noble status often received their primary education while living within a convent. Nuns and noblewomen were educated together under the guidance of the convent school's *magistra*, where they used the psalter as a way to acquire literacy. For

[108] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 96.
[109] See Appendix of this dissertation.
[110] **Admont, MS 58, MS 62, MS 73, MS 455, and MS 63** (all 1165–1180); **Admont, MS 650, MS 651, MS 682, MS 16, MS 17** (all 1165–1180).
[111] **Admont, MS 62** and **Admont, MS 58**. See, Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 79–84.

example, a Psalter originating from a convent in Normandy, datable to c. 1210, includes a "carefully penned alphabet" on fol. 123v.[112]

Although the psalter was deemed an essential book for monastic prayer as well as education, surviving manuscript evidence from twelfth-century convents is sparse. Perhaps, once the Psalms were committed to memory, a physical manuscript in the hands of each member was not needed. It is also possible that many women's communities were still using a psalter manuscript dating from an earlier century, such as the manuscript held at Essen from the eleventh century.[113] The lack of surviving psalters from twelfth-century convents could suggest other factors as well. First, since psalters were used for the liturgy, they may not have been cataloged as part of a convent's book collection and during subsequent centuries may have been subsumed under other monastic collections, erasing their use within a convent. Second, psalters used in a convent milieu may not have been as highly decorated in contrast to those owned by noblewomen. The practice of *lectio divina* perhaps influenced the extent of decoration added to a convent psalter, so as not to distract the reader. Thus, the survival rate of average, or even "scruffy" manuscripts, may hinder our knowledge regarding the number of psalters available to nuns and canonesses. Nonetheless, I have uncovered fifteen psalters datable to the twelfth century from women's monastic communities across Western Europe.[114]

As delineated by Bell's study, only six psalters held in the convent libraries survive from twelfth-century England. During the twelfth century, three were held by Shaftesbury Abbey: known as the Salisbury Psalter, the Winchester Psalter, and the Shaftesbury Psalter.[115] The Salisbury Psalter dates from the late tenth century and has been attributed as belonging to the monks of Salisbury; however, scholars such as Bell and Orietta da Rold have argued for a Shaftesbury provenance owing to the "feminine grammatical forms," and interlinear glosses in Old English.[116] Bell also places the Winchester Psalter in the convent library

[112] **Paris, BnF, Lat 1315 (c. 1210)**. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly, eds. *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages; Production, Reception, and Performance in Western Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press), 248.
[113] Kashnitz, "The Gospel Book of Abbess Svanhild," 136. *Psalterium Quadruplex,* **Essen, Minster Treasury (1000–1100)**.
[114] See Appendix. I do not argue that this is a definitive list of manuscripts. Omissions or misidentified manuscripts are my error.
[115] **Salisbury, Cathedral Library, 150 (900–1000); London, British Library, Cotton Nero C.iv (1100–1200); London, British Library, Lansdowne 383 (1100–1200)**.
[116] The wording, "*famulam tuam*," suggests a female community. Orietta da Rold, "The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060–1220," https://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.SCL.150.htm (accessed 11 November 2017).

at Shaftesbury during the twelfth century.[117] Originally made for the Bishop of Winchester sometime between c. 1129–1171, the manuscript was soon acquired by the nuns of Shaftesbury, who made additions to the calendar. Furthermore, the well-known Shaftesbury Psalter, dated to c. 1125–1150, includes two images of a woman at prayer, explained by scholars as the female patron, whether noblewoman or nun, who commissioned the manuscript.[118] These three manuscripts demonstrate the importance of the psalter held by the female community of Shaftesbury, and further show that the convent library at Shaftesbury could be entrusted with manuscripts from long-standing religious houses in England, possibly indicating a network of book exchange.

Also from twelfth-century England is the well-known St Albans Psalter.[119] This manuscript is argued as belonging to Christina of Markyate, an anchoress who later became prioress of the growing community of women around her cell.[120] Produced at St Albans in c. 1130, the psalter was given to Christina by her mentor, Abbot Geoffrey, after her enclosure as an anchoress. The illustrated psalter manuscript was compiled with other various texts that would be valued reading for the spiritual guidance of an enclosed nun. Whether these textual additions, or even the decorative additions of curtains sewn into the parchment that covered some of the images, were added by Christina or perhaps a nun in her following, suggest that this psalter was an important book held by the female community at Markyate.

By the early thirteenth century in England, the Benedictine nuns of Wherwell in Hampshire adapted a psalter that came into their belonging to better address their reading needs.[121] The manuscript originates from the Abbey of St Bertin in Saint-Omer, France, around c. 1170, and has a provenance that connects it to female readers within a decade of its production.[122] The psalter belonged to "nunnery of Bailleul" which, as Walter Cahn has argued, was more likely a noble family of

[117] *Psalter in Latin and French*, **London, British Library, Cotton Nero C.iv (1100–1200)**. Bell, *What Nuns Read,* 165–166.
[118] *Shaftesbury Psalter*, **London, British Library, Lansdowne 383 (1150–1200)**. Bell, *What Nuns Read,* 166.
[119] *St Albans Psalter*, **Hildesheim, Dombibliothek, MS St. Godehard 1 (1130–1140)**. For a complete discussion of the contents of this manuscript and the circumstances of its production, see Jane Geddes online project at www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/.
[120] Christina became the first prioress of this community located nearby St Albans. *Life of Christina of Markyate*, **London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius E. 1 (1300–1400)**.
[121] *Wherwell Psalter*, **Cambridge, Cambridge University, St. John's College, C. 18/olim., MS 68 (1170).**
[122] See St John's College, University of Cambridge online catalog description, http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/psalter-st-bertin-wherwell (accessed 11 November 2017). Euphemia is discussed below in regard to her poetic manuscript production.

Bailleul near Flanders. It was here that the book was in the possession of a noblewoman, possibly Margaret de Walliers, who later gave it to her daughter Euphemia, an abbess of Wherwell.[123] Additions to the calendar reflect the giving of this book between women, and changes to the Latin endings of prayers were made to speak to the female supplicant.

From France and Germany, the manuscript evidence for psalters from women's convents also remains sparse. In a letter between Abelard and Heloise, Abelard mentions a psalter which was possibly part of the Paraclete's book collection, but is now lost.[124] The book collection held at Admont included one psalter manuscript, known as the Millstätter Psalter (1173–1200), described by Beach as possibly copied at Admont.[125] At Lamspringe, the convent held two psalters, both dating to the end of the century.[126] Further, as discussed above, the nuns of Augsburg owned a psalter which they were also responsible for producing.[127] Finally, two psalters were part of the books used by the nuns of the double-house of Muri abbey in present-day Switzerland.[128]

Although psalters were used to learn the daily recitation of Psalms, as well as for developing literacy in Latin, the lack of extant manuscripts attributed to women's religious communities may indicate that psalters which were kept in the sacristy, or not highly decorated, were therefore not listed in medieval booklists. It is also possible that psalters from women's communities were subsumed into larger collections at a later date, erasing their existence in convent libraries. Yet the evidence that remains shows that the psalter was a book that was often passed between female readers, as well as through networks of monastic houses. In the manuscript's role for education, it was a vehicle for further learning, by both individuals and groups, adapted, added to, and even copied by female readers.

[123] For provenance, see the online catalog description. c*f*., Walter Cahn, "St. Albans and the Channel Style in England," in *The Year 1200: A Symposium*, ed. François Avril (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), 191–192. Cahn argues the psalter manuscript was made at St Albans "as a special commission for outside export," owing to the calendar and the style of "the St. Albans painter" evidenced in this manuscript. Cahn also notes that Eufemia [sic] was married to a lord of Bailleul, and it was "through her daughter Matilda (d. 1226) abbess of Wherwell…it likely returned to England."
[124] Peter Abelard, "Letter Nine: To the Nuns of the Paraclete," in *Letters of Peter Abelard, Beyond the Personal*, trans. Jan M. Ziolkowski (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 4. Abelard mentions the psalter in Letter Three.
[125] *Psalter*, **Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 2682 (1173–1200)**. Beach, *Women as Scribes*, 84.
[126] *Psalter*, **Wolfenbüttel, HAB, Cod. Guelf. 905 Helmst. (c. 1200)**; *Psalter*, **Wolfenbüttel, HAB, Cod. Guelf. 997 Helmst. (c. 1200)**.
[127] *Psalter*, **Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W. 26 (1175–1225)**.
[128] *Psalter*, **Hermetschwil, Benediktinerinnenkloster, Cod. Membr. 19 (1150–1200)**; *Psalter*, **Hermetschwil, Benediktinerinnenkloster, Cod. Membr. 20 (1150–1200)**.

PRAYERBOOKS

Living under a monastic rule, nuns and canonesses organized their day around prayer, performed in both private and communal manner. During the twelfth century reading in the form of "confessional prayer texts, and shorter versions known as collects," made up an essential component of nuns' daily practice of prayer.[129] Most often the Pater Noster, Canticles, and other standard prayers (Eucharistic Prayer, Athanasian Creed) were placed in books such as a Gospel or psalter.[130] It is in fact difficult to make clear distinctions between prayerbook and psalter, since the recitation of the Psalms was a main form of prayer in the Middle Ages. As we saw above, prayers placed within psalters were adapted to address a female reader through the use of feminine forms of Latin. For example, Susan Boynton points out that a "prayer to be recited after completing the recitation of the all the psalms, appears with feminine forms in the tenth-century Salisbury Psalter."[131] Boynton also notes a "set of prayers for the adoration of the cross on Good Friday" found in the Shaftesbury Psalter, where the prayers are written in the feminine.[132] Adding to this, Morrow brings attention to a number of Anselm's prayers which are included in the Shaftesbury Psalter. Morrow states, "two of his prayers, one to the Virgin and one for use before taking communion, were part of a prayer collection Anselm had composed in the last decade of the eleventh century."[133] The inclusion of these prayers indicates the female patron and reader of the Shaftesbury Psalter was reading the near-contemporary work of Anselm, and may have been aware of the connection these prayers held between court and convent readers.[134]

Books made up exclusively of prayers would seem to be a rare occurrence. Yet, as Jeffrey Hamburger has argued, it is the twelfth century that "marks a turning point in the history of the prayer book,"

[129] Morrow, "Literary Culture," 80. Also see Schaefer, *Women in Pastoral Office*, 163.
[130] Susan Boynton, "Prayer as Liturgical Performance in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Monastic Psalters," *Speculum* 82 (2007): 896–931, at 897–898.
[131] Boynton, "Prayer as Liturgical Performance," 899, n.15.
[132] Boynton, "Prayer as Liturgical Performance," 899, n.15. Also see Anne Bagnall Yardley, *Performing Piety: Musical Culture in Medieval English Nunneries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2006), 97–98.
[133] Jane Morrow, "Sharing Texts: Anselmian Prayers, a Nunnery's Psalter, and the Role of Friendship," in *Voices in Dialogue: Reading Women in the Middle Ages*, eds. Linda Olson and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 97–113; Morrow, "Literary Culture," 156.
[134] Morrow, 156. n. 111. Morrow dates the Shaftesbury Psalter to 1130–1140, and the abbess Eulalia (predecessor to Emma) was in correspondence with Anselm. Morrow writes, "The texts contained in the Shaftesbury manuscripts have not been included in the sigla of the editions of Anselm's prayers, … Thus far, the Anselm texts contained in the Shaftesbury psalter are the earliest copies of his prayers extant, which provides even more reason for a formal edition of the manuscript to be produced."

supported by the reading habits of monastic women.[135] In his study on the development of illustrated prayerbooks, Hamburger discusses a *liber precum* from Sélestat, datable to c. 1150 and which was made for the use of nuns from an unknown Benedictine convent in the Rhine region.[136] In this manuscript the prayers are rendered in feminine form, where the female reader would identify with "*ego peccatrix*" and "*me peccatricem famulam tuam*"; together with this there are a number of female saints present in the litany, and full-page miniatures are used to supplement prayers.[137] Hamburger argues that the addition of illustrations was relatively new to the period, shaped by the role women held as patron and reader of prayerbooks used for their spiritual guidance.[138]

The use of illustrations in prayerbooks belonging to nuns is further addressed by Otto Pächt.[139] He argues that the inclusion of images in manuscript copies of Anselm's *Orationes sive meditationes* can be traced to the manuscript belonging to Matilda of Tuscany, discussed in the previous chapter.[140] Pächt states that "the exemplar sent by Anselm to Matilda was already an illustrated one."[141] In a manuscript copy of Anselm's *Orationes* belonging to the nuns at Admont from the middle of the century, images supplement the prayers.[142] Produced at a scriptorium within the Salzburg diocese for Diemud, an abbess of Nonnburg, this manuscript came into the possession of the Admont convent library when nuns from Nonnberg were moved to Admont around 1116–1120, bringing this book along with them as part of their movable goods.[143] Small in size, this book uses miniatures to illustrate

[135] Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "A *Liber Precum* in Sélestat and the Development of the Illustrated Prayer Book in Germany," *The Art Bulletin*, 73 (1991): 209–236; Hamburger, "Before the Book of Hours: The Development of the Illustrated Prayer Book in Germany," in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 149–195.
[136] *Prayerbook*, **Sélestat, Bibliotheque Humaniste, MS 104 (1150)**. Hamburger, "A *Liber Precum,*" 211.
[137] Hamburger, "A *Liber Precum*," 211.
[138] Hamburger, "A *Liber Precum*," 210. "the manuscript provides an early, perhaps the earliest, surviving example of a prayer book of German origin with an extensive cycle of narrative illustrations."
[139] Otto Pächt, "The Illustrations of St. Anselm's Prayers and Meditations," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19 (1956): 68–83.
[140] Anselm, *Prayers and Meditations*, **Admont, MS 289 (1117–1139)**; (Debated dating. Possibly c. 1160 if attributed to the nuns of Traunkirchen). The copy belonging to the nuns of Littlemore in England was not made specifically for their use, but was part of their book collection by the early thirteenth century; **Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D. 2. 6 (1100–1200)**. Pächt, "The Illustrations of St. Anselm," 71. Pächt argues the transmission begins with Matilda's manuscript as exemplar.
[141] Pächt, "The Illustrations of St Anselm," 81.
[142] **Admont, MS 289 (1117–1139)**.
[143] Rachel Fulton, "Praying with Anselm at Admont: A Meditation on Practice," *Speculum* 81 (2006): 706, n. 26.

the subject of the prayers, with banderoles indicating the titles, and neumes for devotional singing.[144] At a number of instances, women are portrayed in the miniatures in a posture of prayer. These elements represent a new way nuns were to read and engage with prayerbooks, as a form of a devotional exercise supplemented by images, which in turn guided the reader in selecting prayers specific to certain occasions and needs. Each of these manuscripts attests to a growing interest in books of prayer independent from the psalter, with illustrations to support the devotion. Feminine forms of Latin, images of women, and attention to female saints provided a way of connecting the reader to the book in a more personal manner.

Additionally, instances of vernacular reading in the convent were often included within manuscripts written primarily in Latin, where some prayers written in the vernacular represent the oldest witness to their creation. For example, a twelfth-century prayerbook which once belonged to Muri Abbey was written in both Latin and German, demonstrating the female reader's implicit or explicit desire to read and pray in her vernacular language.[145] This manuscript includes a Latin *Life of St. Margaret*, prayers in both Latin and German, and the *Mariensequenz aus Muri*, which represents "the oldest known German language version of the Latin sequence model."[146] This prayerbook is small in size, only 90mm x 65mm, indicating use by an individual reader, and since the prayers were addressed to the Virgin, an image of Mary is placed prominently within them. (Fig. 20) The twelfth-century nun using this book may have imagined Mary "listening" to her prayers as she read them in German.

[144] The dimensions are 245 x 170mm.
[145] *Prayerbook*, **Hermetschwil, Benediktinerinnenkloster, Cod. membr 69 (1100–1200)**. See e-codices – Virtual Manuscript Library of Switzerland; http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/bks/membr0069 (accessed 11 December 2017).
[146] Online description from e-codices (see above). Also see Nigel F. Palmer, "The High and Latter Middle Ages (1100–1450)," in *The Cambridge History of German Literature*, ed. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 73. Palmer also points to two other German prayers to the Virgin Mary belonging to women's communities during the twelfth century: the *Mariensequenz aus St. Lambrecht* (**Graz, Universitätsbibliothek Graz, ms. 1501**) from the house of Augustinian canonesses in Sekau, and the *Melker Marienlied* (**Cloister Melk, Ms. 383**) originating in the Rhine region.

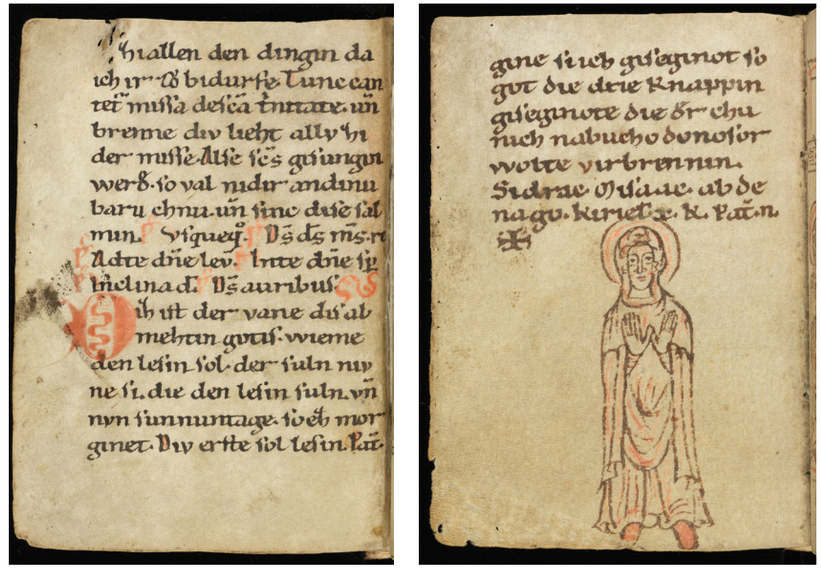

Figure 20: *Muri Prayer Book*, Hermetschwil, Benediktinerinnenkloster, Cod. membr. 69 left: fol. 3v and right: fol. 44v.[147]

A further vernacular German book addressed to nuns is the St *Trudperter Hohes Lied*, a Middle High German prose commentary on the Song of Songs from c. 1170. According to Wolfgang Riehle, the text was composed for Benedictine nuns around the same period as when Aelred of Rievaulx wrote *De institutione inclusarum* in England, a guidebook made specifically for the anchoress or female recluse.[148] The manuscript belonged to the nuns of Admont, possibly made expressly for their community.[149] This tells us that nuns from Admont were capable of reading in German in addition to the numerous Latin manuscripts they owned. Due to its focus on the benefits of religious communal life for women, this guide-book would likely have been part of the daily chapter or refectory reading by nuns.

[147] *Prayer Book*, **Hermetschwil, Benediktinerinnenkloster, Cod. membr. 69 (1100–1200)**. Images from e-codices, http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/bks/membr0069/3v (accessed 8 December 2017).
[148] Wolfgang Riehle, *The Secret Within: Hermits, Recluses, and Spiritual Outsiders in Medieval England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 27 and 309.
[149] Seeberg, "The Manuscripts of the Admont Nuns," 116.

2.3 Guidebooks and Monastic Rules

It should first be mentioned that all of the books discussed above played a role in the pastoral care of women living under a religious order. Each genre addressed in one way or another how a woman was to live a life of monastic prayer. However, when a woman desired to live a life of solitude as a recluse or anchoress, this presented a need for guidance books written specifically for women to read and emulate.[150] Liz McAvoy has discussed how these guidebooks were written with the specific intention of a female reader living under a monastic order, enclosed within a cell.[151] The compositions often took the form of letters addressed to an individual or small group of nuns, yet they were intended for wider reading and often were copied into collections.[152] For example, in the late eleventh century Goscelin of St Bertin wrote the *Liber confortatorius* (1082–1083) for Eve, a nun who had left the abbey at Wilton in England to become a recluse attached to Ronceray Abbey in Angers, France.[153] In the prologue to his work, Goscelin writes to Eve assuming she would have other manuscripts available to read while at Ronceray, accessible to her as an enclosed anchorite. To guide her pastoral care, Goscelin encourages her to read "the Bible and other exegetical works by Jerome, Augustine, Gregory; the Life of St. Anthony and other 'documenta patrum'; Augustine's Confessions and *De civitate Dei*, Eusebius, Orosius, and Boethius."[154] This list of books tells us of the literacy in Latin that Eve had acquired at Wilton, and further suggests there may have been a library with a variety of genres available to the nuns at Ronceray.[155]

A further example of a manuscript meant for the pastoral care of an individual anchoress was Aelred of Rievaulx's *De institutione inclusarum* (c. 1160), mentioned above, possibly written for his sister to read and use as a guide for her life as a recluse.[156] Composed in the form of a letter, it was addressed to an anchoress "who had graduated from the convent to the anchor-house with a good reading knowledge of Latin and long practice in recitation of the Divine Office."[157] Aelred expects an anchoress to spend her day in reading and prayer, reciting the full canonical Hours, and recommending the "Little Office of the Virgin, but only as a supplementary devotion."[158] This advice from Aelred points to the Latin literacy of a female recluse, demonstrating an ability to undertake "extra" reading material in addition to her daily recitation of the Divine Office.

Another twelfth-century guidance text concerned with the spiritual life of nuns is known as the *Speculum virginium*, or Mirror of Virgins, originally written in c. 1140, possibly by a monk of Hirsau.[159] Composed as a dialogue between a nun and her spiritual mentor, the text presents a "model for the interaction between women and men in the religious life."[160] Copies of this manuscript use a combination of text and images, where "the illustrations of the Speculum were integral to the book's message, and the author directed his readers' attention to images on particular pages for greater clarity."[161] Mews argues that the book may have been meant for a monk to "read aloud to religious women rather than to be read silently by women religious."[162] However, an early copy of the Speculum virginum was held at the Augustinian abbey of St Mary at Andernach, read by the canonesses under the guidance of their magistra Tenxwind.[163] (Fig. 21)

[150] Mari Hughes-Edwards, "'How Good Is It to Be Alone?' Solitude, Sociability, and Medieval English Anchoritism," *Mystics Quarterly* 35, (2009): 31–61.
[151] Liz Herbert McAvoy, *Medieval Anchoritisms: Gender, Space and the Solitary Life* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), 6–7, and 91.
[152] "Introduction," *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*, trans. Vera Morton, essay Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 1.
[153] *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius*, eds. Stephanie Hollis and William Reginald Barnes (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 97–207. The connections between Goscelin and Wilton nuns are discussed above. The only surviving copy of Goscelin's work: Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber confortatorius*, **London, British Library, Sloane 3103 (1100–1150)**. "There is no evidence Eve received his letter," see McAvoy, *Medieval Anchoritisms*, 87 no. 50.
[154] Joan M. Ferrante, *To the Glory of Her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 79.
[155] "The Ronceray cartulary is highly unusual, existing in several rolls (rather than in codices) drawn up by the nuns in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries." See Kathryn Dutton, "Angevin Comital Children," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXII Proceedings from the Battle Conference 2009*, ed. C. P. Lewis (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 29 n. 37.
[156] Mari Hughes-Edwards, *Reading Medieval Anchoritism: Ideology and Spiritual Practices* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), 20.
[157] Bella Millett, "Ancrene Wisse and the Book of Hours," in *Writing Religious Women: Female Spiritual and Textual Practices in Late Medieval England* eds. Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 21–42.
[158] Millett, "Ancrene Wisse," 21.
[159] Fiona Griffiths, *Garden of Delights*, 4. Elizabeth Bailey, "Judith, Jael, and *Humilitas* in the *Speculum Virginum*," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies Across the Disciplines*, eds. Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010), 275. Also, Constant J. Mews, "Virginity, Theology, and Pedagogy in the Speculum virginum," in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 18–20.
[160] Bailey, "Judith, Jael, and *Humilitas*," 277.
[161] *Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index* (The University of Iowa Libraries, 2014), "Description: Ladder of Virtue," https://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/DetailsPage.aspx?Feminae_ID=31297 (accessed 11 November 2017).
[162] Mews, "Virginity, Theology, and Pedagogy," 21.
[163] **Cologne, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, W. 276a (c. 1150)**. Jutta Seyfarth, trans. Janice M. Pinder, "The *Speculum Virginum*: The Testimony of the Manuscripts," in *Listen, Daughter: The Speculum Virginum and the Formation of Religious Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Constant J. Mews (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 41. Tenxwind sent a letter (c. 1150) to Hildegard of Bingen criticizing the ways the nuns of Bingen were dressed; see Carolyn Muessig, "Learning and Mentoring in the Twelfth Century: Hildegard of Bingen and Herrad of Landsberg," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 91–92.

Figure 21: *Speculum virginum*, Ladder of Virtues. Köln, Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln, W 276a (1150), fol. 78v.

Guidebooks such as Goscelin's *Liber confortatorius* or Aelred's *Institutione inclusarium* were "addressed on the surface" to a single female reader enclosed away from the world, yet scholars have argued that these guidance books were written with the hope that they would eventually be read by a wider audience.[164] Similarly, the *Speculum virginum* was intended for an individual female reader, with a focus on the illustrations to guide spiritual prayer, yet spread to other reading audiences, including monks and clerics.[165] However, we cannot

[164] Mari Hughes-Edwards, *Reading Medieval Anchoritism: Ideology and Spiritual Practices* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), 20.
[165] Seyfarth, "The *Speculum Virginum*," 44–48.

ignore the initial drive behind the production of these manuscripts, envisioned as a solitary "scene of reading" of an enclosed nun alone with only her books available for spiritual guidance. In these cases of guides for an anchoress, the books function as a "model for developing and transforming the self."[166] In contrast, monastic rules were meant to guide the needs of a community. As discussed in chapter one, the structure of daily life was laid out by the rule adopted by the monastery. Yet, monastic rules did not usually address the needs of a female community. For example, Heloise requested that Abelard "suggest how the Benedictine Rule might be adapted to women's lives in the convent."[167] Abelard's response likely became part of the Paraclete's library, read possibly during chapter meetings or meals, and which could be consulted if questions arose.[168]

3. CONCLUSION

Addressing the challenge posed by Kelly discussed in the introduction of this study, "Did women have a renaissance," in this chapter I have shown that nuns were active in acquiring manuscripts, using their socio-economic position combined with a status as a pious reader to commission books they found valuable for their spiritual guidance. The manuscript evidence reveals that women in monastic communities across orders needed books for the Divine Office, the components of the liturgy, education, and periods of communal or private reading. Additionally, women in a convent milieu displayed an interest in contemporary authors, such as Hugh of St Victor and Honorius of Autun, indicating a desire to read new texts and discover new thinking. The examples demonstrate that twelfth-century women living within the convent were educated readers in Latin and vernacular, requesting books that spoke to their concerns of piety, history, and literacy, attesting to their engagement in the "Twelfth Century Renaissance."

[166] Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*, 41.
[167] Terence P. McLaughlin, "Abelard's Rule for Religious Women," *Mediaeval Studies* 18 (1956): 241–292. John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 75. Letter 8, Rule for the Paraclete, **Troyes, Bibliotheque Municipale, MS 802, (1250–1300) fol. 89r–90v**.
[168] Anne Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers*, 36.