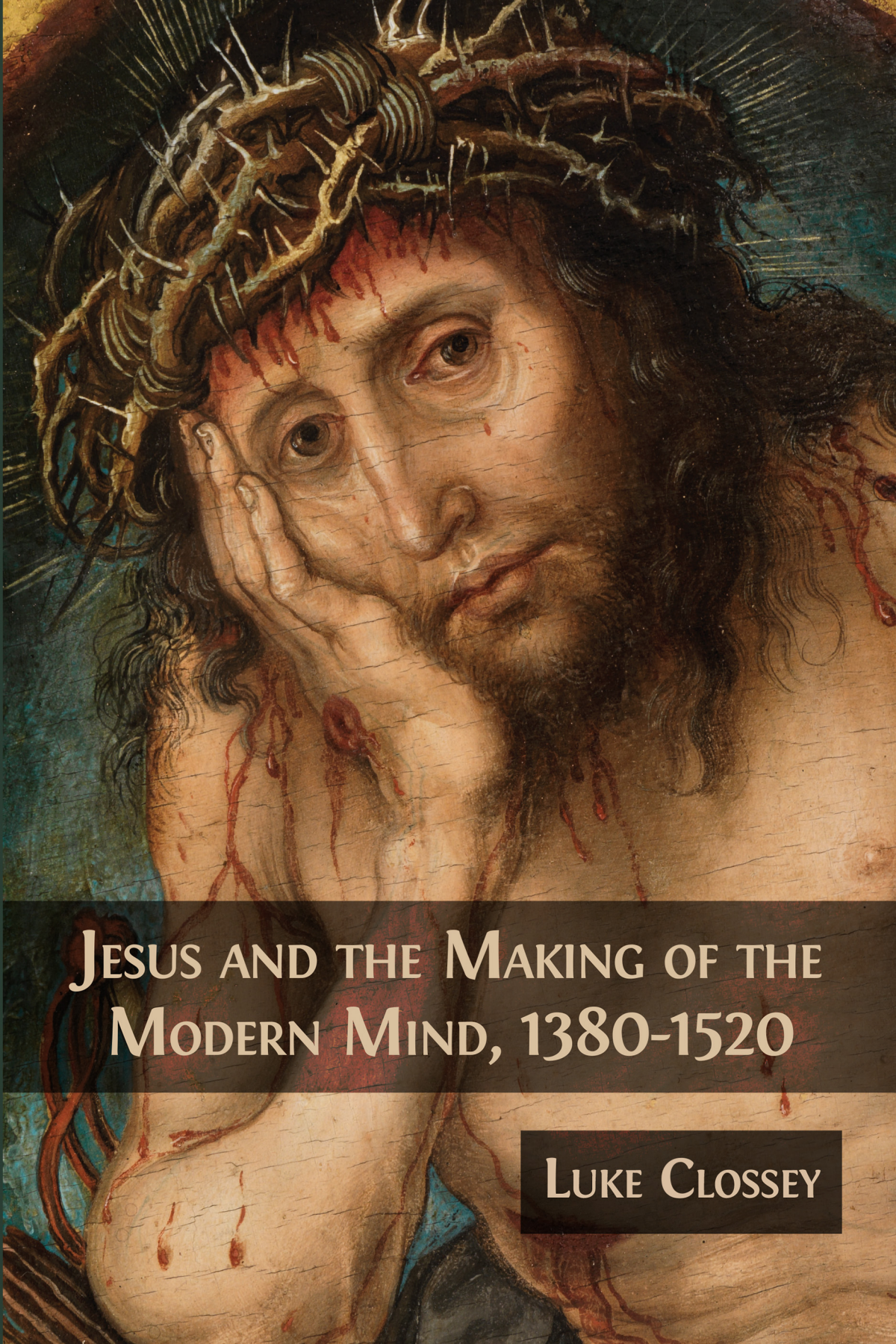

Jesus and the Making of the Modern Mind, 1380-1520

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20. Intimacy with Jesus

The late-fourteenth-century poem "Christus und die minnende Seele" [Christ and the Loving Soul] describes an intimate, savage relationship between the two title personages. The Soul, saying her bedtime prayers, reveals that she is considering a worldly opportunity, presumably a human husband. Jesus soon arrives to wake her up, to explain that he would make a much better husband: "I mean to bend you over here and beat you on your back, from which you'll hesitate to defend yourself… I can do what I want." Jesus uses consecrated wine as a love-potion to excite the Soul. He cripples and blinds her, as it is better to "come blind into heaven than painfully into hell with two eyes." He strips her, to help her break her addiction to social esteem. She complains that without clothes she cannot attend church, but he repeatedly warns her against going: "Don't go to the chapel, so you can stay home and sit at the oven, on the stone" floor. In despair, she retorts, that if she "should have to go naked," she would rather hang herself. Jesus silences her, saying "That might well happen to you," and then hangs her. Even within the poem there is some sense that Jesus is behaving badly. He justifies his actions, meeting her objections with the reminder that she herself had said she wanted to be hung. He also defends his blinding her, which he did so that she "would not forget him."[1]

A number of images illustrate versions of the poem, some depicting Jesus bearing the cross, linked by a rope to the Soul (personified as a woman), following him while bearing her own cross. In one example the woman wears a red mantel, suggesting a worldly orientation (see Fig. 20.1). In another, a devil is whispering into her ear.

1 Romuald Banz, ed., *Christus und die Minnende Seele: Untersuchungen und Texte* (Breslau: Marcus, 1908), 284, 288, 291, 304–05. See Rabia Gregory, "Marrying Jesus: Brides and the Bridegroom in Medieval Women's Religious Literature" (PhD thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007), 164–76; Rabia Gregory, *Marrying Jesus in Medieval and Early Modern Northern Europe: Popular Culture and Religious Reform* (London: Routledge, 2016), 51–59, 85–100.

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Fig. 20.1 *Kreuztragende Minne* (ca. 1490), Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 710(322), fol. 1r, Wikimedia, public domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Einsiedeln_Stiftsbibliothek_Codex_710_(322)_1r.jpg

The ease with which historians can read these relationships as abusive, in such human terms, suggests their inclination towards the plain ken. Recently, scholars have suggested this dialogue is "compassionate and humorous"[2] with a "delicate irony and a thoroughly loving tone,"[3] but it is also possible to read the poem in a fifteenth-century voice filled with deadly urgency to submit to Jesus.

This particular marriage lived in a poem, but similar Jesus-relationships took place in reality. The previous chapter presented actors, kings, and religious enthusiasts who resembled Jesus either in their own behaviour or in later accounts of their lives. This chapter shifts to three groups of Jesus cultists who chose intimacy over imitation, making use of both kens to achieve kinds of closeness that could become domestic and even sexual. We begin with a group of female mystics, from England to Ethiopia, who cultivated extraordinary relationships with Jesus. Second, the Modern Devout are considered, who lived in regulated communities, sometimes involving spiritual nudity and marriage alongside more modest activities like yarn-spinning and prayer. Finally, we examine Hafiz of Shiraz (1325–90) and other Muslim poets, who spun lyrics celebrating comely boys bearing stupor-inducing wine and life-giving Jesus-breath.

2 Elina Gertsman, "Wandering Wounds: The Urban Body in *Imitatio Christi*," in *Wounds and Repair*, ed. Tracy and DeVries, 340–66 (343), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004306455_017

3 Peter Parshall and Rainer Schoch, *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and their Public* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2005), 280 (cat. 87).

Mystics

Through combining the two kens, mystics could have a direct and powerful experience of intimacy with Jesus, who was effectively brought into their fifteenth-century lives. The route to bridge the past was made possible by meditation handbooks, a flourishing genre in our period. These focused on the narrative of Jesus's life story, and approached it analytically, by breaking it down into its constituent parts. They urged readers to exclude external sensory inputs, and instead to cultivate an emotional engagement with Jesus's life.[4]

Ludolph of Saxony (ca. 1295–1378) wrote a *Life of Christ* that coupled a narrative with extensive commentary to help readers project themselves into temporal Biblical history. This was an older technology that Ludolph helped popularize. Indeed, his work was based on a life of Jesus by the Italian mendicant Michael of Massa (d. 1337), which in turn had been based on that of Pseudo-Bonaventure (see Chapter 4). Ludolph cultivated a devotion both interior and corporal, "by stretching the hands or the eyes to the cross," with genuflections and, if useful, self-flagellation. He advised the reader to remove "all other cares and concerns" and then cultivate "all your mental emotion, diligently, delightfully." Then the time travel began. You should "render yourself present" to Jesus's life, and engage with the scenes "as if you hear with your own ears and saw with your own eyes." Despite these being historical, you must "meditate upon all these as if they were in the present." As a result of this process, you would experience Jesus's actions as "savory and delicious." When describing the Mocking, for example, Ludolph asked, "What, then, would you do if you saw this? Would you not throw yourself on the Lord, saying, 'Stop already! Do not go such evil to my Lord. Here I am—do it to me'" instead. Then when you weep, "you can use those tears to rinse the spit off Jesus's face."[5] Ludolph's *Life* was long influential. Queen Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504) was keen on meditation on the *Life*, and especially the Passion, and in 1493 was impatient to see it translated into Spanish.[6]

A later work in the Ludolph tradition was the *Giardino de oratione fructuoso* [Garden of Fruitful Prayer]. It proved popular and was repeatedly reprinted for over a century. The intent was, again, to help readers meditate on the life and virtues of Jesus. The author invited readers to hold Jesus's life in their memories,

4 Richard C. Trexler, "Gendering Jesus Crucified," in *Iconography at the Crossroads*, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1993), 107–20.

5 Ludolphus de Saxonia, *Vita Jesu Christi*, ed. L. M. Rigollot, 4 vols. (Paris: Palmé, 1878), I, 7; IV, 4, 44–45 (part 2.2, ch. 60).

6 Peggy K. Liss, *Isabel the Queen* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 313.

as if it were the paternoster. He emphasized the importance of familiarity with the entirety of Jesus's earthly life, from Nativity to Ascension, for all thirty-three years, "all his acts, and customs, and virtues." You could then create consonance between your present life and Jesus's historical life: "It will be useful to you to for model in your mind [*formarti nella mente*] the places, grounds, and rooms where he conversed, and the people who were individually in his company," like Mary and the twelve apostles. By meditating "slowly, ruminating on each particular thing" you would be able to "fall in love more warmly" with Jesus.[7]

The tactics developed by such texts, put into practice, created connections of intimacy that recognized and transcended historical distance. At the Diepenveen convent near Deventer, Salome van den Wiel taught Alijt Comhaer (d. 1452) how to engineer good dreams by showing her, as she fell asleep, how "to lie on the breast of our dear lord to suckle his bottomless love and kindness." The technique was successful, and the nun had a "sweet dream" as a result.[8]

In addition to the verbal imagery of such suffering, images were used to help people cultivate mindfulness of Jesus's life in preparation for becoming closer to it. The Franciscan preacher Stephan Fridolin (d. 1498) developed a set of antipodal images, pairing triumphal and abased scenes from Jesus's life, into a seven-hundred-page devotional text, the *Schatzbehalter* [Treasury]. This was published in 1491, with woodcut illustrations from the workshop of Wolgemut and Pleydenwurff.[9] One pair of illustrations mapped one hundred discrete points, corresponding to moments from Jesus's life, onto a pair of hands, a handy device for memorizing them. Another woodcut shows the left hand with Jesus and Mary on the thumb, and the twelve disciples divided up among the four fingers (see Fig. 20.2).[10] Another manuscript includes meditations on the life of Jesus, for mnemonic purposes each linked to a different part of Jesus's body, illustrated on a image of the Crucifixion.[11]

7 Nicolaus da Osimo, *Giardino de oratione fructuoso* (Venice: Simone Bevilacqua, c. 1496), 59v–60r, 69r.

8 D. A. Brinkerink, ed., *Van den doechden der vuriger ende stichtiger susteren van Diepen Veen* (Groningen: Wolters, 1904), 275.

9 Stephan Fridolin, *Schatzbehalter* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1491). See Almut Breitenbach and Stefan Matter, "Image, Text, and Mind: Franciscan Tertiaries Rewriting Stephan Fridolin's *Schatzbehalter* in the Pütrichkloster in Munich," in *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue*, ed. Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 297–316. Some exemplars are at "F-263" (12 June 2019), *Bayerische StaatsBibliothek*, https://inkunabeln.digitale-sammlungen.de/Ausgabe_F-263.html

10 A similar illustration is in *Origins of European Printmaking*, ed. Parshall and Schoch, 292–95 (no. 92).

11 BSB Clm 4425, fol. 165r. The text explains that the twenty visualized wounds represent the full 5,455 wounds revealed to Bridget. See David S. Areford, *The*

Fig. 20.2 *Left and Right Hands*, *Schatzbehalter*, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, CC0 1.0, https://art.thewalters.org/detail/13698/schatzbehalter-der-wahren-reichtumer-des-heils/

A number of enthusiasts were nuns in the reformed Schönensteinback convent near Wittenheim in Alsace. Bedridden with illness, Clara of Ostren (d. 1447) re-envisioned her room into the Bethlehem stable where Jesus was born. She "placed" Jesus and his parents in one corner, recognized the door as leading to the shepherds, and the three windows as roads for the three Magi. Hearing a commotion beyond the windows, a caregiver asked the nun what she thought the noise was. Clara answered in first-century terms: "The lords from the Orient have received a message from the angel that they must not return to Herod. They are going straight home." Sister Margaretha's (d. 1442) last words were an excited "Jesus is here! Jesus is here!"[12]

Sometimes, a more deep-ken approach endured, but even that was deeply enmeshed in daily life. At Schönensteinback, Clara assigned spiritual meanings to various articles of clothing (see Table 20.1). These pairings were carefully chosen to link each article with a consonant object from the Passion, and her

Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe (Farnham: Asghate, 2010), 88–91. This text has flip-over woodcuts of the Nativity attached at 156v, and the woodcut facing 156r uses the alphabet to key wounds on a Crucifixion to meditations on the text.

12 Johannes Meyer, *Women's History in the Age of Reformation: Johannes Meyer's Chronicle of the Dominican Observance*, trans. Claire Taylor Jones (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2019), 104–05, 128–29.

purpose was to fill the nuns' lives with reminders of Jesus's life, and thus "to orient their lives around virtue and devotion."[13]

CLOTHING ITEM	CORRESPONDING ASPECT OF JESUS'S PASSION
wimple	blindfold
first veil	loincloth that Mary gave Jesus at the Crucifixion
over-veil (*peffe*)	crown of thorns
second veil	tombstone
under-tunic	white robe Herod gave Jesus
belt	rope tying Jesus to column
scapular	cloth wrapping Jesus's corpse before burial
cappa	burial shroud

Table 20.1 Clara of Ostren's Clothing Interpretation.

Similarly, another nun named Margareta (d. 1428) understood her illness, with a deep ken, as being infused with meaning: when God wanted "to take his dear child from this world, he wanted to prepare her well and gave her a difficult illness," with symptoms including a stinking gangrenous leg. Still, the ultimate purpose was a psychological transformation occurring in this life. If a nurse's mishandling of her leg caused her to yelp, Margareta would denounce herself, "you poor sinner and evil-smelling sack! Why are you not thinking about the miserable hanging of our dear Lord Jesus Christ on three nails on the holy cross without any comfort?"[14]

These mystic women shared and intensified the interest in Jesus's suffering, especially that from his Passion. In particular, the saintly sought pain.[15] Julian of Norwich (d. after 1416), who longed for "God's gift" of a nearly fatal "bodily sickness," had visions of the Passion only after becoming sick and paralyzed from the waist down.[16] Catherine of Siena's (1347–80) "stigmata" was internal pains. Camilla Battista da Varano (1458–1524) was physically ill and depressed. Dorothea of Montau (1347–94) nailed herself to the walls to consonate Jesus's

13 Ibid., 102–03.
14 Ibid., 172–73.
15 See Esther Cohen, *The Modulated Scream: Pain in Late Medieval Culture* (Chicago, IL: Chicago UP, 2009).
16 Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Elizabeth Spearing (London: Penguin, 1998), 4–5, 43–44.

death. For these women, even sickness became a positive good, a sign of consonance with the divine. A greater suffering, however, occurred in marriage.

Jesus Marriages

A number of female mystics from this period understood themselves to be, in various ways, married to Jesus. During the century centred on 1400, most, but not all, European women claiming direct communications from God were laywomen. The lay element had been slowly developing over the last couple centuries, with increasingly frequent visions of Christ. Catherine of Siena had married Jesus using his foreskin as a wedding ring. Others included Constance of Rabastens (d. ca. 1385), Marie Robine (d. 1399), Jeanne-Marie of Maille (1331 Jeanne-Marie of Maille 1414), and the nun Chiara Gambacorta of Pisa (d. ca. 1419).[17]

None of these brides married in a vacuum: they drew on previous experience, and influenced each other. Margery Kempe (ca. 1373–1438) found inspiration in Dorothea of Montau, who in turn found inspiration in Bridget of Sweden (ca. 1303–73).[18] Hearing sermons from Observant Franciscans influenced Camilla Battista da Varano as a child. Nevertheless, each of these women negotiated a very individual relationship with Jesus, just as in a real marriage. Many were not virgins, and some took Jesus as a second husband, which created space for complications and idiosyncrasies beyond those of monogamous human–human marriages today.[19]

Some preachers pointedly contrasted a Jesus husband with a more mundane one. For example, Jan Hus (ca. 1370–1415) described Jesus as an ideal husband, a description revealing his expectations of what young women sought in a spouse: "He does not defile, violate, or trouble his wives, does not grow old, never becomes faithless to them, nor can He grow old and faithless to them."

17 Catherine of Siena, *Il dialogo di S. Caterina da Siena*, ed. Girolamo Gigli (Rome: Monte Citorio, 1866), 314–15. See Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP 1993), 375; Ann M. Roberts, "Chaira Gambacorta of Pisa as Patroness of the Arts," in *Creative Women in Medieval and Early Modern Italy*, ed. E. Ann Matter and John W. Coakley (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 120–54; Claire L. Sahlin, *Birgitta of Sweden and the Voice of Prophecy* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 20; André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 205–15, 221–25, 258–61, 328–29.

18 Ute Stargardt, "The Influences of Dorothea von Montau on the Mysticism of Margery Kempe" (PhD thesis, University of Tennessee, 1981).

19 See Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, 132–94, 253–54; Gregory, *Marrying*, 145–67, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315594040

Wives should not be tempted from the ideal to a lesser husband, for "if he is good-looking, you will fear that he would go after another; if he is ugly, there is distress; if he is a drunkard, irascible, or otherwise evilly disposed, there is hell enough." Futhermore, "if he sires a child, there is suffering in pregnancy, in the birth, and the upbringing; if there is no issue, it brings disgrace, sorrow, and useless cohabitation. If a child is born, you will worry about it being still-born or somehow deformed"—presumably a catalogue of young women's fears.[20]

The ca. 1400 treatise *Von Ihesus pettlein* [On the Little Bed of Jesus] led its female-monastic readers through one of the more conservative descriptions of spiritual marriage. The bride describes her heart as "a pig's sty, full of filth," and is surprised that Jesus wants to be born there, echoing his birth in a manger. Jesus will create a chamber in that heart, and the bride will renovate it with a fresh coat of paint, featuring one wall with Jesus's coat of arms, and another with erotica: Christ "lays himself down on [the soul's] breast and there he kisses her." Jesus has prepared a bridal bed for you, but one only wide enough for one person, so you will be sharing a tight and intimate space with him. At the Eucharist, the bride is reminded that Jesus "desires" her even more than she does him, and is advised to "imagine the Lord to yourself as he was naked before the cross, when he had disrobed for your sake, so that he might rest beside you naked and without anything between you."[21]

The cases of individual women deviate significantly from this baseline. Camilla Battista da Varano was the daughter of Giulio Cesare da Varano (1434–1502), the Lord of Camerino, who bought a Poor Clares monastery for her there. Even as a teenager, Battista did Friday meditations on the Passion, with asceticism and attempts to squeeze out a single tear for Jesus. Beyond Franciscan sermons, Battista learned her mysticism through songs and through direct instruction by Jesus himself, for at age twenty-one she began having conversations with him.[22]

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20 John Hus, *Letters*, trans. Matthew Spinka (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1972), 20–21.

21 "Von Ihesus pettlein," in Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone, 1998), 395–98, 412, 419–24 (his translation).

22 Camilla Battista da Varano, *La vita spirituale*, in *Le opere spirituali*, ed. Giacomo Boccanera (Iesi: Scuola Tipografia Francescana, 1958), 10–12. See Giuseppe Capriotti, "Visions, Mental Images, Real Pictures: The Mystical Experience and the Artistic Patronage of Sister Battista da Varano," *Ikon* 6 (2013): 213–24, https://doi.org/10.1484/J.IKON.5.102950; William V. Hudon, "'In The End, God Helped Me Defeat Myself': Autobiographical Writings by Camilla Battista da Varano," *Religions* 9 (2018): n.p., https://doi.org/10.3390/rel9030065; Paul Lachance, "Battista da Varano (1458–1524): A Survey of Her Life and Writing as a Poor Clare Visionary," *Mystics Quarterly* 20 (1994): 19–25.

Battista explained her general practice: "We need first to make the mental effort to evoke in our mind the places of the Passion, how it's the garden, the palace, Mount Calvary and so on, otherwise imagine them as the place you are in now." She thus trained to "conform" to Jesus by sensing him with her eyes and ears, those of her body and those of her mind, and maintaining mindfulness of him. Once Battista and another nun began singing as they were sewing and spinning. The song's lyrics treated Jesus's Passion, and systematically asked the hearer to observe each part of his body: "look at those hands... look at those feet... look at that hip..." The "vision" also had an auditory dimension, for Battista could hear the wailing of Mary Magdalene and John. The visual exercise and the harmony of sound triggered an ecstatic vision in which Battista's "soul then was enraptured." Her goal was to leave "the prison of my body to be with Christ."[23]

Battista's visions of Jesus were physical, occurring in her own spacetime. She appreciated Jesus's attractive beauty: "blonde abundant hair" that "looked so good over those large, well-proportioned shoulders; the white robes gave a glimpse of the body, which was a wonderful thing." The feelings were reciprocated: Jesus inscribed "ego te diligo Camillam" [I love you Camilla] on his own heart. She also specified the spatial relation between her soul and Jesus. Angels would haul her soul up to Jesus's feet, or she herself would bend down to those feet "like a new Mary Magdalene."[24]

Battista and Jesus had a human relationship, with human disagreement and exasperation. When Herod Antipas questioned Jesus during the Passion, Jesus remained silent (Lk 23:9). Battista, standing nearby, became frustrated by her husband's refusal to answer: "It seems that you yourself wish to die," she said, adding, "excuse me, my Blessed Lord, but I do not understand you." On another occasion, Battista felt a desire to see her husband's face. Jesus entered her soul, and before leaving offered to fulfill this desire: "If you want to see me," he told her, "look at me." She readily looked, but he had turned, so she saw him only from behind, "like a person, when parting from another turns his back and leaves." She described the partial sight, occurring under the constraints of spacetime: "When I saw him first he was over six steps away from me and was walking down a long hall. At the end of the hall there was a small door, like a room's door. I kept seeing him until he lowered his head to pass through the door; and then I couldn't see him, the door or even the hall any longer." Jesus's showing his back when she wanted to see his front was typical of their

23 Camilla Battista da Varano, *Considerazioni sulla passione di Nostro Signore*, in *Le Opere*, 305–08, 332; Battista da Varano, *La vita*, 44, 55.

24 Battista da Varano, *La vita*, 7, 34, 39.

relationship. As Battista complained, "This Jesus always does the opposite of what I want!" Still, he could also be kind. As proof ("a clear sign") that he had been in her soul, Jesus gave Battista three lilies, which symbolized aversion to the world, humility, and the desire to suffer.[25]

The situation of Margery Kempe was more complicated, as she was not a nun, but a married woman. The complications centred around her husband's sex life. Sometimes she, though uninterested herself, acquiesced to his demands, and John "used her as he had done before" and "would not desist." John's frustration loaded a hypothetical question he asked Margery during a walk: "If there came a man with a sword who would strike off my head unless I made love with you as I used to do before, tell me on your conscience—for you say you will not lie—whether you would allow my head to be cut off, or else allow me to make love with you again, as I did at one time?" He asked that they sleep together "in one bed as we have done before," that she pay off his debts, and that she eat with him on Fridays instead of fasting. The subsequent negotiations were fruitless: "No sir," she refused, "I will never agree to break my Friday fast as long as I live." "Well," he retorted, "then I'm going to have sex with you again…" Eventually Jesus intervened, telling her that "I proceed like a husband who would wed a wife," which means, he explained, that he had confidence in her and "they may go to bed together without any shame," for even the greatest lord married to the poorest woman "must lie together." Therefore she should "boldly, when you are in bed, take me to you as your wedded husband" and "boldly take me in the arms of your soul and kiss my mouth, my head, and my feet as sweetly as you want."[26]

Public perception and human psychology played important roles here. Their married state required "familiarity," and so Jesus declared that "I would not be ashamed of you, as many other people are" (presumably a reference to her other husband John) and thus could proudly "take you by the hand amongst the people and greet you warmly, so that they would certainly know [schuldyn wel knowyn] that I loved you dearly." Margery wore a wedding ring engraved with "Jhesus est amor meus" [Jesus is my love]. Jesus also understood himself to have rescued Margery from her husband's sexual demands: "You have your will in the matter of chastity as if you were a widow, although your husband is still living." This, Jesus explained, was one of many reasons why she should love him. The situation became more complicated when Jesus urged Margery to marry the Godhead, as "I shall show you my secrets and my counsels, for

25 Ibid., 10, 30–34, 38.

26 Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B. A. Windeatt (London: Penguin, 1985), 47, 58–60, 126–27, 254. See Rabia Gregory, "Marrying," 111–19; Gregory, *Marrying*, 147–65.

you shall live with me without end." Margery's response to this new marriage proposal, or brokering, was to weep "amazingly much," as she understood it as incompatible with her current marriage to Jesus. Since "all her love and affection were fixed on the manhood of Christ," Margery "would not be parted from that for anything."[27]

This fascination with Jesus and his manhood heightened when she completed her pilgrimage to Rome. There she saw a woman breastfeeding her son, which caused her to weep, "as though she had seen our Lady and her son at the time of his Passion," to the confusion of the mother. This was part of a general pattern of behavior when she was in Rome. She would accost women carrying children in the street, to determine the sex of those children. On the discovery of a boy, she would "cry, roar and weep as if she had seen Christ in his childhood," and try to seize and kiss the child. Similarly, seeing an attractive man she would "weep and sob bitterly," as if seeing Jesus, for "she had so much feeling for the manhood of Christ."[28] Was this a deep-ken search for resemblances, or a plain-ken bridging by which she mentally entered the first century?

Like Margery, Dorothea of Montau was already married, and her second marriage to Jesus involved a mental and physical self-abnegation that paralleled the abuse she suffered at the hands of her first husband, Adalbert. At the age of seven, a number resonant in the deep ken, Dorothea experienced pain, like that of severe burns, over her body, followed by the pleasure of God's "comforting presence." This began a complex life-long relationship with pleasure and pain. Four years later she began self-harming, especially self-burning; at age ten, she burned her feet so badly that "she had to sit in a dunghill and cover the burn with dung to draw out the pain." She prepared herself for a dance by stabbing her feet, so that the rhythmic motion would pool blood in her shoes. Even as she grew up and married, she continued to beat herself with "rods, whips, thistles, thorny branches, and with hard, knotty, barbed scourges," and with "nettles, hard, coarse broom twigs and jagged nutshells, stinging herbs," mostly on her "shoulders, arms, hips, sides, loins, knees, calves and feet," so that "these individual wounds looked like one single big wound and her body resembled a plowed field."[29]

27 Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, 114, 122–26, 200. Equally fascinating is John's relationship with Jesus, who treats him better than Margery does. For example, when John, pantless, seriously injures himself by falling down the stairs, it is Jesus who urges Margery to take care of him. See Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, 219–21.

28 Ibid., 123, 131.

29 Johannes von Marienwerder, *The Life of Dorothea von Montau, a Fourteenth-century Recluse*, trans. Ute Stargardt (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1997), 44–49. See Albrecht Classen, "Wounding the Body and Freeing the Spirit: Dorothea von Montau's Bloody Quest for Christ, a Late-Medieval Phenomenon of the

Jesus's Passion authorized and recommended this violent asceticism. Dorothea was specifically motivated by a love of God, a desire to feel the Crucifixion, and a hope that "God would increase her suffering and its rewards." When she rested from her labour, Jesus "seemed to manifest himself to her by driving her with blows." One Easter, her wounds miraculously opened up and "bled so profusely as though they were being formed anew." Sometimes, Jesus would become even more directly involved: once, as she was falling asleep, Jesus himself began injuring her "on her shoulders, arms, chest and back; on her shoulder blades, sides, calves, and knees," faster than she could count, so that the wounds could serve as "symbols of their inseparable love"[30]—a plain-ken Jesus enabling a deep-ken understanding.

Dorothea's relationship with Jesus interfered with her relationship with Adalbert. Bliss distracted her from shopping; she had to cook without supplies, and in one instance she served her husband a bread purée with a side of bread. Her husband gave her an ultimatum: "If you don't cease your wandering about and see to the care of your household with greater effort than you have done so far, I shall tame you with shackles and chains." The threat was not rhetorical, and he locked her up for three days. He beat her for too slowly cooking fish, so severely that "her mouth was swelled shut hideously, which disfigured her greatly." She would respond with an affectionate smile, or with the "spiritual shield of patience," which her husband read as defiance and raged into further abuse.[31]

The timing is unclear, but it seems that Dorothea married Jesus while still married to Adalbert. She found herself caught between the demands of each. Sometimes, Jesus advised her to yield to her other husband: "Tear yourself away at once from my loving words and be obedient to your husband's commands!" Later, Jesus credited himself with rescuing her: "You may well love me dearly,

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Extraordinary Kind," in *Wounds and Wound Repair in Medieval Culture*, ed. Larissa Tracy and Kelly DeVries (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 417–47 (417), https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004306455_020; Sieglinde Hartmann, "Bridal Mysticism and the Politics of the Anchorhold: Dorothy of Montau," in *Anchoritism in the Middle Ages*, ed. Catherine Innes-Parker and Naoe Kukita Yoshikawa (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), 101–13; Michelle M. Sauer, "Violence, Isolation, and Anchoritic Preparation: Dorothy of Montau, Anchoress of Marienwerder," *Magistra* 21 (2015): 132–50; Almut Suerbaum, "'O wie gar wundirbar ist dis wibes sterke!': Discourses of Sex, Gender, and Desire in Johannes Marienwerder's Life of Dorothea von Montau," *Oxford German Studies*, 39 (2010): 181–97, https://doi.org/10.1179/007871910x12778178067968; Max Töppen, ed., *Das Leben der heiligen Dorothea von Johannes Marienwerder*, Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, 2 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1863).

30 Von Marienwerder, *Life of Dorothea*, 47–49, 53, 63.

31 Ibid., 66, 95, 100–01.

for I dragged you away from your husband. When he was still alive and believed that he possessed you, I would drag you away and take possession of you."[32]

Thus, Jesus became Dorothea's "mighty lover" who "embraced and kissed her soul." "As a bridegroom would treat his beloved bride," Jesus cut up her food and fed her, while he "whispered sweetly." In another instance, Jesus served himself to her as a banquet of "heavenly sweetness." She "experienced severe longing and desire" for Jesus's body, which she could consume as the consecrated host. She would get "spiritually drunk" with Jesus during mass, so drunk that she could not leave the chapel unassisted. During one mass, Jesus removed her heart, and "shoved into her" a new "extremely hot piece of flesh" that caused her joyous rapture. This intimacy eventually resulted in a "spiritual pregnancy during which the Lord gave birth to himself in her soul." Her womb swelled, "as if it were ready to burst," she experienced labour pains, and she could feel Jesus within her "kicking merrily."[33]

When Adalbert died, Dorothea moved into the Marienwerder convent so that she could live with her remaining husband. Her confessor there recorded and publicized her story. In 1393, she had herself walled into an austere cell. Her intent was to subsist by eating only consecrated hosts, the body of her remaining husband that she had long lusted for, but Jesus insisted she accept one additional meal daily. She died the following year. We can give Jesus the last word here, to explain their relationship: "It was my will," he told her, "that the foundation of your true, constant patience be tempted, tested and made manifest." As a result, he praised her for demonstrating that "you loved poverty and misery for my sake and in accordance with my will were happy to be deprived of all transitory things all the days of your life."[34]

The marital relationship between Katharina Tucher and Jesus was much less violent and less plain ken, but had a strangeness that suggests the deep ken. It also included a strained relationship with her mother-in-law, Mary. Katharina was well educated—she translated the Gospel of John into her own German dialect—and married, but she became a widow before 1420, when she was about thirty. Around 1433, she entered the cloister of St. Katharina's at Nuremburg, perhaps not as a nun. In one instance, Jesus made her strip, and then criticized her "unclean" appearance, but agreed to make her beautiful by dressing her in luxurious garments. He "imprinted" her with his crown of thorns, but then also armed her with a spear. He comforted and cuddled with her. Ultimately, they

32 Ibid., 102–05. See *Das Leben der heiligen Dorothea von Johannes Marienwerder*, ed. Max Töppen (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1863), 249–51.

33 Von Marienwerder, *Life of Dorothea*, 77–79, 103, 163, 233, 238 (4.4). See Töppen, ed., *Das Leben*, 250.

34 Von Marienwerder, *Life of Dorothea*, 102, 123, 169. See Töppen, ed., *Das Leben*, 266.

resolved their conflict not through physical violence but through a game of dice with deep-ken significance. In the final round, she, or rather her soul, rolled a three, but he "defeated" her by rolling a five. He then explained that the three pips "are" the cross, and the five his wounds. Jesus seemed closer to his mother Mary than to his wife. Jesus ordered Katharina, as she was holding, and perhaps kissing, a crucifix, "You should not kiss me on my mouth. You are not worthy of it; my mother alone is." When Jesus became upset by the possibility of Katharina taking a second, fully human husband, Mary intervened to scold her daughter-in-law: "As often as you think to take another husband, just that often have you done a great sin against me."[35]

As a contrasting illustration, we might turn to a very different kind of relationship, that between Jesus and the fifteenth-century Ethiopian noblewoman Kristos Samra ክርስቶስ ሠምራ, whose name means "Christ Delights in Her." Her father-in-law, Iyäsus Moa ኢያሱስ ሞኣ [Christ has vanquished] was a priest to the Emperor of Ethiopia. At around age forty, in a fit or rage, she pushed a burning stick down the throat of a servant, killing her, and when sober promised to become a nun in exchange for the resurrection of her victim. Living around Lake Tana, Kristos Samra had visions of and spoke to Jesus. At times, her relationship was fairly intimate—as a reward she was once allowed to suck on his wounds—but more often it tended towards the formal. Her most important act was to request Jesus to forgive not only all humans, but also the devil. Astonished by the unprecedented ask, Jesus explained how difficult this would be. Finally, he had the archangel Michael escort her to hell, where she told the devil that Jesus had forgiven him (which was not obvious from the record of her earlier conversation). The devil was beyond ungrateful, and Michael had to shield her from his attacks. Kristos Samra and Michael escaped, rescuing thousands of souls in the process. On her deathbed, she dictated her life and visions to a scribe, which gives us this extraordinary window into Ethiopian history.[36]

35 Katharina Tucher, *Die "Offenbarungen" der Katharina Tucher*, ed. Ulla Williams and Werner Williams-Krapp (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer Verlag, 1998), 39–43, 65–67. See Gregory, *Marrying*, 148–63.

36 Wendy Laura Belcher, with Michael Kleiner, "The Life and Visions of Krəstos Śämra, a Fifteenth-Century Ethiopian Woman Saint," in *African Christian Biography*, ed. Dana Robert (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster, 2018), 80–101 (96, 99–101); Filəṗṗos, *Atti di Krestos Samrā*, ed. Enrico Cerulli, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Leuven: L. Durbecq, 1956), esp. 93–99.

Doubts and Controversies

The strangeness of all these relationships may raise doubts about their plausibility, especially in the eyes of feminist historians today.[37] Such doubts arose even in the minds of contemporaries. The women's gender, at times, made them especially suspect (see Chapter 12). Jean Gerson (1363–1429) disliked female religious writing in general. Even if there were no other drawbacks, just "this so vast consumption of precious time would abundantly satisfy the devil." He blamed their presumptuousness on an "insatiable appetite for seeing and speaking."[38] In the case of a woman who claimed to see Jesus flying, Gerson recognized a *signum* [sign] not of a miracle, but that she was insane.[39] Following Gerson, Johannes Nider (1380–1438) emphasized the role of humility in the discernment of truth, a humility he found lacking in many women. He contrasted Francis, who "hid this treasure lest he lose it," with more contemporary women claiming the stigmata, who proudly presumed to become second Francises.[40]

These mystics themselves recognized the problem, and sought solutions, in terms of proofs, or by explaining away the doubt. Dorothea herself admitted that her relationship "may seem scarcely or not believable" to a worldly perspective, because doubters "enjoy the life of the body."[41] When Sister Lukardis died (1438), a whip and a hairshirt were discovered hidden in her straw mattress, and the blood on them demonstrated, in a contemporary historian's eyes, "her love,

37 Ulrike Wiethaus, for instance, has accused medieval mystics of practicing a ritual that was "undeniably misogynist, anti-Judaic, militaristic, homophobic and xenophobic." See Ulrike Wiethaus, "Thieves and Carnivals: Gender in German Dominican Literature of the Fourteenth Century," in *The Vernacular Spirit: Essays on Medieval Religious Literature*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Bradley Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 209–38 (211–12), https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230107199_10. For a contrasting perspective, see Ute Stargardt, "Dorothy of Montau," in *Medieval Holy Women in the Christian Tradition, c. 1100–1500*, ed. Alastair Minnis and Rosalynn Voaden (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 475–96. See Gábor Klaniczay, "Doubts in the Reality of Stigmata—Stigmata as a Weapon against Doubt," in *Faith, Doubt, and Knowledge in Religious Thinking*, ed. Éva Pócs and Bea Vidacs (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2020), 69–90; Carolyn Muessig, *The Stigmata in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2020); Gabriella Zarri, "Living Saints: A Typology of Female Sanctity in the Early Sixteenth Century," in *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 219–303.

38 Jean Gerson, "De probabtione spirituum," in OC, IX, 184.

39 Jean Gerson, "De distinctione revelationum," in OC, III, 51.

40 John Nider, *Formicarius* (n.p.: n.d.), fol. 52vb.

41 Von Marienwerder, *Life of Dorothea*, 47.

seriousness, and devotion to God."[42] Alijt Comhaer dreamed of a magnificent local wedding, which found confirmation in 1452 when plague killed eighteen nuns, a disaster the deep ken could connect with matrimonial glory.[43] Jesus personally reassured some of these women. In Venice, the Poor Clare nun Chiara Bugni (1471–1514) received small bottles of Jesus's blood and his mother's milk. The blood could serve as the object of a kind of indulgence. Chiara herself was dubious of both, until Jesus told her that the miracle had been effected not by "human ingenuity nor diabolical artifice, but only my providence."[44]

The woman known as the Selige Schererin (d. 1409) had a series of revelations, and her supportive confessor encouraged her, even allowing her to wear a habit. Balancing spiritual and worldly duties was not easy. Because it was illicit to take Communion after sex, her confessor urged her to take Communion less; he felt the alternative, less sex, would force the husband into adultery. Because her frequent Communion scandalized the public, the confessor ended up putting her on a strict diet of three consecrated hosts per week. When this regime made her ill ("deadly sad and injured"), Jesus had to intervene. He would appear, and allow blood from his wounds to flow into her mouth to sustain her. That an apparition could have physical consequences reinforced the sense of its reality.[45]

The Dominican tertiary Lucy Brocadelli (1476–1544) received the stigmata in 1496 or 1497. Every year during Holy Week, she had celebrated each day by beating herself with an iron chain, to consonate with Jesus's Passion; she also washed twelve poor peoples' feet. She slept with a crucifix between her and her husband, an amateur actor who played Jesus in local plays. She explained that Catherine of Siena had asked Jesus that Lucy's miraculous wounds serve as confirmation of Catherine's own miraculous, and much disputed, wounds. Indeed, those who doubted Catherine's wounds tended to also discount Lucy's,

42 Meyer, *Women's History*, 114.

43 Gregory, "Marrying," 237–38.

44 Francesco Zorzi, *Vita* [*di una santa monaca*], *tradotta dal pre'Andrea Pillolini fiorentino*, ed. Stefania Cavalli and Simone Rauch, in *La Vita e i Sermoni di Chiara Bugni*, ed. Reinhold Mueller and Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2011), 165, 217. Zarri, "Living Saints," 265 discusses its reliability.

45 "Von der seligen Schererin" (1409), reproduced in Hans-Jochen Schiewer, "Auditionen und Visionen einer Begine: Die 'Selige Schererin', Johannes Mulberg und der Basler Beginenstreit," in *Die Vermittlung geistlicher Inhalte im deutschen Mittelalter*, ed. Timothy R. Jackson, Nigel F. Palmer und Almut Suerbaum (Tübingen: De Gruyter, 1996), 289–317 (306–17). See Hans-Jochen Schiewer, "Preaching and Pastoral Care of a Devout Woman (*deo devota*) in Fifteenth-century Basel," in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, ed. Miri Rubin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2009), 126–31.

as dubious by association.[46] The cardinal Ippoliti d'Este (1479–1520) noted that Lucy's wounds bled every Friday, and their holy origins were confirmed when the collected blood failed to coagulate. Thus, he marvelled, Jesus "was transformed into a virgin."[47] Tito Veltri de Viterbo, Bishop of Castro (in Lazio), performed an empirical examination: after cleansing her hands with wine and vinegar, he enclosed one hand in a glove, securing it with his seal. Fifteen days later, in front of an audience of local dignitaries, he opened the glove, and a smell "so sweet and great" came from the wound that it filled the entire convent. This proved the wound was not man-, or woman-, made. Thus "God manifested the truth," and "all the people of Viterbo were well edified."[48] Nevertheless, rumours ran that Lucy had been witnessed self-harming.[49] After about 1505, she began to cover her side wound out of humility, and Jesus complied with her request to render the hand and feet wounds invisible. Another stigmatic confirmed, in 1522, that Lucy's stigmata was "true and good" but had become invisible because of the "thankless" friars who doubted them.[50]

The stigmatic Osanna of Mantua (1449–1505) was a special case because her wounds were consistently invisible. Girolamo Scolari (1459–1535), the abbot of a nearby monastery, composed a life (1507) of her in which he claimed greater "certitude" about Osanna's stigmata than about Francis's, because the former he had "experiential familiarity" with, but could only take the latter on faith. That experiential knowledge was of a peculiar sort: Osanna "had truly perceptible pains of the Passion of Christ, and they were so enlarged it was as if they were visibly apparent." He appears to be describing a situation in which the stigmatic wounds themselves were invisible, but could be recognized by other signs: a swelling on the head and on the left side of the heart, and her inability to use her hands or, sometimes, to answer questions. He concluded that just as "he who

46 Giacomo Marcianese, *Vita della B. Lucia di Narni dell'Ordine di S. Domenico* (Viterbo: Diotallevi, 1663), 43–46, 59. See Muessig, *Stigmata*, 213–16; Tamar Herzig, "Genuine and Fraudulent Stigmatics in Sixteenth-Century Europe," in *Dissimulation and Deceit in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Miriam Eliav-Feldon and Tamar Herzig (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 142–64 (145–50, 159), https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137447494_10

47 Heinrich Kramer, ed., *Stigmifere virginis Lucie de Narnia* (Olomouc: Konrad Baumgarten, 1501), fol. 4rv. The diabolical aspect only appears in an earlier version, quoted at Herzig "Genuine," 161.

48 Lucia Brocadelli, *Una mistica contestata: la vita di Lucia da Narni (1476–1544) tra agiografia e autobiografia: con l'edizione del testo*, ed. E. Ann Matter and Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2011), 76–77.

49 Domenico Ponsi, *Vita della b. Lucia vergine di Narni* (Rome: Gonzaga, 1711), 149–60.

50 This is Stefana Quinzani (1457–1530), as quoted in Tamar Herzig, *Savonarola's Women: Visions and Reform in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 167, 277.

sees bears witness, and his testimony is true, so I say ours is true and certain."[51] It was precisely the invisibility of Osanna's wounds that impressed the humanist Mario Equicola (d. 1525), who in 1518 praised belief as the "greatest light of the Catholic faith," and its "certain credulity" that believed in things unseen.[52]

The most high-profile Jesus-bride debate involved María de Santo Domingo (1485–ca. 1524), the Beata of Piedrahíta. From a peasant background, she joined a Dominican tertiary order around age eighteen. She became involved, controversially, in the reform of the Dominicans and, no less controversially, experienced visionary trances that resulted in prophecy, which confirmed God's approval of the reform. In these trances she "sometimes responds to important questions, even in theology, fundamental issues, as in things about Holy Scripture and things pertaining to our Holy Catholic faith." Those who heard these responses marvelled that "a poor ignorant girl" from the countryside sometimes answered "better than some master of theology and man of great knowledge."[53] Such special knowledge allowed her to advise, for example, Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517) on when to launch his invasion of Africa. Annually, on Good Friday, her right side would open and bleed, where Jesus had been stabbed with the lance at his Crucifixion; this miracle proved "the truth that she always is near the Crucified Christ."[54] María later became a prioress of a convent established for her at Aldeanueva. In 1507, she accepted a royal summons to Ferdinand's court at Burgos, where she impressed Cisneros (see Chapter 11), but was soon investigated for faking holiness and lasciviousness, in, for example, her dancing. Four trials (1508–10)

51 Girolamo Scolari, *Vita alia ex Italico de Osanna Andreasia*, in "De B. Osanna Andreasia" [18 June], in *Acta Sanctorum Ivnii*, 68 vols., new edition (Paris and Rome: Victorem Palme, 1867), IV, 619.

52 Mario Equicola, "In conservatione Divae Osanne Andreasiae Mantuanae Oratio ad D. Isabellam Estensem Mantuae Principem," in *Osanna Andreasi da Mantova 1449–1505 tertii praedicatorum ordinis diva*, ed. Gabriella Zarri and Rosanna Golinelli Berto (Mantua: Casandreasi, 2006), 134.

53 Defensa de Fr. Antonio de la Peña, in Bernardino Llorca, *La Inquisición española y los alumbrados (1509–1669)* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1980), 262–63.

54 María of Santo Domingo, *The Book of Prayer of Sor María of Santo Domingo*, trans. Mary E. Giles (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 123 (prologue). See Vincente Beltrán de Heredia, *Las corrientes de espiritualidad entre las Dominicos de Castilla durante la primera mitad del siglo XVI* (Salamanca: Convento de San Esteban, 1941), 9–17; Geraldine McKendrick and Angus MacKay, "Visionaries and Affective Spirituality during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century," in *The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*, ed. Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), 93–101; Jodi Bilinkoff, "A Spanish Prophetess and Her Patrons: The Case of Maria de Santo Domingo," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992): 21–34; Herzig, "Genuine," 151–12.

ultimately ruled in her favour, in part thanks to the support of Ferdinand and Cisneros.[55]

Although others never saw Jesus, María frequently spoke to him, as if her husband were physically present. Sometimes her holy mother-in-law would also appear, only to her. This caused her some plain-ken spacetime problems negotiating narrow doorways that allowed only single-file passage: who had precedence, Jesus's mother or his wife? The two argued in no-you-go-first conversations, with only the Beata's side audible to onlookers: "I could not be Christ's bride, unless you Mary had given birth to him for me. Hence it is proper [*decet*] for you to go first." The gossipy royal historian Pietro Martire d'Anghiera (1457–1526) made explicit his doubt and disgust for her and her elite followers: "The entire court is stupefied by these and similar conversations—I nearly said 'stupidities.'" He reported that "some say she's deceived by a demon, others argue she's visited by angels and Christ, and from this discord they rouse mockery from the people."[56] The contemporary editor of her work admitted that either her life was the "most perfect and holy that we know in the world," or the "worst and most imperfect"; he believed the former, but could imagine no middle ground.[57] The Dominican reformer Juan Hurtado de Mendoza (d. 1525) found himself precisely in that middle ground. He doubted that all her raptures were authentic and recognized that María's claims to dance with Jesus were ridiculous, but watching their half-visible duets had a profound emotional effect on him.[58]

Modern Devotion

Geert Groote (1340–84) was born in Deventer, in the Netherlands, and then studied at Paris, where he learned nominalism (see Appendix B) under a student of William of Ockham (1285–1347). Although he was a prominent theology teacher, a brush with a near-fatal disease gave him a sense of urgency. He retired to Deventer, converted his family home into a shelter for single and

55 Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, *Historia de la Provincia de España (1450–1550)* (Rome: Istituto Storico Domenicano, 1939), 82–110; Jodi Bilinkoff, "A Spanish Prophetess and Her Patrons: The Case of Maria de Santo Domingo," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992): 21–34; Jesús G. Lunas Almeida, *Historia del señorío de Valdecorneja en la parte referente a Piedrahita* (Avila: S. Martín, 1930), 151–83.

56 Peter Martyr d'Anghiera, *Opus Epistolarum* (Amsterdam: Elzevirianis, 1670), 261–62.

57 María of Santo Domingo, *The Book of Prayer*, 129.

58 Jesús G. Lunas Almeida, *Historia del señorío de Valdecorneja en la parte referente a Piedrahita* (Avila: S. Martín, 1930), 168–69. See María de Santo Domingo, *The Book of Prayer*, 25, 31.

widowed women, and travelled across the Netherlands preaching to large crowds. His criticism of clergy and laity alike triggered accusations of heresy, but he explained that he had done nothing more than speak about Jesus, especially that Jesus who, "robed in the cloak of holy poverty," "came upon this earth as a Virgin's Son, and in exceeding poverty."[59] Under pressure, the Bishop of Utrecht agreed to silence him by banning lay preaching. In 1384, Groote died of a disease contracted while ministering to the sick.

Followers came together around Groote to form the Brethren and Sisters of the Common Life. The movement spread by launching colony communities and soon stretched across the Dutch and German-speaking lands in hundreds of establishments, including both clergy and lay people. Most Devout were women, and many of them were truly devout, as opposed to being forced by circumstances to join. Some, few, tried to confine their movement to within the community, as a way to join Christ in his suffering, for example at Bethlehem near Louvain in 1414.[60]

The Devout lived intentional lives in regulated communities. They pursued spiritual perfection with the methodical attention of an athlete in training. With a special enthusiasm for books, the Devout composed mystical manuals of systematic prayer and mental imagery, with exercises set out daily. Groote proposed imagination as a tool for devotion: one could envision suffering together with Jesus. Inspired by impending Judgment and an awareness of heaven and hell, they focused on the imitation of Jesus and meditation on his Passion, with special devotion to the Eucharist. They taught, prayed, copied manuscripts, studied scripture, and performed acts of charity. Persistent labour was seen as a form of devotion, and they worked while singing or reciting scripture.[61] The Devout sought to place their deep-ken lives over their plain-ken lives; their actions' meanings mattered more than their outcomes. Mother Ide at Emmerich spent her days alternating between spinning and finding solace in a book on the life of Jesus she kept nearby. Sister Griete (1413–22) dedicated her life as a *trouwelschat* [betrothal-gift] to Jesus. She encouraged the other women to remember and share helpful gems from their readings. When she caught herself

59 Thomas à Kempis, *The Founders of the New Devotion*, trans. J. P. Arthur (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Trübner, 1905), 16, 24, 29.

60 Koen Goudriaan, "Empowerment through Reading, Writing, and Example: The *Devotio moderna*," in *Christianity in Western Europe, c.1100–c.1500*, ed. Miri Rubin and Walter Simons, Cambridge History of Christianity 4 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2010), 405–19 (409–10), https://doi.org/10.1017/chol9780521811064.028; John Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers of the Common Life: The Devotio Moderna and the World of the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 56, 121, 137, 158–60.

61 Goudriaan, "Empowerment," 412–13; Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers*, 140.

taking excessive pleasure in her bookmark, she made a point to confess it. Sisters woke at four in the morning, in time for chapel prayers, before beginning their work, which was punctuated by prayers, meals, and the mass, and retired at six or seven for two or three hours' reading and review before sleep.[62] Despite the presence of a priest, Sister Eefce Neghels (d. 1423) insisted, against modesty, on taking off her shirt on her deathbed, for Jesus was "a naked bridegroom who would have a naked bride."[63]

The Devout worked within orthodoxy, but pushed at its borders, especially against its rules restricting unregulated communities. This was a new movement, in an age when novelty was suspicious; new establishments often had to stipulate to local authorities that they were not actually "new religious orders" per se. In particular, the Devout were criticized for being ordered without being a religious order. They argued that the key characteristics of a religious order were vows, habits, and superiors—none of which they had. As a result, the Devout emphasized that they were voluntarily imposing order on themselves. Groote himself "made resolutions," not vows. In answer to the critics of these irregular regulars, six Brethren did take monastic vows in 1387, and established a Congregation at Windesheim, south of Zwolle. The Devout who remained lay had to explain that many lay people, and all good people, led well ordered lives, just as bells end work shifts for artisans. The hostility reached the point where parish priests threatened to refuse Devout participation in the Eucharist. In 1401, the Bishop of Utrecht authorized their way of life, but it remained controversial. A Dominican named Grabon attacked them on this point at the Council of Constance (1418). A special committee, including Pierre d'Ailly (1351–1420) and Gerson, rejected the criticism by citing history: in the first-century, Jerusalem Christians lived in community, before the establishment of monasticism.[64]

Criticized for being eccentric, the Devout replied that their eccentricity was not nudity or skipping church (which, they agreed, should be criticized) but was merely living lives more closely modelled on Jesus's "precepts."[65] Though

62 Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers*, 135–36.

63 Dirk De Man, ed., *Hier beginnen sommige stichtige punten van onsen oelden zusteren* (The Hague: Martinus Hijhoff, 1919), 57. This is a trope in the devotional literature. See Johannes Busch, *Chronicon Windeshemense und Liber de reformatione monasteriorum*, ed. Karl Grube (Halle: Hendel, 1886), 101–02, 276.

64 This last point is Gerson's. Hermann von der Hardt, ed., *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense Concilium de universali Ecclesiae reformatione, unione, et fide*, 6 vols. (Frankfurt: Christianus Genschius, 1698), III, col. 116. See Goudriaan, "Empowerment," 408–12; Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers*, 87–88, 100, 171, 179–82.

65 Albert Hyma, "Het traktaat 'Super modo vivendi devotorum hominum simul commorantium,' door Gerard Zerbolt van Zutphen," *Archief voor de geschiedenis van het Aartsbisdom Utrecht* 52 (1926): 56–71 (40–41).

controversial, collective living, the Devout said, was inspired by and authorized by "the example of Christ, whose action is our instruction."[66] Groote defended collective living even without formal authorization by quoting Jesus saying that where "two or three gathered in my name there I am in the middle of you" (Mt 18:20).[67] Approximating apostolic poverty, the Devout redirected all income above a certain threshold to the library and the poor, discouraging private, locked chests and replacing "my" with "our."[68] One critic, annoyed by the Devout's modest dress, agreed that "every action of Jesus is an instruction for us," but pointed out that Jesus himself wore expensive clothing, as was evident from the soldiers gambling for it (Mt 27:35).[69] The Devout consciously and carefully stayed on the good side of the Church hierarchy; they avoided academics, controversy, new scholarship, and social reform. In contrast to the brides of Jesus described above, the Devout soon shied away from claims of direct mystical experience of God.[70]

Jesus-breath in Muslim Verse

The long Islamic tradition of Jesus poetry intensified in the thirteenth century, especially on the lips of the Sufis, who had a specific fascination with Jesus, breath, and Jesus-breath.[71] The term "sufi" referred to the mystics' ascetic tradition of wearing wool (*suf*), a practice specially associated with Jesus, as explained for example in the thirteenth-century book of Sufi etiquette by Najm al-Din Razi (1177–1256).[72] Defying any plain-ken sense of a historical sequence of prophets, the poet Fakhr al-Din 'Iraqi (1213–1289) noted that a "pinch of

66 Paul Frédéricq, *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis neerlandicae*, 5 vols. (Ghent: Vuylsteke, 1896), II, 160.

67 Gerrit de Grootes, "Verlorener Traktat 'de Simona ad beguttas,'" in *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Mystik*, ed. Rudolf Langenberg (Bonn: Hanstein, 1902), 1–33 (30).

68 Van Engen, *Sisters and Brothers*, 174.

69 Thomas Kock, "Zerbolt incognito: Auf den Spuren des Traktats 'De vestibus pretiosis,'" in *Kirchenreform von unten: Gerhard Zerbolt von Zutphen und die Brüder vom gemeinsamen Leben*, ed. Nikolaus Staubach (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004), 165–235 (201).

70 Gregory, "Marrying," 8, 233; Gregory, *Marrying*.

71 The greatest of the medieval Jesus poets was the blind, vegan freethinker Al-Ma'arri (973–1057). See Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Poetry* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1921), 135, 171, 173, 178.

72 Fritz Meier, "The Rules for Novices (*Ādāb al-murīdīa*)," in "A Book of Etiquette for Sufis," in *Essays on Islamic Piety and Mysticism*, trans. John O'Kane (Brill: Leiden, 1999), 49–92.

his [Muhammad's] noble being was placed in Jesus's breath."[73] Similarly Ibn Arabi (1165–1240) understood Jesus as the seal of holiness because he was a pure spirit whom Gabriel had "blown" into Mary.[74] Rumi (1207–73), the most famous Sufi poet, wrote verse specifically about Jesus-breath. Sometimes, those references reached across subcult divisions: Christians attended Rumi's funeral, reading from the Gospels, despite Muslims' attempts to beat them back, for they believed that Rumi was "the Jesus of our time," and in him they "understood the true nature of Jesus."[75]

In our period, the most famous evocation of Jesus-breath came from Hafiz of Shiraz. Ibn Battuta (1304–69) reported that city as the place where the Qur'an was chanted most beautifully, and there women gathered in the largest numbers—a single group might number in the thousands—to hear preachers in the mosques. The name Hafiz referred to someone who had memorized the Qur'an, and, according to his own poetry, he would recite the revelation at night as a form of devotion. The earliest known copy of Hafiz's *Divan*, now in Tashkent, was dated 1400–01. Already in the early fifteenth century, over five hundred manuscripts of the *Divan* were collected and collated into a critical edition. Enjoying an immediate and wide celebrity, Hafiz's *Divan* described the quest for union with the Beloved (who is perfect-complete, *kamal*) or Friend, who in a spiritual sense represents God and the Divine. The longing for what can never be achieved causes suffering, that can, for example, turn his heart into a kebab (362/291).[76]

Hafiz's interest in Jesus clusters around that prophet's breath. His references to Jesus are usually about breath, and his references to breath are usually about Jesus. This should not surprise: even beyond Jesus, Hafiz makes frequent use of the movement of air. Three kinds recur: natural breeze (*nasim*), human breath

73 Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 63.

74 Ibn al-'Arabī, *Ibn al-'Arabī's Fuṣūṣ Al Ḥikam: An Annotated Translation of "The Bezels of Wisdom"*, trans. Binyamin Abrahamov (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 104–13, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736655. See Ibn al-'Arabī, *The Meccan Revelations*, trans. Michel Chodkiewicz (New York: Pir, 2002), 220, 307, 334–35.

75 Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad Aflākī, *Les saints des derviches tourneurs*, ed. and trans C. Huart (Paris: Leroux 1922), 96–97.

76 Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, "Ḥāfiẓ and the Sufi," in *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 143–57 (148); Leonard Lewisohn, "Prolegomenon to the Study of Ḥāfiẓ," in *Hafiz and the Religion of Love*, ed. Lewisohn, 3–30 (3–4, 11, 13). References to Hafiz are in the format (x/y), where x is page number and y is *ghazal* number, in Hafiz, *The Collected Lyrics of Hāfiz of Shīrāz*, trans. Peter Avery (Cambridge, UK: Archetype, 2007).

(*nafas*), and divine wind (*bad*).[77] These need not be mere metaphor: breath was a powerful component of popular magic in fourteen-century Persia, and Hafiz describes (67/36) blowing on knots as breathing spells.

Breath is most especially associated with healing in the form of Jesus-breath, or Messiah-breath. This is not Hafiz's invention, for Rumi also makes many references to it as well.[78] Jesus-breath, like the breeze, can carry a fragrance and news (300/235). It has great health benefits: Jesus-breath can heal a heart because its breather can take up sorrow (517/428, 126/86), and even resurrect us (241/181), because one with Jesus-breath understands the pain of love (558/462). This association with healing brings with it an association with death, since suffering so intertwined with desire for the Beloved. The Beloved can thus use the normally healing Jesus-breath to kill, in order to allow life (755/477).

> The shadow of your cypress, O Jesus-breathed /
> is the reflection of the soul fallen on putrid bones (70/38)

> To whom can this subtlety be told, that the stony-hearted one
> Slew us, yet the breath of Jesus son of Mariam is with him (96/59)

This suffering even has value in that it creates a problem for Jesus-breath to solve: "The physician for love is Messiah-breathed and kind, but / If no pain in you he sees, for whom is he going to prescribe?" (242/182).

Hafiz strongly associates Jesus-breath with wine and intoxication. In Sufi poetry, wine can serve as a metaphor for prayer, and intoxication a metaphor for being in love—although neither was solely metaphorical. The initial lines of the first and second couplets of one poem are parallel:

> The morning breeze with felicitations for the wine-selling Elder
> has come [...]
> The air has turned into the breath of the Messiah...

And the last line explains this connection: "Maybe he [Hafiz] has come to his sense from the intoxication of pseudo-asceticism" (229/171).

Similarly, another poem, which has the line "Kiss the wine-boy's curving chin to the melody of reed and lute," later reveals that the wine-boy himself has Jesus-breath:

77 Note the first two words have Arabic origins, and the third Persian.

78 For a discussion of this with examples see John Renard, *All the King's Falcons: Rumi on Prophets and Revelation* (Lahore: Suhayl Academy, 2001), 91; Oddbjørn Leirvik, *Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2010), 93, https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472548528. Rumi's Jesus-breath has a wider range of associations than Hafiz's.

> From the hand of a fair-cheeked darling possessed of Jesus's breath
> Drink wine and dismiss the story of 'Ad and Thamud (258/198)

The last two proper names refer to people in the Qur'an who were punished for refusing to obey God's messengers. Hafiz thus warns his reader not to be keen on asceticism, and not to worry about punishment.

Hafiz is not really—or not only—drunk. This is an expression of the opposition to the reason, religion, and decorum of the hypocrites and false ascetics, in opposition to the barriers erected by organized religion. Note this is partially a parallel with the hesychasts (see Chapter 12). Being the opposite of love,[79] reason is even worse than asceticism and decorum. It is feral (149/105). Hafiz advises someone, presumably the wine-boy, "do not frighten us with reason's prohibitions but bring the wine" (113/73). The breeze carrying the Beloved's scent scatters reason (248/188), and a curl of the Beloved's hair can bind it (479/394).

The wineboy with Jesus-breath can bring us the wine and the healing breath necessary to relieve suffering. Although beautiful, the wineboy is not the Beloved—none of this is the Beloved—but wine and Jesus-breath are the best Hafiz can do. At the end, even though the Beloved denies Hafiz, he can still think about Jesus and his breath:

> Let there be the memory that, while your rebuke was slaying me,
> On your sugar-crunching lip was the miracle of Jesus (262/200)

Thus, the Jesus-breath of the Jesus-breeze enlivens Hafiz's soul…

> O Jesus-breeze, may your times always be happy
> for by your breath Hafiz's wounded soul has come alive (130/89)

… and in return Hafiz's poems set Jesus in joyous motion:

> There's no wonder if, at the words of Hafiz, in the heavens
> Venus's ecstasy makes the Messiah dance! (24/4)

Some scholars link this image of the Messiah dancing as a reference to relatively lively Christian music, but there is a marked absence of association in Hafiz of the Messiah or Jesus with Christians. I think, rather, this is mostly an expression of joy, perhaps compounded in that Hafiz makes dignified things dance—Timurid princes (520/431), and the cypress trees (215/159) which were thought

79 Hafiz usually used *'ishq* for love, which had a specifically erotic sense, and did not appear in the Qur'an. Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, "The Erotic Spirit: Love, Man and Satan in Ḥāfiẓ's Poetry," in *Hafiz and the Religion of Love*, ed. Lewisohn, 107–22 (108).

to have perfect proportion and beauty—so it makes sense that an ascetic like Jesus would be made to dance, like a *true* ascetic.

Jesus was a fashionable image in love poetry well beyond Hafiz. The Ottoman Grand Vizier Mahmud Pasha Angelović (d. 1474) had been born a Christian before being involuntarily recruited into the bureaucracy, and then converted to Islam and married a daughter of Sultan Mehmed II (1432–81). His mystical-erotic poetry compares Mary's arms coiling around Baby Jesus to "your curl" of hair coiling around "your ruby lip."[80] Mehmed was a particular enthusiast for the work of one of his court poets, Isa Necati (d. 1509). Perhaps reflecting his Jesus name ("Isa") suggestive of Christian origins, Necati matches the Christian cross with a lover's hair.[81] In another love poem, he writes, "When the people of the heart see your image in the mirror / They thought that it was Mary; who pressed Jesus on her breast."[82] Even Mehmed himself composed his own Jesus-related poetry. As Avni, his penname, he has fallen in love with the lord of Galata, Istanbul's Genoese merchant colony, who "follows the way of Jesus." Although "his glances kill," this Christian lord's "lips give life anew."[83] The Jesus-breath is not explicit here, but those lips may exhale it and its traditional life-giving property.

Two themes resound in Jesus poetry in Hafiz, in Mehmed's court, and beyond. The first was the healing abilities of Jesus and his breath. Isa Necati described the "sugar-lipped" Jesus who "cured an ailing me a thousand times with a word,"[84] a word spoken with breath. The Persian Sufi poet Jami (1414–92), born near the famous Jam Minaret, continues the image: Muhammad's "lip taught Christ how to quicken the dead," and Christ can heal the "defect" of someone shamefully having a white body and a black heart.[85]

80 Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)* (Brill: Leiden, 2001), 318, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004492332; Theoharis Stavrides, "From Byzantine Aristocracy to Ottoman Ruling Elite: Mahmud Pasha Angelović and His Christian Circle, 1458–1474," in *Living in the Ottoman Realm*, ed. Christine Isom-Verhaaren and Kent F. Schul (Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2016), 55–65.

81 Matthias Kappler, "The Beloved and his Otherness: Reflections on 'Ethnic' and Religious Stereotypes in Ottoman Love Poetry," in *Intercultural Aspects in and around Turkic Literatures*, ed. Matthias Kappler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 37–48 (42–43).

82 Stavrides, *Sultan*, 318.

83 Walter G. Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2006), 3–4.

84 Walter G. Andrews, *Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1985), 75–76.

85 Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, 133; William N. Wysham, "Jesus in the Poetry of Iran," *The Muslim World* 42 (1952): 104–11 (108–09).

Christians shared Muslims' interest in associations between Jesus and breathing, as we see with the hesychasts. In Christianity, Jesus and the Holy Spirit were both God. "Spirit" was the English translation of the Latin Bible's *spiritus*, itself going back to the Greek word πνεῦμα *pneuma*, which sometimes meant "wind" in a general sense. There was also, in some subsubcults, a connection between the Jesus canon and the breath: Pachomius the Great (ca. 292–34) had described scriptures as the "breath of God."[86] The usual word for Bible in Armenian is Աստվածաշունչ Astvaçašownč, literally the breath, respiration, or soul of God.[87] Bernardino of Siena invited his hearers to examine the letter h, which looks "like a pregnant woman," and thus refers to the Holy Spirit, by which Mary was impregnated. He notes that h is not voiced, rather almost breathed from the throat, and thus the Holy Spirit comes with the wind, with the breath.[88]

Muslim Jesus poetry's second theme is the liberating potential of asceticism. Isa Necati envisioned that as worldly goods bind one to the earth, so in contrast the ascetic Messiah had ascended in the sky. A number of Persian Sufi poets similarly focused on the power of Jesus's renunciation. Qasim-i Anvar (1356–1433) lamented that the fleshbound could not "distinguish the soul's Jesus-breath / from this corporeal frame." Verse from a century earlier was still influential on fifteenth-century poets: in the *Gulshan-i Raz* [Rosegarden of Secrets], Mahmoud Shabestari (1288–1340) recalls Jesus's announcement that "I go to my Father above" before ascending into heaven. Shabestari urges his readers to "set forth for your Father!" and "leave the world's carcass to vultures" if "you wish to be a bird in flight."[89]

In our terms, through his achievement, Jesus thus transcended the plain-ken world of contradictions and multiplicity to attain the deep-ken perfection of the divine oneness. Shabestari's lines prompted an extended commentary from Shaikh Asiri Lahiji (1506–60), who considered Jesus the prophet most like Muhammad. Like other humans, Jesus was a "theophany" of the name "Allah," which was the "blower into," the "in-spirer" of Jesus. In his asceticism, Jesus

86 Pachomius, *Instructions, Letters, and Other Writings of Saint Pachomius and his Disciples*, trans. Armand Veilleux, Pachomian Koinonia 3 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1982), 97.

87 Vreg Nersessian, "Armenian Christianity," in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, ed. Ken Parry (Chichester: Blackwell, 2007), 23–46 (27), https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470690208.ch2; Vreg Nersessian, *The Bible in the Armenian Tradition* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2001), 90.

88 Bernardino of Siena, *Le prediche volgari: La predicazione del 1425 in Siena*, ed. Ciro Cannarozzi, 2 vols. (Florence: Rinaldi, 1958), II, 191–95.

89 Walter G. Andrews, Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *Ottoman Lyric Poetry* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997), 75–76; Javad Nurbakhsh, *Jesus in the Eyes of the Sufis* (London: Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi, 1983), 56.

"manifests" "pure freedom" and "dispassion, detachment and emancipation" from the "bondage of multiplicity and habit." Lahiji shows his reader how to emulate Jesus: "If only you could emancipate yourself of this human soul and its passions, by means of ascetic self-denial and self-effacement, then you would unquestionably attain, like Christ [...] the level of the Oneness of the Divine Essence" which was "unblemished and consecrated from all contrariness and disparity."[90]

An enduring tradition in Sufi poetic logic is the distinction, and sometimes identification, between *fana* [annihilation] and *baqin* [enduring]. Through the practice of *dhikr*, the mystic annihilates the passions—and, for Lahiji, the worldly multiplicity—to achieve an eternal enduring in what does not change. Some of these early mystics spoke in terms that, with the deep ken, defied the plain-ken restrictions of spacetime: Dhul-Nun al-Misri (796–860) described a mystic who "is as he was, when he was before he was," while Abu'l-Hasan Kharaqani (963–1033) equated his own volume with that of the earth and heavens, and equated the length of his stride to the distance between earth and heaven. Abu'l-Qasim al-Junayd (830–910) explicitly defined *tawhid* [unification] as "the separation of the Eternal from that which was originated in time." That distinction between creation and creator appears even in Turkish verse, even at the very end of our period: in his Şehrengiz of Istanbul (1520s), the janissary poet Yahya bey Dukagjini (1488–1582) praises poetry for its ability to reveal divine knowledge. It reflects all of creation, which, in turn, shows the unity of God. Jesus—alongside Noah and Moses, as well as other prophets—"desire[s] for the beauty of the beloved / all are longing for the beloved." Thus "constantly / the power of God will unfold" all creation "like daylight."[91]

Throughout this book we have seen Jesus cultists sometimes looking with deep-ken eyes, and sometimes with plain-ken eyes. In these mystics, poets, and hesychasts we find cultists who, from their mystical heights, have a panoramic view in which both types of perspective are visible. Indeed, 'Ali Hujwiri (ca. 1009–71) presented *fana* and *baqin* as two kinds of awareness.[92] Our poets can

90 G. Böwering, "Baqā' wa Fanā'," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 3 (1988): 722–24; Michael Glünz, "Poetic Tradition and Social Change: The Persian Qasida in Post-Mongol Iran," in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia & Africa*, ed. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 183–203 (200–02); Nurbakhsh, *Jesus*, 19–24; Andrew Wilcox, "The Dual Mystical Concepts of *Fanā'* and *Baqā'* in Early Sūfism," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 38 (2011): 95–118, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13530191003794681

91 Böwering, "Baqā' wa Fanā'," 722–24; B. Deniz Çalış-Kural, *Şehrengiz, Urban Rituals and Deviant Sufi Mysticism in Ottoman Istanbul* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 123 (a typographical error misidentifies Moses as David, also a prophet in Islam); Wilcox, "Dual Mystical Concepts," 99, 104.

92 Wilcox, "Dual Mystical Concepts," 99.

look with the plain ken at creation, at the peach fuzz on wine-boys, and catch glimpses of what the world would look like seen through the deep ken. Our hesychasts can look with human eyes at an uncreated light. Both groups seek and sometimes achieve access to a deep ken in which everything consonates with everything, and thus consonates all the more powerfully with, and even identifies with, God. Their frustration with the limitations of this vision, like binoculars that constantly drift out of focus, gives voice to this poetry, and through practice they seek to make the deep ken the default way of seeing the world.

Breath and healing fell out of fashion in Jesus-related poetry after Yahya bey Dukagjini, but returned with a vengeance in the eighteenth century; the search for the Beloved continued unabated.

Envoi

The forms of devotion described in this chapter are perhaps more alien to our sensibilities today than anything else in this book. Some of these Jesus-intimates' contemporaries shared our discomfort. The first husbands of the women who remarried Jesus had difficult relationships to navigate, and some behaved monstrously in their frustrations. Some theologians dismissed mystics' experiences as pride or madness. Juan Hurtado de Mendoza drove himself mad over what he saw as María de Santo Domingo's cloying fraud. Critics hounded the Modern Devout for preferring Jesus-intimacy over tradition, and the Sufis' esotericism and indecorous imagery incited centuries of persecution.

Sometimes, priests threw plain-ken cold water on deep-ken passions. One German account, in a humorous (and, therefore, suspect) collection, involves a sermon on Jesus's Passion that moved the priest's audience to weep. He tenderly comforted them: "Don't cry, dear children! It is now some fifteen hundred years since this is said to have happened; it could be made up; it's so far from Jerusalem to here." This may have been satire, but such things did happen: another priest advised an overly emotional Margery Kempe (so overwhelmed by thoughts of the Passion that she was "compelled to cry out very loudly and weep very bitterly, as though she would have died"): "Woman, Jesus is long since dead."[93]

Many of this chapter's Jesus cultists would have been too busy experiencing ecstasy to worry about such doubts and distance. They walked their mystic ways across realities and across centuries. In her womb, Dorothea felt Jesus kicking; in his verse, Hafiz set the Messiah dancing.

93 Kempe, *Book of Margery Kempe*, 186–87; Johannes Pauli, *Von Schimpf und Ernst* (Strasbourg: Gruninger, 1522), fol. 87v (no. 459).