SARAH APPLETON WEBER

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in the middle english lyric

A Study of Sacred History
and Aesthetic Form

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By Sarah Appleton Weber

In recent years scholars have shown the influence of Christian theology on the forms of medieval art, music, and drama. In this study Dr. Weber establishes the profound way in which medieval theology determined the aesthetic characteristics of the Middle English religious lyric. The theological basis of analysis is the liturgy, which not only provided the source and texture of the lyrics, but which was the foundation upon which medieval theology itself developed. The liturgy was fundamentally a sacred history that shaped the history of man from his birth to his death to the plan of redemption. The method of the liturgy's formulation of the history of redemption provided certain dynamic forms and principles of proportion for the lyrics that evolved from it.

By selecting several lyrics on each of the central events of the redemption — the annunciation and birth of Christ, the crucifixion and resurrection, Christ's ascension and Mary's assumption — and by analyzing them in the order celebrated by the liturgy, Dr. Weber has demonstrated that the aesthetic structure of each lyric can be found only by means of its specific theological subject and that the meaning and structure of a lyric on one event of sacred history can be fully grasped only in its total context of the other events of sacred history. The divine ratio and symmetry of proportion within sacred history provides the principle of proportion within the poem. The subjective element in these Middle English lyrics also receives its ultimate definition in terms of the objective sequence of events in sacred history. Poetry itself when it comes into relationship with medieval theology is not an autonomous art, but is assumed as part of the endeavor of the Christian soul into being a means by which he may reach eternal delight. Thus an aesthetic theory appropriate to the nature of the medieval religious lyric, including the lyrics composed in the ancient classical tradition, can be formed only when beauty is defined in its relationship to the Eternal Art.

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*To Matthew Howard
and Bernadine Whitmer*

pReface

This is a study of the ways in which medieval Christian theology determined the aesthetic characteristics of the Middle English religious lyric. Such a study has yet to be made before there is any full understanding of the lyrics. It is also a theoretical study of the relationship of beauty and poetry to theology. I would like to show, as it has been demonstrated for art, music, and drama,[1] in what a profound way medieval theology shaped the purpose of these poems and the sensibility of the audience; how theology provided the poetry with certain unique forms and established a certain kind of relationship between the poet and his audience.

Although in recent years the works of several major authors have been reappraised in light of their theological context,[2] among the critics of the Middle English religious lyric there has generally been a desire to avoid consideration of theology, which they find to be either "on the fringes of criticism"[3] or hostile to poetry.[4] To my knowledge two important studies outside the field of Middle English have sought through theology to reveal the purpose and aesthetic quality of a medieval religious poem. The first of these is Étienne Gilson's explication of "Iesu dulcis memoria."[5] Using the conception of love in St. Bernard's sermon on the Canticle of Canticles, he shows that the poem defines the mystical coming of the presence of God into the soul and the soul's aspiration to heaven of which this was only a fleeting foretaste. The second is by Walter Ong, S.J., who uses the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas to explain the texture of the poetry in the hymns of

Thomas and Adam of St. Victor. In his analysis of the relationship between wit and mystery in Latin hymnody, Father Ong states a thesis which I believe also holds true for many of the Middle English religious lyrics as they are related to the theological formulation of sacred history by the liturgy of the medieval Church: "Here Christian teaching does more than merely supply the matter for poetry, and more than merely suggest an 'architechtonic' framework for literature. . . . Rather, at the point to which the trail of wit leads, the very texture of poetry itself—the element which makes literature literature—is seen to come into functional contact with the heart of Christian doctrine, the mysteries distinctive of Christianity as these lie in their own distinctive way within the human mind."[6]

The liturgy of the medieval Church was medieval man's living contact with theology.[7] Medieval music and the new forms of drama evolved from the liturgy,[8] and along side the classical and didactic tradition of poetry maintained by the early religious poets an entirely new poetry also developed.[9] As the research indicates in Carleton Brown's anthologies, *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century* and *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century,* a great many of the Middle English religious lyrics are simply translations from Latin hymns and sequences used in the Roman rite which existed in England from the time of the Benedictine monastic foundations.[10] But the liturgy was also the source and texture from which many original English lyrics developed. The valuable comprehensive work of Dr. Natalie White shows that the organization, the phrasing, the images, the metrical forms— in short, the rhetorical fabric of these English lyrics, developed from the liturgy.[11] Among the poems are those based upon Latin meditations, especially the homilies of the early Church Fathers and the sermons of St. Bernard of Clairvaux that were assimilated into the liturgy by the lessons of the Office, homilies which themselves were ordered according to the themes and forms of the liturgy.[12] Besides the official liturgy of the Church, the devotional practices of the English clergy and people, originating in Latin and also using the forms of the liturgy, were the basis of many types of lyrics. For example, there are the metrical meditations of the Hours of the Cross and the Compassion of Mary, which were attached to the canonical Hours of the Divine Office.[13] There are special prayers on the five wounds of Christ and many poems on the joys of Mary (see below, Part III).

The liturgy was fundamentally a sacred history which shaped the history of man from his birth to his death to the plan of redemption. It was itself an event with two modes, an objective mode, the perpeptual re-enactment of

the history of God's redemption of man; and a subjective mode, the response of the soul in his journey to God. The liturgy shaped the seasons of the year, the days, the hours, and the beginning and end of the actions of men. And the method of the liturgy's formulation of the history of redemption provided certain dynamic forms and principles of proportion for the lyrics which evolved from it.

The following pages which consider a number of the lyrics that developed from the liturgy are not a historical study of sources, but primarily a structural study of the lyrics' order and proportion whose method grows by analogy to the medieval liturgy's dynamic and architectural structuring of the universe. A glance at the Table of Contents will show its general outlines.

Since the liturgy is a history, I have restricted the selection of lyrics to be analyzed to those which tell its main events, and I have excluded lyrics which are formed primarily by the inner experience of the speaker, such as those of the school of Richard Rolle. To show the fundamental principle that an understanding of the over-all coherence of the plan of sacred history and of the relationship between events is necessary to the understanding of each one of the events, I have grouped the poems to be discussed in the same order as the sequence of events in the liturgy.

The life, the dynamic tension of the liturgy, lies in its purpose of re-uniting man to God. Although theology contains and speaks of the Divine, the medieval theologian saw that it is fundamentally limited and shaped to the human point of view. This limit is felt by the soul who ascends to God, as a darkness, or by the soul who contemplates God descending to man by the human incarnation of His Son, as a source of joy. According to medieval Christian theology, Mary is the central human being through whom Christ entered history and through whom now in the present, as she is in heaven united to Christ, man himself will be led to Christ. To show that the medieval Church conceived the events of sacred history to be focused within man and fitted to the exigency of man's capacity,[14] I have chosen to consider those poems which use Mary as the medium through whom the events of sacred history are seen and to whom the poet appeals to be united to Christ.

I hope to show by my classification that to divorce the lyrics from the objective aspect of theology, the events of sacred history, is to lose the means of understanding the principle of order behind the poetry [15] and also to lose the unique Christian concept the poet has, as part of the Church, of the identity of his situation with his listeners'. To contradict the idea that medieval Christian dogma was basically static and to indicate that there

were innumerable varieties of ways in which the poet might conceive these events within their over-all relationship to the whole plan of sacred history, I have chosen several poems on each event. In each part of the study, by discussing the limitations of the evaluations various critics of the lyrics have made, I will attempt to indicate the central importance of theology to the purpose, form and structure of these lyrics.

Using Mary as the medium through whom the events take place and are experienced will provide a figure by which the subjective dimension of the human experience of joy and sorrow can be studied as it is affected by the incarnation, death and resurrection of Mary's Son. These poems will serve to define how medieval theology modified the concept of human emotion by its Christian definition of the ultimate objects of fear and desire and how the modern reader must adjust his view of subjective experience to comprehend fully the poem's effect.

Thus the study develops in three parts by a series of corresponding meditations. Part I is on the annunciation and birth of Christ; Part II is on Christ's crucifixion and Mary's sorrow; Part III is on Mary's joy in heaven as it defines the joy of mankind. Within each part there is (1) a poem which introduces the new subject matter and new forms, (2) then two shorter poems which clarify principles of criticism, and (3) a final poem which develops the subject matter and illustrates the variety of treatments possible for one event. The theological subject is always presented preceding the poetry. The whole study, therefore, is introduced by a description of the way in which the liturgy reformulates sacred history; then each part, except for Part I which is prepared for by the material of the Introduction, is introduced by an explanation of the event which provides its subject and proportion; and within each part also the theological subject of each poem is presented before the analysis of its form.

Once the full context of the poems has been given, with its possibilities both for beauty and for monotony, it will be possible to set up some standard by which to divide the good lyrics from the bad, and in Part III, "The Figure of Delight," I will show why some lyrics which may be theologically valid are at the same time not good poetry, and why, on the other hand, some theology which does not use poetic form arouses the same delight as good poetry does. In the concluding section of the study, I will draw together some of the general aesthetic characteristics of the Middle English lyric which are the result of the fundamental orientation of the poetry in medieval Christian theology.

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introduction

The Theology of Sacred History:
The Liturgy of the Medieval Church

SACRED HISTORY

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LITURGY AND
the medieval religious lyric, it is necessary to study the liturgy not as a
collection of prayers or formulas, but as both a history and a method of
formulating history. There is a profound analogy to be developed between
the medieval theologian's understanding of the events of creation and the
universe as the language of God—theology its grammar—and the modern
linguist's approach to semantics through structure—through phonemic, mor-
phemic and syntactic analysis:[1] for the medieval liturgy might be seen as the
meta-language of creation.

History can be explained simply as a chronicle of events, a succession of
dates, and time may be given only a descriptive ordering value. Or the
principle the historian uses to formulate history may be a logical one, and
time may be conceived in terms of cause and effect. The medieval liturgy,
however, was formulated as a sacred history: that is, the principle of explana-
tion was God, Who is beyond time, in His relationship to man, who is in
time. For the medieval soul God was both the ground of value—i.e., the
origin, end, and center of time—and the means of understanding it. (See
Figure 1 and descriptive note.) It is necessary to outline the nature of this
view of history before the full dimensions of the liturgy itself can be made
clear.

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The Beginning and End of History

For the medieval theologian the principle of sacred history was living, dynamic, since it was not only the basis of interpreting past events, but it also gave the meaning of the present and the direction of the future. According to sacred history, events literally begin at the beginning with God and end at the end in God. God is their foundation and their purpose. In its sequence, this sacred history begins with the creation of the world for God's glory, the disobedience of man through pride, and man's fall. It tells of God's remedy for this, a second creation, more wonderful than the first: the coming of God Himself into the world through Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Who redeems man through His incarnation, death, and resurrection. It tells how Christ, after ascending to His Father, sends the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, to establish the Church and to perpetuate it with His gifts of grace and with the sacraments, by which men are taught, sustained, and united to Christ until the consummation of all things at the end of time. The end of time will occur with Christ's second coming in majesty, with the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment where man is fixed in the pains of hell or the eternal joy of paradise. Sacred history encompasses all time, and each event is given significance by its context in the total plan. Sacred history gives meaning to individual action as well, so that every thing done, every act, offers information and has value by its context in sacred history.

This order, with God as the beginning and end and with history conceived of as stages in the creation of a new reality, is fundamentally Hebraic and is the principle of order of the accounts in Holy Scripture.[2] From the time of the early Church, Holy Scripture was the foundation of commentary and theological refinement, and the order of events in Scripture became the structural basis for some of the later more general theological works.[3] The same principle of order was used in the early technique of catechesis put forward by St. Augustine and implied by St. Gregory of Nyssa. Histories of the world were organized according to the stages of sacred history. This order is at the heart of Augustine's *City of God,* for example, which is two contrasted stories, the origin and the final end of the City of God and the City of Earth.[4]

Many Middle English works are ordered by sacred history, among them works of instruction such as *Cursor Mundi,* which divides history into seven

ages from the creation and fall to the end of the world.[5] Sacred history is also the principle by which the three dramatic cycles of Chester, York, and Wakefield are ordered. One purpose of this study will be to show how each of the Middle English lyrics that meditates on an event is conceived in the context of the beginning and the end of sacred history and that the total plan of sacred history is incorporated as a structural principle of the poem.

The Center of History

God is not only the beginning and the end of history; the second dynamic principle of sacred history is that God is the center. God the Father through the Holy Spirit sends His Son into history, and Christ, being both God and man, becomes the means whereby man is united to God and raised up to Him.

The central events of sacred history, to which all events point, in which all events culminate, are the Incarnation, the moment God enters the world by taking on man's human nature through Mary; Christ's passion and death, the moment He atones for man's sin; Christ's resurrection from the dead, showing His godhood and thus giving the guarantee of man's hope for his own future resurrection; and, nine days after Christ's ascension, Pentecost, when through the coming of the Holy Spirit Christ establishes His Church which will be for man the means of union with God through grace and knowledge until the end of time. Thus the Church provides the central focus of present history. It is the present moment's unity with God through Christ, and it is the particular point of view from which the Christian soul interprets all things, from which he relates himself in an historical present to a past, to the present, to the future. It is this central focus of history in the present time, on Christ within the Church, which establishes the basic proportion of value, the divine *ratio*, among events lived in the context of sacred history.

A perception of this divine *ratio* or proportion among events informed the method by which the exegete interpreted Holy Scripture, and it is the principle by which the liturgy reformulates sacred history. Based on the precedent of Christ in the Gospel, Who applied the words of the psalms and prophets to His own coming, and on the practice of the authors of the New Testament themselves, especially on St. Paul, the exegete divided Holy Scripture into the Old and the New Testament. The incarnation and death of Christ, Who is Himself the New Testament, was seen to fulfill the events

and prophecies of the Old by which His coming and death were prefigured. Thus at the same time as they were historical realities, the events, historical personages and sayings of the Old Testament were applied to the actions and words of Christ in the New and were seen to have allegorical value relative to the value of Christ.[6]

Although with the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and the Apocalypse, Holy Scripture as such is complete, the Old Testament and the New are not as yet completely fulfilled. Scripture is assumed into the living Church which perpetuates in the present all things in Christ until His second coming.[7] The liturgy is the re-enactment of sacred history in the present. It reformulates Holy Scripture perpetually according to the divine *ratio* of events.[8] Through its sacraments it is the present means for the Christian soul of achieving the purpose of his life, the union with God in heaven.[9]

We shall see that this proportioning of events is also the principle of structuring in the religious lyrics, that it defines the role of the poet and his relationship to his audience, as well as defining the character of the audience itself, and that it also determines the power and beauty of the poem. A description of the ways in which the liturgy reformulates sacred history will provide the method and context for studying the poems.

níriu supplices rogamus ʒp̄

mus uti accepta heas ʒ bñidi

hec ʒ dona · hec ʒ munē

Three Reformulations of Sacred History by the Liturgy of the Church

THE LITURGY, WHICH WAS THE FORM OF THE SACRIFICE AND PRAYER AND sacraments of the medieval Church, is more than a symbolic form of worship. It is the reformation, reformulation and reconsecration of all things in Christ. It extends from Him as the center to all time and action. Articulating for the Church the events of sacred history until the end of time, it is the present interpreting the past; and at the same time this present is the means to and a foreshadowing of the beatific vision.

The center of the liturgy is the Mass, or the sacrament of the Eucharist.[10] The Mass is the perpetual re-enactment of the sacrifice of the New Testament in which the sacrifice of the cross is made present through Christ. Christ is the sacrificing priest and also the sacrificial victim, and the priest at the altar is His visible representative and His living instrument. Through him Christ offers Himself to the Father in sacrifice and gives Himself to the faithful as food. (See Figure 2 and descriptive note.) The central part, or Canon, of the Mass has three sections [11]: (1) the oblation of the gifts; (2) the sacrifice itself, consisting of the consecration of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ and the offering of Christ to the Father, which extends to the Pater Noster; and (3) the communion in which the Body and Blood of Christ are consumed.[12]

FIG. 2.—The Mass, Elevation of the Host. Illuminated "T" of the first words of the Canon "Te igitur . . . ," New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 142. The illumination shows the Mass as the perpetuation in present time of the redemptive death of Christ on the cross. For more extended discussion, refer to the Notes to Illustrations.

The Mass is the perpetual objective focus around which the rest of the liturgy of the Church is centered, uniting the sacrifice of Christ to each soul. Deep from within this center radiate the other sacraments, which are the unchanging rituals that mark the stages of the individual's worldly life with the stages of the coming of grace into the soul: baptism at birth, the cleansing of the soul from the original sin inherited at conception from Adam; penance, the cleansing of the soul from individual sins; confirmation, the strengthening in maturity by the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit; extreme unction at death, the anointing of the senses and the viaticum; and the sacraments of the state of life—marriage and holy orders. Every aspect of the individual's life is brought by the liturgy into direct relationship with the life of Christ, and the Mass and the other sacraments—the act of redemption and its application to individual souls—are the perpetual powers by which man is reformed into the likeness of Christ.

Besides the central sacrifice and communion of the Mass which never vary, the liturgy of the Church is composed of parts which vary, yet which bear a fixed relationship to each other and to the Canon. The liturgy reformulates sacred history according to three main proportions. Around the sacrifice and communion of the Mass gather the parts of the Mass called the Proper which vary according to the time and the occasion of the year. This is the seasonal cycle, in which the liturgy adapts the seasons of the year to the stages in the history of the redemption of man by God, so that through each year the Christian soul relives Christ's coming, His passion and death, His resurrection, and the founding of the Church.

Through the Divine Office the liturgy reformulates sacred history in a second way. The Office organizes the psalms and lessons of Holy Scripture, the homilies and prayers of the Church into a series of eight "hours" which correspond to the stages of the rising and the setting of the sun, so that the Christian soul can unite his prayer with the Church throughout each day. The Hours are made up of an unvarying sequence of readings, but also a variable proper part which, in relation to the Proper of the Mass, is adapted to the liturgical cycle of the seasons.

The third way in which the liturgy reformulates sacred history is by the fact that the parts into which it arranges these other varying forms are themselves ordered in a fixed relationship to each other. This order has levels of value, a scale of being, with Christ present in the sacrifice of the Mass as its focus and as the meaning of all the other parts. This third proportioning

is the composition of meaning itself within the liturgy and, as we shall see below, within the individual lyrics.

The Seasonal Cycle

First of all, the Proper of the Mass and the Office re-enact sacred history as it is related in Scripture and formulated in the present by the Church, by fitting it to the natural or temporal cycle of birth and death in the year. The seasons of the year are divided by the Church according to the stages of the redemption: in autumn, Advent, the season preparing for the coming of Christ, His birth in the world and also for His second coming at the end of time; in late winter and early spring, Lent, the long season of penance preparing for the passion and death of Christ, which culminates in the spring in Easter, the glorious season of Christ's resurrection, His forty days on earth before His ascension to the Father, and the nine days of waiting for the Holy Spirit; and finally, in summer, the season of Pentecost, which celebrates the mysteries of the Church, such as the Holy Trinity (the First Sunday after Pentecost) and Corpus Christi (Thursday after Trinity Sunday),[13] and which foreshadows in its liturgy the heavenly Jerusalem.

Besides celebrating the events of the redemption according to the seasons of the year, there is a second yearly cycle within the Mass and Office. The Proper of the Saints, organized according to a fixed calendar of the individual days and months of the year rather than the seasons, commemorates the lives of individuals as they have revealed or imitated Christ throughout the history of the Church and thus incorporates into the liturgical year the events coming after the death of Christ and after Pentecost.[14] The liturgy chosen to commemorate the saints was categorized into several common forms which reflected the traditional distinctions made between individual states of life within the Church. The Common of the Saints in the thirteenth century Sarum Missal contains a Common for apostles, martyrs, bishops, confessors, doctors, abbots, and virgins.[15] Individual Propers were also composed for special saints, as for the Feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury.[16] Individual events in a saint's life were occasionally commemorated, as, for example, on January 25, the Conversion of St. Paul.[17] Of the saints, Mary alone was venerated on each of the most important occasions of her life.

As well as the commemoration of the saints throughout the year, there

were also Votive Masses, Masses said so that the needs and desires of the people coming at any time or occasion of the year could be articulated within the Church. There were special Masses for the pope, for the whole Church, for the bishop and other clergy, for the king; Masses for oneself, for a friend, for penitents, against the temptations of the flesh and evil thoughts; Masses for invoking the graces of the Holy Spirit, for the gift of tears, a Mass "pro quacunque tribulacione," Masses for calm winds, against invaders and plagues, for sailors, for those in chains, for the infirm, and a Mass even for the mortality of man.[18] By means of these Masses every moment and desire of a man's life, or of a congregation's life, was articulated and consecrated by the liturgy of the Church.

The Hours of the Day

The second way sacred history was formed to the life of the soul by the medieval liturgy was by the singing of the hours of the day:

> The prophet saith: *Seven times a day have I given praise to thee.* We shall observe this sacred number of seven, if we fulfill the duties of our service in the Hours of Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline; for it was of these Day Hours that he said: *Seven times a day have I given praise to thee.* But of the Night Office the same prophet saith: *At midnight I rose to give praise to thee.* At these times, therefore, let us render praise to our Creator *for the judgements of his justice:* that is, at Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline; and let us rise in the night to praise him.[19]

These are the words of St. Benedict in Chapter XVI of the Holy Rule he composed for his monks, in the section where he tells "How the Work of God Is to Be Performed in the Day-Time."[20] Although St. Benedict (d. 543) did not institute any of these Offices, through his order of monks they were diffused throughout Christendom.[21] The Divine Office was said by both the secular and the religious clergy, and it reached the lay people through the public recitation of Matins, Vespers and Compline in the great cathedral churches and also in manuals of devotion, such as the *Horae,* or Prymers, by means of which the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin was said.[22]

The eight Hours of the Divine Office enclose the course of the natural day

in prayer and they reformulate sacred history through using Scripture in such a way as to relate each day to the seasonal cycle of the year and to interpret the passage of a day in the life of the individual soul. According to the length and complexity of their contents, the Hours can be grouped into three main types.[23] Matins, said early in the morning, is the longest and most central Hour.[24] Lauds, said at dawn, and Vespers, said late in the afternoon, form a second shorter type, and Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Compline which do not vary as much as the other three Hours make up the third, simpler type of Office.[25] At Matins the readings from Scripture, the homilies, antiphons, and responses develop most profoundly the theme of the day in the cycle of the year.

The norm established by St. Benedict was for the readings of Matins to cover the whole of Scripture during the year, together with commentaries from the Fathers on the selections read.[26] The order in which the Old Testament readings were arranged was adapted to correspond with the cycle of the Church year which followed the history of the coming of Christ, and these readings maintained the allegorical relationship between the events and figures of the Old Testament and the incarnation of Christ. In Advent Isaiah's prophecy of the coming Messiah was read. The story of creation was read on Septuagesima Sunday, and Genesis and Exodus read from then until Passion Sunday to prepare for the new creation accomplished by Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.[27] Jeremiah was read in Passiontide;[28] then in the midsummer season of the Holy Spirit, the Book of Kings, followed by Ecclesiasticus, Job, Tobias, Judith, Machabees and Ezechiel.[29] On Sundays and feast days the last lesson at Matins was the selection from the Gospel which was to be read at the Mass of that day, and it was preceded by a reading of one of the Fathers' commentaries on it.

Just as the readings of Matins originally were intended to comprehend all of Holy Scripture during the liturgical year, so, St. Benedict explains, the Hours were composed to provide for the saying of the one hundred and fifty psalms of the Psalter once a week.[30] The psalms said were not varied according to the season, although on Sundays and special feast days, the Office contained the more joyful psalms. But within the Hours of the Office, the hymns, the antiphons, the invitatory and responses, and the readings, all varied, reflecting the aspect of sacred history commemorated in that particular season of the year.

It is the shorter Hours said throughout the day which relate the stages of life of the individual soul to the rhythm of the day. The hymns with which

each Hour opens reflect the leading thought of the hour, expressing a correspondence between the time of day, the needs of the soul and the coming of Christ into the world. At Prime, the sun dawns, the Church rises to meet Christ the spiritual sun. The "Jam lucis orto sidere"[31] asks that God may keep our acts from harm, that we guard our tongues, hearts, and carnal desires, and that finally when daylight has gone we may sing His glory. The hymn for Terce invokes the Holy Spirit to take possession of our hearts and enkindle them with the fire of divine love. Sext, said in the heat of the day, compares the heat of the sun to the passions and asks that noxious heat be extinguished. None, addressing God Who remains immovable through the gradation of the light of the day, asks for a death in the light of eternal glory. Finally, Compline, said at the ending of the day, asks for protection from nightly fantasies, from the devil, and from bodily pollution.

Just as the Mass had a Proper for the individual saints' feasts, so individual Offices were composed for the celebration of saints' feasts. The Sarum Breviary provides for a Common of the Saints which corresponds to that of the Mass, a Common for apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, and virgins. Some of the Offices of the saints were composed in poetical form, using rhyme and meter. The Franciscans adopted this practice and set out whole Offices in the same rhythmical and metrical pattern. The composition of Offices in poetical form occurred in England as well as on the Continent. Around the beginning of the thirteenth century, for example, Julian Spires (d. 1250) wrote Offices of St. Francis and St. Anthony. The Archbishop of Canterbury, John of Peckham (ca. 1297), composed an Office of the Holy Trinity imitating Julian's Office of St. Francis.[32]

Thus the Hours of the Divine Office unite the progress of the activities of the day and the passage of the Christian soul through life to sacred history which the liturgy orders in the great seasonal cycle of the year. We shall see that this seasonal cycle itself is formulated by another movement of hierarchical relationship effected by the fixed order of the liturgy as it culminates in the present prayer of the Church when the Church offers Christ in the sacrifice of the Mass.

Mary

Because of Mary's unique relationship to Christ as His mother and therefore the doorway through which Christ came to earth and the gate

through which man will reach heaven, the liturgy of the Church formulated Mary's part in sacred history, honoring and invoking her beside her Son as the means of reaching Him. The important stages in her life were commemorated as they related to the life of Christ. Honoring Mary's own birth as the preparation of Christ's coming, on December eighth the liturgy celebrated the Feast of Mary's Conception and on September eighth the Feast of her Nativity.[33] Commemorating her central role as the virgin mother of Christ, on March twenty-fifth the Church celebrated the Feast of the Annunciation, and through the Christmas season the liturgy referred often to her motherhood.[34] On February second, also, came the Feast of the Purification, when the candles were blessed for the year and the readings commemorated the presentation of Christ in the Temple. It is the account of the presentation by Luke which foreshadows Mary's suffering at her Son's crucifixion and death, for Luke tells how Simeon prophesied that Mary's heart would be pierced by a sword (Luke 2:34–35), a prophecy that we shall see in the lyrics is fundamental to the definition of Mary's sorrow.[35] And finally, on August fifteenth, the liturgy celebrated Mary's assumption into heaven, the event which came as the consequence of her being the mother of God.[36] In the Middle English Marian lyrics the themes and content of the liturgy of Mary's feasts are used by the poet to name and define her beauty as he seeks her intercession, and it is Mary's position in the present as Queen of Heaven and Mother of Mercy that establishes the fundamental proportion and context of the poems.

As well as being honored in these individual feasts, Mary was especially commemorated on Saturdays. In the Lady Chapel, a side chapel built in cathedral and collegiate churches in Mary's honor, her Mass would be said if there were no major feast taking precedence.[37] Reflecting the changing focus of the liturgy throughout the seasons of the year, the Proper of these Saturday Masses changed three times: for the season of Advent, for the season from Christmas to the Purification, for the season from the Purification to Advent again (with changes in this season in the Gospel reading of Eastertide).[38] The principle of variation was, as in the Matins readings, to make a correspondence between the season and the stages in the redemption of man by Christ. That from Advent to Christmas, the season which prepares for Christ's coming, used the Mass of the Annunciation; that from Christmas to the Purification, the season which celebrates the appearance of the Messiah, used the themes of Christmas; and that from the Purification to Advent, the spring and summer seasons which celebrate the founding of the

Church, used the theme of Mary as mother in heaven, where, analogous to the Church, she draws men to Christ.

Just as the form of the seasonal cycle of the Mass celebrated Mary, so the Church consecrated the hours of the day to her. In the tenth century the custom grew up of saying a daily Office devoted solely to the Blessed Virgin, which along with the Office of the Dead began to be said in addition to the Divine Office. The order of this Office, referred to as the *Horae,* or Hours of the Virgin, and later in English as the Prymer, was the same as for the Divine Office, but there was no variation by day or season.[39] Since the *Horae* did not vary with the cycle of the Church year and did not change with the days of the week, they offered a fixed form of perpetual praise of Mary, defining her virgin birth, celebrating her union in heaven with Christ. A form of poetry used for devotion attached itself to these Hours which reflected the sequence of the canonical Hours of the day in the Divine Office. The sequence of the Hours of the day was ordered to correspond with the events of the life of Christ, and more frequently in a series of metrical meditations called Hours of the Cross or of the Passion, they were made to correspond with the stages of His passion. Corresponding to the Hours of the Passion, the *Horae* sometimes included the Hours of Mary's Compassion.

The devotion in the *Horae* of the Hours of the Passion and the Hours of Mary's Compassion produced many Middle English versions.[40] The method by which the devotion was organized illustrates for us a fundamental principle of form behind the lyrics we shall study which springs from the *ratio* Christ establishes between events, that there is a symmetrical correspondence between events and inner experiences as they are defined by the stages of sacred history. Always the governing focus of the correspondence to which the others point and by which they are defined is Christ.

The principle is clearly illustrated by the Hours of the Cross and the Compassion as they are composed in the Sarum *Horae.*[41] At Prime, Christ is accused before Pilate and bound (Mary sees Him flagellated and spat upon, and twists her hands). At Terce, the Jews condemn Him, crown Him with thorns and lead Him to Golgotha (Mary sorrows about His crowning, His shoulders suffering under the cross). At Sext, Christ is nailed to the cross, hung between the two thieves, and is given gall to drink (Mary, seeing her Child lifted on the cross, between thieves, and given gall to drink, cries out). At None, Christ dies, the soldier pierces His side, the earth trembles, the sun is hidden (Mary, weeping, sees Him expire, give His spirit to the Father crying out *Eloi,* and, seeing His side pierced, she falls transfixed by sorrow).

At Vespers, Christ is taken down from the cross (Mary holds and kisses Him). At Compline, Christ, anointed with spices, is placed in the sepulchre. In Him, the poet says, is the hope of the future life (Mary mourns in confusion, not desiring to leave but to die with Him there, until at last by His resurrection her Son is exalted). The Hours correspond to the stages in the passion. Mary is the counterpart of Christ's suffering, expressing, as well as her own, the inner sorrow of those who love Him.

In the Sarum *Horae* there is yet another poetic meditation appended to the Passion of Christ and the Compassion of Mary which illustrates through Mary the double potentiality each hour of the day has for sorrow and for joy. Added at a date possibly later than Hours of the Passion and Compassion, before each Hour, beginning with Matins, there is a woodcut with a quatrain of verse under it depicting the sources of Mary's joy and sorrow as mother of Christ. The woodcut pictures an event in her life; the quatrain of English verse explains its meaning. These are, at Lauds, the visitation; at Prime, Christ's nativity; at Terce, the angel's annunciation to the shepherds; at Sext, the epiphany of Christ to the Three Kings; at None, Christ's circumcision; at Vespers, the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt; and, finally, at Compline, the assumption, reception, and coronation of Mary in heaven.

The liturgy of Mary is the reflection of the life of Christ and points to Christ as its source and end and its center. Her place closest to Christ, and her life in the most perfect image of His, is praised, meditated on and invoked. Her life is celebrated through the course of the year, in the seasonal cycle, and the hours of each day are consecrated to her in the *Horae,* in which the life of Christ is seen through the present joy of Mary, who by her assumption is the promise of man's final joy.

The Ladder

We have mentioned that the Mass is the focal point of the liturgy, the central re-enactment of sacred history offered perpetually by Christ through the priest and the body of worshippers, to be done until the end of time. The third reformulation of sacred history is by order of the fixed parts of the liturgy as they relate to Christ. Whereas through the changing seasonal cycle and the movement of the Hours, the focus of the liturgy on sacred history varies, through the fixed sequence of parts, these variations move in a fixed order of value, much as in early polyphony the variation in melody moved

from point to point of a stable harmony.[42] The parts of the Mass are ordered as they relate more or less closely to Christ, or to use the inverse image, as they radiate out from the center which is Christ. This fixed hierarchical relationship establishes the second dynamic relationship between the soul and Christ, that of closer and closer union.

To illustrate this third reformulation of sacred history by the medieval Church, and to show how it is the foundation of meaning in sacred history, I will describe, using the Sarum Missal, how the hierarchical order in which the variable parts of the Proper of the Mass of the Annunciation are arranged affects the way these parts are interpreted. These variable parts are of three kinds: readings—the Gospel and the Lesson; shorter passages from Scripture and tradition—the Gradual, Tract, Offertory and Communion Verses; and three prayers, the Collect, Secret and Postcommunion. Having defined the principle of the ladder of value, we can then begin the study of the poems themselves as theology shaped them.[43]

The Gospel

The Proper of the Mass, the texts of the Mass varying according to the feast of the day, focuses on a short reading from one of the four Gospels which states the event or the theme of the event in sacred history being commemorated. The reading for the Feast of the Annunciation is Luke 1:26–38:

> And in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son: and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his father: and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of

his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy [one] which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren. Because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.[44]

This passage from Luke as it is selected by the liturgy is the unit chosen for the commentary by the homilists [45] and on which the Middle English poets base their account of the annunciation. Generally the sermon of the Mass, which in the Sarum Missal comes after the Credo, would be based upon the passage in the Gospel reading, and several of the lessons read at Matins would be homilies of the Fathers on this same text. It is through the incorporation of the commentary on Scripture of the early Fathers into the Office that the Church preserved her traditional interpretation of Scripture and from which the Church formulated new commentary. And it is these sermons and homilies which develop the Gospel reading in its context of sacred history.

The Lesson

Preceding the Gospel and preparing for it is the Epistle or Lesson which is taken from a part of Scripture other than the Gospels, sometimes a selection from the Old Testament, or from the Acts of the Apostles, or an Epistle of Paul, James, Peter or John.[46] By coming before the Gospel reading and being used as a preparation for it, the Lesson is given direct application to the event or words related in the Gospel. It is set in an allegorical relationship to the Gospel, in terms of which its full meaning is made clear. The Lesson for the Feast of the Annunciation is Isaiah 7:10-15:

And the Lord spoke again to Achaz, saying: Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, either unto the depth of hell, or unto the

height above. And Achaz said: I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord. And he said: Hear ye therefore, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son: and his name shall be called Emmanuel. He shall eat butter and honey, that he may know to refuse the evil, and to choose the good.

The method of the liturgy and the method of Scripture and scriptural commentators is the same in applying this prophecy to the words of the angel and the event of the annunciation. Already in his wording of the Vulgate translation of the passage from Isaiah, "ecce virgo concipiet, et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel," St. Jerome made the relationship between the two explicit, "ecce concipies in utero et paries filium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum." [47]

In the readings of Matins for the Feast of the Annunciation in the York Breviary, in his homily on the Gospel, St. Ambrose uses this same method of juxtaposing events of the Old to the New Testament to describe the significance of the annunciation. Using Genesis 3:13–16, which describes the penalty given to the serpent and to woman for her disobedience, and by developing the correspondences and symmetries in sacred history, the Matins lesson formulates the doctrine of Mary's virginal conception and parturition. First of all, St. Ambrose conceives of Mary as the second Eve, expressing the traditional interpretation of God's curse to the serpent as a prophecy applying to the Virgin Mary: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." And he contrasts Mary to Eve whom God punished by the curse: "I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." Mary is the second Eve, but where Eve disobeyed, Mary is obedient to God's word, and where Eve brought sorrow and will bear children in sorrow, Mary brings joy and bears her Child in joy. She bears Christ, but remains a virgin:

Precisum est in ea illud eve infelicitatis elogium: in tristitia paries filio. [*sic*] quia ista in leticia dominum parturivit. Virgo quippe genuit: quia virgo concepit. Inviolata peperit: quia in conceptu

libido non fuit. Extitit enim sine corruptione gravida: et in partu virgo puerpera.[48]

Using this same method of juxtaposition of the Old Testament to the New, the medieval theologian saw Mary not only as the second Eve, but as the fulfillment of many other events and figures: the valiant woman (Prov. 31:10–31), the burning bush of Moses (Exod. 3:2–3), the flowering of the rod of Aaron (Num. 17:8), the rod of the root of Jesse (Isa. 11:1–2, Rom. 15:12), the fleece of Gideon (Judg. 6:36–40); he saw her as Judith, as Rachel, as the sling of David, as the closed gate (Ezek. 44:2).[49] Many of these relationships were made by the liturgy on the feasts of Mary as it applied passages to Mary from Ecclesiasticus, the Psalms, the Canticles. This method of conceiving events and people and phrases of the Old Testament as figures of Mary is fundamental to the poetry evolving from the liturgy, and it is fundamental to the Middle English religious lyrics.[50] We shall see that even when actual biblical figures are not used, the poet will develop his definition of different aspects of Mary in each poem by juxtaposing one event or concept to another in a way analogous to the methods of the liturgy and the homilists. And as in the liturgy, the juxtaposition will be made always in relation to Christ as the center of value.

Passages from Scripture and Tradition

Leading up to the Lesson, joining the Lesson to the Gospel reading, introducing the offering of the bread and the wine in the Mass, and occurring at the time of communion are shorter passages taken from Scripture and tradition, the Introit, the Gradual and Tract, the Offertory and the Communion Verses. These were taken from the psalms, the prophets, the Gospel, homilies and poetic tradition.[51] By their position in the Mass, they, like the Lesson, were interpreted in relation to the central events celebrated by the feast and recounted in the Gospel. On the Feast of the Annunciation, the Introit of the Mass, which is said after the preparatory psalm and the confession, consists of another prophecy of Isaiah (Isa. 45:8).[52]

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and bring forth a saviour.

19

Ps. And let righteousness spring up together: I the Lord have created it.[53]

By the Introit those present are prepared for the theme of the Lesson and the Gospel, and at the same time invoke God to fulfill the prophecy contained in it.

Between the reading of the Lesson and the Gospel, the Gradual is sung by the choir and said privately by the priest as the subdeacon prepares the bread and wine. The Gradual for the Annunciation again illustrates the way in which the liturgy selects and rearranges Scripture giving it new meaning as the passage is set in relationship to the event being celebrated. Here the Gradual (and the Tract which follows) focuses on the holiness of Mary as the medium through whom Christ came. The Gradual applies to the theme several verses of Psalm 44, and it introduces the salutation of the angel (Luke 1:28), anticipating the account in the reading of the Gospel that will follow:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the king of glory shall come in.

V. Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall rise up in his holy place? even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart.

Alleluya. *V.* Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

In the context of Mary's feast the verses of Psalm 44 are applied so that they refer to the special purity and grace of Mary which made her a fitting place for the Lord to dwell. The order of verses is changed from that in the psalm, so that the theme of the entry of the Lord comes before the description of the holiness of Mary, revealing by its position that the Lord is the source of her holiness. The description of Mary's holiness in the first verse provides the transition to the *Alleluia* and New Testament verse, where Mary is named and honored by the salutation given to her by the angel at the annunciation.[54]

In the Sarum liturgy a sequence usually follows the Gradual on feast days. It is through the sequences that poetry is directly incorporated into the texture of the Mass. The sequence is a rhythmic or metrical structure of words and music which evolved from the practice of troping or farsing ("filling") the long melisma of the *Alleluia* sung in the Eastern season.[55] As

with liturgical drama, its early forms can be traced back to the ninth century and the monastery of St. Gall.[56] By the twelfth century sequences had become very popular throughout Europe. The *Laetebundus* melody, for example, had at least a hundred imitations. Adam of St. Victor (d. 1192), who used metrical rhyming verse pairs with a changed melody for each pair, gave the sequence its highest development.[57] Many Middle English lyrics developed from liturgical sequences, and we shall see examples of this in four of the poems to be discussed below.

The sequence used on the Feast of the Annunciation, "Ave mundi spes Maria," develops from the verse of the Gradual, "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women," and it is a series of modifications, much like farsings, of the angel's greeting (see Appendix I).[58] It uses many of the modes of formulation in the liturgy which we shall see are used in the English lyrics: the traditional figures for Mary—the burning bush, the rose, the rod of Jesse, the lily of chastity; the application of the liturgy to the individual soul; and the three focuses of liturgical time.

Because the Annunciation falls during Lent, it has a Tract, which is said privately by the celebrant and ministers while the sequence is being sung:[59]

> Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
>
> *V.* Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
>
> *V.* The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.
>
> *V.* Therefore, also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

The emphasis of the Tract is that Mary will bear God. The verses, taken again from the Gospel to follow, repeat the last verse of the Gradual and combine it with a second salutation, Elizabeth's greeting to Mary inspired by the Holy Spirit at Mary's visit to her (Luke 1:42). Preceding the angel's words of prophecy that Mary shall bear God, they remind those present of the prophecy's fulfillment. The two verses which follow are the angel's reply to Mary's question, "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" They explain how the prophecy of Isaiah is to be brought about; the Father is to be God, the Son is to be God. Thus prepared for both by prophecy and a description of the holiness of the mother and the nature of the Child, the Gospel is read.

After the Gospel reading comes the Credo. Following the Credo and the sermon comes the Offertory as the priest offers the bread and wine which are to be consecrated. The Offertory Verse repeats the combined salutation of the angel and Elizabeth, here as the expression of praise. After the consecration, oblation and communion, the Communion Verse is said. The Communion Verse repeats the essential element of the Lesson, the sign given in Isaiah's prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son: and shall call his name Emmanuel."

Prayers

A third type of formulation in the Proper remains to be mentioned that is also a structural principle of the Middle English lyric. At three moments the liturgy formulates special prayers for the feast and the intention of the Mass, channelling the prayers of the present congregation. These are the Collect, the Secret, and the Postcommunion prayers. The Collect follows the Gloria and precedes the Lesson. As Jungmann points out, the Collect is based on the Roman oration, which in its simplest type is the barest petition, a request. While the Secret and Postcommunion are close to this simple form, for the Feast of the Annunciation, as for the other major feast days, the Collect is an amplified petition:

> O God, who wast pleased that thy Word should take flesh in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary, through the message of an angel; grant unto us thy suppliants, that as we believe her to be truly the mother of God, so we may be aided by her intercession before thee. Through [our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end].

The Collect makes visible the outlines of the universe in which the prayer of the Church is conceived: "It arises in the communion of holy Church and ascends through Christ to God on high." [60] In all Collects of the Roman liturgy the address is to God the Father rather than to Christ, Who generally is not mentioned except in the closing formula. This focus on God the Father reflects the end and object of the Church's prayer in the Mass. The fact that Christ is mentioned in the concluding formula reflects the Church's

conception of the universe in terms of sacred history, as the congregation asks for the gifts *through* Christ. The Church offers the petition to God *"through the mediation* of Christ, who (as St. Paul says) 'lives on still to make intercession on our behalf' (Heb. 7:25)." [61]

Besides being the address to God the Father through the mediation of Christ, there is another aspect of the Collect which is also, as we shall see, central to the lyrics. The prayer is worded in the plural, "we." In this "we" it is the Church that prays, the petitioners and recipients of God's gifts. Jungmann explains:

> The Church is included here not only conceptually, but actually. In liturgical prayer there is—there must be—in fullest reality a communion in which all those participate who join with the priest as he performs the service, all those who are represented expressly by the greeting and its answer and by the comprehensive *Oremus*. Even in a small group of faithful, with the priest standing at the altar at their head, not only is there present a number of Christians, but the Church itself is there in its hierarchic structure—God's people of the New Covenant in the order and arrangement given them by Christ. [62]

This is the identity of the "us" which so often forms the point of view in the Middle English lyric.

In the Collect for the Annunciation, the fact that the Church celebrates Mary's feast is reflected in the relative clause, which mentions the annunciation, and in the petition, which contains a profession of faith that Mary is truly the mother of God. Most Middle English religious lyrics are ultimately addresses to Christ as man's redeemer. The lyrics which focus on Mary will all have a double mediation. The address to Christ comes through a prayer to Mary. The ultimate purpose of the poet and his audience is that of the Church, to be united through Christ to God the Father in heaven.

The Secret is the last variable part before the Canon of the Mass, and on the Feast of the Annunciation it anticipates the coming mystery. [63]

> Strengthen, we beseech thee, O Lord, our minds in the mysteries of the true faith; that we who stedfastly confess him who was conceived of a virgin to be very God and very man, may by the power of the same saving incarnation be found worthy to attain unto everlasting happiness. Through etc.

The Postcommunion prayer applies the graces of the Mass to the congregation.

> We beseech thee, O Lord, to pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection. Through etc.

The prayers of the feast have a three-fold perspective: on the two central events of the Incarnation, the coming and the death and the resurrection of Christ, as these are defined by the third, the particular theme of the feast—the words of the angel to Mary and her role as the virgin mother of Christ. Just as the lessons and verses are related ultimately to the Gospel in which the central event of the feast is told, so in the prayers the Church applies the theme of the whole Mass to the souls of the faithful who petition God, by Mary's intercession, through Christ.

The position in the movement of the Mass of these variable parts, the Introit, Collect, Lesson, Gradual, Sequence, Tract, Gospel reading, Offertory, Secret, Communion and Postcommunion, never varies. They remain in their position relative to the unchanging parts—the entry psalm, the Kyrie and Gloria, the prayers of preparation which lead to the Credo—like the frame of a ladder through which the succession of feasts moves, each new theme being reformulated as the ladder juxtaposes new units of words.

Besides the fixed hierarchy of the variable parts of the Mass there is also the analogous fixed order of the material in the Hours of the Divine Office and the devotion of the Little Hours in the English Prymer, with the psalms, the readings, the many antiphons, verses and responses, all applying events, images, phrases in Scripture to the themes of Mary's feasts. In the Prymer, for example, are gathered some of the most beautiful antiphons, which develop the Old Testament types of Mary as they celebrate her virgin motherhood: for Prime, "O þou wondurful chaunge! þe makere of mankynde, takynge a bodi wiþ a soule, of a maide vouchide saaf be bore, & so, forþ goynge man, wiþ-outen seed, ȝaf to us his god-hede"; for Terce, "Whanne he was born wondurfulliche of a maide, þanne was fulfillid holi writ. þou cam doun as reyn in-to a flees, for to make saaf mankynde: þee we preisen, oure god"; for Sext, "Bi þe buysch þat moises siȝ vnbrent, we knowen þat þi preisable maidenhede is kept. modir of god, preie for us"; for None, "The

rote of iesse haþ burioned; a sterre is risun of iacob; a maide haþ borun oure saueour. þee we preisen, oure god"; for Evensong, or Vespers, "Aftir þi child-berynge, þou leftist maide wiþ-outen wem. modir of god, preie for us"; for Compline, "Hail, quene of heuenes, modir of þe king of aungelis! O marie, flour of virgines, as þe rose or þe lilie, make preiers to þi sone, for þe helþe of alle cristen men." [64]

The third reformulation of sacred history by the liturgy, then, is through the fixed hierarchical order of the parts of the Mass and the Office. The form of the liturgy is itself an interpretation of Scripture and sacred history. The form generates a meaning ordered to lead closer and closer to Christ. This form is both a sequence in time and a hierarchy of reality. As sequence and hierarchy it is analogous to the principle of sacred history which it formulates, which recounts the coming of God into history and the drawing of man into God through Christ. It is also, considered in the subjective mode, analogous to the movement through grades of perception of the soul in its ascent into Christ.

By these formulations the materials of Scripture and the meditations of the Church are reordered and juxtaposed with a triple focus. At the center of the Proper is the Gospel reading, the first focus, in the light of which the Lesson, the psalms and verses are defined and expressed, and around which the Office is built. The Gospel itself and its galaxy of reflections in the Proper is defined in relationship to a deeper focus, to the present sacrifice of the Mass to which it points. The feast of the occasion and the desires of the people present are, in a third focus, united to the present sacrifice through the Collects and other prayers. In the medieval liturgy the Mass stands in direct relationship to God, being Christ's offering to the Father, and the means by which the past, assimilated to the present, points to the future union in the ultimate focus of the beatific vision.

part one

The Annunciation and Birth of Christ

FIG. 3.—The Annunciation. First of four miniatures preceding the Amesbury Abbey Psalter, Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 3 (see Figs. 6 and 7). For more extended discussion, refer to the Notes to Illustrations.

28

AVE MARIA GRACIA PLENA DOMINVS TECVM

Gabriel, fram evene-king
  sent to þe maide swete,
broute þire blisful tiding
  And faire he gan hire greten: 4
    "heil be þu ful of grace a-rith!
    for godes sone, þis euene lith,
    for mannes louen
    wile man bicomen,   8
    and taken
    fles of þe maiden brith,
    manken fre for to maken
    of senne and deules mith."   12

Mildeliche im gan andsweren
  þe milde maiden þanne:
"Wichewise sold ichs beren
  child with-huten manne?"   16
    þangle seide, "ne dred te nout;
    þurw þoligast sal ben iwrout
    þis ilche þing,
    war-of tiding   20
    ichs bringe,
    al manken wrth ibout

þur þi swete chiltinge,
and hut of pine ibrout."   24

Wan þe maiden understud
  and þangles wordes herde,
mildeliche with milde mud
  to þangle hie andswerde: 28
    "hur lordes þeumaiden iwis
    ics am, þat her a-bouen is.
    anenttis me,
    fulfurthed be   32
    þi sawe;
    þat ics, sithen his wil is,
    maiden, withhuten lawe
    of moder, haue þe blis."   36

Þangle wente a-wei mid þan,
  al hut of hire sithte;
hire wombe arise gan
  þurw þoligastes mithe.   40
    in hire was crist biloken anon,
    Suth god, soth man ine fleas and bon,
    and of hir fleas
    iboren was   44
    at time.
    War-þurw us kam god won,
    he bout us hut of pine
    and let im for us slon.   48

Maiden, moder makeles,
  of milche ful ibunden,
bid for hus im þat þe ches
  at wam þu grace funde,   52
    þat he forgiue hus senne and wrake,
    and clene of euri gelt us make,
    and eune blis,
    wan hure time is   56

to steruen,
hus giue, for þine sake
him so her for to seruen
þat he us to him take.   60

"Gabriel, fram Evene-King"

TO BEGIN TO SHOW HOW FUNDAMENTAL THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE THEO-
logical form behind the poem is to achieving the full reading of a medieval
religious lyric, I would like to take the English version of "Angelus ad
virginem," the song sung by Nicholas in Chaucer's *Miller's Tale,* and set it
back into its context as a liturgical sequence commemorating the coming of
Christ.[1] The sequence is an appeal to Mary by virtue of the beauty of her
virgin motherhood, and it was with humorous irony that Chaucer put its
words into the lecherous clerk's mouth.

The Inner Form

Mother and Maid

As part of the Mass the Latin sequence was composed to be sung after the
Lesson containing Isaiah's prophecy that a virgin should conceive (Isa.
7:10–15) and before the Gospel reading telling of the annunciation by the
angel and Mary's acceptance (Luke 1:26–38), and it opens with almost the
same words as the Gospel, "Missus est angelus Gabriel a Deo . . . ad
virginem." The author of the English version has used the Gospel account
and through praising Mary's part in Christ's coming, he gives the Gospel its
full context in sacred history. The manner in which the author has modified
his account from that in the Gospel reveals the central focus of the sequence.

The first three stanzas tell of the angel's coming to Mary. (See Figure 3.)

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In the Gospel the focus is on the angel's annunciation of the moment of the coming of the Messiah. Immediately after the angel's salutation, Mary is troubled in her heart about the import of the angel's greeting. The angel, who reads her unspoken thoughts, tells her to fear not. With his next announcement, of the coming of Israel's King, he mentions Mary's motherhood, telling her that she will bear Jesus, Who will be called the Son of God and Who will reign forever. Whereas the Gospel account begins with the angel's greeting and Mary's being troubled by what the salutation means, the English poem combines the angel's greeting with his announcement that she will conceive the King and begins by focusing on Mary's virgin motherhood: "heil be þu ful of grace a-rith!/ for godes sone . . . wile man bicomen,/ and taken/ fles of þe maiden brith." [2] Because of His love, the angel continues, through the "maide swete" God will become man and will free man from sin and punishment. Mary is not disturbed, as she is in the Gospel, by the nature of the greeting, but by the fact that, vowed to virginity, she will conceive a child, and stanza two is devoted to Mary's questioning of the angel and to his explanation. How can this birth take place without her having known man, she asks. The angel replies, through the power of the Holy Spirit. All men will be redeemed by her childbearing, he continues, his words "swete chiltinge" suggesting both that Mary will remain a virgin at her Child's conception and bring forth her Child without pain.[3]

In stanza three, speaking of Mary again as "maiden," the poet gives Mary's acceptance. The first part (lines 29–33) paraphrases Mary's words of consent in the Gospel, "anenttis me,/ fulfurthed be/ þi sawe." The last three lines expand her reply, again shifting the words of the Gospel to emphasize the idea of her virgin motherhood, as if she herself had fully formulated the doctrine at that moment: "þat ics, sithen his wil is,/ maiden, withhuten lawe/ of moder, haue þe blis"—that I according to His will shall have the bliss of maidenhood without the law of motherhood. This "law" refers to the punishment given by God to Eve for her sin: that she shall bring forth her children in pain and sorrow. Mary, the second Eve, contrasted to Eve by her obedience and humility, will bring forth the Son of God in joy.[4]

In the fourth stanza, the poet tells of Christ's actual growth in Mary's womb, repeating the idea that Christ's flesh was her flesh, echoing the idea spoken in the Gradual of the spring and summer Masses of Mary: "O virgin mother of God, he whom the whole world cannot contain hid himself in thy womb, and was made man." [5] He tells that in time Christ was born for man's salvation.

Stanza five is the climax of the appeal to Mary in virtue of her virgin motherhood. "Maiden, moder makeles," Mary is addressed by a title that recurs often in Middle English. The word "makeles" had two denotations: the first, to be without an equal, matchless, peerless; and the second, a later use of the word, to be mateless. When applied to Mary, "makeles" has the same special connotations as the Latin *singularis*. Of all creatures, Mary is unique because she is the only woman to be both maid and mother. This matchlessness is the special sign of her closeness to God and also of the fact that her Son is divine.[6] The address in this last stanza to Mary as "maiden, moder makeles" comes at the fitting moment, after the poet has defined her matchless quality, and it is with this title that the poet appeals to her mercy (lines 53-60).

Yet the event has been set also in a wider context. Mary has been conceived of always as the medium through whom God came, who opened heaven to man. The Feast of the Annunciation is Mary's feast, yet only because it celebrates her important role in sacred history before Christ Himself became manifest. At the same time as he has modified the account of the annunciation from that given in the Gospel into a full definition of the virgin motherhood, the poet has used the virgin motherhood he defines as a figure through which to show the importance of the annunciation in sacred history.[7]

The Context of Sacred History

First of all, the concept of sacred history is important to the wider purpose and structure of the poem. Each of the first three stanzas which are given to recounting the Gospel event of the angel's coming and Mary's reply is placed by the poet explicitly in the context of the total plan of salvation. In stanza one, the angel is said to come from God with, in line three, "blisful" tiding. Seen in its context in sacred history, "blisful" suggests more than one joyful occasion. From Mary's perspective at the moment of the annunciation, "blisful" can refer to the joy of Christ's birth which will follow. From the full perspective of the soul living in the present age of the Church, who looks back on the annunciation, "blisful" refers to the bliss of heaven, which Christ's birth and death have opened for man. This is the point of view of the poet and the audience for whom he writes. The last three lines of stanza one make this full meaning of the bliss the angel announces explicit by

recounting Christ's coming as part of the total plan of sacred history: This Son of God will come to set man free from sin and the power of the devil.

As in stanza one, in each of the next two stanzas the poet devotes the last three lines to giving the event its significance in the total plan of sacred history. In the second stanza, the angel repeats his explanation of the purpose of the Incarnation, but in a different manner from the first. The angel does not say that man will be bought by Mary's Child Himself, but, focusing on Mary's virgin motherhood, which we saw was the special focus of the poem, he says that man will be bought through Mary's sweet bearing of the Child. In other words, by means of the painless giving birth by a virgin mother man will be brought from pain. The concept of being brought from pain has the same references in time as the concept of "blis." There is a reflection backward and forward in sacred history of the figure of pain. If we think of past history, pain refers to the pain which has come as a penalty of the Fall; of the present, pain refers to the pain of this life; of the future, pain refers to the pain of an eternal hell. From the point of view of the events related in the poem, latent in this figure of pain is the pain that will follow from Christ's birth, the pain He will take on Himself in His passion and death and which will be the means whereby man will be released from pain. Christ's pain will be mentioned in stanza four.

The last three lines of the third stanza contain Mary's consent to God's will and the explicit theological formulation of Mary's painless giving birth, the "swete chiltinge" which was only suggested in the second stanza. They bring to a climax the focus of the poem on Mary. Seen from the perspective of the moment of the annunciation, this birth will be a source of "blis" to Mary by being painless. From the point of view of man in present time seeing the whole of God's plan, the "blis" of the painless birth will be the mark of her special grace with God. With these last three lines the poet has now completely formulated the meaning of Mary's virginal conception and giving birth to Christ.[8]

The first three stanzas together told of the event of the annunciation, giving in the last three lines of each stanza its significance through Mary in the context of sacred history. The last two stanzas, four and five, by making the implications explicit fulfill the first three.

> Þangle wente a-wei mid þan,
>   al hut of hire sithte;
> hire wombe arise gan

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þurw þoligastes mithe.
in hire was crist biloken anon,
Suth god, soth man ine fleas and bon,
and of hir fleas
iboren was
at time.
War-þurw us kam god won,
he bout us hut of pine
and let im for us slon.

In the fourth stanza, to define fully the reason for joy, the poet tells of the events in sacred history which have occurred as a consequence of the annunciation. Through the power of the Holy Spirit (as the angel had said) Christ, true God and true man, was conceived, swelled in Mary's womb, and was born. The last three lines here in stanza four speak of Christ in Whom sacred history centers, saying that through His conception and birth the rest of the events of the redemption were able to be fulfilled. Christ died, was resurrected and opened heaven ("god won") to man.

In this stanza Mary's painless conception and giving birth to Christ have yet another application, which is made clear by these last three lines. The angel had told Mary in stanza one that man would be bought through her virginal conception, that he would be freed from sin and the power of the devil. In stanza two the concept of painless birth was suggested and applied to the first stanza. The redemption of man through Mary's "swete chiltinge" was expressed by the figure of release from pain. We find here in stanza four that the fulfillment of the angel's promise is told in respect to a third pain. Through the crucifixion of Christ, His pain and death, man is bought and given heaven. The crucifixion is more explicitly treated in the Latin version of the sequence from the Arundel MS, where the last three lines read:

affigens humero
crucem qui dedit ictum
soli mortifero.[9]

Tracing the central emphasis of the poem as it has been developed, we see the following applications of the figure of pain and joy. Stanza one: through Christ's birth from the virgin man will be bought. Stanza two: the painless "chiltinge," a sign that the Child is God, will release man from the pain of

hell. Stanza three: a childbearing which is exempt from motherhood's law of giving birth in pain—that is, the "blis" of Mary's virginal childbearing—prefigures man's birth into joy and bliss. In the fourth stanza, the angel's promise given in stanza one, that man will be bought, is explicitly fulfilled. As in stanza two, sorrow and joy are seen under the figure of pain and release. Mary's actual giving birth in joy is juxtaposed to a second birth. Through the pain of Christ's passion man is released from his pain into the joyful hope of heaven.

Thus in "Gabriel, fram evene-king" the event of Christ's virginal conception and birth has been used as a principle of form. The poet has selected the figure of pain changing to joy and used it to make a symmetrical correspondence between the events he relates. And this poem provides our first example of a Middle English poet's use of certain principles of proportion and symmetry in sacred history which, as was shown in the Introduction, are present in the liturgy.

To recall briefly what we saw defined by the readings of the Mass of the Annunciation and the homily of St. Ambrose, the proportion and symmetry between the events of sacred history are based on the doctrine that the first creation, which fell, has been recreated by Christ Who is the New Adam.[10] There are three principles of proportion between the first creation and its re-creation. First, the events of the new creation, the Incarnation and Redemption, have occurred in a fitting correspondence to the events of the first. They have been applied like poultices to heal the wounds of the old, or like lights to transfigure them, in a way which does not destroy but is appropriate to them. Second, not only does the new creation assume and transform the old, but because Christ, through the Incarnation, is their redeemer, or re-creator, all events which lead to Christ's coming find their end and significance in Him.[11] The focus in Christ establishes the third principle of proportion. Because their significance can be fully defined only in terms of the events of the new creation, the events which lead to the coming of Christ have their full meaning and value only as they prefigure the new. As we have seen in regard to both Scripture and liturgy, the Old Testament events are significant not only in themselves but as types of the events to come in the New.

The symmetrical proportioning of the events of the old and the new creation has been used by the Middle English poet as a structural principle of the poem we are studying. In the first three stanzas the poet uses the event of Mary's painless childbearing, her virgin motherhood, as a figure through

which to formulate the truth of the second event, man's spiritual redemption from the pain of sin and death. In the fourth stanza in a second juxtaposition of events, the birth of Christ, which for Mary was painless, is contrasted to the spiritual rebirth of man through the pain and death of Christ at His crucifixion. This pain of Christ reflects a further correspondence, going back to the Fall. Mary bore Christ "withhuten lawe/ of moder." But in her compassion at Christ's death, Mary suffered the pains from which she was exempt in Christ's birth. Thus, through her pain during man's spiritual delivery, she becomes the spiritual mother of mankind. In Part II we shall see the significance of this concept developed fully in the poems on Mary's suffering at the crucifixion of Christ:

> Nu is time þat þu ʒielde
> kende þat þu im withelde
>   þo þi child was of þe born;
> Nu he hoschet wit goulinge
> þat þu im in þi chiltinge
>   al withelde þar biforn.
>
> Nu þu fondest, moder milde,
> wat wyman drith with hir childe,
>   þei þu clene maiden be;
> Nu þe's ʒiolden arde and dere
> þe þine werof þu were
>   ine ti chiltuing quite and fre.[12]

The Final Purpose, or the Full Form

The fifth stanza makes the ultimate purpose of the poem explicit. It is the culmination of the third movement in the poem and subsumes the other two. The first focus was on Mary's virgin motherhood. The poem is a sequence in her honor, telling of her as the medium through which Christ came. This focus culminates in stanza three. The second focus was the relationship of Mary's virginal conception and "chiltinge" to the redemptive plan of history. In stanza four the angel's promise is fulfilled. The sweet birth with the

corresponding painful death of Christ has released man from pain and opened heaven to him. Now, in the fifth stanza, these two movements are drawn into a third focus, which is the present moment in sacred history. This is the full context in which the poem has been conceived. In terms of sacred history, the present moment, as we have seen, refers to the time of the Church, which stands after the Incarnation and Crucifixion, after Christ's ascension, and looks with hope towards Christ's second coming in glory. In terms of the poem, the present moment is also the time of the actual participation in the poem by the speaker or singer and his audience, and it is for those living in this moment that the poet shapes his poem into a prayer to Mary.

> Maiden, moder makeles,
>   of milche ful ibunden,
> bid for hus im þat þe ches
>   at wam þu grace funde,
>   þat he forgiue hus senne and wrake,
>   and clene of euri gelt us make,
>   and eune blis,
>   wan hure time is
>   to steruen,
>   hus giue, for þine sake
>   him so her for to seruen
>   þat he us to him take.

Mary's title "Maiden, moder makeles" has been prepared by the account in the earlier stanzas. But now it is joined with a second title she has received by the fact of Christ's death for mankind, Mary "of milche ful ibunden," full ready with mercy. "Bid for hus," the poet petitions Mary in virtue of the events that have been related, that we who are living in the hope established by the angel's coming, by Mary's acceptance, and by the birth and death of Christ, may, for Mary's sake, have the joy of heaven.

By the petition in stanza five the initial words (stanza one) of the angel's salutation are given their full meaning. The poet asks Mary by virtue of the fact that Christ chose her (line 51), "Gabriel, fram evene-king/ sent to þe maide swete," and he asks her because she found grace with Him (line 52). Corresponding to the title with which the angel greeted Mary, "Heil be þu ful of grace a-rith!" (line 5), the title "of milche ful ibunden" serves as its

ultimate interpretation: Mary was full of grace, of God's favor; in time she became full of Christ, for "in hire was crist biloken" (line 41); and now, finding grace with Christ, Mary is a source of grace for man. Implicit in this final petition is Mary's position as Queen of Heaven, in the perpetual present that will last until the end of time and transcends time. She, being the medium of Christ's coming and redeeming, can ask that He forgive us our sins and free us from His vengeance, and that when we shall die, He give us the "blis" of heaven. This is the full meaning of the "blisful tiding" (line 3) brought by the angel.

But the last three lines develop the petition to enter bliss in another way, making it more exact. Bliss is spoken of as Christ Himself. Not only the future, but the course of man's life is assumed into Him, bringing the subject of the poem to the full circle characteristic of sacred history: God is the beginning—the angel is sent by God; Christ, God and man, is the middle or center—He is conceived and born into the world. He suffers and dies, and then raises Himself and ascends to the Father. There He reigns as heaven's King and man's hope and final end.

The way the whole poem moves to a petition and the way the petition is formed in terms of sacred history is analogous to the Mass liturgy. Just as the Mass is the re-enactment of the crucifixion to unite the present congregation to God, so the poem which relates the event of the annunciation to the crucifixion of Christ is made by the poet into a prayer in order to apply the events to himself and his listeners for their "god won." In the Collect for the Feast of the Annunciation the address to God is amplified by a relative clause which incorporates the significance of the feast day, beginning "O God, who wast pleased that thy Word should take flesh in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary, through the message of an angel. . . ."[13] In the poem the petition has two relative clauses, "þat þe ches/ at wam þu grace funde," but they refer not directly to the subject of the feast, the fact that God took flesh, but to the central fact by which the poem was formed; that is, to Mary's own special relationship with God, her virgin motherhood.

The External Form

Up to this point in our explication of the poem, we have seen that the poet adapts the theological concepts of Mary's virgin motherhood and of sacred history in a manner analogous to their formulation by the liturgy, and it is

the study of these theological ocncepts that has revealed both the over-all form and the purpose of the poem. We have noticed also that sacred history is both the subject matter of the poem and the method by which meaning itself evolves. The poem tells of the past time when Christ entered history, how He redeemed man. This coming is applied through Mary to the present moment in hope of the future bliss of heaven.

The external form mirrors this movement. The whole consists of (1) the first three stanzas, presenting the annunciation of Christ's coming, its implications, and Mary's consent; (2) the last two, presenting the fulfillment of the promises, as stanza four recounts the actual coming of Christ and the redemption of all men, and as stanza five, in virtue of the first three stanzas, petitions for the future fulfillment of those in the present. The overall structure is a theme—the birth of Christ through Mary—and its fulfillment.

The structure of the individual stanzas mirrors the structure of the whole. The first three stanzas provide a clear example of the form. Each stanza consists of an opening statement presented in a quatrain, then a couplet which introduces the main theme of the stanza, and finally an elaboration of the theme which extends to the last three lines. The last three lines relate the theme explicitly to the full context of sacred history. A study of the structure of the melody to which the poem was set supports the conception of the form we have reached through analysis of the meaning. The music would strongly affect how the parts of the sequence would be felt and understood by both the singer and the listener.

The music [14] is based on a single melody which is developed in two ways, and each section of the melody, the theme and its two developments, is repeated.[15] The first unit of melody, the statement of the theme, corresponds in the stanza of the poem to lines one to four—the basic melody with lines one and two, the repetition with lines three and four.

> Gabriel, fram evene-king
> sent to þe maide swete,
> broute þire blisful tiding
> And faire he gan hire greten

Thus the opening quatrain of each stanza, with its abab rhyme (except the first, which has an imperfect b rhyme) corresponds to the first unit of the melody which states the theme. In each of the first three stanzas of the poem this quatrain tells the action. The rest of the stanza, lines five through twelve, in the same way as the music, develops the opening melody.

In the music, lines five through twelve are two developments of the melody each based on a melodic inversion of it; that is, the higher tones are substituted for the lower ones—the melody is turned inside out. The first musical inversion (lines 5–6) is shorter than the original melody. Line six is the repetition of line five. In the stanza, this first short development of the melody corresponds to a rhymed couplet which introduces the central theological idea which the rest of the stanza develops.

> heil be þu ful of grace a-rith!
> for godes sone, þis euene lith [16]

The couplet provides the third rhyme of the poem, which is repeated later in the last three lines of the stanza (10–12).

The second melodic inversion corresponds in the poem's stanza to lines seven through ten, its repetition to lines eleven and twelve. Lines seven through ten introduce the fourth and fifth rhymes, with line ten repeating the rhyme of the couplet:

> for mannes louen
> wile man bicomen,
> and taken
> fles of þe maiden brith,
> manken fre for to maken
> of senne and deules mith.

But the repetition of the second development of the melody is irregular. One melodic phrase has been omitted. The fact is reflected in the poem's stanza, where the last two lines, lines eleven and twelve, do not correspond in length exactly to lines seven through ten. According to the structure of the melody, line eleven in the stanza corresponds to the phrases developed in lines seven through nine. Nothing in either the original Latin or the English line eleven indicates the melodic parallel. Lines ten and twelve, which rhyme, are musically identical. The effect of the omitted melodic phrase is to make the repetition of the second development flow as a further development and to make the musical setting of lines seven through twelve sound more like an evolving unit. Finally, the rhyme scheme, which has supported both the melodic and stanzaic structure of lines one through six, in the last four lines

works against both the music and the syntax to bind them into a unit whose rhyme ties them to the couplet.[17]

It is important to realize that the music these words were written for is not in a metrical phrasing of notes. The music was adapted to the clear articulation of Latin words. It does not follow a rhythm of regular measure, but flows in groups of neums, or clusters of notes which are determined by syllabic shift and accent of the words they are set to, the clusters being made up of units of one, two or three notes.

The formal relationship between the sections of the melody would have affected the listeners' understanding of the relationship of the parts of the stanza. In music a sense of form comes from a relationship between levels of pitch and extension of phrases in time. Although the music of "Gabriel, fram evene-king" develops one basic melody, each of the two developments of it contrasts and is set in a symmetrical relationship of height and length to the other. The first statement of the melody provides the mean. The first section of the melodic inversion (lines 7-10) ascends to the highest point of the music in a succession of phrases climaxing at line nine, which is the shortest line of the stanza and the one which precedes the final group of three lines that relate the whole of the first part to sacred history. It then drops abruptly an octave below its last phrase to the lowest position. The shortened repetition retains and echoes the climax and the drop. This means that the tenth and twelfth lines are the lowest, contrasting radically in pitch to the ninth and eleventh which lead to them. The correspondence between lines ten and twelve makes the last three lines into a concluding unit. Approximating in length the opening statement of the melody, the last three lines bring the final repetition back into relationship with the opening.

The music, then, is one theme that unfolds by two developments of its inversion. It reaches a climax at line nine and resolves in the last three lines by the symmetry of the contrasting low lines ten and twelve, which in the stanza rhyme with the couplet (lines 5-6) of the first development. The form of the music, statement (lines 1-4), development (lines 5-12), with a conclusion (lines 10-12), is reflected in the stanza form. Not only do the music and the stanza form correspond to each other, but they correspond to the development of meaning within stanzas one through three, in which lines one through four describe the action and the succeeding lines develop its significance, first through a statement of the theological truth (the couplet) and then its expansion (lines 7-9), and finally through showing its relationship to sacred history (lines 10-12).

However, after stanza three, this correspondence shifts when the poet begins to set the event of the annunciation that the whole poem celebrates in its full and present context of sacred history. If we stand back for a moment from the individual stanzas, we can see that there is a parallel between the development in one stanza and the development in the whole poem. Just as in each stanza lines five through twelve develop the event told in the opening quatrain, so stanzas four through five are the development of the event of the annunciation related in stanzas one through three. Just as lines ten through twelve relate the first part of the stanza to sacred history, so the last two stanzas relate the whole event to sacred history. Stanza four modifies this development of meaning by narrating the fulfillment of the event told in stanzas one through three. The fact that each stanza is sung to the same music suggests to the listener that the development in stanza four is an application to the old, and in stanza five suggests it again, as the poet applies the whole sequence of events to the present moment.

By first studying the three movements of the whole poem—the focus on Mary's maiden motherhood, the context of sacred history, the movement towards petition—and by describing the stanza form through using the structure of the music, we have found that the poet develops his theme by a series of juxtaposed statements which are proportionately related. The structural principle of the poem seems to be developed by an ordered series of correspondences, the later ones fulfilling the earlier.[18]

We noted above that the events of sacred history have a proportion and symmetry. The coming of Christ into history is a re-creation by which the events of the first creation are sanctified and fulfilled. We saw, by juxtaposing the events told in one stanza of the poem to those of another in the same way as the succeeding events are juxtaposed in sacred history, that the corresponding parts of the succeeding stanzas in the poem could be seen to fulfill the preceding ones. Thus, the painless birth was seen as a figure, but also as an effective cause, of man's delivery from death—all men, and particularly those still journeying to future joy. The painless childbearing was seen to gain its effect for man by Christ Himself taking on the pain through His passion and death to secure man's rebirth into grace.

Now that the units which compose each stanza have been singled out and confirmed by a study of the music, we can see an analogous symmetry and proportion present in the poem's external structure. As the whole poem develops from the Annunciation to the petition in present time, each part of the individual stanza can be seen to be related to the corresponding section

of the preceding stanzas. Thus, if we juxtapose the opening quatrains, we find they present the simple narrative sequence of the poem: (1) Gabriel descends and greets Mary; (2) Mary questions how she can bear a child without having known man; (3) when she has understood, she answers Gabriel; (4) then, after the angel leaves, the Child swells in Mary's womb; (5) the poet addresses Mary: Maiden and mother, pray for us to Him Who chose you and with Whom you found grace.

If we juxtapose the couplets, we find the theological statement of truth developing the narrative quatrain: (1) the angel hails Mary and announces God's Son;[19] (2) in stanza two he tells her the coming of God's Son will be accomplished by the Holy Ghost; (3) in stanza three Mary begins the response of obedience upon which the salvation of all depends; (4) in stanza four the poet tells how it was Christ, true God and true man, of flesh and bone, Who was "biloken" in Mary; and, finally, (5) in stanza five he forms the petition of what man desires, the forgiveness of his sins.

It is wrenching the context, however, to consider the couplet separately, for in each stanza it initiates the lines which follow. In the first three stanzas which tell of the annunciation, lines seven through ten complete the development of the theological idea begun in lines five and six, as (1) in stanza one the angel continues to explain that God's Son Whom he announces will take flesh of Mary; (2) in stanza two he finishes explaining that the events he bears tidings of will be accomplished through the Holy Ghost; and (3) in stanza three Mary completes her response to the angel and declares herself obedient to his words. But just as in the whole poem stanzas four and five act to fulfill the event recounted in stanzas one through three, so within the development of these two stanzas themselves, lines seven through ten act to fulfill what was presented by lines one through six, as (4) stanza four recounts that which follows from Mary holding Christ within her, the event of His birth; and (5) stanza five formulates that which man desires as a consequence of the forgiveness asked for in the couplet, the fact of future entrance into "eune blis."

Finally, if we juxtapose the last lines of each stanza, which we have already seen to establish the principle of proportion for the whole poem in relation to sacred history, we find the development of the event's deepest significance for man as (1) in stanza one the angel explains that God will take flesh of the sinless maiden to free man from sin; (2) in stanza two he says that through her painless childbearing man will be bought from pain; and as (3) in stanza three, which formulates God's plan of the Incarnation in

relation to the central figure of Mary's painless giving birth, Mary accepts God's plan that she be mother and maiden, exempt from the penalty of Eve. In the last two stanzas, which reflect the modification in the development of the whole poem, lines ten through twelve apply the painless birth of Christ to the poet and his audience to establish the final point of view in sacred history, as (4) in stanza four these lines recount Christ's crucifixion, which accomplished the liberation of all mankind from pain and which makes possible the petition formed in (5) stanza five where the last three lines recall the deepest meaning of man's rebirth from pain: So let us serve Christ here on earth, the poet prays, that when we die, Christ will "us to him take." And the poem ends suggesting the fact that rebirth into bliss is rebirth into union with Christ Himself.

... bem tene qui non

commouebitur parata

sedes tua deus et tunc a seculo
... Dne ... ra nra qs do
tu es. mine natiuitatis
hodierne mistis apta proueni
ant. ut sicut homo genitus ide
refulsit deus. sic nobis iex tenena
subtantia conferat qr diuini
est. p eunde. Ana ...

Capr qs dne muncia dig
nanter oblata. ze be anasta
sie suffragatib: mitis. adnir sa
lutis anralui puenur concede. p.

Exulta filia syon lauda fila

ierlm ecce rex tuus uenit sanchus

z saluator mundi.

Uius nos dne sacramenti sep
nouitas natalis instaurit.
cuius natiuitas singularis hu

man am repulit uetustate. p.e.
S....laasti dne fa ... posteo.
miliam tuam muunub: fa
ens eius qs semp intuentone
nos refone: cuius sollempnia ce
lebramus. p do. la peortione. iu
Descendit. Tanqin sponsus ...
... laudant. ...
ant. Hodie rex ...
... Hodie in tota: o Hndictus qui
uenit in no. ... Concede qs omni
... ...

Ger na

tus est

nobis z

fijus datus est nobis cuius im

pium sup humerum e ius et

uccabitur nomen eius magni

THE "MAIDEN MAKELES"

A COMMON CRITICISM OF THE MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS LYRIC IS ILLUSTRATED by George Kane's statement that, although by itself one of these poems may seem good, when studied with specimens of its own kind, the religious lyric seems to recede into a common sameness of theme and effect. This is in the first place, Kane says, because the number of themes is limited. Then, the variations of these are minute, and the degrees of "poetic transport" are not great. The limited number of themes and the few signs of developing technique except as it reflects the progress in the secular lyrics, confirm "a suggestion there implicit of the static nature of this particular combination of medium and subject which the few exceptions fail to dismiss." [1]

In answer to this common criticism of the medieval religious lyric, and as a bare suggestion of the variety possible in the treatment of one dogmatic theme, I would like to discuss two other poems which treat the conception and birth of Christ. These are the thirteenth century "Exemplum de beata virgine & gaudiis eius," which begins "Nu þis fules singet hand maket hure blisse," [2] and the late fourteenth century poem which is based on it, "I syng of a myden þat is makeles." [3]

FIG. 4.—The Birth of Christ and the Tree of Jesse. Illuminated "P" of the Introit, Third Mass on Christmas Day, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 23. Christ's birth is presented in the context of Christ's kingship. The folio shows a triple focus: on the present feast of Christmas, as it is the fulfillment of the past, and also the means of union with Christ and His mother who reign in heaven. For more extended discussion, refer to the Notes to the Illustrations.

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"Nu Þis Fules Singet hand Maket Hure Blisse"

Leo Spitzer refers to the first of these two poems on the "maiden makeles" as "quite mediocre." Using the words of W. W. Greg who pointed out their relationship, he says: "The 'not very remarkable' thirteenth-century version is a quite traditional poem about the Annunciation, including a mention of the tree of Jesse, a transcription of the *Ave Maria* and a prayer at the end." [4] In this brief description of the poem, Spitzer simply lists three traditional theological subjects, implying by this listing that the poet has related them in a similar mechanical way. I believe that Spitzer's opinion that this poem is an ununified collection of traditional concepts comes from a misunderstanding of the purpose of the poem, which in turn arises from a misunderstanding of the theological subject behind it. My intention in explicating this poem will be not to decide whether or not it is a "remarkable poem," but to show that a unified purpose and structure can be found by studying its theological subject matter, and also to provide a background for a discussion of its later offspring, "I syng of a myden þat is makeles."

Exemplum de beata virgine & gaudiis eius

Nu þis fules singet hand maket hure blisse
and þat gres up þringet and leued þe ris;
of on ic wille singen þat is makeles,
þe king of halle kinges to moder he hire ches.   4

Heo his wit-uten sunne and wit-uten hore,
I-cumen of kinges cunne of gesses more;
þe louerd of monkinne of hire was yboren
to bringen us hut of Sunne, elles wue weren for-lore.   8

Gabriel hire grette and saide hire, "aue!
Marie ful of grace, vre louer be uit þe,
þe frut of þire wombe ibleset mot id be.
þu sal go wit chide, for sout ic suget þe."   12

and þare gretinke þat angle hauede ibrout,
he gon to bi-þenchen and meinde hire þout;

he saide to þen angle, "hu may tiden þis?
of monnes y-mone nout y nout iuis."   16

Mayden heo was uid childe & Maiden her biforen,
& maiden ar sot-hent hire chid was iboren;
Maiden and moder nas neuer non wimon boten he—
wel mitte he berigge of godes sune be.   20

I-blessed beo þat suete chid & þe moder ec,
& þe suete broste þat hire sone sec;
I-hered ibe þe time þat such chid uas iboren,
þat lesed al of pine þat arre was for-lore.   24

Even though one section includes part of the Gospel on the annunciation,
it is imprecise to say that this is a poem about the annunciation. Because our
last poem developed the events in the Gospel account, it could be also
designated as a poem on the annunciation, yet it was, more specifically, a
poem invoking and defining Mary as the medium of God's coming and
therefore the medium of man's deliverance from pain and of man's entry
into heaven. The defining of the tree of Jesse and what Spitzer calls the *Ave
Maria* are two aspects of the unified conception of the poem, which describes
Mary not as the medium of our salvation, but as unique because she is the
mother of God. The purpose of the poet's address to her is not petition as in
the previous poem, but praise.

The poem moves in three stages. The first, stanzas one and two, defines
the setting and the subject of praise, the "makeles" one chosen by the King to
be His mother, and it proposes the first paradox, that a child might choose
his own mother. The second, stanzas three and four, tells of the annunciation
and proposes the second paradox, that a virgin might conceive without man,
and asks how this might be. And the third, the last two stanzas, shows that
what lies behind the paradoxes is cause for giving praise to God.

The opening stanza of the poem might be said to be merely a friar's
adaptation of a conventional beginning of a secular love song, used perhaps
to capture the audience's attention, or perhaps to identify a secular melody to
which the poem might be set.[5] Yet the opening serves a purpose more
integral to the poem. By classifying Mary conventionally, with all other
women who come to mind to be praised in the spring season of love, it

establishes the way her identity will be handled. The subject of the poem will be one that is matchless, a woman unequaled by all other women. Neither the mother nor her Child will be directly identified, and the unique fact that her King and Child is God will be withheld until line twenty. By speaking of Mary and her Child as comparable to all mankind, the poet can heighten the effect of the paradoxes in the conception and birth of God and heighten, in turn, the listeners' feeling of wonder.

But we cannot expect that the audience was unaware that Mary was the subject of the poem. In fact, in stanza one it can be seen that the poet already plays on his listeners' knowledge of the full identity of Mary and Christ by implying the present situation of events in sacred history, and we shall see in the last stanza that the event of Christ's birth is the basis of praise. Christ would be recognized by the title, "king of halle kinges," as He is now, in glory with the Father.[6] And Christ would be recognized in the paradoxes. This King chose the "makeles" one not only, as the love lyric context would suggest to the listener, to be His spouse, but to be His mother. What child has chosen his mother? What mother is at the same time a spouse? Mary herself would be recognized as the mother of the King of Kings, and also as she is in present time, after her bodily assumption, the Queen of Heaven.[7] It is from this perspective in the present time of sacred history that the poet takes his listeners back into past time to recall the nature of this mother's matchlessness.

> Heo his wit-uten sunne and wit-uten hore,
> I-cumen of kinges cunne of gesses more;
> þe louerd of monkinne of hire was yboren
> to bringen us hut of Sunne, elles wue weren for-lore.

The "on . . . þat is makeles" is a fit choice for a king. She is sinless and without stain.[8] Not only is she sinless, but she comes of a kingly line. With the mention of Jesse's root, again the poet calls on his listeners' knowledge of Mary's place in sacred history. In the lessons and antiphons of Christmas and Advent and in the Masses celebrating the nativity of Mary, the liturgy applies to Mary's giving birth to Christ Isaiah's prophecy of the Messiah:

> And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse: and a flower shall rise up out of the root (Isa. 11:1).[9]

Developing the implication of the last line in stanza one, the last two lines of stanza two give the central reason why the King of Kings chose this mother. Mary's beauty is seen to be the result of God's design in sacred history to redeem man. The "louerd of monkinne"—now named from the point of view of His humanity—was born of her, the sinless one, to bring man out of sin; otherwise man had been lost. Having given the purpose of the King's entry into time, the poet then tells of the moment itself when the King's choice of the matchless one to be His mother was announced to her:

> Gabriel hire grette and saide hire, "aue!
> Marie ful of grace, vre louer be uit þe,
> þe frut of þire wombe ibleset mot id be.
> þu sal go wit chide, for sout ic suget þe."

Using the Gospel account of the annunciation, the poet modifies it for the purposes of his poem. As in "Gabriel, fram evene-king," the angel combines his salutation to Mary with his announcement of the birth. But in this poem, "þe frut of þire wombe ibleset mot id be" is substituted for the Gospel lesson's "blessed art thou among women." This is the blessing given to Mary, after her conception of Christ, by Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (Luke 1:39-47), which in Mary's feasts the liturgy traditionally couples with the angel's salutation.[10] By substituting for the angel's blessing of Mary herself the blessing of the fruit of her womb, the poet puts greater emphasis on Mary's coming motherhood to heighten the paradox of Mary's virginity, which will be presented for the first time in the next stanza. The poet also, as he does throughout the poem, omits the Gospel's identification of the match-less one's Child with the Messiah.

The fourth stanza establishes Mary's virginity. As in "Gabriel, fram evene-king," Mary searches her thought, not troubled by the greeting as in the Gospel account, but about the impossibility of her conceiving without having known man. Yet after her question, "hu may tiden þis?/ of monnes y-mone nout y nout iuis," the account breaks off. By withholding the angel's answer, the poet gives emphasis to Mary's question.

Stanzas five and six, the third section, reach a climax of paradox, give the solution to it, and complete the purpose of praise.

> Mayden heo was uid childe & Maiden her biforen,
> & maiden ar sot-hent hire chid was iboren;

> Maiden and moder nas neuer non wimon boten he—
> wel mitte he berigge of godes sune be.

This mother remained a maid after she had conceived, as well as before, and a maid after her Child was born. No other woman has been maiden and mother but she. Well might she be the bearer of God's Son. The last line of stanza five suggests a double truth. Since her fitness has been the theme of the poem, line twenty seems at first glance to mean that this unique fact makes her a fitting mother of the Son of God. But seen as the resolution of the two paradoxes, that a child chooses his mother, that a mother remains a virgin, her matchlessness serves also as a sign that the Child she bore is God. God only could choose His mother. God only could cause a virgin to conceive without her knowing man, and God only could be born without disturbing her virginity. Her Son then must be God.

> I-blessed beo þat suete chid & þe moder ec,
> & þe suete broste þat hire sone sec;
> I-hered ibe þe time þat such chid uas iboren,
> þat lesed al of pine þat arre was for-lore.

In this last stanza, the poet fulfills the purpose of praising the matchless mother, and applies to Mary the words of a third blessing given to her during the Gospel account of Christ's ministry and traditionally applied to her by the liturgy which celebrates her queenship of heaven.[11] Then in the second two lines of the stanza, the praise reaches beyond Mary to the full meaning in sacred history of her motherhood. Referring back to line eight where the purpose of the King's birth was given, the last two lines speak of the purpose as fulfilled. Christ has been born, man redeemed. The praise extends beyond the mother and Child to the moment itself when such a Child was born, Who loosed all, who before were lost, from pain.

The indirect mode used to refer to Mary in the opening stanza is retained significantly in the last. In the same way as Mary was called "on . . . þat is makeles," the three elements praised in this stanza are identified solely in terms of their relation to the event of the coming of the unique Child. The Child is praised first as "þat . . . chid"; the mother as the mother of that Child, "þe moder ec." Time itself is praised only because of its relationship to the birth of that unique Child, "I-hered ibe þe time þat such chid uas iboren." Finally, in the last two lines, even the Child Himself, identified in

stanza five as "godes sune," is made relative to the purpose of His birth, as He is named "such chid." And the whole chain of praise, of the mother, the time, the Child, is made to spring from gratitude for the redemption of mankind.

The rhyme "iboren" and "for-lore[n]" is repeated at three important points in the poem, possibly to emphasize the final focus I have suggested. It occurs at the end of the first section, lines seven and eight, with the mention of the purpose of the birth, which sets the King of Kings and His mother in the context of sacred history. In lines seventeen and eighteen the rhyme is repeated. These are the lines in which the poem's paradoxes culminate, as the poet presents Mary's virgin motherhood. And, finally, the rhymes are repeated in the last stanza, where the verb form, modified from emphasizing a general purpose, "to bringen us hut of Sunne," presents the fact as fulfilled, "þat lesed al of pine."

The heading of this poem, "Exemplum de beata virgine & gaudiis eius," indicates the poem may have been used in a sermon, as does the fact that the poem is found in a miscellany of English, French and Latin works, compiled probably by Dominican preaching friars in the second half of the thirteenth century.[12] The joys on which the poem is based are the first two of five joys traditionally celebrated in medieval England (see Part III). Mary's joys—the annunciation, the birth of Christ, the resurrection and ascension, and Mary's own assumption—reflect the steps of man's redemption, and Mary's final joy of being bodily in heaven is the promise of man's final joy.

For the particular combination of images used to describe Mary in this poem, two sources can be seen. One is the concept of the tree of Jesse as formulated by the medieval artist, and the other, as was mentioned above, is the liturgy's celebration of Mary in her present joy as Queen of Heaven. The concept of the tree of Jesse began to have a traditional artistic form in the late eleventh and early twelfth century. In stained glass windows and in illuminated manuscripts depicting the tree, the artist would show at the bottom of the representation Jesse lying asleep, and springing up from him, a tree on which the prophets and kings were arranged. (See Figure 4.) At the top would be Christ in majesty, the flower of the tree. Mary would be below Him as the stem of the flower. Later, beginning with the thirteenth century and the upsurge in devotion to Mary, the tree was often conceived with Mary enthroned and the Christ Child in her lap.[13] Occasionally, grouped at the bottom of the representation, would be some of the events in the life of Mary, such as the annunciation and birth of Christ, the presentation in the Tem-

ple.[14] Many of the elements in the artistic conception of the tree of Jesse are in this poem—the representation of Christ as the King of Kings, of Mary as Queen and mother of Christ, the mysteries of Christ's birth.

Some of the concepts in the poem can be found also in the daily Masses and Offices devoted to Mary in the spring and summer season. The Mass used from the Purification on February second to the beginning of Advent, with the exception of Easter week, celebrates Mary's timeless aspect, as she is in present time, Queen of Heaven, with the angel's prophecy of her blessedness now fulfilled. The Introit of the Mass is "Hail, holy mother, who didst bring forth in childbirth the king who ruleth over heaven and earth for ever and ever. *Ps.* Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." [15] The Gospel lesson is Luke 11:27-28, the source of lines twenty-one and two of this poem, which tells about the woman crying out from the crowd to bless the mother of Christ.[16]

I would like briefly to refer back to Spitzer's summary of "Nu þis fules singet hand maket hure blisse" as a "traditional poem about the Annunciation, including a mention of the tree of Jesse, a transcription of the *Ave Maria* and a prayer at the end." My purpose is not to put an undue amount of weight on a description which Spitzer obviously sketched in to provide the basis of his detailed study of the poem derived from it, but to find fault with what seems to be the attitude of Spitzer, and of Kane also, that when certain "traditional" themes or forms appear they must necessarily each be about a limited subject or have a certain static relationship to each other.

"Nu þis fules singet hand maket hure blisse" is, in fact, not a poem on the annunciation, but a poem in praise of Mary as mother and virgin because she is a sign of the redemption of man. Her qualities are conceived in their timeless aspect, as she is now, the Queen of Heaven. The poem defines her matchlessness by recalling the past events of her life which have made her unique, and from the definition of her beauty rises the praise in the last stanza. There is no "transcription of the *Ave Maria,*" but the angel's salutation combined with Elizabeth's greeting is introduced into the narrative of the annunciation as part of the definition of Mary's virgin motherhood. The angel's salutation is later developed by the third salutation in stanza five from Luke 10. All three salutations, as they do in the liturgy, emphasize the theme of her blessedness. How the poet modifies the account from that in the Gospel further illustrates that the subject of the poem is not directly the annunciation, but Mary's special quality of virgin motherhood. The poet's reference to Mary springing from the root of Jesse is an integral part of his

demonstration that she is fit to be the mother of the King, and at the same time it introduces the human lineage of her Son, Who, until the end of the poem, is presented explicitly only in His human nature. And finally, the "prayer at the end" grows from the purpose of praise which was announced at the beginning and which was carefully prepared for by means of the entire poem.

"I Syng of a Myden Þat Is Makeles"

"I syng of a myden þat is makeles" is the counterpart of the poem which is its source. This poem also praises Mary for her unique quality of being virgin and mother. In the same way as in "Nu þis fules singet," Christ is presented as the King of Kings and Mary is called "makeles"; [17] Mary's identity is withheld until the end, and the revelation that she is "godes moder" gives the purpose and direction of the poem. However, in this poem, instead of being introduced in general terms as the "on . . . þat is makeles," Mary is spoken of immediately, in line one, as the "myden þat is makeles." Eliminating other aspects of Mary's beauty, the poet focuses solely on the quality of Mary's virgin motherhood. It is this great concentration and the poet's use of imagery that has made this poem, contrary to its source, appeal unanimously to the readers of our time. [18]

I syng of a myden   þat is makeles,
kyng of alle kynges   to here sone che ches.

he cam also stylle   þer his moder was
as dew in aprylle,   þat fallyt on þe gras.   4

he cam also stylle   to his moderes bowr
as dew in aprille,   þat fallyt on þe flour.

he cam also stylle   þer his moder lay
as dew in aprille,   þat fallyt on þe spray.   8

moder & mayden   was neuer non but che—
wel may swych a lady   godes moder be.

The first poem begins with the King of Kings choosing the maiden to be His mother and tells of the angel's announcement and Mary's question. However, omitting any account of the annunciation, this shorter poem begins (lines 1-2) with the fact of Mary's acceptance of the King of Kings to be her son. This beginning has the effect of transferring the sovereign choice which in the last poem was the King's to Mary in this poem, and Mary's choice initiates the movement of the poem. The rest of the poem develops the result of her choice, describing the quality of the King's response to it. He came to her as still as the dew in April, so still that while she became His mother, she remained a virgin. No other woman has had this unique prerogative. Well may such a lady be the mother of God.

What has been modified or omitted from the earlier version is a result of this poem's concentration on the single event in sacred history, the actual coming of the King. Omitted is direct reference to Mary's quality of sinlessness, to her descent from the tribe of Jesse, to the fact that the King's coming was to release man from sin and punishment. Instead, the poet develops the manner of the King's conception and birth, and by using several comparisons suggests the qualities of the "myden" through whom He was born. The context of sacred history is present by implication only, as the comparisons the poet chooses have their associations in liturgical and exegetical tradition.

> But is there any creature—except perhaps her who alone merited to have in herself this most blessed experience—is there, I ask, any creature capable of comprehending with his intellect or of discerning by his reason how the inaccessible Splendour of the Godhead poured Itself into the Virgin's womb, and how of that small portion of her body which It animated and united hypostatically to Itself, It made a shadow, as it were, for her whole being, in order that she might be able to endure the approach and the presence of such intolerable brightness? [19]

Among the possible denotations of the adverb "stylle" in Middle English, three are useful to us here. The most evident meaning is that He came without noise or commotion, quietly, silently.[20] "Stylle" might even connote a sense of motionlessness, to suggest that the King disturbed or changed nothing in the maiden with His coming. "Stylle" could also mean "secretly." If we think of the homilist and of St. Bernard's words above, this could suggest that He came mysteriously in a manner hidden to human reason; or

if we think of the secular love song context, it could suggest that He came secretly, as a lover would steal to his lady's bower.[21] In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries "still" (from Latin *destillare*) was used as a verb, meaning to trickle down or fall in minute drops, so that in these lines which compare His coming to the falling of dew, "stylle" by a play on words could reinforce the comparison.

"He cam also stylle . . . as dew in aprylle," the secular love setting of spring in "Nu þis fules singet" is adapted in this poem to suggest fertility,[22] the freshness of April rain that brings growth. But more fundamental are the associations with liturgical tradition, which, especially in Advent and on the Feast of the Annunciation, applies to the conception and birth of the Messiah the Old Testament figures of falling dew. Such is the passage from Isaiah, which contains all the connotations of fertility present in the poem and which was used as the Introit for the Feast of the Annunciation: "Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and bring forth a saviour" (Isa. 45:8).[23] A second figure of falling dew was applied by the Office during Advent and on the Annunciation to the conception and birth of Christ. This is the figure from Judges 6:34-40 of the dew falling on Gideon's fleece, which was used also in the Prymer's antiphon for Prime: "Whanne he was born wundurfulliche of a maide, þanne was fulfillid holi writ. þou cam doun as reyn in-to a flees, for to make saaf mankynde." [24] In the selection of antiphons and especially in the sequences, these two figures were associated by the liturgy with the flowering of the rod of Jesse.[25]

But this poem is very unlike "Nu þis fules singet" in the way it uses traditional sources. Here the traditional attributes of Mary are not presented by narration, but by suggestion and association only, and the poem develops, as a modern poem might, by a series of accumulating associations. The simile of falling dew is repeated, with an incremental effect, three times,[26] and each time the poet develops the simile so that it reveals an aspect of the delicacy and beauty of her to whom Christ came.

First, with each repetition of "he cam also stylle," the poet indicates the nature of the place to which the King came. In line three it is presented as unspecified and without connotations: He came so quietly "þer his moder was." But in line five, the place is made more concrete: He came "to his moderes bowr," as a lover to her secret place. "Bowr" in its general sense denoted an inner room, a chamber or bedroom, and was especially applied to a lady's private apartment. It was also used figuratively to refer to Mary's

womb or body.[27] This suggestion that Christ came as a lover would stir associations of the liturgy used during the summer months for Mary's feasts, where images from the Canticle of Canticles were applied to her—Mary was "my sister, my spouse," "a garden enclosed." [28]

In the third repetition, line seven, the King is seen to come closer to Mary's person, to "þer his moder lay." Being used to the many representations of the nativity in painting after the Council of Trent, one is apt to overlook that the thirteenth and fourteenth century manuscript illumination and sculpture of the nativity represented Mary as reclining. We see this, for example, in the nativity scene from the Tiptoft Missal (Figure 4). In the early fourteenth century East Anglian Psalter of Robert de Lisle (Figure 5), Mary is represented at the bottom of the illumination resting on a couch. Joseph sits beside her. Above her the Christ Child is lying on a box-like, altar-like cradle. Mary looks down and away from the Child. Above Christ are the ox and the ass and above them the star. Joseph, the Christ Child and the others look to the star. Another example of Mary reclining at the birth of Christ is included in a series of scenes around the tree of Jesse from the Gorleston Psalter, which is also early fourteenth century East Anglian.[29]

The place the King came to is developed more profoundly by the second part of the simile, the figure used for the place upon which the dew falls. Each figure seems to refer to Mary herself, so that in the three repetitions she is compared to the "gras," the "flour," and then the "spray." Besides its connotations in nature of fertility and delicacy, "gras" also has traditional liturgical associations with the Feast of the Annunciation, where it is used in a Vespers antiphon: "Orietur sicut sol Salvator mundi: et descendet in uterum virginis sicut ymber super gramen." [30] As well as the many applications of "flour" to Mary in art, from the great rose windows of the cathedrals to the lily of virginity traditionally present in illuminations and paintings of the annunciation "flour" suggests again the liturgy's use of the Canticle of Canticles in relation to Mary: "I am the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys. As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." [31] In Middle English the word "spray" meant the small slender twigs of trees or shrubs and more particularly, in the early fifteenth century, a single twig. Because the poem is based on "Nu þis fules singet," and because of the liturgical association of Mary's descent from "gesses more" with her maiden motherhood, the readers of this poem have in general interpreted "spray" to refer to the blooming rod of Jesse.[32]

Thus in this accumulation of associations about the place to which the

"kyng of alle kynges" came it is possible to see simultaneously in the King's coming both the coming of Christ to Mary in His conception by the Holy Spirit and the coming of Christ into the world at His birth. The poem can be read to describe either event. If we think of the poem so that the falling dew refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit, in the threefold repetition we see Him approach closer and closer to the mother—to the place, to her bower, to herself. Just as tradition sees in the fleece of Gideon a type of Mary's virginity, so the growing things on which the dew falls, "þe gras," "þe flour," "þe spray," can be seen to develop the same traditional application to Mary. On the other hand, if we read the series of developing figures as referring to the painless giving birth to Christ, we see Christ transforming the nature of His presence as He comes, from being the King, to being the Child of the maiden, Who comes to the place beside her, "þer his moder lay." The figures of the grass, the flower, the spray still suggest His conception and emphasize the delicacy and beauty of Mary, which remain inviolate.

In their analyses of "I syng of a myden þat is makeles," both Spitzer and Kane suggest that there is an inherent opposition between poetry and dogma. They believe this particular poem succeeds because it has moved beyond dogma to poetry, or, in Spitzer's words, beyond "the burden of Biblical lore. . . . We may conclude then that the simile of the dew, even though inspired by dogmatic literature, has been relived by this extraordinary poet who was able to give the pristine beauty of nature to a venerable scriptural concept." [33] Kane defines the opposition in terms of a contrast he finds between religious emotion or theology and the imagination. In the body of the poem (lines 3–8):

> Not the intellect but the imagination is invoked, required to comprehend the magnitude of the contrast between the greatness of the "kyng of alle kynges" and the silence of his arrival in "his moderes bowr" . . . A great restraint is imposed in this part of the poem; there are no superlatives, no expressions of the poet's own emotion, no intrusions of his personality. The emphatic statement is reserved for the last stanza, which returns to the theme of the first, the maiden's matchlessness and the reason for it. Out of this assertion the plain words of that last stanza, tremendous in their implications, create a climax that is intensified not only by the theology of the doctrine and the faith that enlivens it, but also by the emotions, aesthetic and personal,

> which the imaginative portion of the poem have excited. . . . *The Maiden Makeles* is, in my opinion, an instance of the ideal religious lyric, that farthest removed from the expression of homily or doctrine or devotion with tags and tricks of poetry attached to it.[34]

It seems to me that by assuming the distinction between the opening and closing sections of the poem and the central section to be that of intellect and imagination, Kane separates the poem into three "themes," whereas the poem is actually a unified conception explaining why the maiden is "makeles." The imagination is used in all three sections. In the first, it is used to consider the quality of the maid and her choice, and the power and implications of the King of Kings Whom the listener identifies as a figure for Christ in majesty as contrasted to Christ the son of one of His creatures. In the second, the listener considers a fact which is the result and purpose of the rest and yet which is itself a sign of the literal identity of the King and the maiden. To discover this is all a use of the imagination, which associates the figures with the truth being related in the poem. The main difference between the opening and closing sections and the central part of the poem is that by the poet's repeating yet varying a series of figures, in the central part of the poem the delight the listeners' senses feel in their proportion and variety is perhaps more intense. Yet to isolate this section from the total context would be to cut the delight off from its total reflection of the beauty of the mystery of the virgin birth, which gives the section its meaning and larger purpose.

The modern critics' habit of contrasting intellect and imagination and of considering content and form as separable aspects of a poem is not adequate for approaching the Middle English religious lyric, for the proportions and effect of these poems issue directly *from* their subject matter. This point will be more fully illustrated by the following studies. Formulating a criterion by which a lyric can be considered good or bad must wait until Part III, after a fuller consideration of the poetry has given a fuller experience with the subject matter and proportions of the poems.

Lullay, lullay, la lullay, Mi dere moder, lullay

[I]

Als i lay vp-on a nith
Alone in my longging,
Me þouthe i sau a wonder sith,
A maiden child rokking.   4

[II]

Þe maiden wolde with-outen song
Hire child o slepe bringge;
Þe child þouthte sche dede him wrong,
& bad his moder sengge.   8

Fɪɢ. 5.—The Birth of Christ and the First Events of His Childhood. Miniature from the Psalter of Robert de Lisle, British Museum, Arundel MS 83, fol. 124. Composed of six corresponding yet contrasting scenes, the folio illustrates an iconic and symmetrical proportioning of narrative similar to that of "Als i lay vp-on a nith." For more extended discussion, refer to the Notes to Illustrations.

[III]

"Sing nov, moder," seide þat child,
"Wat me sal be-falle
Here after wan i cum to eld—
So don modres alle.   12

[IV]

Ich a moder treuly
Þat kan hire credel kepe
Is wone to lullen louely
& singgen hire child o slepe.   16

[V]

Suete moder, fair & fre,
Siþen þat it is so,
I preye þe þat þu lulle me
& sing sum-wat þer-to."   20

[VI]

"Suete sone," seyde sche,
"Wer-offe suld i singge?
Wist i neuere ȝet more of þe
But gabrieles gretingge.   24

[VII]

He grette me godli on is kne
& seide, 'heil! marie.
Ful of grace, god is with þe;
Beren þu salt Messye.'   28

[VIII]

I wondrede michil in my þouth,
for man wold i rith none.
'Marie,' he seide, 'drede þe nouth;
Lat god of heuene alone.   32

[IX]

Þe holi gost sal don al þis.'
He seyde with-outen wone
Þat i sulde beren mannis blis,
Þe my suete sone.   36

[X]

He seide, 'þu salt beren a king
In king dauit-is see,
In al Iacobs woniing
Þer king suld he be.'   40

[XI]

He seyde þat elizabetȝ,
Þat baraine was be-fore,
A child conceyued hatȝ—
'To me leue þu þe more.'   44

[XII]

I ansuerede bleþely,
For his word me paiȝede:
'Lo! godis seruant her am i!
Be et as þu me seyde.'   48

[XIII]

Þer, als he seide, i þe bare
On midwenter nith,
In maydened with-outen kare,
Be grace of god almith.   52

[XIV]

Þe sepperdis þat wakkeden in þe wolde
Herden a wonder mirthe
Of angles þer, as þei tolde,
In time of þi birthe.   56

[XV]

Suete sone, sikirly
no more kan i say;
& if i koude fawen wold i,
To don al at þi pay."   60

[XVI]

"Moder," seide þat suete þing,
"To singen I sal þe lere
Wat me fallet to suffring,
& don wil i am here.   64

[XVII]

Wanne þe seuene daiȝes ben don,
Rith as habraham wasce,
Kot sal i ben with a ston
In a wol tendre place.   68

[XVIII]

Wanne þe tuelue dayȝes ben do,
Be leding of a stere
Þre kingges me sul seke þo
With gold, ensens, & mirre.   72

[XIX]

Þe fourti day, to fille þe lawe,
We solen to temple i-fere;
Þer simeon sal þe sey a sawe
Þat changen sal þi chere.   76

[XX]

Wan i am tuelue ȝer of elde,
Ioseph & þu, murningge,
Solen me finden, moder milde,
In þe temple techingge.   80

[XXI]

Til i be þretti at þe leste
I sal neuere fro þe suerue,
But ay, moder, ben at þin heste,
Ioseph & þe to serue.   84

[XXII]

Wan þe þretti ȝer ben spent,
I mot be-ginne to fille
Wer-fore i am hidre sent,
Þoru my fadres wille.   88

[XXIII]

Ion baptist of merite most
Sal baptize me be name;
Þan my fader & þe holi gost
Solen witnessen wat i ame.   92

[XXIV]

I sal ben tempted of satan,
Þat fawen is to fonde,
Þe same wise þat was Adam,
but i sal betre with-stonde.   96

[XXV]

Disciples i sal gadere
& senden hem for to preche,
Þe lawes of my fader,
In al þis werld to teche.   100

[XXVI]

I sal ben so simple
& to men so conning
Þat most partiȝe of þe puple
Sal wiln maken me king."   104

[XXVII]

"Suete sone," þan seyde sche,
"No sorwe sulde me dere,
Miht i ȝet þat day se
A king þat þu were."   108

[XXVIII]

"Do wey, moder," seide þat suete,
"Þerfor kam i nouth,
But for to ben pore & bales bete,
Þat man was inne brouth.   112

[XXIX]

Þerfore wan to & þretti ȝer ben don
& a litel more,
Moder, þu salt maken michil mon
& seen me deyȝe sore.   116

[XXX]

Þe sarpe swerde of simeon
Perse sal þin herte,
For my care of michil won
Sore þe sal smerte.   120

[XXXI]

Samfuly for i sal deyȝe,
Hangende on þe rode,
For mannis ransoun sal i payȝe
Myn owen herte blode."   124

[XXXII]

"Allas! sone," seyde þat may,
"Siþen þat it is so,
Worto sal i biden þat day
To beren þe to þis wo?"   128

[XXXIII]

"Moder," he seide, "tak et lithte,
For liuen i sal a-ʒeyne,
& in þi kinde þoru my mith,
for elles i wrouthte in weyne.   132

[XXXIV]

To my fader I sal wende
In myn manhed to heuene;
Þe holigost i sal þe sende
With hise sondes seuene.   136

[XXXV]

I sal þe taken wan time is
to me at þe laste,
to ben with me moder in blis—
Al þis þan haue i caste.   140

[XXXVI]

Al þis werld demen i sal,
at þe dom risingge,
Suete moder, here is al
Þat i wile nou singge."   144

[XXXVII]

Serteynly, þis sithte i say,
Þis song i herde singge,
Als i lay þis ʒolis-day
Alone in my longingge.   148

"Als I Lay vp-on a Nith"

> Thus the whole world is described in a most orderly sequence
> by Scripture as proceeding from beginning to end, in accordance
> with the peculiar beauty of its well-designed song. One can view,
> following the sequence of time, the variety, multiplicity and
> symmetry, order, rectitude and beauty of the many judgments
> proceeding from the wisdom of God governing the world. As no
> one can see the beauty of a song unless his view extends over the
> whole verse, so no one sees the beauty of the order and gover-
> nance of the universe unless he beholds the whole of it. Because
> no man is so long-lived that he can see the whole of it with the
> eyes of the flesh and because no man can foresee the future by
> himself, the Holy Ghost has provided man with Holy Scripture,
> the length of which is measured by the extent of the universe.[1]

WE HAVE SEEN THAT SACRED HISTORY, DEFINED BY THEOLOGY AND BASED ON
Scripture, is the account of two creations, the creation of the world and of
Adam and Eve, and Adam's rejection of God and fall from grace; the
re-creation, or reformation, of all things by Christ, as history prepared for
and witnessed the birth, life, death and resurrection of its Redeemer. We
have seen, because *the second creation is the reformation of the first,* that the
events of sacred history bear a symmetrical relationship to each other, as
events of the second creation are applied to and transfigure the events of the
old. Christ in becoming man is the second Adam, Mary the second Eve. We

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have seen, finally, that besides the symmetrical proportioning, there is a hierarchical value among events in relation to the Incarnation. As history approaches closer and closer to the appearance of Christ, it grows closer to its fulfillment, its reunion with God.

In reading "Gabriel, fram evene-king" which celebrates a single one of the events in sacred history, we found these same proportions. The event of the annunciation was told in such a way that it reflected, through the figure of the maiden mother, the total course of sacred history, from the fall of man, to Christ's resurrection and ascension, and, finally, to man's own future entry into heaven. And we found that the meaning of the poem depended partly upon the relationship between events as arranged proportionally to each other by the sequence of stanzas: the painless birth, applied to man's release through the pain of Christ's death, gave man rebirth from the pain of Adam's sin.

But the definition of the beauty of sacred history is incomplete unless it includes the achievement of its purpose, the restoration of man's delight. In "Gabriel, fram evene-king," the petition in the last stanza reflected this purpose. As man, living now, joined to Christ in the Church, the poet and his audience looked back from the present and, in virtue of both past and present, expressed hope for a future which had been foretold and prefigured, but which still awaited consummation.

From this point of view in the present, looking back with the poet and his audience, we are able to see the beauty of the plan of sacred history. We see not only the ordered relationships of the sequence of its events, but its end, the ultimate transformation of pain to joy. The beauty of this transformation reflects the goodness and wisdom of the Creator and is the basis of praise.

The next poem to be discussed organizes the events of sacred history in terms of their end in joy. For mankind seen in the light of sacred history, the experiences of joy and sorrow have very specific definition. Sorrow as defined by theology is the loss of God and the physical and spiritual pain resulting from it. Man's joy is his union with God in the beatific vision of heaven. The fulness of joy, or delight, is relative to the degree of closeness of man's union with God.

The sin of Adam and Eve was the beginning of all man's sorrow. It caused an infinite gulf between God and man. Only the infinite God could join the gap. In His incarnation, Christ, both God and man, took on Himself all the suffering caused by sin. Christ's crucifixion and death released man from the bondage to sin through Adam and reunited man to God. Thus the

annunciation of Christ's coming is called the beginning of joy. But the reunion is as yet unconsummated. After Christ rose from the dead, the choice between separation from God and eternal suffering or union with God and eternal joy has been given to the power of the individual's free will, as each soul works out his salvation. Because the value of the suffering of Christ is infinite, man has as many possibilities to reject sorrow and accept joy as the moments he has to live and to decide.

Sorrow, then, after the Incarnation, when it is formulated by theology, has two possible definitions. It may be the absolute sorrow that comes from the loss of eternal joy because of sin. This is the sorrow expressed in the Middle English poems of penitence. Or, on the other hand, it may be a relative sorrow, which, springing from a limited view of suffering, makes the suffering appear to be absolute. The restricted view cuts the sufferer off from awareness that the final experience of history is transfiguring joy. This restricted view is natural to humanity. It can be widened only by the point of view of Divinity.

We have seen that Mary is the medium for the coming of God into history, and that being the one through whom heaven was reopened, she replaces Eve through whom heaven was lost. Just as Christ takes on the pains of man to give him rebirth, so Mary, spiritually suffering Christ's pains, becomes the spiritual mother of man. In "Gabriel, fram evene-king," Mary, having been assumed into heaven, was appealed to as she is now, from the point of view of present time. Being the creature closest to God, she was seen as man's intercessor as well as the sign of his joy. Yet even in heaven her spiritual motherhood, since man still suffers, can still cause her sorrow. It is sorrow because of her bond with man that, for example, is the subject of the fourteenth century "Quia amore langueo":

> I byd, I byde in grete longyng,
> I loue, I loke when man woll craue,
> I pleyne for pyte of peynyng [2]

However, just as every man during this life has imperfect vision, so Mary, the human mother of God, was subject during her life on earth to seeing what happened under its limited aspect of joy or sorrow. As a human mother, Mary's sorrow was greatest for her Son. We shall see, in Part II, that the poet uses Mary's limited human view as the source of drama in the poems on the compassion of Mary. In these poems, the poet will focus on the

pains of Christ and exclude the implications of the future joyful outcome of the crucifixion, until the suffering portrayed reaches a great degree of intensity. In this way his poem can reflect the immensity of the consequences of sin which caused such pain, and through this knowledge it can turn man's heart towards Christ.

Yet Mary's experience of the events during her life was not defined solely by the limitation of her own viewpoint. The matter is more complex. Her experience of joy and sorrow was fundamentally related to the fact that the events of sacred history themselves have the double potentiality of joy and sorrow depending upon how wide the context is in which they are presented. Thus, in the lyrics about Mary, each of the events of her life with her Son may be presented either in the light of joy or in the light of sorrow. The events are joyful when they look towards her Son's final glory, which is the source of her own and of mankind's joy, or they are sorrowful when they look towards her Son's passion. Shown by the poet in its joyful aspect, Christ's birth will be described as the coming of the Messiah: seen in its mortal poverty and humility, it will be shown to foreshadow His crucifixion.

The fact that the outcome of sacred history is ultimately joyful always has the power to transfigure sorrow to joy. In the poems on Mary's compassion at the crucifixion, for example, the poet will often transfigure the present sorrow by introducing into his poem Christ's resurrection, ascension and Mary's assumption. It is especially the dialogues between Christ and Mary, or Christ and man, or Mary and man, that are structured by this metamorphosis of sorrow to joy. The dialogues of the mother of God with her Son are dialogues between the limited view of humanity and the omniscience of God. We shall see that it is theology's formulation of the plan of sacred history that provides the poet with the Divine perspective.

The next poem to be discussed is a dialogue between the Blessed Virgin and her Child from the preaching book compiled in 1372 by Friar John of Grimestone.[3] The manuscript is an extensive and varied collection of Latin theological materials arranged by subject, with Latin and English poetry interspersed. There are short verses, moral lyrics, paraphrases and songs. Among the selection of poems from it in Carleton Brown's *Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century* are dialogues and laments spoken by Christ and Mary.

The group of poems about the nativity and the group about the passion can illustrate for us the double potentiality the events have for sorrow or joy. Of those on the nativity, one (Brown, No. 57) is simply a song in praise of

Christ's birth, which relates how the words of the angel to Mary, the words of the prophets, the angels' song, the visit of the Magi, all manifested that the Child was God; but then, in contrast, how cruelly He was put to death for man's sake. Another (No. 58) has Joseph speak, "a man of þe elde lawe," who testifies to Mary's virginal conception and giving birth. The poem contrasts Christ's poverty at His birth to the kingly nature of His Father in heaven. There are three poems about the poverty of Christ in His cradle. One (No. 59) is a lament by man because he is the cause of Christ's suffering. One (No. 65), prompted by the idea of the Christ Child weeping in the cradle, rues the suffering Christ will have and, in order to appeal to man to repent, describes His passion. In the last one (No. 75), first Christ, shivering with cold, tells man to learn to love as He loves, and then Mary addressing Christ, laments that she cannot help Him now or at His passion.

For the most part these poems see Christ's birth as it foreshadows His passion. They dwell on Christ's suffering to stir as sense of sorrow and repentence in the listener. The innocent child embodies Christ's innocence. By juxtaposing His passion to His nativity, relating the passion to an innocent child, a poet could dramatically illustrate the injustice of Christ's suffering.

"Als i lay vp-on a nith" (No. 56) uses all the principles I have mentioned. The dramatic basis of the poem is the limitation of Mary's point of view as she hears of her Son's life and death. The poet uses the second joy of Mary, the event of Christ's nativity, as it contains the potentiality for both joy and sorrow, and he organizes the events of the Incarnation as each reveals the glory or the suffering of Christ.

The Child tells His own story. Throughout the tale because her perspective is limited, Mary repeatedly mistakes the significance of an event. Each sorrow and each joy she hears of only foreshadows a later moment, which she will suffer or rejoice in, with increasing intensity, until she finally comprehends the joyful outcome of events. Through the course of the telling, her initial limited understanding is transformed by the Child, until she can recognize the full implications of what His godhood means for herself and for man.

The listeners' view is limited rhetorically by the poem to that of Mary. Although, like Christ in the poem and like the author, the audience has a knowledge of the whole, through watching the events of Christ's life unfold as they are presented to Mary, they see the plan in a new, limited way, as she saw it for the first time. Yet the fact that the listeners remain simultaneously

aware of the total plan of sacred history adds an ironic dimension to the poem. As Christ first asks Mary to recount to Him His future, they immediately anticipate the pain that will be caused her if this seemingly happy request is fulfilled, and they sympathize with the sorrow that Mary, who is now unaware, will feel. They wonder at the motives with which the Christ Child asks to know, since the knowledge will make His mother suffer. At the same time, they see the irony of the Child's own situation, that He asks to hear, a future not of joy, as one would hope for a child, but a future of crucifixion and death. If the listener projects his thoughts beyond, however, he will also think of the ultimately joyous outcome, when Christ will return in glory.

The Setting

> Als i lay vp-on a nith
> Alone in my longging,
> Me þouthe i sau a wonder sith,
> A maiden child rokking.

The poem is set in a vision framework, to translate the listeners to another time and place, to a "maiden" rocking a child.[4] The paradox of mother and maid is not emphasized, but is one of the accepted mysteries of the vision. The presence of a maiden rocking her child leads the listener to expect her to sing a lullaby. Paradoxically, however, the maid has desired to make her Child sleep without a song. Then, incongruously to the expectations formed by the setting, it is the Child who speaks from His cradle. He will sing His own lullaby. The incongruity of the Infant speaking is an incongruity potential to every act of Christ because of the fact that He is God and both the source and the object of all human action. As God, He conceives Himself through Mary. Here as God He will tell His own story, and as God He will transform His own sorrow to joy.

Voicing the listeners' expectation of hearing a lullaby, the Child says that since mothers are wont to tell their children what will happen to them, and that since every good mother sings her child to sleep, so also should His mother sing Him to sleep with the same tale. Replying that she knows only what the events leading up to the present moment of His birth foretell, His

mother begins to sing of those. The listeners' perspective is narrowed to hers, to her joy as it must have been at Christ's birth with the words of Gabriel in her heart and the angel's prophecy of the Messiah confirmed by the fact of her painless giving birth to the Child.

The Foretelling

Mary's Tale: The Proposal; The Acceptance and Birth

> He grette me godli on is kne
> & seide, "Heil! marie.
> Ful of grace, god is with þe;
> Beren þu salt Messye."

The poet begins the story of the Child's life by having Mary tell what the angel said to her. The Gospel account of the annunciation is used, but in contrast to the first two poems discussed, it is used to emphasize the prophetic aspect of the angel's words to Mary. You shall bear the Messiah, the Savior of mankind.

> I wondrede michil in my þouth,
> for man wold i rith none.
> "Marie," he seide, "drede þe nouth;
> Lat god of heuene alone.

> Þe holi gost sal don al þis."
> He seyde with-outen wone
> Þat i sulde beren mannis blis,
> Þe my suete sone.

As in "Gabriel, fram evene-king," the angel's salutation contains both the greeting and the prophecy of Mary's motherhood and Mary is puzzled about how she, a virgin, shall conceive. By emphasizing that it is the God of heaven alone, the Holy Ghost, by Whom she shall conceive, the angel reassures her. She shall give birth "with-outen wone," outside the law of women; that is, without pain.[5]

In lines 35–36 which follow this phrase, because of her limited understanding, Mary makes her first error of interpretation. Not yet knowing the full meaning of the angel's prophecy as history will fulfill it, she identifies "mannis blis" with the immediate joy of "þe my suete sone," the Infant lying before her. It will not be until her Child tells her of His resurrection and final heavenly glorification that she will fully comprehend "mannis blis."

> He seide, "þu salt beren a king
> In king dauit-is see,
> In al Iacobs woniing
> Þer king suld he be."

In contrast to the other poems, here, where the significant events in the life of Christ will be related one by one, the poet has the angel develop the messianic significance of Mary's Child. His words prophesy Christ's kingship: You shall bear a king for David's throne—David's see—Who shall be king over all the house of Jacob.[6] The angel then gives the sign to Mary, also in the Gospel account, which will provide her with proof of his words: If barren Elizabeth can conceive, so must you believe what I say is true. And, in Stanza XII, Mary tells how, believing and pleased, she accepted.

In the next four stanzas, Mary recounts to her Son how the angel's prophecy was fulfilled. As the angel had said, Mary bore her Child without pain. Not only this, but at the time of His birth the Shepherds heard the angels rejoicing that He was the Messiah. These two facts testify to the truth of the angel's words, and in joy Mary finishes her account of her conception and giving birth. Now she can tell her Child no more. But in the same way as she had not fully comprehended "mannis blis" in the preceding stanzas, so here, she mistakes Christ's birth itself for the full accomplishment of the joy she will comprehend only in Stanzas XXXIV–XXXVI.

> "Moder," seide þat suete þing,
> "To singen I sal þe lere
> Wat me fallet to suffring,
> & don wil i am here.

Christ from the cradle then begins to instruct His mother. As the Son of God Who already has the view of His whole life, what He says establishes the tension in the poem between Mary's joy and her sorrow. Immediately He

contradicts her joyous view by speaking of the events of His life as "What it befalls Me to suffer and do while I am here." Although in its relationship to the phrase "& don," "to suffring" suggests the meaning, what He will undergo or experience, the verb carries with it in Middle English all the connotations of injury, punishment and death, especially when it is applied to Christ. The poet uses it here in direct contrast to Mary's joy and to introduce the idea of pain. Pain is the theme of the events the Child tells next: those which foreshadow His crucifixion.

Christ's Tale: Childhood

The next five stanzas tell of four events of Christ's childhood. Each stanza is introduced with a measure of time, and each stanza has a twofold purpose. The first is to present an element of suffering which foreshadows His passion and reflects also Mary's coming sorrow. The second is to use each event to point to the Child as the Messiah, either as He fulfills the law or as He is singled out as the Son of God.[7] When the seven days "ben don," the Child begins, He will suffer pain as He fulfills the law of Abraham by being circumcised, cut in a "wol tendre place." When twelve days have passed, He continues, the three kings, led by a star, will seek Him with their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.[8] Implicit is the homilist's interpretation of their visit as the testimony of the gentiles that the Child is King, Priest and Messiah.[9] After forty days, again in order to fulfill the law, the Child says, He will be presented in the Temple. Simeon will recognize Him as the Glory he has waited in old age to see, and he will prophesy. The Child does not say explicitly that Simeon's prophecy will be of a sword of sorrow that will pierce Mary's heart (Luke 2:34-35), but suggests it by contrasting the sword's effect of sorrow to Mary's present joy: Simeon's "sawe . . . changen sal þi chere."

The final event the Child foretells will happen when He is twelve years old and teaches the elders in the Temple. The Gospel account (Luke 2:41-52) relates this story from Mary and Joseph's view, how, losing their Child after spending the Passover in Jerusalem, they return and search for Him for three days. When they find Him teaching in the Temple, Mary rebukes Him: "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." But He replies to them: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?"

(See lines 48–49.) His reply asserts His primary purpose on earth, to do the will of His Father.

The Gospel account ends: "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men" (Luke 2:51–52). In paraphrasing it, the account in the poem transforms what in the Gospel is a summary of Christ's childhood years into a prophecy which summarizes the rest of His childhood: saying that until Christ is "þretti at þe leste" (Luke 3:23), He will be obedient to His mother and Joseph. As well as being a prediction, Christ's words in the poem have the effect of a reply and reassurance for Mary's rebuke. It is as if He intends to assuage Mary's sorrow, the sorrow of both the Mary He will hurt at that future time and the Mary to whom He now talks from the cradle, whom He is causing by his tale to suffer everything in anticipation of the events.

Christ's Tale: The Divine Mission Begins

The next five stanzas, as complement to His human childhood, recount the divine mission of Christ's manhood, as He begins to fulfill His purpose, to redeem man. Lines eighty-five through eighty-eight fulfill the previous quatrain and act as a transition. Then the four aspects of His mission are described which lead towards the fulfilling of the prophecy that He is the Messiah. The first event the Child tells of shows He is the Son of God. He will be baptized by His forerunner John, and the form of a dove will appear and the Voice will testify, "Thou art my beloved Son. In thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21–22). The next event He recounts is how He will withstand the Devil. As Adam was, so Christ will be tempted by Satan, but unlike Adam, Christ will resist the temptation (Luke 4:1–13). And next, the Child relates how He will establish His Church, gathering disciples to teach His Father's law over the whole world. And then, finally, He tells how His simplicity and knowledge will attract the people, so that most of them will desire to make Him King.

Mary's Response of Joy, the Contradiction

At this point Mary bursts out in joy. Yet again she has mistaken a limited joy for full joy, and ignoring the prediction of sorrow present earlier in her

Son's description of His childhood, she says, Sweet Son, no sorrow should ever injure me if I could see that day on which You would be King. The poem arrives at the climax of the opposition between sorrow and joy. To Mary the kingship her Son foretells seems truly to fulfill what the angel of the annunciation had prophesied, and she rejoices. But her joy would have intense ironic overtones for the audience of the poem; for, being ignorant of the rest of His story, Mary does not realize what is entailed before her desire for her Son's future glory can be fulfilled. Before Christ finally ascends into His true kingship of heaven, He must undergo all the sorrow His humanity will suffer on earth.

Although, in Stanza XXVI, the Child had seemed to predict His kingship, His words to Mary had been carefully qualified: the "most partiȝe" of the people, but not all, "sal wiln," shall desire to, but not actually make Him king. In Stanza XXVIII Christ reproves Mary for her false assumption, and the next three stanzas (lines 113-124) plunge her into sorrow. In words which echo His correction, in Stanza XVI, of Mary's joy at His birth, Christ contradicts her statement that no sorrow would ever injure her: "Do wey, moder," he says, it was not for this I came, but to be poor and to amend man's sorrow. Therefore, when two or more years of My mission have been accomplished, contrary to what you have said, you will mourn much and see Me die a cruel death.

The Child foretells His death in terms of the suffering Mary will experience. Taking up Simeon's words that Mary "changen sal þi chere," He explains first that the change she will experience will be from joy to sadness. The figure of the sword piercing her heart, present in Luke's account but which the Child had omitted from His own, is here introduced and interpreted in relation to His passion. The sword to pierce Mary's heart will be the abundant compassion she will suffer at His own great pain, for, the Child starkly reveals, He will hang shamefully on the cross:

> Samfuly for i sal deyȝe,
> Hangende on þe rode,
> For mannis ransoun sal i payȝe
> Myn owen herte blode.

For the ransoming of man I shall pay the blood of My own heart. This is not a figurative statement, because Mary will witness her Son's heart pierced by a lance. Out of this blood and water, the Church would spring.[10] Mary could not have imagined that from the birth she gave to her Child "with-outen

wone" would come this "care of michil won," the rebirth of man in exchange for the blood of her Son's heart.

Now is the moment of Mary's greatest sorrow, the deepest contradiction of the joy she felt at her Son's birth. Mary's view takes her no further. She is fixed to the moment of her Son's death. Alas, she says, Why shall I endure that day, to bear Thee for that woe? The context of their dialogue seems ultimately tragic.

Mary's Response of Sorrow, the Transformation

> "Allas! sone," seyde þat may,
> "Siþen þat it is so,
> Worto sal i biden þat day
> To beren þe to þis wo?"

But Mary is again mistaken. Just as, in the previous section, her joy at Christ's earthly kingship had the implications of not being final, so here, her sorrow at the crucifixion contains implications of its outcome in joy. Mary has focused on His suffering only, but the Child had suggested that the giving of His heart's blood for man's ransom from pain was part of a higher purpose.

> "Moder," he seide, "tak et lithte,
> For liuen i sal a-ȝeyne,
> & in þi kinde þoru my mith,
> for elles i wrouthte in weyne.

Christ replies to her outburst, and asserts the power of His godhood over the suffering of His humanity: Mother, bear this lightly, for I shall live again and in your nature through my power. His words foretell His resurrection as a renewal of His birth in human nature, and He replies to Mary's despairing question from the preceding stanza, Why did I bear You if it is to such a death?, by affirming: Or else I have wrought in vain.

The point of Mary's greatest suffering is when Christ suffers most and when He seems least powerful, when He seems, in fact, to die. But this is also the moment when the Child asserts His godhood most fully. With His

assertion He transforms the moment. The last section moves from passion to action, as the Child goes on to tell how He shall return to His Father in His human nature, to heaven. He shall send the Holy Ghost with His seven gifts. And when Mary's time comes to die, He shall take Mary with Him to be a mother in heaven. All this He has planned. With these words, the angel's prophecy at the annunciation is fulfilled joyously and completely.

We have reached the moment in the events of sacred history from which the poet himself speaks and in which his audience hears the poem. Just as the Child tells Mary what will happen after her own death, so, in the last stanza, He foretells the last judgment, when He will come again as King and Judge and in virtue of His resurrection all men will rise from the dead. Here the Child stops speaking. The poet takes his listeners out of the context of his dream vision, into the reality of the occasion on which the vision took place, as in the last verse he specifies the context of the first:

> Serteynly, þis sithte i say,
> Þis song i herde singge,
> Als i lay þis ȝolis-day
> Alone in my longingge.

The time is the festival of Christmas. The fact that the listeners now celebrate the event of the nativity testifies that the birth of the Child has in fact occurred, that the story foretold has happened, that the Child was God; that sorrow, solitude and longing have been turned into joy, that the Child and His mother are now in heaven together in joy. The listeners can rejoice in hope for themselves and praise the mother and the Child as they have revealed the beauty of God's plan.

The Structure

From this summary of the poem, it is possible, as did the poet and his audience, to look back on the story told by the mother and Child and to see in it a certain order and beauty of proportion. So regular do the proportions appear to be that they enable us to divide the poem into exact units, which may well reflect the units of melody to which the song was set. If we omit the opening and closing frame quatrains, leaving them to be a special introduction and an echoing conclusion, the poem falls naturally into seven

groups of five stanzas.[11] These units of five quatrains, in turn, can be seen to be ordered by their subject matter into, first, a unit of five stanzas which gives the setting and, then, three groups of ten stanzas each which recount the life of Christ. This grouping by subject matter has been represented above by the headings given to the poem's analysis. Correspondences between the organization of the different stages of the telling and the repetition of certain patterns of phrasing support the proportions in the poem made apparent by the subject matter.

The introductory five quatrains (II–VI) provide the lullaby setting and prepare for Mary's singing of the annunciation and birth of her Son. In the first group of ten stanzas (VII–XVI), Mary tells her part of the tale. In the first unit of five within this group (VII–XI) she relates the proposal, the angel's greeting and prophecy of the Messiah; and in the second unit (XII–XVI) she relates the fulfillment of the proposal, her acceptance and the consequent birth of Christ. She ends her tale in a spirit of joy. "He grette me godli on is kne" in the first unit is responded to by "I ansuerede bleþely" in the second. And corresponding to the last of the introductory stanzas (VI), this first group of ten quatrains ends with a quatrain (XVI) that leads into the next part, as Christ says He will tell of what in His life He will suffer and do. Christ's tale occupies the second and third group of ten stanzas.

The second group (XVII–XXVI) divides also into two units of five quatrains each. The first five (XVII–XXI) tell of Christ's childhood, ending with His promise of obedience to Mary and Joseph until "i be þretti at þe leste." Each stanza of the five tells of one event. Each opens with a phrase indicating an interval of time: "Wanne þe seuene daiȝes ben don," "Wanne þe tuelue dayȝes ben do," "Þe fourti day, to fille þe lawe," "Wan i am tuelue ȝer of elde," "Til i be þretti at þe leste." Complementary to the first, the second unit of five stanzas (XXII–XXVI), beginning "Wan þe þretti ȝer ben spent," tells of Christ's manhood. As the stanzas recount the acts of His divine mission, they develop the promise of His childhood and bring Christ's tale to the moment when the people desire to make Him king. At this point, Mary interrupts her Child's story with her second expression of joy. In the same way as in this group's first unit of five, in the second unit each stanza tells of one event, and each stanza repeats a phrase, "I sal."

The last group of ten stanzas (XXVII–XXXVI) shows Christ's contradiction of Mary's joy and her sorrow at its extreme; then it counterbalances her sorrow with Christ's account of the ultimately joyful outcome of events. In the first unit of five (XXVII–XXXI) the sorrow is told. "Do wey moder,"

Christ contradicts Mary's "Suete sone," and then He tells how she will suffer at His crucifixion. His explanation of why she will suffer begins with a phrase which echoes the phrase introducing each of the events of His mission, "Þerfore wan to & þretti ȝer ben don," and reinforces the idea in the preceding stanza that the Child's suffering is the true way in which His mission will be fulfilled. In the first stanza of the second and final unit of five (XXXII–XXXVI), Mary cries out in despair that she ever gave birth; whereupon Christ counters with a prediction of His resurrection and of man's glory (XXXIII–XXXVI). The despairing " 'Allas! sone,' seyde þat may" is countered by " 'Moder,' he seide." Christ's foretelling of the glorious events of His life continues to recall the manner in which He recounted His mission. After Christ foretells ultimate joy, the poem concludes with the frame quatrain (XXXVII), which makes explicit the setting of the vision on "ȝolis-day."

With a cursory reading, one might classify "Als i lay vp-on a nith" as an example of the religious lyrics which, in Kane's terms, would seem to recede into a common background of indistinguishable accounts of the life of Christ.[12] However, it can be seen from the summary of the poem and of its proportions that through the dialogue of God with man, the poet is reflecting in his poem the beauty of the transformation in history of man's pain into joy, the beauty of the Incarnation.

There are two principles of proportion by which the poet organizes this transformation. As in the case of "Gabriel, fram evene-king," both are also principles of proportion in the events of sacred history. The first is that the poet presents the Incarnation in the form of the fulfillment of truth. The poem develops as the recounting of a series of three prophecies and fulfillments: the annunciation of "mannis blis," fulfilled by the birth of Christ and ultimately by His resurrection and ascension to glory; the prophecy of Simeon, fulfilled by the crucifixion; and the angel's prophecy of Christ's kingship, first falsely seeming to be fulfilled by the Child's account of Palm Sunday and then truly fulfilled by the Child's foretelling of His return in glory at the last judgment.

The first principle of proportion, the fulfillment of truth, works in relation to the second, the dramatic fulfillment of desire. The movement of the poem is not controlled, as it was in "Gabriel, fram evene-king" by the objective sequence of events in history, but by the minds conceiving it. There is first of all the point of view of Mary; the principle revealing the symmetry of events is the reflection of joy and sorrow in Mary's heart, in a progression which

reveals more and more the full implications of the manhood and godhood of her Child, as her pain and joy grow more intense. Although the movement of the poem is controlled by the perspective of Mary, the perspective of the listeners from the first transcends what she knows. They see the events more from the point of view of the Child, Who has knowledge of the whole.

The poem begins in the spirit of Mary's joy at Christ's birth. This incomplete joy is countered by Christ's story of the pain present in the events of His childhood, but reestablished by the foretelling of His mission, which ends with the telling of a second, but also incomplete joy, His Palm Sunday kingship. To Mary's second mistaken rejoicing, Christ replies in a way that plunges her into deepest sorrow; only again to raise her, with the account of His resurrection, ascension and of her own assumption, to a comprehension of fullest joy. Thus the poem moves from joy to joy, in three stages: first, from an initial limited joy; then, counter to suggested sorrow, to a second deeper but misconceived joy; then finally, counter to the experience of most intense sorrow, to the comprehension of ultimate joy.

Given these two principles of structure in the poem, if in our mind's eye—in the same way as we juxtaposed the individual stanzas of "Gabriel, fram evene-king"—we exclude the introductory five quatrains and place the three groups of ten stanzas which recount the life of Christ side by side, we can see that the development of the narrative is symmetrically proportioned according to the units of five stanzas. Within each group of ten stanzas, the first and second units of five contrast, yet complement each other. Thus the first five quatrains in each group develop Mary's experience of sorrow, while they also prefigure or prepare for the second unit of five stanzas; the second five quatrains, while fulfilling the events related in the first unit, contrary to the first develop Mary's experience of joy. The principle of structure corresponds to that found in the Psalter of Robert de Lisle. (See Figure 5 and its descriptive note.)

We can see the proportion established in the first group of ten stanzas (VII–XVI). The first unit of five presents the story of the annunciation of Christ's birth. The annunciation contains the prophecy of joy in the words "mannis blis." Yet latent in the prophecy is sorrow. The words "with-outen wone" refer back in sacred history to the penalty of Eve and refer forward to the pains Mary will suffer at the rebirth of man. In the second unit of five, the story of the actual birth of Christ fulfills the event that was promised in the first unit, and Mary is joyful.

In the second group of ten stanzas, the first unit of five presents the story

of the events of Christ's childhood. While confirming His messiahship by the circumcision, epiphany, presentation, and then the finding in the Temple, the stanzas specifically develop what the Child will suffer: the wound, when He is cut; death, in the gift of myrrh; crucifixion, in the prophecy of Simeon; and finally, separation from His parents, in the search of Mary and Joseph for their Son at Passover. The second unit of five, correspondingly, fulfills the promise of the Child's divinity and kingship by the story of the events of His manhood, and Mary experiences great joy.

In the third group of ten, the first unit of five, which is the description of the crucifixion, fulfills the promise of suffering both implicit in the first unit in the story of Christ's birth and explicit in the first unit of the second group in the story of Christ's childhood. The description of her Child's crucifixion causes Mary's most intense experience of sorrow. The second unit of five fulfills ultimately the angel's prophecy in the first group of ten of "mannis blis" and completes the account in the second group of ten of Christ's mission, by manifesting His victory as God over sin and death. At the same time it counters the crucifixion by foretelling the events to follow it and provides the full cause for Mary's joy.[13]

Not only does the poet proportion the vision narrative of the life of Christ according to these two principles, but he sets the whole dream vision in relation to his audience by means of them. The introductory five quatrains place the dialogue at the time of Christ's nativity. By the two frame quatrains' setting of the poem itself at the time of the celebration of Christmas in the Church year, an analogy is established between the situation of the poet and his audience and the situation of the Christ Child and Mary.

Thus the poem can be seen, more deeply, to act as a prophecy and fulfillment of truth in relation to the audience. Just as for Mary the birth of her Child is the fulfillment of the words of the angel at the annunciation, so for the audience the fact that it is "ʒolis-day" gives testimony that the Child speaking in the poem has in fact been born. As the Child foretells the rest of His life to Mary in terms of the fulfillment of what was prophesied in order that He may teach her the ultimately joyful outcome of events, so through Mary the audience recalls the outcome of events they know have already actually come to pass, and they are reminded that, indeed, except for the last judgment, all the Child has foretold has come to pass.

Because of its setting, the whole poem can also be seen to act as the dramatic fulfillment of desire in relationship to the audience. That the deeper purpose of the poet is focused beyond Mary and on the audience's desire for

joy is revealed by his handling of the last two stanzas. The dialogue of the poem is left incomplete. Omitting Mary's response, the poet concludes the poem with the Child's account of final joy. It is for the listener to apply the significance of Christ's tale, beyond its consequences for Mary, to himself. The frame quatrains make this application clear. The opening quatrain introduces the dialogue as a dream vision witnessed by a solitary speaker who lay one night alone in his "longging." The concluding quatrain, affirming the vision was true, reveals that it took place on Christmas Day. The setting on "ʒolis-day" is a testimony to the listener that the ultimate transformation of his own solitary longing into joy has in fact been made possible.

There is, finally, a further general comparison to be made between the movement of sorrow to joy in the poem and the point of view of the audience established by the poem's setting at Christmastide. There is an analogy between Christ's view in the poem of the progression of the events in His life and the perspective in time of the liturgy of the Church as it looks forward from the Christmas season. After the joyous celebration of Christmas will come the penitential season of Lent, culminating on Palm Sunday, when Christ's entry into Jerusalem will be celebrated, and in Holy Week, when the passion and death of Christ will be relived by the Church. The sorrowing at the passion on Good Friday will be succeeded by the rejoicing at the resurrection on Easter. This in turn will be succeeded by the joyous time of Ascension and Pentecost, and the triumphant summer season of feasts, which includes the celebration of Mary's assumption, and whose liturgy prefigures the joy of the Heavenly Jerusalem, to be established by the second coming of Christ and the resurrection and final judgment of mankind.

part two

The Crucifixion
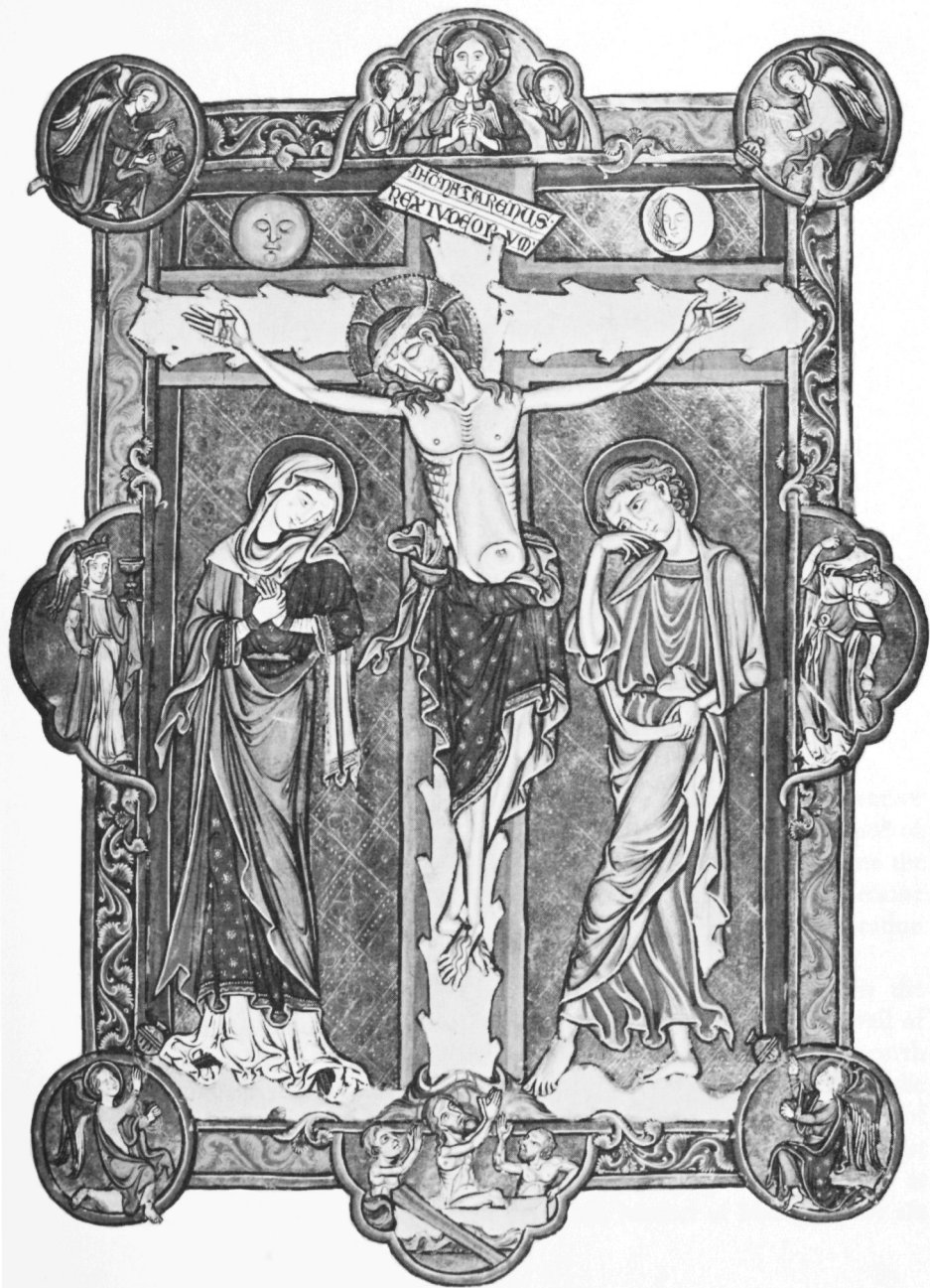
Tunc terra tremuit et sol sua luminaria clausit. Moerebantque poli, moerebant sydera cuncta. Omne suum iubar amisit luna dolendo recessitque omnes ab alto aethere fulgor. Finduntur duri lapides, scinduntur fastigia templi. Petrae durissimae scissae sunt et momenta aperta. Surrexerunt multi apertis tumulis fatentes voce magna Christum esse Deum. Cogitare nunc libet quantus dolor tunc infuit matri, cum sic dolebant, quae insensibilia erant.[1]

IN PART I WE CONSIDERED THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE of Christ's joyous birth. All salvation depended upon Mary's acceptance of the words of the angel. When Mary agreed to God's will, as she became the medium through whom Christ assumed the nature of man, she also became the medium of man's joy. At the moment of Christ's birth all creation rejoiced.

Opposed to that moment of Christ's coming in sacred history is the moment of His death, the time of Mary's deepest sorrow, when "the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom: and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent" (Matt. 27:51). Yet, what seems to be the moment of man's complete rejection of God and the complete denial of Christ's power accomplishes man's redemption. At this moment the greatest sorrow begins to be transformed to joy. Mary through her suffering at Christ's death becomes the mother of mankind, Mother of Mercy. These are

the mysteries that occupy the poets who write about the crucifixion and death of Christ.

The sin of Adam, because it was an offense against God Who is infinite, had infinite consequences. Christ's passion and death, because God Himself assumed man's sin, had infinite merit, which is offered inexhaustibly for the salvation of every man who has sinned. The dimensions of the loss caused by the fall of man are fully defined by the intensity of the suffering Christ underwent at His death. In the present age of the Church each man has been bound to Christ by the grace flowing from the crucifixion, by his baptism. Thus for him to contemplate the crucifixion is an experience of both joy and sorrow. He experiences joy because he knows Christ was crucified for the redemption of his own sins and for the restoration of his joy; yet he suffers sorrow as he beholds the great pain Christ suffered, because he realizes that he in fact has caused Christ's suffering by his own rejection of Him. But this great suffering he beholds also manifests the great love Christ has for him, and, recognizing this, the soul feels doubly joyful. Yet because the great love Christ has for him, in turn, stirs him to love Christ more, even more deeply does the soul sorrow at Christ's pain. Full sorrow for the Christian soul is not in realization, but in action, requiring the amendment of his life.

As counterparts to the lyrics on the joyous annunciation and birth of Christ, I would like to discuss four lyrics on Christ's crucifixion and death, in which Mary is used as the medium through whom the poet formulates the significance of the event. By analyzing these poems, I would like to illustrate further in what way a consideration of the theological dimension of the Middle English religious lyric is necessary for the full understanding of both its purpose and its structure and also to illustrate how the structural principle of each poem varies as the poet considers the different events of sacred history.

The poems are "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode," a thirteenth century sequence from the same manuscript as "Gabriel, fram evene-king," two short fourteenth century lyrics from Friar Grimestone's preaching book which re-create what Mary must have said under the cross, and a thirteenth century dialogue which presents the words that Mary and Christ might have exchanged during the crucifixion. All four of these poems derive from a common tradition springing from two dialogues, the *Beatae Mariae et Anselmi de passione Domini,* attributed to St. Anselm of Canterbury [2] and the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi de compassione Mariae,* attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux.[3] The St. Anselm dialogue is a brief retelling of the whole

passion, from the arrest of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane to His entombment. St. Anselm asks a simple question about what happened, and Mary describes the events, mostly in the words of the four Gospels and in the same phrases from the psalms that are used in the Passiontide liturgy to formulate the feelings of Christ.

It is the dialogue between St. Bernard and Mary, however, that provides the full background for the poems. In this dialogue, St. Bernard asks Mary to tell the sorrow she suffered at her Son's death in order that his own heart be moved to share the full extent of her sorrow. By means of St. Bernard's questions and Mary's replies, the earlier events of the passion are briefly told. Most of the dialogue relates what Mary felt and said as Christ hung on the cross. In a series of rhythmical laments Mary appeals to her Son and to the Jews to let her die with her Son. Christ, in turn, appeals to His mother, whose unassuageable grief wounds Him the most severely of all His wounds. But so long as Mary sees her Son suffer, her grief cannot be lessened. Finally, after consoling Mary by explaining that He must suffer and die to fulfill His Father's will to save mankind, and after giving her over to the care of St. John, Christ dies. Even after His death, as Christ is taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb, His mother continues to mourn. The dialogue between St. Bernard and Mary was influential on Middle English poetry other than the poems we shall discuss. There are several metrical versions,[4] and certain other lyrics printed by Brown seem to have been influenced by it.[5] I will include various selections from the dialogue as its subject matter contains parallels to each of the poems.[6]

Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode,
heng bihornen al oblode,
for hure gelte, for hure gode—
    for he ne gelte neure nout.   4
Feawe of hise im warn biliued,
Dred hem hadde im al bireued
Wan he seyen here heued
    to so scanful deth ibrout.   8

Þis moder, þar im stud bisiden,
ne leth no ter other vnbiden,
wan hoe sei hire child bitiden
    swics pine and deien gelteles.   12
Saint Iohan, þat was im dere,
on other alue im stud ek fere,
and biheld with murne chere
    is maister þat im Louede and ches.   16

Sore and arde he was iswungen,
feth and andes þurew istungen,
Ac mes of alle is othre wunden
    im dede is modres sorwe wo.   20
In al his pine, in al his wrake,
þat he drei for mannes sake

he sei is moder serwen maken—
 wol reufuliche he spac hire to.   24

He seide, "wiman lou! me here,
þi child þat þu to manne bere.
With-uten sor and wep þu were
 þo ics was of þe iborn.   28
Ac nu þu must þi pine dreien,
wan þu sicst me with þin eyen
pine þole o rode, and deien
 to helen man þat was forlorn."   32

Seint Iohan þe wangeliste
hir understud þurw hese of criste;
fair he kept hire and bi-wiste,
 and serwed hire fram and to fot.   36
Reuful is þe meneginge
of þis deth and tis departinge,
þar-in is blis meind with wepinge,
 for þar-þurw us kam alle bot.   40

He þat starf in hure kende,
Leue us so ben þar-of mende
þat he giue us atten ende
 þat he hauet us to ibout.   44
Milsful moder, maiden clene,
mak þi milce up-on hus sene,
and brinc hus þurw þi suete bene
 to þe blis þat faillet nout.   48

''Be Milde Lomb Isprad o Rode''

"Þe Milde Lomb Isprad o Rode" defines simultaneously two aspects of the reformation of sacred history by Christ for the salvation of man.[7] First, it defines the enormity of the offense of man's sin by showing the intensity of its consequences—the degree of the suffering caused to Christ—while it defines the infinite value of the Victim atoning for the offense of man. Second, by showing the intensity of the suffering Christ accepted, it reveals the extent of Christ's love for man.

Describing the crucifixion from the point of view of the poet and his audience, that of man in the present moment of sacred history as he is himself in transition from sorrow to joy, the meditation contains both the aspects of sorrow and joy. The crucifixion is violation and ugliness, yet Christ, transcending this, is love and beauty. The means in the poem by which the poet shows Christ's suffering is the very means by which the poet also reveals the transformation of the suffering. Further, the poem is itself given power to transform the lives of its hearers in virtue of this same Person the poet is recalling, when at the end the meditation becomes an efficacious prayer for final joy.

Since the crucifixion has its double power, the transformation of suffering by love and the transfiguration of ugliness by beauty, we shall analyze the poem from these two points of view, always as the poem reflects back to the double perspective of sorrow mingled with joy from which the poet and his audience meditate.

The Transformation of Suffering by Love

There are three movements in this poem: stanzas one and two, which describe the setting and the significance of the suffering of Christ; stanzas three and four, which show the intensity of Christ's suffering through His compassion for Mary's suffering on His behalf; and stanzas five and six, which apply the meditation to those present who "ben þar-of mende." The whole poem is constructed in terms of the audience's awareness: their awareness of Who the Victim is, of what the context of the event in sacred history is; the special awareness the friends of Christ have of these facts.

In the first two stanzas, there are two components to the suffering shown, the physical pain inflicted on Christ's body and the interior suffering caused to Christ or suffered by others. In the first four lines of the first stanza, the poet describes Christ on the cross; in the next four, he describes the flight of the disciples and the unfaithfulness of those closest to Him, except for the few who believed in Him.

> Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode,
> heng bihornen al oblode,
> for hure gelte, for hure gode—
>   for he ne gelte neure nout.
> Feawe of hise im warn biliued,
> Dred hem hadde im al bireued
> Wan he seyen here heued
>   to so scanful deth ibrout.

In the opening lines, Christ is presented to the listeners from a double point of view: not simply as He would appear to the outward eye, which is how the unfaithful disciples saw Him, but as He would appear to the faithful, with the insight given to them by their own context in the present moment of sacred history. Man has rejected God, but his rejection has been turned by God into saving sacrifice. Using the Church's application to Christ of Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. 53), the poet presents Christ through the figure of the Lamb.[8] The Lamb expresses the inner nature and significance of the Victim, Christ's meekness, His innocence, His value as a sacrifice for man, "for hure gelte." Spread on the cross as if it were an altar, the Lamb suggests,

more profoundly, the Paschal Lamb, sacrificed for the salvation of man, Whose sacrifice is renewed at each Mass until the end of time.[9]

While the opening lines reveal the inner significance of the Victim, the third and fourth define mankind's relationship to Him. "For hure gelte, for hure gode," describes the two fundamental relationships in sacred history that man has to God. The Lamb hangs because of man's guilt; that is, He hangs because of Adam's sin and because of all men's sins after Adam's sin, and He hangs because of this greatest sin, man's crucifixion of Him. And the Lamb hangs also on behalf of man, for his good; that is, He hangs so that through His suffering man will be reunited with God, ultimately in heaven. With the pronoun "hure" in line three, the poet applies this guilt and good not to the generality of "all men," but directly to his present audience, to "us." With "for he ne gelte neure nout" in line four, the poet affirms, in contrast to "us," Christ's innocence. Implied by this fact that Christ suffers although innocent is His choice to suffer as a free gift.[10]

The next four lines complete the description of Christ's abjection and sorrow. These lines indicate indirectly the ignominy and ugliness of the sacrifice, while they also revealed the significance in sacred history of His death. Fear had taken Christ's disciples when they saw their "heued" brought to such a shameful death. Christ was so shrouded by the ugliness of sin that the disciples were blinded to His godhood, and so they fled.[11] By referring to Christ as the "heued" of the disciples, the poet reveals a second aspect of Christ's saving sacrifice. The Victim is the source of unity, for in Him are all things, "And he is before all: and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church." The figure of the "heued" is the familiar one applied to Christ by St. Paul (Col. 1:14–22).[12] The flight of the disciples is the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy at the Last Supper: "All of you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written: *I will strike the shepherd: and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed*" (Matt. 26:31).

In addition to establishing that Christ is the source of unity, the desertion by the group of disciples defines the personal dimension of Christ's sorrow. Besides suffering although innocent, besides being racked with pain, Christ suffers humanly, from desertion by His most loved friends. They have not struck Him or nailed Him, but they have abandoned Him. Implied by their fear is disbelief in the power of His godhood. By fleeing, the disciples provide the audience with the example of man's deepest rejection of Christ.

Yet in contrast to the disciples, some remained faithful. In stanza two it is shown that Christ's mother and John have not rejected Him. The disciples

and Mary and John are those who know Christ most closely. By retaining their vision of Who the dying One is through their love for Him, Mary and John provide the example of those who feel compassion for His suffering.

> Þis moder, þar im stud bisiden,
> ne leth no ter other vnbiden,
> wan hoe sei hire child bitiden
> swics pine and deien gelteles.
> Saint Iohan, þat was im dere,
> on other alue im stud ek fere,
> and biheld with murne chere
> is maister þat im Louede and ches.

Stanza two defines the intensity of Mary and John's compassion by showing the inner source and outward effect of their sorrow. The first four lines describe Mary's compassion, the second John's. The primary cause of Mary's sorrow is her motherhood. "Þis moder" beholds the suffering of "hire child." She sees on the cross not only a man, but a man who is her child, with all the past associations, with all his early helplessness and innocence. The second cause of Mary's suffering is her perception of "swics pine," the increasing intensity of the pain of Christ's suffering, and the third is her knowledge that He is "gelteles," that He suffers unjustly. Whereas Mary's sorrow is that of a mother for her son, John's sorrow is that of a man for a lord who is the source of all his "gode," not material good, but the spiritual good of love. Following the liturgical and artistic tradition that St. John was the most beloved disciple of Christ,[13] the poet identifies John as the one "þat was im dere." This Master "þat im Louede and ches," Who had singled out and cherished him, John sees dying a shameful death.

Suffering because of sin is the source both of Christ's pain and of Mary and John's compassion. Christ's physical attitude and condition are the effects of man's sin. His wounds manifest the disorder of sin. The bodies of Mary and John do not cause them pain as Christ's body causes Him, but their bodies are used to express their inner pain, their compassion. They reflect Christ's suffering like a living mirror. Just as, in stanza one, Christ's suffering was introduced first by His physical position "isprad o rode" and then by the fact He was "bihornen al ablode," so, in stanza two, Mary's compassion is introduced first by her physical position beside her Son and then by the fact of her attitude of weeping, she "ne leth no ter other vnbiden." St. John, "þat

was im dere," is also shown in this double way, first as placed on the other side of Christ, and then as beholding his master "with murne chere," mournful aspect or countenance.

The next two stanzas use Christ's physical pain and inner compassion to convey the intensity of His suffering as evidence of the capacity of His love, and they show how His love transcends all pain. In these stanzas the poet multiplies sorrow upon sorrow to an increasing intensity which Christ absorbs in Himself, as His mercy, the expression of His love, transforms the demands of justice, that man be separated from God by his sin, into the joy of union. This transformation begins to be presented in stanza three:

> Sore and arde he was iswungen,
> feth and andes þurew istungen,
> Ac mes of alle is othre wunden
>   im dede is modres sorwe wo.
> In al his pine, in al his wrake,
> þat he drei for mannes sake
> he sei is moder serwen maken—
>   wol reufuliche he spac hire to.

In the first two lines, the poet conveys the intensity of Christ's physical suffering by adding details. By describing Christ's body swinging, he suggests the pain of the "sore" and the "arde" pressure of weight on His "feth and andes þurew istungen." He then, in the next two lines, adds the greatest wound of all Christ's wounds, His mother's grief. In the first two stanzas, the outer or physical aspect was defined as expressive of the inner source of suffering. Here in this stanza, the intensity of Christ's physical suffering is shown in order to emphasize by contrast His deepest suffering, the inner pain caused by Mary's compassion for Him.

This inner pain manifests more fully the degree of the intensity of Christ's love. To define this love is the purpose of the next four lines, the climax of intensity. The poet speaks of the pain that Christ suffered for man comprehensively as "al his pine," "al his wrake," as if the pain were so intense that nothing was any longer distinguishable except pain itself, like a light so bright that it blinds, or a sound so loud that it deafens—and the organ of perception is shattered and destroyed, as Christ's body was shattered and destroyed. Yet through this most intense destructive sorrow, Christ discerns His mother sorrowing, and sorrow transcends itself to absorb yet more

sorrow: "wol reufuliche he spac hire to." "Wol reufuliche" expresses the full extent of His sorrow, as impelled by her suffering, Christ speaks out:

> . . . wiman lou! me here,
> þi child þat þu to manne bere.
> With-uten sor and wep þu were
>   þo ics was of þe iborn.
> Ac nu þu must þi pine dreien,
> wan þu sicst me with þin eyen
> pine þole o rode, and deien
>   to helen man þat was forlorn.

What Christ does is to name the very thing that is the cause of Mary's most intense sorrow. Behold Me here, your Child Whom you bore to be man. It is as if by articulating the cause of her suffering, Christ desired to intensify her sorrow. Yet, rather, will He define the full significance of Mary's pain in order to transform it by her awareness and acceptance. To her grief now at His crucifixion He contrasts the fact of her painless giving birth to Him: You were without sorrow and weeping when I was born of you. By reminding her that she gave birth without suffering, He recalls to her the ultimate source and meaning of His birth. The painless childbearing was the sign that her Child was God and a sign of God's infinite respect for the desires and capacity of His creature; and the birth of her Child manifested man's salvation. That moment was full of joy—the antithesis of this present moment of crucifixion, when the enormity of sin rends the Creator with suffering, violates His nature as man, and rejects His power as God.

"Ac nu þu must þi pine dreien." Christ does not speak in order to lessen Mary's pain, but says, Now at this moment you must suffer your pain when you see Me suffer on the cross and die to heal man who was lost. The second four lines balance by contrast against the first, making a transition from the moment of Christ's birth to the present moment. Implied in these four lines is a kind of justice of sacred history. All women suffer in childbirth. Mary's painless childbearing was the unique exception. But if Mary is truly a mother, she also must suffer. Her suffering, however, has been transposed from the moment of giving birth to her Son to the moment of her Son's death. Because Christ dies "to helen man þat was forlorn"—for the spiritual rebirth of man—through her pain at Christ's death, Mary co-operates with Christ to become the spiritual mother of man.

Yet in contrast to two poems on the passion to be discussed below,[14] although this traditional idea of the justice of Mary's suffering in her spiritual motherhood is implicit, in this poem Christ's words do not express it directly. Instead, the poet recasts the traditional application, so that he may develop it in the context of the third and fourth stanzas, which tell of Christ's compassion for His mother's suffering. These words which command Mary to bear her suffering have burst forth from Christ at the moment when He experiences the greatest sorrow for His mother. Now she must suffer, He explains to her, as He must suffer, to heal man who was lost. As He chose Mary to be the instrument of His birth, now, in asking Mary to bear her suffering, which is "mes of alle is othre wunden" (line 19), Christ chooses her to be the greatest instrument of His pain.

It is to this degree of suffering that the poem has been mounting. Step by step the intensity of the sorrow has been defined, revealing the enormity of man's sin which Christ took on Himself. The suffering was defined first, in stanza one, as it deformed Christ, and then, in stanza two, as its effects on Christ caused suffering to those who loved Him. The suffering of Mary, the one closest to Him, was in turn shown, in stanzas three and four, to cause Christ's most intense sorrow. But by defining the intensity of Christ's suffering and the implied enormity of sin which caused it, the poet has been demonstrating the immensity of Christ's love. The sorrow He asks Mary to bear, who is the instrument of His most excruciating pain, will also be the instrument by which He expresses perpetually His deepest love for man.

The listener, who is bound personally to the crucifixion by his baptism and by his unity with the Church, thus finds himself loved to an inconceivable degree. He is one who has sinned, who, like the unfaithful disciples, without vision that the Sufferer is God or that he himself is the reason for His suffering, flees the ugliness and terror of the crucifixion. He has caused Christ's crucifixion, and thus has caused Mary's sorrow which, in turn, causes Christ's greatest suffering. The more intensely aware of the meaning and extent of the suffering he becomes, the more he despises himself and realizes that in all justice God should take vengeance on him, yet the more aware he becomes of Christ's transforming love for him. This is the source of his hope, and all he finds he can do is to cry out for mercy. It is to this point of awareness in the meditation that the poem has moved.

The last two stanzas apply the meditation to the listener by recalling him to the context of the present moment from which the crucifixion has been seen. The poet does this by virtue of the love demonstrated in the poem, and

asks for mercy—to be brought to bliss, the "gode" introduced at the beginning of the poem. First, the poet relates the events immediately after Christ's death, and then he makes the transition to the present moment in sacred history.

> Seint Iohan þe wangeliste
> hir understud þurw hese of criste;
> fair he kept hire and bi-wiste,
>   and serwed hire fram and to fot.

The first four lines of the fifth stanza temper Mary's suffering. At the command of Christ, St. John the Evangelist received Mary, and he protected her and served her in every way. Here the poet shows that Christ's particular love for Mary extends to her after His death through the disciple closest to Him. Like the author of the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi,* the poet has varied his account from its source in the Gospel of St. John in order to emphasize Christ's love for Mary.[15] Concluding the account of the effect of the crucifixion on Mary and John, these four lines also lead the narrative in time to the present moment from which the poet has conceived his meditation on the suffering and love of Christ.

> Reuful is þe meneginge
> of þis deth and tis departinge,
> þar-in is blis meind with wepinge,
>   for þar-þurw us kam alle bot.

The last four lines of the stanza are the heart of the poem, bringing the event from the past to bear on the present in such a way that the event has power to transform its hearers. Its function is analogous to that of the last two stanzas of the sequence from the same manuscript, "Gabriel, fram evene-king."[16] "Reuful is þe meneginge/ of þis deth and tis departinge"— Full of sorrow is the recalling of this death and departing. The word "reuful" has been given its full connotations by the first three stanzas in which Christ and Mary's suffering have been defined, so that the listener has realized his double position, both as one who causes the suffering and as one full of compassion for the Lamb Who suffered "for hure gelte." The last two lines of the stanza express the double response of the listener's soul to this position, as through realization of the intensity of Christ's suffering he

accepts his guilt, and through recognizing the intensity of God's love for man, he affirms his hope: Therein is bliss mingled with weeping, "for þar-þurw us kam alle bot," for by means of His death all profit came to us. The use of the past tense in line forty reflects the fact that the purpose of the suffering, "for hure gode,"—the purpose with which Christ consoled Mary— has been achieved. Implied in this one line are the other events of the redemption which define the poet and his listeners' present relationship to the crucifixion: Christ's resurrection, ascension, and the founding of the Church which is the means to future joy. And the poet forms the last stanza as the complete acceptance of the consequences of the earlier part of the poem.

> He þat starf in hure kende,
> Leue us so ben þar-of mende
> þat he giue us atten ende
> > þat he hauet us to ibout.
> Milsful moder, maiden clene,
> mak þi milce up-on hus sene,
> and brinc hus þurw þi suete bene
> > to þe blis þat faillet nout.

The last stanza is made up of two petitions, one to Christ, one to Mary. Each is conceived from the poet and his audience's perspective of the present moment in relationship to the meditation on the past event. The first petition is made indirectly, worded as an instruction for "us," those now present for whom redemption has been defined: Let us be so mindful of Him Who died in our nature that He give us at the end what He has bought for us. The suffering itself is referred to indirectly by the comparison to a purchase, and the circumlocution and indirectness seem to reflect the awareness that man is responsible for the incredible suffering, as if man's awareness of the greatness of the offense makes it impossible for him to approach Christ directly. Implied also in the fact of the great suffering is the great joy of heaven. Yet this joy, like the guilt—of such immensity that the poet does not dare to name it—is defined only indirectly as "þat he hauet us to ibout," what Christ has bought for us. Nor is Christ Himself named, but defined in terms of how He was presented in the poem, as He Who died in our nature, the power and means of our redemption.[17] The power called upon by the poet in this petition grows directly out of the fact that the poem is a meditation. He asks

that the response of Christ be a response to the intensity with which the poet and his audience recall Christ.

Direct petition is made only when the poet turns to Mary, the instrument through whom Christ took our nature, and through whose suffering Christ expressed His greatest love. The fact that the poet appeals to Mary directly is a consequence of her position in heaven in the present time of sacred history, where she is now the spiritual mother of man. But it is also a reflection of what the poet had revealed in his poem. For by asking Mary's mercy the poet fulfills the implications in the command of Christ to Mary that she suffer for mankind. It is as if here the poet says, Your Son asked you to suffer for us, and this request caused Him His greatest suffering; now be merciful to us, as He said. Mary is not named, but given her titles "milsful moder, maiden clene," recalling the paradox of virgin motherhood which is the sign that her Child was God and joining this to her quality of mercy. Her mercy, in virtue of Christ's mercy, is called upon: Merciful mother, spotless maiden, make manifest that mercy, through which you bore your suffering and which is our means to reunion with God, and bring us through thy sweet prayer to never ending happiness. The whole meditation on the crucifixion, then, has been transformed, through present petition, to achieve the final resolution of all sorrow: joy that never ends.

The Transfiguration of Disorder by Beauty

The second aspect of the sequence I would like to discuss is its beauty. Although the crucifixion is an event of disorder and destruction, through the dimension of theology the poet reveals the deeper beauty and power of the Divine: the means by which the poet describes the suffering and violation of Christ have a proportion and beauty which reflect the power of Christ's transformation of suffering by His love. There are three aspects of this beauty, which correspond to the three movements in the poem as described above. These aspects are order and proportion, intensity of perception, and power to achieve the fullest delight. The beauty exists always proportionate to the audience, to man in his present perspective of sorrow mingled with joy.[18]

In stanzas one and two, which we saw above described the setting and significance of the suffering of Christ, the poet has transformed the disorder and destruction of the crucifixion by presenting it in an objective and

proportioned way, a process that can be compared to the artist's presentation of the crucifixion in Figure 6 (descriptive note). First of all, the two figures by which the poet has chosen to reveal the inner nature of Christ establish Him in His position as the center of sacred history. By the figure of the Lamb the Victim is manifested as the Messiah, the event of His crucifixion as the sacrifice which redeems all men; while by the figure of the "heued" the Victim is revealed as the ground of mankind's unity in God. Then also, the event of destruction and disorder is presented by the poet in such a way as to reveal, with an almost geometrical proportioning, the Victim as the central power of the poem and Mary and John as the instruments through which His love will be demonstrated. In stanza one, the first four lines present the crucified Christ, His bodily suffering; the second four lines, the bereaved Christ, His inner suffering. Then, complementing and contrasting stanza one, stanza two describes the compassion of Mary and John, the first four lines presenting the grief of Christ's mother, the second four lines, the grief of His disciple John.

In stanzas one and two, the suffering of Christ and the compassion of Mary and John are further made to correspond and thus to reinforce each other by the poet's selection of the elements of description. Each person is introduced by the epithet which defines the cause of suffering: Christ, Who suffers for man's redemption is named "þe milde Lomb"; Mary who suffers for her Son is named "þis moder"; John who suffers for his Lord is named "Saint Iohan, þat was im dere." The epithet is followed by a phrase giving the bodily position and situation of each: Christ is "isprad o rode," Mary "im stud bisiden," and John "on other alue im stud ek fere,/ and biheld." And, lastly, the effect of their suffering is described: the "milde Lomb" is bathed with blood, Mary weeps, John has "murne chere." Taken together, the opening two stanzas are held in symmetry, creating the impression of a still tableau.

Also in the first two stanzas, the painful details of the suffering itself are minimized by use of language whose stylization and abstractness convey rather the inner significance of the suffering than the immediate fact of physical violation and destruction. In stanza one, the poet's depiction of the crucified Christ through the figures of the Lamb and the Head conveys rather than the torment of an individual man, the eternal significance of the Victim. Only two physical details of Christ's suffering are given. The Lamb is "isprad o rode," as a sacrificial animal would be spread upon an altar. There is no mention in this stanza of the use of nails, of the pressure of His

weight hanging on them. The second detail refers to the Lamb as "bihornen al oblode." "Bihornen" with its connotations of a covering quality and profusion, rather than suggesting the severity of Christ's wounds suggests the generosity of Christ's love and the sacramental power of His blood—a ritual spilling, rather than the literal horror of the body's rupture and pouring out of life blood.[19]

The compassion of Mary and John is also presented in such a manner that rhetorical stylization minimizes the harsh evidence of their suffering. The poet uses synecdochic figures. Mary's tears are described to show their abundance, signifying rather than conveying the intensity of her inner suffering, as she "ne leth no ter other vnbiden," allowed no tear to await the other. John's grief is indicated by one generalized detail, the mournful countenance caused by the loss of his Lord. The description, in lines five through eight, of the fleeing of the disciples also is stylized to indicate the inner significance of their desertion. The poet presents first a summary statement, "Feawe of hise im warn biliued," which anticipates, by contrast to the next stanza, the presence of Mary and John. Then in figurative language he gives the explanation of why few believed: first by personification—dread had deprived Him of His disciples; then by metonymy—when they saw "here heued" brought to such a shameful death. Thus, formal ordering of the scene and the use of stylized figures for description of physical details are both means by which the poet reveals concealed behind the ugliness of suffering the inner value of the crucifixion, the power which gives the crucifixion its value "for hure gode."

There is yet another formal proportion of relationship between the opening two stanzas, which reflects through and is modified by the whole poem: that of the implied relationship of the unfaithful disciples to the faithful Mary and John and of both of these to the listener.[20] As we saw above, the first four lines of stanza one center on Christ's suffering caused by His painful crucifixion, the second four on His suffering caused by the disciples' desertion, save a "feawe." We saw how stanza two complements stanza one as a mirror image of it. But the second stanza is set in relation to the first in a way that significantly contrasts it. The last four lines of stanza one about the unfaithful disciples are contrasted by the whole of stanza two which tells of those who are faithful. Whereas the unfaithful disciples fled at Christ's suffering and thus caused Him more suffering, Mary and John remained. With their compassion they complement Christ's passion. We remarked how for the listener, as he beholds the crucifixion, the unfaithful disciples and the

faithful Mary and John embody the two causes of man's sorrow: sorrow at having offended God, compassion for the suffering God underwent for his sake.

But in the light of stanzas three and four, the relationship between the unfaithful disciples and the faithful Mary and John is modified by yet another application of their compassion to the suffering of Christ. In stanza two, Mary and John are united to Christ by their compassion; however, in stanzas three and four the poet shows us that this compassion is an additional wound to Christ. Because Christ loves Mary, her compassion becomes "mes of alle is othre wunden," and it is assumed by Him so that it increases His own suffering. In retrospect we can see that, paradoxically, Mary's relation to Christ is in fact comparable to the unfaithful disciples' relation to Him—she causes a pain to Christ, found to be even more severe than the pain they caused. Thus as well as through the action related in the poem, by means of the formal proportioning itself the poet manifests how Christ assumes all sorrow to Himself, and by the very proportioning of the poem the ground of awareness is being prepared so that at the end of the poem the listener, who has found in himself both the unfaithful disciples and the compassionate Mary and John, will accept the love Christ offers to him by asking that it be given.

In stanzas three and four, which we saw above showed the intensity of Christ's suffering through His compassion for Mary's suffering on His behalf, the second mode of beauty can be seen. Taking the scene he had composed objectively in stanzas one and two, the poet translates it into an event experienced from a single point of view, that of Christ, reproportioning the crucifixion according to the elements of the human perspective of suffering and love. By giving the crucifixion Christ's order of value, the poet can reveal the full intensity of Christ's suffering. By revealing this intensity, the poet can, in turn, heighten the listeners' perception of Christ's pain, and correspondingly, according to the purpose of his poem, heighten their perception of Christ's love. Christ's deepest suffering is interior, and it is defined in these stanzas by the fullest expression of His love, when Christ asks Mary to bear her suffering—the greatest cause of His own suffering—for the love of man.

There are four ways the poet conveys the intensity of experience: by accumulation of separate pains, by adding a pain to an already full pain, by contrasting to this pain the most intense memory of delight, and finally by

Christ and Mary voluntarily consenting to suffer this pain without end. The first two ways by which the poet conveys the intensity are seen in stanza three, which shows the intensity of pain Mary's suffering causes Christ, and the second two in the fourth stanza, where Christ asks Mary to support this pain for the love of mankind.

In stanza three the poet defines the intensity of Christ's suffering in two ways and juxtaposes the second to the first. He defines the intensity of Christ's suffering by accumulating pain and by paradoxically adding one more pain to a pain already entire. In the opening four lines (17-20), the poet develops two sources of physical pain, to emphasize the pain of crucifixion. Christ was swung sorely and hard. We are given a feeling of shifting that suggests the heaviness of His body's pull. Then the poet mentions the nails in His hands and His feet, and our perception of the pain is intensified as we realize this swinging heaviness is pulling on the pierced feet and hands. But "mes of alle is othre wunden," the poet says, adding the third and greatest suffering, His mother's sorrow caused Him woe. In the second four lines of the stanza (21-24), he restates the pain her suffering causes Christ by defining it a second way, in terms of Christ's sensitivity of perception. His most sensitive organ of perception is not bodily. It is His love, and it is by His love He perceives Mary's pain, which adds to His already all inclusive suffering a pain transcending pain, brought by a perception transcending perception.

Stanza four is the climax of the expression of the intensity of Christ's suffering as it defines Mary's suffering. Christ cries out from His love, which made him perceive through all His blinding pain Mary's pain, to comfort Mary. But the comfort is by knowledge, not by release. He defines for Mary the source of her pain and its full intensity, and then prolongs it, doing both by relating her pain to the purpose of His suffering and death. In the first four lines (25-28) by recalling Mary's painless giving birth, Christ defines the deepest source of Mary's pain. First, by recalling His relationship to Mary as her son, the source of her greatest happiness, He names also the source of her greatest suffering. Second, by contrasting to Mary's present sorrow the joy of His painless birth into the world, He heightens the present sorrow, which is to end in His painful death. The last four lines of stanza four (29-32) prolong the suffering He has defined as Christ commands Mary to bear her suffering, which is His deepest suffering, for the love of mankind. Focused now on Mary's choice to obey or disobey, the expression of the most

intense degree of suffering has been reached. The stanzas which follow define it as the most intense degree of love, as Christ dies and the poet appeals to Mary, through her mercy to intercede for us.

In stanzas three and four, the poet has taken the elements of stanzas one and two and used the power of Christ's love to define the depth of suffering. In the imagination's eye nothing in the tableau the poet originally presented has moved. Christ hangs above, Mary and John stand below. The development has been, rather, in the point of view, which was changed to that of Christ. The poet has defined the interior dimension of Christ's suffering caused by Mary's pain, which, in turn, causes Christ to cry out and explain to Mary that they both suffer for love of mankind. It is in virtue of the power of love shown in the first four stanzas that the rest of the poem is formed.

The third mode of beauty used by the poet is the transformation of the recollection of the crucifixion into a source of power in order to attain for his audience its consequence, eternal delight. This he achieves in the last two stanzas, which, as we saw above, apply the meditation to those in the present time of sacred history who "ben þar-of mende." The purpose of the "meneginge" given in stanzas one through four was not merely to stir sorrow for sin and compassion for the Sufferer and for His mother. It was to recall also that the crucifixion is the event through which all profit, all "gode," has actually come to the poet and to his audience. And in the last two stanzas the poet translates the past event into its literal relationship with his present audience so that he can make it a means to procure what "He þat starf in hure kende . . . hauet us to ibout." To unite his listener "to þe blis þat faillet nout," he reproportions the meditation a third time, and expresses, in virtue of what has been remembered, the poet and the listeners' present desire.

He does this in two stages, the application of the memory to the present moment and the making of a prayer. Stanza five, by telling what happened after Christ's death, recalls the listeners to the fact that Christ's death has occurred, and that their lives have now the possibility of redemption. The fact is incorporated by implication only, as the first four lines of stanza five (33–36) describe how after Christ's death John cared for Mary. In the mind's eye, the tableau of the opening stanza has been modified. The head figure is gone from the cross; the two figures on either side beneath have joined. The dominant fact in these lines remains Christ's love for Mary as seen in the loving protection of her by John. In the second four lines (37–40), the poet makes the event's relationship to the listeners, which has been implied throughout the earlier part of the poem, explicit. Christ died in our nature.

The memory of His death leaves us full of sadness. Yet bliss is mingled with this weeping, for through His death came to us "alle bot," all profit.

In the last stanza, the meditation is transformed into a prayer for final joy. The nature of the power of the prayer is defined in the first four lines (41–44). The poet exhorts the listeners to keep Christ so deeply in their hearts that He will give them the joy He bought. In defining the value of remembering Christ, the poet's words reveal the central, and until now only implicit, proportion in the poem: the relationship of Christ's experience of suffering to the experience of those who meditate upon it. Let us be so intensely aware of Christ that at the end (at our death, at the last judgment) He will give us the bliss He has bought for us. As we observed above, although these lines are an exhortation to the listeners to be mindful of Christ, they can be seen actually to be an indirect prayer to Christ for His own response—the indirectness seeming to reflect man's sense of nothingness in the face of the crime he has committed and his sense of the power of God's love for him shown in the suffering of the crucifixion.[21]

For the audience, the value of the "meneginge" to achieve the response of Christ and that "blis þat faillet nout" (line 48) will correspond proportionately to the intensity of the power with which they recollect the crucifixion, not seeing in it simply the central fact of salvation, but seeing in it, more deeply, the revelation of the person of Christ. With a purpose analogous to that found in "Gabriel, fram evene-king," it is in order to intensify the response of his audience to Christ Himself that the poet has carefully shaped the recollection. In so far as the listeners respond to Him "þat starf in hure kende," Who in our nature gave Himself to death, Christ will respond to them and give that Joy that never fails, that Joy which is Christ Himself. Yet the poet does not let the power to reach the response of Christ rest finally with the audience alone, or even with the poem by means of which he has shaped the audience's response. The last four lines are a direct appeal to Mary. As she is the instrument Christ uses to redeem man and as she is the medium the poet has used to show both the degree of Christ's suffering and the degree of His love for man, so through the final prayer, Mary is called upon to be what Christ asked her to be, the medium of man's joy.

MARY'S SORROW

SINCE PERHAPS THE ADVENT OF THE RENAISSANCE SONNET, IT HAS BEEN THE
accepted manner of lyric poetry for a poet to focus on the intensity of a
moment of experience, or on a wider experience as if it were only one
moment, or for a poet to make his poem the intense expression of a single
personal voice. It has also been a fundamental conception of criticism that to
be effective as poetry a lyric must convey intensity of emotion.[1] That theol-
ogy by nature has an adverse effect on a poem's power to achieve this
emotional intensity has been the particular expectation of our modern sensi-
bility that has limited our appreciation of the Middle English religious lyric,
which depends upon theology for its subject matter and many of its aesthetic
qualities. The conclusions of George Kane in *Middle English Literature*
illustrate how this point of view can affect our evaluation of the lyrics.

In his chapter on the religious lyric Kane devotes a major section to what
he calls the meditative lyric; that is, poetry which involves "the intent
contemplation of a religious subject for the purpose of inducing a devout
state of mind." For Kane, poetry "connected with this contemplative activity
is by its nature more happily circumstanced than that which is concerned
with the simple formal expression of worship," or simple devotional poetry,
because contemplation and meditation are activities of the imagination.[2] In
evaluating and classifying the meditative lyrics according to their effective-
ness as poetry, Kane separates the emotional effect that an individual poem
might have on the listener from its theological dimension and holds that the
greatest effectiveness is achieved by the most intense expression of "human"

experience, in such a way that "specifically religious treatment" is excluded.[3]

To clarify the relationship in the religious lyrics of the emotional intensity of a poem to its theological dimension, I would like to discuss two short poems which restrict the point of view from which the crucifixion is seen entirely to Mary's experience of sorrow. Each poem is composed so that the listener identifies with Mary's perspective, and her suffering is used to make the listener's meditation on the crucifixion more intense. Focusing on a moment of time as though the full meaning of the crucifixion is contained entirely in the agony of the present, each lyric excludes an explicit setting of the event in its total context of sacred history.

The two poems are from the Friar Grimestone preaching book, the same manuscript in which "Als i lay vp-on a nith" is found. As the lullaby did, so these envision through the eyes of Mary, and thus through the love of a mother for her child, what happens to Christ. But in these two poems her Son does not speak. Only Mary cries out. The first poem is an appeal by Mary to those who have put Christ on the cross, in which the listener's perspective is restricted entirely to the suffering caused Mary by her human bond with her Son. The second poem is an appeal by Mary to her Son, in which the listener contemplates what Mary must have suffered from the realization that her Son Who was dying was God and had all power to release Himself and comfort His mother. Both poems are evaluated by Kane for their effectiveness in inducing meditation. In the following two studies, I would like to indicate what kind of importance the theological dimension has in a religious lyric that excludes any explicit setting of the crucifixion in the context of sacred history, and, further, to show that the presence of the theological dimension is not necessarily restrictive, but can in fact deepen the effectiveness of a poem.

"Wy Haue 3e No Reuthe on My Child?"

Fili, dulcor unice, singulare gaudium, vita animae meae et omne solatium, fac ut ego ipsa nunc tecum moriar, quae te ad mortem genui, sine matre noli mori! O fili, recognosce miseram et exaudi precem meam! Decet enim filium exaudire matrem desolatam. Exaudi me obsecro, in tuo me suscipe patibulo, ut qui una carne viuunt, et uno amore se diligunt, una morte pereant! O Judaei impii, o Judaei miseri, nolite mihi parcere! Ex quo natum

meum crucifixistis, et me crucifigite, aut alia quacunque morte
saeua me perimite, dummodo cum meo filio simul moriar! Male
solus moritur. Orbas orbem radio, me Judaea filio, gaudio et
dulcore. Vita mea moritur, et salus perimitur, atque de terra
tollitur tota spes mea. Cur ergo viuit mater post filium in dolore?
Tollite, suspendite matrem cum pignore! [4]

In this first lyric which Brown entitles "The Blessed Virgin's Appeal to
the Jews," [5] in contrast to "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode" the divine
perspective has been darkened from the poem. The wider purpose, man's
redemption, is excluded. Mary speaks solely as the mother of her Son and is
made the intercessor not for mankind, but for Christ. Whereas in "Þe milde
Lomb isprad o rode" the intensity of Christ's suffering was shown to define
the intensity of Christ's love, in this poem where Mary is the central figure,
the intensity of Mary's love for her Son is shown in order to define the
intensity of Mary's suffering. The intensity of her love is expressed in her
desire to be united to her Son; the intensity of her suffering is the direct
result of her being separated from Him. Christ's silence in the poem in-
creases the sense of Mary's helpless distance from the Center of her love. The
poem develops according to the two poles of intensity: the intensity of
suffering defined by the intensity of love.

> Wy haue ȝe no reuthe on my child?
> Haue reuthe on me ful of murning,
> Taket doun on rode my derworþi child,
> Or prek me on rode with my derling.
>
> More pine ne may me ben don
> Þan laten me liuen in sorwe & schame;
> Als loue me bindet to my sone,
> so lat vs deyȝen boþen i-same. [6]

The poem opens with Mary's crying out in recognition that her Son's
torturers have no mercy for Him: Why have you no pity on my Child?
Have pity on me, full of mourning. She makes herself the medium of
Christ's expression, presenting her suffering, which is caused by His suffer-
ing, as the evidence to bend His torturers' hearts. Then she offers two ways

in which the torturers may show pity. They may take her Child down from the cross, or they may join her to Him on the cross. By requesting His descent to her or her being joined to Him, Mary's words reveal to the listeners her situation of separation. The alternatives she gives also express to them the fact of her love. In the first alternative she desires to relieve her Son of pain; the first failing, she desires, in the second, to be joined to His pain.

While the first stanza presents the bodily setting of suffering and love—Christ hangs on the cross, Mary stands below—the second stanza develops the inner meaning. The first two lines express Mary's greatest inner pain: No greater pain could be caused me than (while He is dead) to let me live on in sorrow and shame. This inner pain she desires to resolve, in the last two lines, by an expression of greatest love: As love binds me to my Son, so let us die both together.

The poet has organized the poem in a series of oppositions. Each opposition expresses both a desire for union because of Mary's love and an increase of the sorrow that Mary is trying to prevent. The external structure of the first stanza embodies their separation, as its focus alternates twice in balanced pairs of lines from Christ to Mary (lines 1–2), from Christ to Mary (lines 3–4): Have pity on Him or have pity on me; take Him down or raise me up. But what Mary desires expresses indirectly also their union and love. Pity for her will be pity for Him. If he is lowered, they will be together; if she is raised, they will be together. The second stanza expresses the separation and union as two ways of resolving the situation, in the first two lines, separation; in the second two, union. Whereas the first stanza was made up of four lines of syntactically independent clauses, the second stanza is made up of opposing two line syntactic units: "More pine ne may me ben don/ Þan laten me liuen in sorwe & schame" and "Als loue me bindet to my sone,/ so lat vs deyȝen boþen i-same."

Mary's address in the poem is literally to the Jews. Her appeal rises out of her moment of most intense suffering as mother of her Son. Yet even in a poem so clearly and simply restricted to the mother's suffering at the moment of her Son's crucifixion, we can see implicit for its audience a wider context and purpose. According to Brown, immediately above the poem in the manuscript the following saying appears, which suggests the English lyric was directly inspired by the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi:* "Quare ut ait B. in persona uirginis ad Iudeos. Si non placet compati filio compatimini matri." [7] Upon comparison certain similarities between the two works are apparent. As in the *Lamentatio,* in this poem the passion is seen from the point of view

of the mother of Christ, and as in the *Lamentatio,* Mary's closeness to Christ, her knowledge of Him as His mother, is the source of her great suffering. The two works have essentially the same purpose. The *Lamentatio* opens with an introductory section in which St. Bernard beseeches Mary in heaven to relate her sorrow during the crucifixion of her Son, so that he too may share in her compassion and receive the gift of tears. The same motive is evident in the saying that introduces the English poem, and the intensity of Mary's appeal to the Jews in the poem would draw deeply also on the listeners' compassion for Mary. For the listener, being made aware of Mary's grief might suggest further not only that he, like St. Bernard, sympathize with Mary, but also that he, like the Jews, have pity on Mary's Son—that he cease from sin because it is his sins that have nailed her Son to the cross.

Kane professes that to give a subject "religious" treatment the poet must attempt to induce "religious emotion" by explicit means. The increase in effectiveness of the meditative lyric is, he holds, on the contrary precisely in proportion as the artistic considerations are not subordinated to the religious ones, but are made foremost. There must be a creative transformation of the religious subject into poetry by the process of selection, rejection, arrangement. It is because it succeeds in this that Kane places "The Blessed Virgin's Appeal to the Jews" highest in the group of meditative lyrics.[8] It is illuminating to compare the principles of effectiveness Kane defines as he describes this poem to the practice of the author of the *Lamentatio,* for they radically contrast those embodied by the Latin work. The contrast will show more precisely how different from the medieval is the modern understanding of the power the theological dimension has to heighten the intensity of emotion.

The excellence of "The Blessed Virgin's Appeal to the Jews," Kane explains, is due to the poet's concentrating on the most striking feature of the situation, which is "Mary's emotion as a human mother face to face with her suffering Son." The listeners can take Mary into their hearts because she speaks with the voice of any disconsolate mother to her Son's torturers:

> No detailed description of the crucifixion, and no suggestion of the enormity of the sacrifice made there, could convey Mary's grief as completely as this desperate plea. Moreover, no specifically religious treatment exists with such a powerful effect of inducing first sympathy and then devotion in the reader. He knows the identity of "my derling," and will the more readily make the transference from the particular instance to the general

plan which necessitated the suffering and occasioned the unhappiness because, as this imaginative experience is presented, it could be the grief of all mothers.[9]

The modern reader of a religious lyric rarely grasps in what way the contrary principle can be true for a medieval author. It is not the typical, but the individual and particular associations that Mary and Christ have, as it is in all human relationships, that are seen to cause and to convey intensity of suffering. Further, the fact that Mary is not any mother, her Son not any child, but that she is the mother of God and that she shared the uniquely profound experiences of His life and death is what reveals their suffering to be far greater than any other human being's suffering. In his method of presenting Mary's compassion the author of the *Lamentatio* illustrates these latter principles clearly. It is first of all by recalling the events of Mary and Christ's life together that the *Lamentatio* begins to attempt to comprehend what Mary suffered during Christ's passion. These individual events establish that in the same way as Mary was closest to Christ throughout His life, so she was foremost in grief at His suffering and death. As the dialogue opens, the author has St. Bernard say:

> Ipsa enim portauit regem gloriae, illum omni petenti datura. Ipsa genuit eum, lactauit eum, die octaua circuncidit, et quadragesima praesentauit in templo, duos tuttures vel duos pullos columbarum pro eo offerens in holocaustum. Fugiens ab Herode ipsum portauit in Aegyptum, lactans eum et nutriens, curam illius habens, sequens eum fere quocunque pergebat. Credo etiam firmiter quod ipsa mater Jesu erat inter illas faeminas quae ipsum sequebantur ministrantes ei. Nullus debet inde admirari si sequebatur eum, cum ipse esset totus eius dulcor, solatium, desiderium et solamen. Hanc etiam arbitror fuisse inter illas dolentes atque gementes, quae lamentabantur flentes dominum.[10]

Although they are facts of the history of God made man, they can, to support Kane's view, be seen to be restricted to the human facts of her Son's incarnation. However, reading on in the dialogue, we find that the author builds on the intensity which he has conveyed through the human facts by using also the miraculous or divine aspects of the life of Mary's Son. It is through these aspects particularly that he conveys how Mary's grief at her

Son's crucifixion surpasses any other grief immeasurably. The power of the supernatural fact to convey this can be seen, for example, early in the dialogue, in the way in which the author uses Mary's present glorious queenship of heaven. "O that you had shown me your tears of joy on that day when you entered into the eternal joy with your Son," St. Bernard says to Mary, "so I might have known the degree of bitter pain you suffered to see Him die":

> Vtinam dolor iste sic quotidie inhaereret visceribus meis, sicut inhaesit tunc tuis! Vtinam die qua assumpta fuisti in coelum ut in aeternum gauderes cum filio tuo, mihi indicasses lachrymas tuas, ut per illas cognoscerem quantum tibi amaritudinis fuit, cum Jesum dilectum tibi, heu, heu et parum dilectum mihi, clauis in ligno confixum, capite inclinato suum sanctissimum exhalare videres spiritum! . . . Quare ego miser non ploro, cum abiectio plebis factus est filius Dei patris? Veruntamen tu, domina, gaude gaudio magno valde ab ipso nunc glorificata in coelis, quae in mente tantis clauis amarissimis fuisti confixa tuae piissimae mortis! [11]

"Truly, you, Lady, now glorified in heaven, rejoice with very great joy from Him, you, most devoted one, who were transfixed in your heart by such bitter nails." It is the supernatural magnitude of Mary's glory now which to St. Bernard can reveal the true magnitude of her compassion then. Again, for example, towards the end of the dialogue the author has St. Bernard convey the extent of sorrow just after Christ gives up His spirit, by describing the grief of the angels. In terms which to the modern reader might seem to be rhetorical hyperbole, but which to the Christian soul telling of the death of the Son of God could have the value of fact, St. Bernard says: "O who among the Angels and Archangels, contrary to their nature, did not weep, when the author of nature, the immortal God and man, died."

> O quis tunc Angelorum Archangelorumque etiam contra naturam suam non fleret, ubi auctor naturae, Deus immortalis, homo, mortuus jacebat? Videbant Christi corpus sic male tractatum ab impiis, sic laceratum a pessimis, jacere exanime suo sanguine cruentatum. Videbant etiam illam piissimam, illam sanctissimam ac beatissimam virginem, matrem eius, tantis cru-

THE CRUCIFIXION

ciari singultibus, tam amaris repleri doloribus, tam abundantibus
lachrymis madidari, sic amarissime flere, quod nullo modo po-
terat suas lachrymas refrenare. Et quis poterat tunc a lachrymis se
abstinere? Fiebat proinde maeror et luctus ab Angelis ibidem
praesentibus, qualis decebat spiritus almos: imo mirarer, si omnes
Angeli in illa beatudine ubi flere est impossibile non fleuissent.
Credo propter quod et loquor, quia dolebant, si dolere valebant.
Sicut enim fuit possible Deum per assumptum hominem mori,
ita forte possibile Angelos bonos dolere de morte Domini Dei sui.

"Rather I would be amazed if all the Angels in their beatitude, where it is
impossible to weep, did not weep. Therefore I believe and say that, having the
power to weep, they wept. For if it was possible for God through assuming
the nature of man to die, it is truly possible for the good Angels upon the
death of their Lord God to weep." [12]

It is difficult for the modern reader to grasp how the theological as well as
the human dimension can be fertile ground for the imagination. The next
poem will illustrate this point further. It is a poem in which the point of view
of the telling is also restricted to that of Mary, but one which uses its
listeners' knowledge of theology to achieve its full effect. "Suete sone, reu on
me, & brest out of þi bondis," or as it is entitled by Brown, "Lamentacio
dolorosa," is Mary's appeal to her Son, Who, besides the Jews, is the second
possible source of release from suffering.[13] She appeals to her Son because she
knows He is God and has the power to release them. The poem is also
classed by Kane as a meditative lyric, but he considers it inferior to "The
Blessed Virgin's Appeal to the Jews," and he gives only a summary descrip-
tion of it. The poem will provide for us a good example of how knowledge
of a theological concept can explain seemingly unrelated aspects of a poem as
well as reveal its power.

"Suete Sone, Reu on Me, & Brest Out of Þi Bondis"

Suete sone, reu on me, & brest out of þi bondis;
For nou me þinket þat i se, þoru boþen þin hondes,
Nailes dreuen in-to þe tre, so reufuliche þu honges.
Nu is betre þat i fle & lete alle þese londis.   4

> Suete sone, þi faire face droppet al on blode,
> & þi bodi dounward is bounden to þe rode;
> Hou may þi modris herte þolen so suete a fode,
> Þat blissed was of alle born & best of alle gode!　　　　　　8

> Suete sone, reu on me & bring me out of þis liue,
> for me þinket þat i se þi detȝ, it neyhit suiþe;
> Þi feet ben nailed to þe tre—nou may i no more þriue,
> For al þis werd with-outen þe ne sal me maken bliþe.[14]　　12

On first reading, the poem seems to be a simple appeal by Mary to Christ, as His mother, to release her from her suffering. The first stanza gives the appeal, the reason for it, and the effect on Mary of Christ's suffering. The second stanza seems to enlarge on the details of Christ's suffering to emphasize Mary's suffering. The last repeats the appeal most intensely at the moment of Christ's death. This is indeed the basic movement of the poem, but to understand the full dimensions of Mary's appeal to her Son and to explain certain phrases more fully, a modern reader needs to be aware of the meaning of Christ's divine identity.

If he reads the poem as if Mary saw Christ solely as her human child suffering, he would understand Mary's appeal to be one with no possibility of fulfillment, a fruitless one. The poem would seem therefore to have simply the sentimental value of expressing a mother's inability to accept the extreme pain and ignominy of her son's situation. The purpose of the poem, as in the last poem, would seem to be solely to effect compassion in the poet's audience. But when the reader recognizes that the conception of the poem depends fundamentally on the idea that Mary's dying son is God, he sees the essential question expressed by her appeal and, also, God's unspoken answer. If this man is God, the all powerful, He can burst His bonds. Why, then, doesn't He? Mary, who loves Him most and knows Him most fully, because she is most fully aware of the significance of the situation can ask this question most forcibly. Christ's silent death, through wounding the one closest to Him, is thus recognized to be Christ's willing choice because of His love for man.

When the reader looks at the poem with this question in mind, he sees that it progresses by two deep movements. The first movement is Mary's gradual inner realization as she sees Christ crucified that her Son, Who is

God, is dying. The clauses "for nou me þinket þat i se" (line 2), "for me þinket þat i se" (line 10), phrased in an indefinite way, express two aspects of the incomprehensibility to Mary of her Son's death: first, the incongruity of the fact that God, Who is Life itself, should suffer and die; and at the same time, the mother's inability to absorb the full reality of her son's suffering, "Hou may þi modris herte þolen . . . ?" (line 7). The poem shows Mary's gradual recognition of her Child's death as she tells bit by bit how He suffers.

The second movement of the poem is the manifestation of the intensity and value of what is happening to Mary's Child so as to fully define the causes of Mary's pain. First, the progress of His suffering is shown until He reaches the point of death. At the same time in the poem, the value of the One dying is gradually manifested—from Mary's opening statement that He is her son, through her description that He is "best of alle gode," to her final desire to be taken from this life because without Him life itself has no value. The value of Christ is revealed in order to reveal fully the value of Mary's loss and thus to show the full depth of her sorrow.

In the opening two lines Mary's appeal to her Son indicates both her desire to see Him released from suffering and her knowledge that He has the power to release Himself: Sweet Son, have pity on me and burst out of your bonds! It is as if we hear echoed in Mary's appeal the blasphemous taunt in the Gospel called up to Christ as He hung on the cross: "Vah, thou that destroyest the temple of God and in three days dost rebuild it: save thy own self. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross."[15] Paradoxically conceived by His mother, the words sound to the audience not as a denial of His godhood, but as an affirmation spoken in faith of it. Mary knows that her Son has the power. Why does He not, then, release Himself?

In lines three and four, Mary gives the reason for her appeal, "for nou me þinket" expressing the incomprehensibility of the fact of which she is gradually becoming aware. For now it seems to me, she says, that I see, through both Your hands, nails driven into the tree, so sorrowfully do You hang. The phrase "nailes dreuen" being suspended in the sentence, as if Mary cannot admit the sight, the syntactical structure acts to emphasize the cruelty of the nails, as does the contrast of her Son's pierced hands to the pierced inanimate wood of the tree behind them. Added at the end, the clause "so reufuliche þu honges" can modify the words on the effect of the nails or those on the cause of Mary's realization. Mary's next consideration—Now it is wiser that I flee and abandon these parts—echoes a second time the account of the passion in the Gospels, reflecting back to the way Christ was abandoned by His

disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane.[16] Or perhaps this line is a momentary suggestion that if Mary finds her Son is truly powerless, she will despair of life itself, a suggestion looking forward to the desire she will state fully in stanza three, that if her Son dies, she desires to die as well.

The second stanza enlarges on the details of her Son's suffering. In lines five and six, Mary describes Christ's face covered with blood, His body bound down on the cross. The fairness of Christ's face is contrasted to the violation of it by His wounds and His power to move to the fact that He is bound down. Lines seven and eight of the stanza, by showing the value of the One suffering, both increase the sense of the injustice of the situation and intensify the evil of the torture. In these lines Mary frames her experience into a question which is the expression of her dilemma through the whole poem, "Hou may þi modris herte þolen . . ." How can Your mother's heart endure? I know my Son is not simply blessed and good, but most blessed "of alle born & best of alle gode!" How can I support this sorrow, to see so sweet a Child, One Who is not only my son, but Power and Goodness itself, bound and destroyed?

In the last stanza, Mary perceives that Christ is dying: For it seems to me, she says, that I see your death, it is nearing quickly. Before in stanzas one and two, she suffered for His suffering as her son, for His being bound down and wounded as God; now she suffers the actual loss of both her son and God. But as it seems most strongly to be denied by His death, in this last stanza Mary gives her Son's eternal value its strongest affirmation. Looking closely at Mary's last appeal, we see that even at His death she calls upon His supreme power: Sweet Son, have pity on me and bring me out of this life. From the beginning of the poem, through Mary's vision the poet has posed to his audience the incongruity that God could die, and through Mary's appeal to her Son he has shown the value and meaning of this death. Now in the last stanza, as Mary sees Christ's death to be imminent, the paradox shifts, from the incongruity that God Who has power over death could die, to the incongruity that God Who in fact is dying would choose to do so. By the vision that Mary retains of her Son's divinity, Mary reveals God's love for man and man's blind rejection of God that caused the manifestation of His love.

In his summary description of "Lamentacio dolorosa," Kane describes it as a poem "in which Mary prays to her Son either to break out of his bonds or let her die." He criticizes it for being unnecessarily explicit, although, he finds, it is good enough to illustrate the superiority of the method which

concentrates on Mary's "bewildered grief" and leaves "to the reader some effort of understanding." "The Blessed Virgin's Appeal to the Jews," however, is the best of this kind of meditative poem.[17] Although Kane's summary is brief, it does show us that to exclude the theological dimension of a poem is misleading, and it reflects the inaccessibility of some of the lyrics to such an approach.

By describing Mary's last appeal as an alternative to the first appeal she makes, Kane ignores the almost ballad-like progression of Mary's inner perception as she recognizes the inconceivable, that God is dying. Rather than being too explicit, each detail given of the crucifixion in this poem heightens the inner fact Mary is realizing. To her Son's omnipotence, Mary's sight opposes His hands held by nails to a tree. To His value as the most blessed of all born and best of all good, her eyes oppose His face covered with blood, His body bound to a shameful cross. And as she realizes His death, her eyes seem to sink down to His feet nailed to the tree. Far from being the weaker of the poems, "Lamentacio dolorosa" suggests even deeper dimensions to the death of Mary's Son than "The Blessed Virgin's Appeal to the Jews."

Mary's affirmation of God's power in the last stanza suggests that for Mary and for man, the loss of her Son will not only be the loss of a son to death which has power over man, but the loss of God Who has power over death from the world, that with her Son's death, the world's death will occur. The fact is implied by Mary's final words in the poem: Now may I live no longer, for even the entire world without you shall never make me happy. As the Son of God leaves the world, virtually all good, all life itself withdraws. Mary's final words embody for the poem's audience the dichotomy of man's situation in present life, which is both a life lived in Christ and a life lived in "the world." In Mary can be seen the Christian who prays against the temptation of the world. Rather than being separated from God, he will choose death. More deeply, Mary's appeal expresses the positive desire of the contemplative soul, whose affections are so centered on Christ that he feels to live his present transitory life is only a suffering and separation from Christ, Whom alone he loves, and Whom he can see now only "through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face" (I Cor. 13:12).[18]

"Stond wel, moder, vnder rode,
bihold þi child wyth glade mode,
blyþe moder mittu ben." [3]
"Svne, quu may bliþe stonden?
hi se þin feet, hi se þin honden,
nayled to þe harde tre." [6]

"Moder, do wey þi wepinge;
hi þole þis ded for mannes thinge—
for owen gilte þoli non." [9]
"Svne, hi fele þe dede stunde,
þe swerd is at min herte grunde,
þat me byhytte symeon." [12]

"Moder, reu vpon þi bern!
þu wasse awey þo blodi teren,
it don me werse þan mi ded." [15]
"Sune, hu mitti teres wernen?
hy se þo blodi flodes hernen
huth of þin herte to min fet." [18]

"Moder, nu y may þe seyn,
bettere is þat ic one deye
þan al man-kyn to helle go." [21]

"Sune, y se þi bodi swngen,
  þi brest, þin hond, þi fot þur-stungen—
  no selli þou me be wo."   [24]

"Moder, if y dar þe tellen,
  yif y ne deye þu gost to helle;
  hi þole þis ded for þine sake."   [27]
"Sune, þu best me so minde,
  with me nout; it is mi kinde
  þat y for þe sorye make."   [30]

"Moder, merci! let me deyen,
  for adam ut of helle beyn,
  and al mankin þat is for-loren."   [33]
"Sune, wat sal me to rede?
  þi pine pined me to dede,
  let me deyn þe bi-foren."   [36]

"Moder, mitarst þu mith leren
  wat pine þolen þat childre beren
  wat sorwe hauen þat child for-gon."   [39]
"Sune, y wot y kan þe tellen,
  bute it be þe pine of helle
  more sorwe ne woth y non."   [42]

"Moder, reu of moder kare!
  nu þu wost of moder fare,
  þou þu be clene mayden man."   [45]
"Sune, help alle at nede,
  alle þo þat to me greden—
  mayden, wyf and fol wyman."   [48]

"Moder, y may no lenger duellen,
  þe time is cumen y fare to helle,
  þe þridde day y rise upon."   [51]
"Sune, y wyle wi'the funden,
  y deye ywis of þine wnden,
  so reuful ded was neuere non."   [54]

When he ros þan fel þi sorwe,
þe blisse sprong þe þridde morewe,
wen bliþe moder were þu þo.   [57]
Moder, for þat ilke blisse,
bisech vre god, vre sinnes lesse,
þu be hure chel ayen hure fo.   [60]

Blisced be þu, quen of heuene,
bring us ut of helle leuene
þurth þi dere sunes mith.   [63]
Moder, for þat hithe blode
þat he sadde vpon þe rode,
led us in-to heuene lith. Amen.   [66]

"Stond Wel, Moder, vnder Rode"

BEFORE SPEAKING OF THE SHORT MEDITATIVE POEMS ABOVE, KANE EVALUATES
the religious poet's use of the dialogue as one of the less successful means of
treating the crucifixion.

> It tends to diffuseness and clumsy handling or else, by the ob-
> viousness of its standard answers to the customary rhetorical
> questions of her lamentations, distracts attention from what
> seems the most striking feature of the situation, namely Mary's
> emotion as a human mother face to face with her suffering Son.
> The dialogue treatment is the easy way of showing how an
> incarnate God and His mother are victims of the conflict between
> divine and human purposes. By dialogue the reasons for this
> conflict can be not only made explicit but also developed beyond
> any possibility of misconception, or else Christ can offer consola-
> tion to His Mother within which doctrinal instruction for the
> hearers is contained. Poetry, however, does not necessarily thrive
> on the obvious. . . .[1]

Among the dialogues he refers to, Kane includes the thirteenth century
sequence "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode."[2] I would like to discuss this
dialogue as the final example of a poem on the crucifixion. Here, not only
does Christ speak, not only does Mary lament or appeal, but there is an
exchange between the two. Thus the poem forms a complement to the three

others we have considered, as well as illustrating yet another way the crucifixion was conceived by the medieval poet. It will give us another opportunity to study the relationship of theology to these lyrics and to see further results of this method of approach.

The Dialogue

Iste erat dolor meus maximus quia videbam me deseri ab eo quem genueram, nec supererat alius, quia mihi erat unicus. Vox mea fere perierat omnis, sed dabam gemitus suspiriaque doloris. Volebam loqui, sed dolor verba rumpebat. . . . Videbam morientem quem diligebat anima mea et tota liquefiebam prae doloris angustia. Aspiciebat et ipse benignissimo vulto me, matrem plorantem, et verbis paucis voluit me consolari, sed ego nullo modo consolari potui.[3]

The dialogue of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" can be seen to be the counterpart of that in "Als i lay vp-on a nith," set at the moment that is the negation of the moment of the dialogue between the mother and the Child in His cradle. Whereas "Als i lay vp-on a nith" opened in the spirit of Mary's joy at Christ's birth, "Stond wel" opens at the moment of Mary's deepest sorrow at Christ's death. As He does in the former poem, Christ instructs Mary about the meaning of an event of His life and the dialogue opposes the omniscience of her Son's divinity to the limited vision of Mary's humanity. But in "Stond wel" Christ is not presented to be as aloof and relentless as in "Als i lay vp-on a nith" where in foretelling His suffering He showed no sorrow for causing His mother's pain or fear for Himself. Here, His mother's suffering causes His own greatest sorrow and His humanity seems to suffer and struggle in the same way as Mary's does. In this poem, as in the other, the poet has used the figure of joy and sorrow to structure the poem, but the joy and sorrow, from the beginning of the poem to the end, is conceived not as it is reflected in the vision and heart of Mary, but from the perspective of the cosmic view of theology looking back on the crucifixion as it is ultimately the source of all man's joy.

As did "Als i lay," "Stond wel" begins with an ironic contrast between the situation and the command of Mary's Son. It begins at the moment when

Mary's Child, suffering on the cross, is about to die. Yet, paradoxically, He commands Mary to rejoice:

> "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode,
> bihold þi child wyth glade mode,
> blyþe moder mittu ben."
> "Svne, quu may bliþe stonden?
> hi se þin feet, hi se þin honden,
> nayled to þe harde tre."

Christ commands Mary to be happy beneath the cross. Mary cannot understand Christ's request for her to stop sorrowing. In reply she simply presents what she sees, that her Son suffers. In the same way as in "Als i lay vp-on a nith" Mary's words expressed the natural joy of a mother at her child's birth, Mary's reply here expresses the natural agony of a mother at the suffering of her son.

This first stanza establishes the opposition fundamental to the poem. In the same way as in the lullaby, the opposition reflects the gulf between the divine and human perspectives of sorrow and joy, which for Mary will become more incomprehensible as Christ's death approaches. In "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," however, the divine view will not gradually widen the capacity of Mary's understanding, but at each exchange between Mary and her Son, His suffering will remain in her heart as an absolute. The first nine stanzas follow a consistent pattern, opposing in the first three lines the words of Christ to, in the second three lines, the reply of Mary. In each stanza Christ's words begin with "Moder," Mary's reply with "Sune."

> "Moder, do wey þi wepinge;
> hi þole þis ded for mannes thinge—
> for owen gilte þoli non."
> "Svne, hi fele þe dede stunde,
> þe swerd is at min herte grunde,
> þat me byhytte symeon."

For the second time Christ commands Mary to cease weeping and proposes to her the significance of His suffering. It is not My guilt I suffer for, but the guilt of man. Mary, however, replies in deeper sorrow, for she senses her Son's death is near. Now, at the moment of her most profound suffering,

she realizes what the prophecy of Simeon meant: the sword Simeon had said would be ground in her heart is the wound she feels at the death of her Son.[4]

The next stanza reaches the first climax of the suffering their love for each other causes and a sudden reversal. In response to Mary's sorrow, suddenly overcome by compassion for His mother's suffering and as if His human nature could not endure the sorrow of His human mother, Christ cries out for her to have mercy on Him. He appeals to Mary just as she herself had appealed to Him, and His cry is caused, as hers was, by what He sees.

> "Moder, reu vpon þi bern!
> þu wasse awey þo blodi teren,
> it don me werse þan mi ded."
> "Sune, hu mitti teres wernen?
> hy se þo blodi flodes hernen
> huth of þin herte to min fet."

To the tears of blood her Son sees her weep Mary simply opposes again what she beholds, the blood running out of her Son's heart down to her feet. Her suffering is His suffering. Her comprehension extends no further. The intensity of the suffering of each is reflected through the speech of the other, as through Christ we see Mary's pain for her Son is so great that her tears are blood, through Mary Christ is so deeply wounded in His heart that the blood flows down to Mary.[5]

Christ then reasons with Mary a second time, wrestling to put her absolute grief in relation to His eternal plan. He presents the same reason He gave in stanza two, now formulated in a new way, opposing their sorrow to the eternal sorrow of man.

> "Moder, nu y may þe seyn,
> bettere is þat ic one deye
> þan al man-kyn to helle go."
> "Sune, y se þi bodi swngen,
> þi brest, þin hond, þi fot þur-stungen—
> no selli þou me be wo."

To emphasize to Mary the value of what He is doing, He weighs His own death, that of one man, against the fact that all mankind will go to hell if He does not die. By comparing death and hell He has defined the stakes for

which He suffers. Hell is man's separation from God, his eternal loss, but Christ's single death will outweigh this loss. Although Christ has here clearly defined the divine significance and power of His crucifixion, Mary simply repeats what she has said before, enumerating the points of Christ's suffering she can see, the physical agony and coming death of her Son. How can you make me happy through woe? she asks.

In a third way, a way which replies directly to her question and, brutally, would seem to demand from Mary a deeper response of pain, Christ then explains His suffering and death.

> "Moder, if y dar þe tellen,
> yif y ne deye þu gost to helle;
> hi þole þis ded for þine sake."
> "Sune, þu best me so minde,
> with me nout; it is mi kinde
> þat y for þe sorye make."

I suffer for man's guilt, one man dying rather than all; and—if I can dare to say so to you—I suffer this for you, for if I do not die, you yourself will go to hell. The dilemma is analogous to the dilemma proposed by "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode," [6] where the one who loves Christ most causes Him His greatest pain and is classed with fallen mankind as an instrument of His crucifixion. Again Mary is powerless to stop grieving. As in the first part of the stanza Christ revealed that she was the source of His suffering, so in the second three lines Mary replies by presenting the fact that her motherhood is the deepest source of her compassion: Son, you are so much in my mind. Do not blame me. It is my nature that I sorrow for you.

A fourth time Christ cries out beseeching Mary, this time in words which a sinner might use to appeal to Mary for aid.

> "Moder, merci! let me deyen,
> for adam ut of helle beyn,
> and al mankin þat is for-loren."
> "Sune, wat sal me to rede?
> þi pine pined me to dede,
> let me deyn þe bi-foren."

Just as the suffering Christ had, paradoxically, told Mary to be happy, so now He cries out, God, paradoxically entreating one of His creatures to let Him

die. Mother, mercy! Let Me die so that I can buy Adam out of hell and all mankind which is lost. Just as the angel of the annunciation sought Mary's consent that she be the mother of Christ, so here the poet has Christ plead with Mary that she accept His death to become the mother of mankind. Replying, Mary accepts His death, but she then offers her death for His death, turning His appeal into an appeal of her own. What shall I say to this? Your pain has pained me to death. Let me die before you. For Mary, pain remains an absolute fact. The next two stanzas focus on her pain, developing the parallel between Mary's painless giving birth to Christ and her suffering at the crucifixion, in yet another way from the poems mentioned earlier, as an element of persuasion.[7] Christ uses it to gain Mary's consent that she become the mother of mankind.

> "Moder, mitarst þu mith leren
> wat pine þolen þat childre beren
> wat sorwe hauen þat child for-gon."
> "Sune, y wot y kan þe tellen,
> bute it be þe pine of helle
> more sorwe ne woth y non."

Using the sorrow Mary suffers now to make Mary one with the sorrow of every mother, Christ says, Now for the first time you can learn what pain they suffer who bear children, what sorrow they suffer who lose their children. And as if Mary's heart is opened by the intensity of her own pain of motherhood, Mary's mode of reply changes. No longer opposing her pain to the requests of her Son as an absolute, she sets it in relation to the greatest pain possible for mankind, the very pain from which Christ is buying man through His suffering and death. Son, I know I can tell you, she replies, that except it be the pain of hell I know of no greater sorrow.

It is after Christ has reasoned with Mary step by step to explain that He is dying to redeem mankind and Mary herself, and after Mary has made the fullest expression of her sorrow and seen it in relation to the greatest sorrow man can suffer, that Christ cries out a fifth time from the cross and asks Mary to pity mankind.

> "Moder, reu of moder kare!
> nu þu wost of moder fare,
> þou þu be clene mayden man."

> "Sune, help alle at nede,
> alle þo þat to me greden—
> mayden, wyf and fol wyman."

Mother, have pity on mothers' sorrow. Now you know the lot a mother suffers, although you are a maiden. Opened to the sorrow of mankind by her sorrow at the death of her own son, Mary becomes the intercessor for mankind, and in the second three lines instead of opposing to Christ's words her own sorrow, Mary fulfills the request of her Son and makes her first intercessory prayer. Both the death of Christ which follows and her prayer will become the basis for the final petition by the poet in the last stanza. Son, she prays, help all in need, all those who cry to me—maiden, or wife, or unchaste woman.

As if the moment could come only with Mary's consent and after her words of petition for mankind, Christ now announces His death.

> "Moder, y may no lenger duellen,
> þe time is cumen y fare to helle,
> þe þridde day y rise upon."
> "Sune, y wyle wi'the funden,
> y deye ywis of þine wnden,
> so reuful ded was neuere non."

With the announcing of His death and His descent into hell, Christ foretells His resurrection, but in this poem only time, not the power of words, can release Mary from sorrow. It will be only when the events themselves transform sorrow to joy through Christ's actual rising from the dead that Mary's heart will change and she be able to obey Christ's opening command to be joyful. To Christ's prophecy Mary opposes her desire to go with her Son and the fact that she herself is dying of His wounds.

The first three lines of the next stanza narrate that what Christ foretold in fact came true. But the death and descent into hell are omitted to present the outcome of events in terms of Mary's joy.

> When he ros þan fel þi sorwe,
> þe blisse sprong þe þridde morewe,
> wen bliþe moder wer þu þo.

> Moder, for þat ilke blisse,
> bisech vre god, vre sinnes lesse,
> þu be hure chel ayen hure fo.

When He rose, the poet says, then your sorrow fell. "Blisse" sprang up on the third morning, and then were you the happy mother your Son had commanded you to be. With this stanza there is an abrupt change in the manner of the poem. There is a transition from past time to the present, and as the poet forms a petition to Mary in virtue of that same "blisse" that is hers, the point of view has shifted from that of Christ and Mary at the moment of Christ's death to that of the poet and his audience in present time. Although the dialogue has ceased, the stanza retains its proportioning into two parts. While the first three lines narrate Christ's rising and the springing up of Mary's joy, the second three, customarily devoted to Mary's reply of sorrow, present the petition of those "at nede" (line 46). Now Mary is in joy above while the poet and his audience stand below on earth, from the position that had been hers seeking her intercession. But the poet's words echo the words with which Christ addressed Mary, and appropriately so, for in fact man in the present is the spiritual child of Mary. "Moder," the poet addresses her, Beseech our God to loose our sins. Be our shield against the devil ("hure fo").

Then in the last stanza, the poet develops the full significance of the appeal for those for whom he composes his poem. He makes the prayer into a power to preserve from hell and to lead to final joy.

> Blisced be þu, quen of heuene,
> bring us ut of helle leuene
> þurth þi dere sunes mith.
> Moder, for þat hithe blode
> þat he sadde vpon þe rode,
> led us in-to heuene lith. Amen.

In the first three lines he asks Mary as Queen of Heaven to bring "us" through her Son's power out of hell's flames. The limits of sorrow and joy having been demonstrated by the debate between Christ and Mary and by the narration of the facts of Christ's death and resurrection, the soul now knows what to seek, and the poet concludes with his most powerful claim. Again addressing Mary as "moder," and setting in opposition to the figure of

hell's flames the figure, in the last line, of "heuene lith," the poet beseeches Mary: For that precious blood that He shed upon the cross—that very blood that caused your bloody tears and salvation for man—lead us finally into the light of heaven, the light in which you now rejoice as blessed while we stand here below seeking the light.

The Intelligible Cross

> Hence Scripture treats of the whole universe as regards height and depth, first and last, and as regards an intermediate course under the form of a certain intelligible cross in terms of which the whole mechanism of the universe has to be described and in a certain way seen by the light of the mind.[8]

"Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," like "Als i lay vp-on a nith," is about the transformation of sorrow to joy. It tells of how Mary's sorrow at Christ's death was turned to joy by His resurrection, and it explains that Christ's suffering reflected in Mary's compassion is the means of transformation of man's eternal sorrow to eternal joy. "Als i lay vp-on a nith" had its dynamic center in the transformation of Mary's incompletely realized joy to joy fully realized through Christ's explaining to her the implications of His birth. In Christ's birth was implied His suffering and death. The structure of "Als i lay" was determined by the stages of Mary's reactions of joy and sorrow as Christ foretold the joys and sorrows of His life, and the poem ended when the Child told of the final mystery, the resurrection and last judgment when He will come again in glory. By his knowledge of the full plan of history, the listener knew more than Mary whose limited vision determined the structure of the poem. His fuller knowledge gave him an ironic view of what Mary saw, until through her knowledge of the story of her Son's life as it unfolded, her vision corresponded in scope with the listener's.

Although in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" the structure is also governed by the concepts of joy and sorrow, the principle of development differs fundamentally from "Als i lay." In the first place, the poem is not a gradual transformation of Mary's limited understanding of sorrow and joy through her imagined experience of a series of events. The poet, rather, chooses three moments of time and at each moment sets joy in opposition to sorrow. The

first is the moment of psychological definition just before Mary's sorrow and Christ's suffering reach their greatest intensity, the moment of Christ's death. The second is the moment of the resurrection, the past event in sacred history which transforms Christ's death to life and Mary's sorrow to joy. The third is the poet and his audience's time of present transition, as they seek by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection to experience eternal joy.

The first moment is contained in the section of dialogue between Christ and Mary (lines 1–54). It is introduced as a joyous moment by Christ, Who opposes to Mary's human vision of sorrow at her Son's death the fact that by His death He will transform cosmic sorrow, the sorrow of all mankind. The dialogue develops this fundamental opposition of divine joy to human sorrow, as first Christ explains the divine reason for His death and then Mary counters by giving her own vision, limited to her "kinde," of the suffering of Her Son. Each repeats the vision again, and then again, and each time the intensity of opposition builds (lines 7–30), until out of desire to release man from sorrow and yet in an agony of compassion for His mother, Christ cries out to His mother to let Him die, whereupon she replies with her request to die first (lines 31–36). Together the two voices define the whole dimension of the passion, Christ giving the supernatural value, Mary offering the human—as if the suffering of Christ's spirit were presented in the first four lines and the suffering of His flesh, through Mary's vision, were given in the second four.

The second moment is the moment of the event which transforms Christ's death to life, Mary's sorrow to joy (lines 55–57). The divine command in the dialogue to be joyful is made fully comprehensible to Mary by the power of an event in history, which is the dimension that creates her experience. When Christ rose, then Mary's sorrow fell, the poet says. But indirectly this moment introduces a second opposition which arises out of the event. This is the separation of Mary from her Son that occurs with His ascension, for Mary's joy can be full only when she is reunited to her Son in heaven. Her assumption into heaven is implied in the transition between the second and third moments of the poem, as line fifty-eight, "Moder, for þat ilke blisse," establishes that now in the present Mary experiences joy in heaven.

The third moment, expressed in lines fifty-eight through sixty-six, is that defined by the poet and his audience's petition in present time. Mary has become a means to joy for man, as man raises his petition to her. A significant proportion is established by the third moment. Mary's position now corresponds to the position which in the dialogue Christ had in relation

to Mary. As Mary had stood below Christ at the crucifixion, so man stands below Mary, on earth and still in sorrow. Just as in the poem the resurrection transformed Mary's sorrow to joy, so analogously the poem has reformed man's knowledge of human sorrow and suffering to an understanding of cosmic sorrow and cosmic joy, so that in the last lines man sees his alternative: to have the flames of hell or the light of joy in heaven.

The opposition of supernatural joy to the sorrow of hell, of the eternal vision of this cosmic joy to the limited vision of human joy and suffering, and the transformation of both these kinds of sorrow to joy provides the structural movement of the poem. The structure of the poem embodies the transformation of sorrow to joy in two proportions: there is the opposition of high to low and there is the horizontal movement of sequence of events, the transformation of the past and present to future. These two proportions correspond to the dimension of awareness and the dimension of time.

The dimension of awareness is developed first by the dialogue section. It is a vertical dialogue of things above with things below, which in terms of the poem opposes three levels of significance or application. The first is the literal. Christ hangs on the cross above Mary. Mary weeps below. Christ commands Mary to be glad. This is the level at which Mary comprehends Christ's suffering. Revealed by Christ's command to Mary is the inner level, the level of the abyss between man and God, the separation of the divine point of view from the human and of the purpose of the Son of God from the understanding of His human mother. Revealed also by Christ's words is yet a third level of opposition, the deeper source of the second. At the time of the dialogue mankind lies imprisoned in hell. God is above in heaven. It is Christ's death in time that will join the two—as it will resolve each of the oppositions. By suspending the horizontal movement of time with the dialogue between Christ and Mary the poet intensifies the oppositions. The ninth stanza (lines 49–54), where Christ announces that His time has come and Mary says she desires to go with Him, acts in the poem as a prophecy which foretells the movement to come in the tenth stanza.

Then in the tenth stanza by the narration of events the poet develops the horizontal movement of time, and we see the three levels of vertical opposition simultaneously transformed. Omitting Christ's descent into hell which He had also prophesied, the poet focuses instead on the third day, the day of Christ's resurrection from the dead (lines 55–57), for this is the event which transforms the literal opposition between Mary's sorrow and Christ's joy. As Christ bodily rises, Mary's sorrow falls. She becomes joyful, to fulfill the

original request of Christ with which the poem opened. Then in the petition of the last nine lines, with Christ's ascension and the assumption of Mary implied, the transformation of the second and third oppositions is revealed. In present time Christ is literally above in heaven, with Mary united to Him. For Mary the abyss of understanding has been closed and her view has become Christ's view. But the final petition reveals also that in the present moment of time there is a separation between Mary and mankind, because for mankind the horizontal time has only incompletely resolved the oppositions. Until his own resurrection and judgment day mankind will remain in an incomplete relationship to joy. But by the power of Christ's death and resurrection which accomplished Mary's joy, he has the power to obtain the joyful end of his own destiny, and Mary's presence in heaven is both a sign and the means of man's own entry into final joy. In the horizontal movement of time, through prayer and good actions he can be drawn up from the depth of a potentially eternal hell into the height of the eternal light of heaven. It has been the purpose of the poem, having in the first section defined its nature, having in the second worked its transformation, and now having in the third applied its power by prayer, to make the outlines of this cross and the source of its power intelligible.

The Dialogue Form

In his survey of the contents of the St. John's College manuscript, M. R. James describes the incomplete version of this dialogue, which corresponds to the Royal version we are using, as a song both in Latin and in English.[9] However, a reference to James' description of the Latin text upon which the dialogue is based, shows that the opening lines are the following:

> Stabat iuxta Christi crucem
> stabat uite uidens ducem
> nitens uale facere.

And a reading of the Latin sequence which James quotes shows that it does not correspond exactly with "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," although both poems have the same stanzaic form. "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem" is not a dialogue between Christ and Mary, but a narrative of the sufferings of Christ just before His death from the point of view of Mary's compassion. Yet the basic structure of the English poem is analogous to the structure of the Latin

sequence, and it appears that the dialogue is an adaptation of it.[10] The narrative sequence referred to by James exists in two Middle English versions printed in Brown's anthology of thirteenth century English lyrics. Only the latter part remains of the first version, and the second is a complete translation of the sequence.

Of the two English narrative versions, the incomplete one is closer to the Latin original.[11] On the other hand, "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" and the complete English narrative version, "Iesu cristes milde moder," share elements neither in the Latin nor in the incomplete English version.[12] Because the complete English version retains the narrative method of its Latin source and yet in some respects its contents are closer to "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," it provides us with an excellent basis for comparing the narrative and dialogue treatments of the sequence. By showing the similarities of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" to "Iesu cristes milde moder" and at the same time by pointing out in what way the English poem is modified from the Latin, I can indicate what particular purpose is achieved through the use of dialogue and offer an evaluation of George Kane's judgment about the effectiveness of the dialogue form.

Both "Iesu cristes milde moder" and "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" begin with a section which meditates on the suffering of Christ through the compassion of Mary. Then both poets apply to the moment of Mary's most intense suffering the contrast of the moment of her painless giving birth and show that her suffering binds her to the nature of womankind. Next, both poems make a transition through sacred history to the present and end with a prayer made in virtue of the events the poets have told before. The most striking difference between the two poems is that the poet of "Stond wel" has changed the point of view from that of a compassionate observer, who through eleven stanzas speaks of what Mary must have experienced and then petitions Mary, into the nine stanzas of dialogue which interchange the points of view of both Christ and Mary. Only in the final two stanzas does he use the view of the speaker of the narrative version.

> Iesu cristes milde moder
> stud, biheld hire sone o rode
>   þat he was ipined on;   [3]
> þe sone heng, þe moder stud
> and biheld hire childes blud,
>   wu it of hise wundes ran.   [6]

Þo he starf þat king is of lif,
dreriere nas neuerre no wif
    þan þu were, leuedi, þo;   [9]
þe brithe day went in-to nith,
þo ihesu crist þin herte lith
    was iqueint with pine and wo.   [12]

Þi lif drei ful harde stundes
þo þu seye hise bludi wundes,
    and his bodi o rode don.   [15]
Hise wundes sore and smerte
stungen þureu and þurw þi herte,
    as te bihichte simeon.   [18]

Nu his heued with blud bi-sprunken,
nu his side with spere istungen,
    þu bihelde, leuedi fre.   [21]
Nu his hondes sprad o rode,
nu hise fet washen wit blode
    an i-naillet to þe tre.   [24]

Nu his bodi with scurges beten,
and his blud so wide hut-leten
    maden þe þin herte sor.   [27]
War-so þu castest thin eyen,
pine strong þu soie im dreien—
    ne mithte noman þolie mor.   [30]

Nu is time þat þu ȝielde
kende þat þu im withelde
    þo þi child was of þe born;   [32]
Nu he hoschet wit goulinge
þat þu im in þi chiltinge
    al withelde þar biforn.   [36]

Nu þu fondest, moder milde,
wat wyman drith with hir childe,
    þei þu clene maiden be;   [39]

Nu þe's ʒiolden arde and dere
þe pine werof þu were
    ine ti chiltuing quite and fre.   [42]

Sone after the nith of sorwen
sprong þe lith of edi morwen;
    ine þin herte, suete may,   [45]
þi sorwen wende al to blisse,
þo þi sone al mid-iwisse
    aros hup-on þe tridde day.   [48]

Welle wat þu were blithe,
þo aros fram deth to liue,
    þur þe hole ston he glod;   [51]
Al so he was of þe boren,
bothen after and biforen,
    hol bilof þi maidenhod.   [54]

Neue blisse he us broute,
þat mankin so dere boute
    and for us ʒaf is dere lif.   [57]
Glade and blithe þu us make
for þi suete sones sake,
    edi maiden, blisful wif.   [60]

Quen of euene, for þi blisse
lithe al hure sorinesse,
    and went hur yuel al in-to gud.   [63]
Bring hus, moder, to þi sone,
mak hus eure with im wone,
    þat hus boute wit his blud. Amen.   [66]

"Iesu cristes milde moder" begins with five stanzas of meditation on Christ's suffering on the cross as it affects Mary. The first three stanzas set the scene. The poet opens his meditation by saying, Mary stood while Christ hung. Then, addressing Mary, the speaker says, No one was ever sadder than you. The day turned to night when the Light of your heart was quenched.

As you saw the wounds of your Son, your life suffered the wound Simeon foretold. After these three introductory stanzas, in stanzas four and five the poet describes Christ's bloody wounds, beginning at His head and moving to His limbs, then to His body, saying that wherever Mary cast her eyes she could see only her Son's pain. The first five stanzas of the narrative version correspond to stanzas one through six of the dialogue version, where by opposing Mary's suffering to Christ's exhortations that she be "bliþe," the poet of "Stond wel" gradually increases the sense of intensity of Mary's suffering. Stanza six of the dialogue reaches a climax as both Christ and Mary cry out to die.

In stanzas six and seven of the narrative version the poet develops the traditional correspondence between Mary's suffering and her painless giving birth. He uses it to suggest the accumulation of pain, saying, Now nature exacts with usury what it withheld at the birth of your Son—as if not only is Mary's present suffering just, but that justice exacts over and beyond for the time she had not suffered. In the dialogue it is stanzas seven and eight which develop the parallel, not, however, to suggest the justice of Mary's pain, but to relate her pain to God's mercy, as she agrees to become the intercessor for mankind.

In stanzas eight and nine of the narrative version, as in the dialogue the poet uses the transition of sacred history, her Son's resurrection, to change Mary's sorrow to joy. In recounting the resurrection, however, he develops a third correspondence to Mary's painless childbearing. Christ's body rose through solid stone ("þur þe hole ston"), just as when He was born of Mary He left her maidenhood whole before and after His birth.[13] In "Stond wel" this third correspondence has been omitted. In its place the poet puts the stanza of dialogue where Christ foretells His resurrection and Mary asks to go with Him, and the event in time, which in "Iesu cristes milde moder" is given two stanzas, he condenses into three lines.

Finally, in stanzas ten and eleven of the narrative version, the poet applies the joy to man and appeals to Mary to make all man's sorrow into bliss. This corresponds in the dialogue version to the second half of stanza ten and the whole of the concluding stanza eleven. The dialogue section of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" has extended through stanza nine. Now the last two stanzas of the poem use the same point of view as the whole of the narrative version, and its final stanza contains the same elements as the final stanza of the narrative version.

In the narrative version of the sequence, the divine point of view is not

developed fully throughout the poem. It is only given briefly at the end, at the point after Christ's suffering as seen through Mary's compassion has been related, after the speaker has pointed out the parallels to the virgin birth, and after he has related the resurrection and made the third parallel to Christ's rising through solid stone. It comes, in the last two stanzas, as the introduction to his prayer:

> Neue blisse he us broute,
> þat mankin so dere boute
> and for us ȝaf is dere lif.

In his notes on "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," Brown indicates that its ultimate source is the dialogue of St. Anselm or St. Bernard.[14] This source, or a similar source, has provided the poet of the dialogue with the divine point of view from which Christ speaks to console or debate with Mary. There are many points of similarity between Christ's thoughts in the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi* and what He says to Mary in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode." In the *Lamentatio,* after Mary has expressed the depth of her sorrow, her Son replies at length, gently reminding Mary first of the purpose for which He took her flesh and became her Son, which is now the most intense source of her sorrow. How else can He fulfill His purpose, He reminds her. Then, as He does in line fifty-one of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," He prophesies that He will rise again on the third day after His death, appearing to both His disciples and to Mary. Put away your sorrow, He tells her, for then He will go to the glory of His Father. By His one death all mankind will be saved. In what way can what pleases the Father displease you? Do not weep, I will not leave you, He consoles her. You will be with Me for all time. You know well whence I proceed, whence I come. Why are you sad if I ascend to the place from which I have come?[15] Yet although Christ's thoughts in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" seem to be based on those of Christ in the dialogue of the *Lamentatio,* as in his adaptation of the narrative sequence, the changes the poet has made in the material he uses reflect the particular purpose of his poem.

In the first place, in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" the poet opens the dialogue with Christ telling Mary to be glad, before He has recalled to her the reasons that should make her glad, so that His command to His mother who sees Him hanging on the cross seems incongruous and paradoxical, and Mary can reply only by opposing to His command the evidence of suffering

before her. Second, the poet sustains this opposition between Christ and Mary's view by withholding until the very end of the dialogue the mention by Christ of His own happy outcome, that He will rise again. We see that by his use of both the narrative source and the *Lamentatio* the poet has recast the theme of Christ's crucifixion, Mary's compassion and Christ's compassion for Mary, into a debate of cosmic joy with human sorrow.

Returning to Kane's evaluation of the dialogue form's effectiveness in treating the crucifixion, it seems to me that the dialogue form of the sequence we have examined provides dimensions to the religious lyric which are not easily conveyed by a narrative form. The deepest dimension provided is the expression of the Christian quality of the divine perspective. The dialogue form is the embodiment in its most perfect expression of the medieval theology of the Incarnation, where God manifests Himself and His love for man through Himself becoming incarnate and assuming human nature. In understanding the dialogue to be merely the easiest means of doctrinal instruction Kane shows the common point of view of critics who classify medieval Christian theology without considering its subject matter, and who equate it with a kind of dispassionate and static body of knowledge which is opposed to what can be humanly experienced and felt. By pointing out two essential differences between the English narrative form of the sequence "Iesu cristes milde moder" and the dialogue form of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," I would like to illustrate two points about this poet's use of the dialogue form which show the insufficiency of Kane's view.

In the first place, rather than the poet using the dialogue treatment of "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" to show how "an incarnate God and His mother are victims of the conflict between divine and human purposes," as Kane suggests, the poet shows rather how the divine purpose transforms the suffering of Mary into the greatest manifestation of God's love for man. And second, the dialogue form of the sequence, rather than being used to give "doctrinal instruction," is used to convey to man a much more intimate and personal view of sacred history than the narrative form.

The first point can be illustrated by the contrast we noted between how the poets of the two forms relate Mary's human suffering to the significance of sacred history. In the narrative version and in the Latin original, the poet has used the correspondences between events to point out two symmetrical relationships in the plan of sacred history. (1) When Christ took His mother's flesh, Mary did not suffer pain. But Christ's suffering and death which caused man's spiritual rebirth, caused Mary's spiritual suffering. (2)

Christ's resurrection in His glorified flesh was as miraculous as His birth, for just as Mary remained a virgin, so Christ passed with His body through the stone of His tomb leaving it whole. His resurrection was given as a sign, just as His birth from a virgin was a sign, of His divinity. The poet of the dialogue, however, has modified this parallel to make Mary's suffering show God's accessibility to man. Omitting the second parallel in the narrative version, of Christ's virgin birth to His rising through a stone, he has focused on the first parallel which defines Mary's human motherhood. He has used the relationship of Mary's intense suffering at the crucifixion as it contrasts to her painless giving birth and made it the basis by which Christ unites Mary to the suffering of mankind, to become the spiritual mother of those for whose ultimate joy her Son is dying. Mary's second motherhood through her sorrow—the intensity of which the poet has defined through the dialogue by opposing it to joy—is made a power by which mankind can appeal to Mary to intercede for them, as, in fact, the poet does appeal at the close of the poem.

The unique power of the dialogue form can be seen in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" in how the poet conveys through sacred history the feeling of God for man. The dialogue and the narrative versions develop their subject matter in essentially the same proportions. They both begin with a meditation on Christ's suffering through the compassion of Mary, then explain her suffering in relation to her painless giving birth, and then tell of the resurrection of Christ which is the source of man's spiritual rebirth. But the poet of the dialogue has presented the crucifixion, not, as the poet of the narrative does, to point out the intensity of Christ's pain as Mary saw it in the evidence of His physical suffering, but to express the inner conflict of love between the human and the divine. He has drawn the divine or inner meaning of Mary's suffering at Christ's pain back from where it began to be developed in stanzas six and seven of the narrative version into the opening section of the dialogue and formed it into a loving voice which explains to Mary the inner meaning of what she sees with her eyes. In each exchange of the dialogue the divine purpose of love for man is opposed to Mary's particular human love for her Son, which she expresses simply through describing what she sees. Yet the divine point of view does not deny the pain Mary feels because of her human motherhood of Him, rather, as in "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode," her human love adds to the suffering of divine love, and Christ transforms her love for Him with His own love for her, into love for man. The difference between the way the narrative and the dialogue

treat this inner dimension can be clearly illustrated by the way the poets convey the compassion of Mary.

The poet of the narrative version focuses on the moment of Christ's approaching death, suspending the movement of time before Christ's death and resurrection in a present moment made up of detail upon detail of suffering. As time is held still, these details accumulate:

> Nu his heued with blud bi-sprunken,
> nu his side with spere istungen,
>   þu bihelde, leuedi fre.
> Nu his hondes sprad o rode,
> nu hise fet washen wit blode
>   an i-naillet to þe tre.

This intense suffering of Christ which the poet conveys through repetition he applies to Mary as she is impressed with each detail:

> Nu his bodi with scurges beten,
> and his blud so wide hut-leten
>   maden þe þin herte sor.
> War-so þu castest thin eyen,
> pine strong þu soie im dreien—
>   ne mithte noman þolie mor.

The poet continues to intensify the present concentration of the moment by repeating "nu" throughout his theological explanation of Mary's suffering: "Nu is time þat þu ʒielde . . . Nu he hoschet wit goulinge . . . Nu þu fondest . . . Nu þe's ʒiolden arde and dere / þe pine werof þu were / ine ti chiltuing quite and fre" (lines 31–42).

The poet of the dialogue, on the other hand, suspends the movement of time, not by an accumulating intensity of details, but by the desire of Christ and Mary, expressed in the love they reveal for each other. Throughout the first eight stanzas Christ pleads with Mary to accept her suffering on His behalf, while Mary opposes His plea by pointing out the severity of His suffering which causes her own. The intensity built up is the inner intensity of two wills rather than of accumulating physical details. It is an intensity of love which then is transferred by both Christ and Mary to man, as at Christ's request Mary makes her first intercessory prayer on man's behalf.

In the narrative version of the sequence the succession of events in time, suspended by the speaker's concentration on the most intense moment of suffering during the crucifixion, is suspended further until after he develops the parallels in sacred history. In the dialogue, the succession of events is shown to depend upon the will of Christ and to reflect His central quality, love of mankind. Thus Christ first foretells what will happen after His death, in order to console Mary. And instead of giving divine reasons—I suffer to buy Adam, and even you, from hell—He offers her the promise of the joy of His own humanity which will rise from the dead. The events which follow, told by a speaker whose view is analogous to that used in the whole narrative version, confirm Christ's words, and as well as bringing Mary joy they are a consolation to the listener to whom the events apply.

In the narrative version of the sequence the events move with a relentless quality of impersonal and symmetrical form by which Christ and Mary suffer as one part of the total design of God's justice and mercy. The impersonal form allows mankind (the listener) to stand back and recognize the meaning of the design. In the dialogue version, however, the form expresses Christ's will as it is touched by compassion for His mother, the compassion which through Mary's consent He turns to compassion for mankind. And mankind is engaged and caught up as the object of the love expressed in the debate of the poem.

part three

The Joy of Mary

FIG. 7.—The Virgin and Child Enthroned. Second of four miniatures preceding the Amesbury Abbey Psalter, Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 4. The miniature illustrates the relationship of mankind in present time to Mary, and to Christ seen through Mary, in the joy of heaven. For more extended discussion, refer to the Notes to Illustrations.
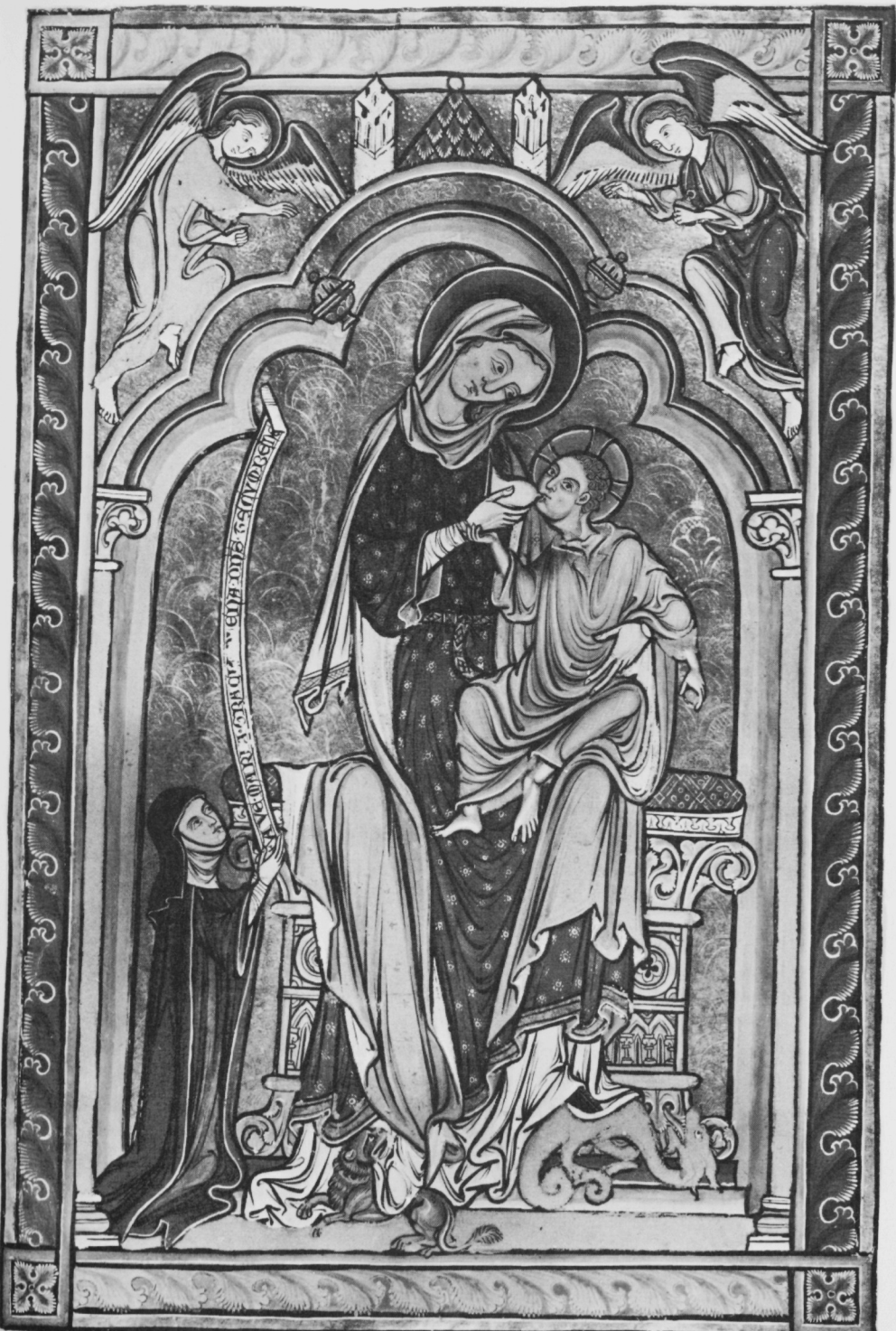
We ought at all times to praise and honour Mary, and with all devotion to meditate on her sweetness; but to-day, on the feast of her Assumption, we should especially rejoice with her, for to-day was her joy made full. Great was her joy when the angel saluted her. Great was her joy when she experienced the coming of the Holy Ghost, and that wonderful union took place within her womb between the Son of God and her flesh, so that He who was the Son of God became her Son also. Great was her joy when she held that Son within her arms, kissed Him, ministered unto Him; and when she heard His discourses, and beheld His miracles. And because she had been greatly saddened in His passion, she had marvellous joy in His resurrection, and still more in His ascension. But all these joys were surpassed by the joy which she received to-day.[1]

WE HAVE STUDIED POEMS IN WHICH, THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF MARY, THE medieval religious poet conceived two of the focal points of sacred history, the birth of Christ and His death and resurrection. We have seen how in the joy Mary felt at Christ's birth were the seeds of her sorrow at His suffering and death, and how the sorrow was transfigured by Christ's resurrection into a final joy which her first joy had foreshadowed. The last event of Mary's life on earth to be celebrated in the yearly cycle of the liturgy was the assumption, the event which brought Mary into the joy of heaven. The other

joyful events of her life, the annunciation, Christ's birth, His resurrection after His death, and His ascension, were seen in relation to this final destiny of Mary. It is on the occasion of this feast that St. Aelred, with his words above, urges his congregation especially to rejoice.[2]

Christ came through Mary. Through Christ's passion and death which redeemed man and in virtue of her motherhood of Christ and her spiritual suffering at His death, Mary became the spiritual mother of mankind. Yet at the same time Mary was herself a human being whose joy, like all man's, was to be defined by the degree of closeness of her union with God. Because through the Incarnation Christ took Mary's flesh and she became His mother, Mary shared a closer bond with Him than any other creature.[3] All her beauty and joy as described by the medieval poet came from this relationship. Her maiden motherhood, the source of her title "maiden makeles," was the effect and the sign of her special union. Of Mary's spiritual suffering during Christ's passion, the deepest was caused by being separated from her Son at His death. At His resurrection her joy was restored to an even stronger degree than her first joy experienced at His birth. At His ascension into glory, while Mary remained on earth physically separated from Christ, as man remains now, she was spiritually joined to Christ by the memories of their life, and she lived in loving expectation of her own entry into heaven.[4] At her death, through her assumption by Christ into heaven, she was reunited bodily and spiritually into the full glory of her Son. This union in present time with Christ in majesty is the basis of her title, Queen of Heaven.

A sermon on Mary's five joys to be found in John Mirk's *Festial* describes the meaning of this joyful queenship:

> The v. joye was yn hur assumpcyon, when scho segh hur swete sonne come wyth gret multitude of angelys and sayntys, and fache hur ynto Heuen, and crowned hur qwene of Heuen, and emperess of hell, and lady of all þe world. Syþen all þat ben yn Heuen, schull do hur reuerens and worschyp; and þos þat ben yn hell, schall be buxom to hur byddyng; and þos þat byn yn erthe, schall do hur seruyce and gretying.[5]

A sermon in the *Festial* for the Feast of the Assumption presents the perfection of her queenship in detail:

And soo crist set hur þer by hym yn his trone, and crowned hur qwene of Heuen, and emperice of hell, and lady of al þe worlde, and hath a hygh ioy passyng all þe sayntys. And as þe sonne leghtenyth al þe day, ryght soo scho lyghtenyth al þe cowrt of Heuen. And al þat byn yn Heuyn byn buxom to hur and redy at hur commaundement, and don hur worschyp in honowre, as þay owyn forto do to hor Lordis modyr and hor qwene; and ys þer of on wyll and one loue wyth þe holy Trinyte þat grauntyth hur what þat euer scho askyth, and at hur prayer rewardyth all hur seruantes. And þus scho sittyþe yn Heuen next to þe Trinite, wyth body gloryfyet, and ys yn full certeyne þat þes ioyes schuld dure for euermor. Þus was þis assumpcyon don ioyfully.

Hit was don alsoo holy, þat is, yn body and yn soule puttyng away the comyn condicion of monkynd, þat ys, forto dey; and so þe body turnyd ynto corupcyon and stynkyng careyne. But for encheson þat Crist toke flesch and blode of oure ladyys body, and so were on flesch and on body, þerfor scho was outtakyn of þat condicion, and was fat ynto Heuen yn body and yn soule.[6]

Mary, the first human being after Christ to have entered heaven, is both the pledge and type of man's own future resurrection and glory. As she was the gate through which God came to earth, so now after her assumption, because of her closeness to God, Mary becomes the gate through which humanity will be reunited to God. As Queen of Heaven she becomes intercessor for man. Her role is the full fruit of the pain she suffered at the crucifixion which made her the mother of man, and it provides the basis of the title given her by the medieval poet: "milsful moder," or Mother of Mercy.[7]

In the religious lyrics we have considered it is Mary's assumption that has defined the present relationship of the poet and his audience to her. The direct appeal to Mary in the petition of the poems has been made with the recognition that she is now Queen of Heaven. When we come to the many English poems which celebrate the five joys of Mary, we find this state of Mary in heaven is the subject. These poems have a double movement which is established by the context of the poet and his audience in sacred history: they look back upon the joyful events in Mary's life from the present perspective of Mary as Queen of Heaven; while at the same time, by enumerating the joys of her life on earth, they define the aspects of Mary's

heavenly joy. Mary's heavenly joy is the fulfillment of her earthly joys and the definition of man's future joy.

The devotion of the five joys of Mary—the annunciation and the birth of Christ, His resurrection, His ascension, and Mary's assumption into heaven —was popular in England by the time the first poems appeared in the English tongue after the Conquest, and it continued to be so through the fifteenth century. In his *Auteurs spirituels et textes dévots du moyen âge latin,* Dom A. Wilmart gives evidence that although the number of Mary's joys celebrated varied widely, in England the tradition of five was the most common.[8] *The Index of Middle English Verse* lists nineteen extant poems on the subject from this period.[9] Developing from popular devotional life rather than from the official liturgy of the Church, the joys of Mary are to be found in various places and take different forms. The devotion was often included in the *Horae* or Prymers. In the *Horae Eboracenses,* for example, the Latin book of the Hours of the Virgin Mary according to the use of York, we find after Compline two hymns, each followed by a verse and response and a prayer on the theme of the hymn.[10] The first, "Gavde virgo, mater Christi," according to the heading above it, "De gaudijs beate Marie virginis corporalibus," is about the five joys Mary experienced during her life on earth. Corresponding to the devotion of Mary's earthly joys, the second hymn, "Gavde flore virginali," is about "Alia gaudia beatissime Marie virginis spiritualia." The seven heavenly joys it celebrates are the same as those above in the *Festial* sermon.[11] There are also many examples of the five joys depicted in the illuminations of the Psalters and the *Horae* of the period.[12]

As early as the twelfth century there were legends of special graces granted and miracles performed by Mary for those who honored her five joys.[13] A correspondence between the five joys and the five wounds of Christ was often made. In *Our Lady's Dowry,* T. E. Bridgett gives a picturesque example of this from two wills. One provided that at the Mass and Dirge there be five men dressed in black, standing for the five wounds of Christ, and five women in white, signifying Mary's five joys; and the other, that at every holy day during divine services five candles be burned on the deadman's grave for Christ's wounds and five for Mary's joys.[14] Besides corresponding in number to Christ's wounds, Mary's five joys were seen to correspond to the five letters of her name. We find an example of this in the thirteenth century *Ancrene Riwle,* where a devotion of the five joys follows a similarly organized devotion of the cross. The devotion of the joys is a combination of meditation, recitation of psalms, and a litany-like petition. It

consists first of a prayer meditation on the joy, next an antiphon of part of the angelic salutation, "Ave Maria gratia plena dominus tecum," which is followed in turn by a canticle or psalm. The first joy's canticle is the *Magnificat,* the rest of the joys having psalms whose first letters, with that of the *Magnificat,* spell in order *M-A-R-I-A.* Finally, after each psalm the whole Ave Maria is to be repeated five times. Concluding his description, the author of the devotion points out, "The psalms are chosen so that their first letters are those of Our Lady's name, as you may notice, and the prayer about her five greatest joys runs in fives. If you count the greetings in the antiphons, you will find five in each." [15]

The origin of the devotion is obscure. The earliest known example in the English tongue is the description given in the *Riwle.* In his Appendix to M. B. Salu's translation of the *Riwle,* Dom Gerard Sitwell traces the concept behind the devotion to the eleventh century antiphon: "Gaude Dei genetrix, virgo immaculata: gaude quod gaudium ab angelo suscepisti: gaude quod genuisti eterni luminis claritatem, gaude mater, gaude sancte Dei genetrix. Virgo tu sola innupta. Te laudet omnis filii creatura genetricem lucis: sis pro nobis pia interventrix." [16] He indicates this antiphon was connected to the five joys in twelfth century anecdotes about the beneficial results of the devotion. Dom Wilmart suggests the same source,[17] while Natalie White proposes an antiphon used in almost every feast of Mary: "Gaude Maria virgo: cunctas hereses sola interemisti in universo mundo." [18] The earliest example of the poetic development of the devotion seems to be the eleventh century Latin hymn, "Gavde virgo, mater Christi," which was included in the York *Horae.* This is the source of the first Middle English poems we shall consider on Mary's joy.

Glade us maiden, moder milde,
þurru þin herre þu were wid childe—
   Gabriel he seide it þe—   [3]
Glade us, ful of gode þine,
þam þu bere buten pine
   wid þe, lilie of chastete.   [6]

Glade us of iesu þi sone
þat þolede deit for monis loue;
   þat dehit was, quiic up aros.   [9]
Glade us maiden, crist up stey
& in heuene þe i-sey;
   He bar him seluen into is clos.   [12]

Glade us marie, to Ioye ibrout,—
Muche wrchipe crist hau þe i-worut—
   in heuene brit in þi paleis;   [15]
Þer þat frut of þire wombe
Be i-yefin us forto fonden
   in Ioye þat is endeles.   [18]

Gavde virgo, mater Christi,
que per aurem concepisti
Gabriele nuncio.   [3]

Gaude quia Deo plena,
peperisti sine pena
cum pudoris lilio.   [6]

Gaude quia tui nati,
quem dolebas mortem pati,
fulget resurrectio.   [9]

Gaude Christo ascendente,
quod in celum, te vidente,
motu fertur proprio.   [12]

Gaude quod post ipsum scandis,
et est honor tibi grandis
in celi palatio.   [15]

Vbi fructus ventris tui
per te detur nobis frui:
in perenni gaudio.   [18]

THE NAMES OF JOY: "GLADE US MAIDEN, MODER MILDE"

THE OTHER POEMS WE HAVE STUDIED HAVE BEEN FORMULATED FROM THE PER-
spective of sacred history; that is, they have been a meditation on a past event
—the annunciation or the death of Christ—as seen from the point of view of
the present in which the poem was conceived. The meditation was then
applied to the present as a way of future fulfillment. This was evident
especially in "Gabriel, fram evene-king," "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode,"
and "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode." In "Wy haue ȝe no reuthe on my
child?" and "Suete sone, reu on me," the context of the present was not
explicitly mentioned in the poem, yet the full meaning and the structure
became clear only in relationship to the present as it was defined by sacred
history. Using his present knowledge of the meaning of the crucifixion and
his own union with it, the listener responded to the meditation as if it were a
definition of the present. Those who wound Christ, the poet implied, are
those who sin; those who have compassion on Him are those who turn to
Him with love and refrain from sin.

When we consider the poems which have as their subject Mary's joy, we
find, however, that the fundamental principle of proportion and perspective
is modified. The nature of the relationship which the poet and his audience
have to Mary in the present becomes the source of movement in the poem.
This relationship is defined by sacred history. The explicit point of view of a
poem on the joys is the present time. The dynamic basis of movement in the
poem is the difference between the quality of the present in which mankind
is and the quality of the present in which Mary is. There is a double

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discrepancy between the two presents, one of grace and, paradoxically, one of time. Both the poet and his audience and Mary occupy the same temporal place in the sequence of events of sacred history, but in terms of state man is separated from Mary in the same way he is separated from heaven. Theology defines the distance. Two facts, both of history, separate man from heaven. The first is that man is in a state of sin and imperfection which only time and grace have the power to remedy. His state is partly a consequence of the second and original cause of separation, the fall of man through the sin of Adam and the fact that the redemption of man still awaits its consummation in the future second coming of Christ. The future event will eternally fix man's relationship to heaven, when time will take the form of the eternal separation from or eternal union with God. Thus man in the present time lives in relation to heaven, much as Mary lived after Christ's ascension, in a tension of love and hope. Mary, because of her sinlessness and because at her death she was assumed by Christ into heaven, is in a state which corresponds to the state man desires to be in. The first human to enter heaven bodily after Christ, besides being man's intercessor, she is the means of defining man's future joy.

In "Glade us maiden, moder milde" the poet addresses Mary as she is now, having been assumed into heaven, from his own present imperfect state of sadness and joy. He speaks to her across the gap, not of space, but of state and time. By recalling and defining the five joys which led Mary into the joy of heaven, it is his purpose to secure for himself and for his audience the perfection of the joy of Mary, and the poet's words themselves, by reaching across the gap to Mary, become a means to joy. To describe the separate causes of Mary's joy on earth, the poet uses the sequence of time, those past events of Mary's life which have led to her present joy in heaven. To describe her state in heaven, the poet uses the figure of place. The poet and his audience are "here" on earth; Mary rejoices "there" in heaven.

Because Mary's joyful state in heaven is her full union with Christ, the aspect of joy in each event recalled consists of an aspect of her union with Christ. First, at His conception and His birth, there is Mary's joy in her maiden motherhood of Christ; then at His resurrection, there is her joy in the redemption of man and in Christ's own release from pain; and at His ascension, her joy in seeing Him enter glory; finally, at her assumption, there is Mary's ultimate joy in her own union with Christ in heaven. Because the poet defines the past joys of Mary's life in light of Mary's eternal present in heaven in order to address her, his words transform the events into timeless

names of Mary. Furthermore, the poet distinguishes the individual joys from each other and orders them proportionately, a fact which will become clearer as we consider how the method of the Middle English poet differs from that used by the poet of his Latin source.

The thirteenth century "Glade us maiden, moder milde"[19] is a close translation of the eleventh century hymn "Gavde virgo, mater Christi," the first known example of the devotion of Mary's five joys. According to Brown, in the manuscript the Latin text alternates stanza by stanza with the English verses. Although Brown says that the rhyme scheme of the English follows that of the Latin original, when we compare Brown's edition to the York Latin version of the poem, we see a significant difference.[20] The Latin poem is in six three-line stanzas, and the whole of the Latin develops as a single unit. This development is reflected in the fact that throughout the poem the third line of each of the six stanzas is identically rhymed (aab, ccb, ddb, etc.). On the other hand, the English poet has grouped his stanzas into three units of six lines, each unit rhyming aabccb. This difference in the stanza grouping of the English version is one of several variations made by the English poet which establish the particular proportions of his poem. So that we can see more clearly the purpose of the English version, I have included the York Latin text for comparison.[21]

"Glade us maiden, moder milde," the poet begins with the exhortation that introduces each of the joys, addressing Mary as she is in her present joy in heaven. "Gavde virgo, mater Christi," the Latin begins. Already in the first line two important variations from the Latin version can be seen. The English poet has shifted the command which in the Latin tells Mary herself to rejoice, to apply to "us," explicitly incorporating the joy of mankind into the poem. The English verb suggests two meanings. Let us rejoice, the command may mean, referring to the joy man feels contemplating the significance of the virgin motherhood of Mary. Or, Mary, make us glad, it may mean, the poet having in mind the petition and purpose of his poem to secure for man "Ioye þat is endeles."[22] For the Latin poem's "Christi" the poet has substituted "milde," minimizing the presence of Christ in the first stanza to focus entirely on Mary, and he has added to the title presenting the paradox of her maiden motherhood, a title suggesting her motherhood of man.

With line two the poet introduces a second paradox, "þurru þin herre þu were wid childe," corresponding in the Latin to "que per aurem concepisti." The poet has drawn a phrase from the liturgy, which as well as suggesting

Christ's nature as the Word, emphasizes by its paradoxical meaning the fact of Mary's virginity. (See Figure 3.) [23] By words and phrasing the English conveys a physical concreteness to the expression of the mystery of Christ's conception, as after stating that Mary became with child through her ear, in a separate clause the poet adds, "Gabriel he seide it þe," suggesting that the angel's words themselves were the cause of her conceiving. In the Latin stanza the conception which preserved Mary's virginity is described more with the play of wit than the physical literalness. We shall see later that the English poet deliberately uses this characteristic of concreteness to establish certain correspondences between the events he describes.

"Glade us, ful of gode þine," in the beginning of his second address, the poet echoes the angel's salutation to Mary as "full of grace." Substituting for the abstract word "grace" the proper name "gode," he introduces the theme of the second joy and proposes yet a third paradox to explain the first two. The child conceived was God. Mary, bodily carrying God, was literally "full of God." Being full of God is the basis of her second joy: first, that she should bear God in such an intimate way; second, in lines five and six, that in giving birth to God, Who was bodily present, she should suffer no pain.[24] The insertion of the editorial comma by Brown makes interpretation of "wid þe, lilie of chastete" difficult. The comma causes "lilie of chastete" to appear to be another title for Mary, corresponding to "moder milde." But the Latin helps us to clarify the poet's intention here: "peperisti sine pena / cum pudoris lilio." You gave birth without pain, like the lily of chastity. "Wid þe" can mean "like," so that "lilie of chastete" is not used as another epithet for Mary, but as a figure for comparison.[25] The phrase means, Mary bore God without pain, in a birth that preserved her virginity; she is in this like the lily of chastity.

The fact that the poem is oriented in present time and condition and is an appeal to Mary is reflected in the language with which the poet has described these first two events which caused Mary's joy. Rather than recounting the joys by means of transitive verbs as happenings occurring by cause and effect, by casting them into descriptive phrases the poet has presented the events as if they were the attributes of Mary. In lines one through three the means and the effect of the angel's annunciation, "þurru þin herre þu were wid childe," are given as the cause, and the actual cause is appended as a qualifying thought, "Gabriel he seide it þe," so that the means and the effect are included not as part of the event, but as they show why the poet names Mary maiden and mother. In a similar way, in lines four through six the action of

the event is linked to the descriptive phrase "ful of gode þine" by a relative pronoun "þam," which introduces in a descriptive clause, "þu bere buten pine," followed in turn, in the sixth line, by another descriptive clause comparing the event to the quality of the lily. By minimizing the action of an event in order to define a state or quality of Mary, the poet achieves his double purpose, both to define Mary's joys and at the same time by virtue of them to name Mary in present time.

The next stanza, repeating the appeal that Mary make us glad, contrasts to the first stanza in which the poet of the English version has made the motherhood of Mary the focus. It presents her next two joys by centering on Christ as His godhood is shown, first, after His death, in His resurrection, and then in His ascension into glory.

> Glade us of iesu þi sone
> þat þolede deit for monis loue;
> þat dehit was, quiic up aros.

Make us glad in Jesus thy Son; or possibly, let us rejoice in Jesus thy Son. In the third joy, as in the first two, the poet formulates the events into a way of naming. Speaking of Jesus as Mary's Son, he identifies Him further by two relative clauses, the tense holding the action of the events into a past time as facts which the poet uses to show why we should rejoice and why Mary should give us joy in regard to her Son Who is the source of all our joy.

The differences between the Latin and the English versions of the poem in the lines on the resurrection and ascension are marked. The Latin poet began his poem by naming Mary "mater Christi," using the part of her Son's name that identifies Him as the Messiah, whereas the poet of the English version told of His conception and birth entirely withholding the name of Mary's Son in order to focus on the "maiden moder" through whom Christ came. Here, the Latin poet has obscured the name of Mary's Son to emphasize Mary's suffering. Referring to Him indirectly, through the suffering of Mary, "quia tui nati,/ quem dolebas mortem pati," he contrasts to the suffering the bursting forth of His resurrection, "fulget resurrectio." The English poet, on the other hand, as he tells of how Mary's Son is crucified and rises, names Him for the first time. He does not use the name "Christ," but the personal name "iesu," which emphasizes the human bond between Mary and Christ and the humanity "þat þolede deit for monis loue." The English poet stresses the cosmic meaning of the event, that Jesus suffered death

because of His love for mankind. And by his abrupt contrasting of life to death, "þat dehit was, quiic up aros," he emphasizes the power which Christ will fully reveal in the next joy, His ascension, where for the first time the poet will name Him "crist."

> Glade us maiden, crist up stey
> & in heuene þe i-sey;
>   He bar him seluen into is clos.

"Make us glad, maiden," the poet repeats the address of the opening stanza as he reaches the central point in his poem and prepares to present the upward motion of Mary's own assumption. The account of the fourth joy, when "crist up stey," was prepared for by the third joy, when Christ "quiic up aros." It is the basis for the fifth joy, when Mary will be brought to joy, and for mankind's appeal in the last three lines for "Ioye þat is endeles." As he tells how Christ in entering heaven prepared a place for Mary and for mankind, for the first time the English poet presents the joy as an action. In a series of three clauses with three active verbs and one implied active verb, he says, Christ ascended, you saw Him (go into) heaven, He bore Himself into His "clos."

It is at this point in the Latin and the English that both poets name Christ. "Gaude Christo ascendente,/ quod in celum, te vidente,/ motu fertur proprio." Rejoice in Christ ascending, Who as you watched was carried into heaven by His own power. Make us glad, maiden, the English poet says, Christ ascended and you saw Him go into heaven. By His own power He bore Himself into His enclosure. Stressing the tangible place Christ entered, the English poet prepares for his description, in the next stanza, of Mary herself in her bright palace in heaven.[26]

> Glade us marie, to Ioye ibrout,—
> Muche wrchipe crist hau þe i-worut—
>   in heuene brit in þi paleis;
> Þer þat frut of þire wombe
> Be i-yefin us forto fonden
>   in Ioye þat is endeles.

"Give us joy Mary, brought to joy." The poet begins the last stanza by repeating the appeal a fifth time to introduce Mary's fifth joy. With the final

joy he addresses Mary for the first time by her proper name, as if her name could be uttered only after the events which define her nature have been told. The poet returns to the mode of the first two joys. Again making an event into an attribute by which to identify Mary, he tells the fifth joy with an infinitive phrase, describing Mary as she is in the present as a result of her assumption. The assumption forms the final component of her name.

After addressing Mary as she now is in heaven, the poet bridges the time from that historically past moment of the assumption to the historically present moment in which he has named the joys. Brown's punctuation with dashes in line fourteen emphasizes the double possibility of temporal application. By the joys in the past and through all time "muche wrchipe crist haue þe i-worut." Now that the poet has oriented Mary's joy in literal time, in line fifteen he specifies Mary's perpetual state of joy, her condition, in terms of a place in heaven. This place was prepared for in the three lines on the ascension. Mary has now been placed in that same "clos" into which Christ bore Himself. In the English version the poet has given a further concreteness to Mary's palace. First, by placing her in heaven "brit," then by distinguishing her own palace from the rest of heaven, he has given a separate identity to Mary's joy within the joy of Christ. No such specific development of place is suggested by the Latin version, where the synthetic grammatical relationships of "in celi palatio" suggest rather the general quality of heaven, its richness, brightness and glory.

Omitting the appeal "Glade us," the last three lines put instead of a sixth joy of Mary the possible joy of mankind. They define the poet and his audience's present relationship to Mary's final joy, which they have not experienced, through the use of the figure "þat frut of þire wombe." This figure of fruit, used as well by the Latin poet and often found in the liturgy, is presented in sharp contrast to the categories of time and space by which the poet has organized his poem.[27] It is a mystical figure expressing the unitive experience of God: "Þer," in that palace, give us the fruit of thy womb to taste, to try, to experience in endless joy. Christ is the source, the experience of Him the fruit or state itself of joy, "Ioye þat is endeles." But at the same time as the poet reveals a glimpse of heavenly delight, with these last three lines he has defined mankind's distance from joy. "Þer," in that place, distinguishes by space the place where the joy will be experienced from the place where man is now. "Þat frut . . . be i-yefin us forto fonden," by verb tense and time and by the very fact that Christ is presented in a figure of which Mary is the basis and medium, the poet shows man's distance in time

and vision from the future endless enjoyment. This distance is what, through naming and securing Mary's intercession, the poet seeks to close with his words.

Looking back at the structure of the whole poem from the perspective of this final petition to Mary in virtue of the five joys by which the poet has named her, a certain proportionate correspondence between the parts of the poem can be seen which explains the modifications the poet of the English version has made from his Latin source. The two joys of the last stanza of the English poem, with their account of Mary's entry into the palace of heaven and the petition to Mary that there in heaven the fruit of her womb be given us to experience in endless joy, correspond to the two joys of the opening stanzas, where the coming of Christ is seen through her motherhood. The opening stanza and the closing stanza are focused on Mary's motherhood, the last fulfilling the first, but in an imperfect way. The two joys of the central stanza tell of the manifestation of God as man, and the events of the resurrection and ascension of Christ are the power in history by which the present moment and the hope of the future have been made possible. Now, by virtue of the events of the two central joys—the resurrection and the ascension—as she was the mother of Christ, so Mary has become the mother of man's future joy. Man's joy will be the experience of the beatific vision. Now in his position on earth his joy is hidden from him, but both by virtue of the Incarnation and through Mary who was the medium of Christ's taking flesh, and who is now in fact in heaven, man asks to be granted joy.

The whole poem is an address to Mary with the end of joy in view. The way in which the poet transforms events to names reflects the proportions the poet has established. Mary's names are aspects of the state of joy. The fact that the ascension is recounted not as a name, but as an event, expresses the element of time and the power which have established the poem's proportion. Because of the ascension of Christ into heaven, Mary could be assumed to Him. Now in present time man stands below; Mary is above. Now again Mary is the medium of birth, but this time of man's entrance into heaven, and now again as during Mary's pregnancy, the glory of Christ is hidden from man in the present moment as man hopes for but does not fully experience joy.[28] (See Figure 7 and descriptive note.)

The English poet's choice of stanzaic form corresponds to this same proportion of Christ being hidden, then revealed, then hidden again, as the poet couples the annunciation with Christ's birth, the resurrection with His

ascension, and Mary's assumption with mankind's final prayer.[29] And the poet's withholding of the messianic name of Mary's Son until the events of the resurrection and ascension and the hiding of His identity again in the last three lines are further components of this same proportion. The succession of titles for Mary, "maiden, moder," "ful of gode," "maiden" again, and finally her full naming, "marie," in the last stanza show the shift of focus through the poem until the poet formulates his final petition in virtue of what he has already said.

As part of this double correspondence between parts of the poem—the first two joys on Mary's motherhood of God corresponding to the last two on her motherhood of man, and the central two joys which manifest Christ to the endless joy of Mary revealed, yet concealed, in the figure of the fruit of her womb—there is another structural quality of the English version which distinguishes it from the Latin. Because the poet has fixed the events as timeless names, and because he embodies the quality of Mary's joy in a figure of space, the effect of the poem on the mind's eye is pictorial. Like illuminated figures or figures in stained glass, each naming of Mary presents an image of the joy, and we can compare the poet's presentation of the joys to their illuminations.[30] In the lines on the annunciation and birth we see Mary and the angel, his words of salutation, the dove descending to the Virgin's ear, the lily. In the resurrection we see Christ bursting from His tomb, and in the ascension we see Him disappear with only His feet left below the clouds of heaven which enclose Him, while Mary and the disciples stand below gazing up. We then see Mary enthroned in a palace in heaven. But the final figure of Christ, which shows His present hidden relationship to man, is not given in visual concepts. In the figure of man's future fullness of joy, Christ is presented to the blind senses as what man can touch and taste and consume.

Leuedy, for þare blisse
    þat þu heddest at þe frume,
Þo þu wistest myd-iwisse
    þat ihesus wolde beo þi sune,—   4
Þe hwile we beoþ on lyue þisse
    sunnen to don is vre wune—
Help vs nv þat we ne mysse
    of þat lif þat is to cume.   8

Moder, bliþe were þu þo
    hwanne þu iseye heouen-king
Of þe ibore wiþ-vte wo
    þat scop þe and alle þing.   12
Beo vre scheld from vre ivo
    & yef vs þine blessyng;
And bi-wyte vs euer-mo
    from alle-kunnes suneging.   16

Leuedi, al myd rihte
    þu were gled and bliþe
Þo crist þureh his myhte
    aros from deþe to lyue,   20

Þat alle þing con dihte
  and wes i-boren of wyue.
He make vs clene and bryhte
  for his wundes fyue.   24

From þe Munt of olyuete
  þo þi sone to heouene steyh,
Þu hit by-heolde myd eye swete,
  for he wes þin heorte neyh.   28
Þer he haueþ imaked þi sete
  in o stude þat is ful heyh,
Þer þe schulen engles grete,
  for þu ert boþe hende and sleyh. 32

Þe king þat wes of þe ibore,
  to heouene he þe vette
To þare blisse þat wes for-lore,
  & bi hym-seolue sette,   36
Vor he hedde þe icore.
  wel veyre he þe grette;
Blyþe were þu þer-vore,
  þo engles þe imette.   40

Moder of Milce & mayde hende,
  ich þe bidde as i con;
Ne let þu noht þe world vs blende
  þat is ful of vre i-von,   44
Ac help vs at vre lyues ende,
  þu þat bere god and mon,
And vs alle to heouene sende
  hwenne we schulle þis lif for-gon. 48

Ihesus, for þire moder bene
  þat is so veyr and so bryht
Al so wis, so heo is quene
  of heouene and eorþe—& þet is ryht,— 52
Of vre sunnes make vs clene
  & yef vs þat eche lyht,
And to heouene vs alle i-mene,
  louerd, þu bryng, for wel þu Miht. 56

The Vision of Joy:
"Leuedy, for Þare Blisse/ Þat Þu Heddest at Þe Frume"

It seems strange indeed that after what has been shown of God's closeness to our souls there are so few concerned about perceiving the First Principle within themselves. Distracted by many cares, the human mind does not enter into itself through the memory; beclouded by sense images, it does not come back to itself through the intelligence; and drawn away by the concupiscences, it does not return to itself through the desire for interior sweetness and spiritual joy. Therefore, completely immersed in things of sense, the soul cannot re-enter into itself as the image of God.

And just as, when one has fallen, he must lie where he is unless another is at hand to raise him up, so our soul could not be perfectly lifted up out of these things of sense to see itself and the eternal Truth in itself had not Truth, taking human form in Christ, become a ladder restoring the first ladder that had been broken in Adam.[1]

"Leuedy, for Þare Blisse/ Þat Þu Heddest at Þe Frume"[2] is a prayer for wisdom in its most precise theological sense, a prayer to see God and not to be blinded by the world. The purpose of the poem is, by defining in so far

as possible the joy man will experience in heaven, to appeal to its power. The poet addresses Mary in her state, now, in heaven, and against her joy he juxtaposes man's own present with its sorrow. As in the poems on the crucifixion, this sorrow has its theological dimensions: it springs from man's limited view of suffering or his separation from God by sin. In this poem the poet seeks to transform both man's limited vision to light and his state of separation to union with God by defining step by step the events of Mary's increasing awareness of joy and closeness to her Son.

With the opening of his poem, the poet does not address Mary as Maiden Mother or Queen of Heaven, but simply as "Leuedy." [3] He speaks to her as one with courtly power, in recognition that she is the mother of God, and he appeals to her by virtue of her joy at this. In contrast to "Glade us maiden, moder milde," the event of the first joy is not made into a name for Mary. Rather, it is described as the state of awareness Mary had which came from her realization—"þu wistest myd-iwisse"—that her son would be Jesus. The qualifying phrase "at þe frume" recognizes that the first joy, the annunciation, was the beginning of Mary's present joy in heaven and also the beginning for man of the ultimate joy which he will experience in his final union with Christ. [4]

To this beginning joy of Mary's life on earth the poet opposes the present sorrow of himself and his listeners. While in this life, he says, it is our custom perpetually to sin. Yet this perpetual kind of sin, as life itself, has really only an apparent perpetuality, for it will reach an end at the end of each man's life, when man will be eternally separated from or eternally united to God. Just as Mary's joy is a foreshadowing of man's perpetual joy, so man's perpetual sinning in this life is the reflection of the perpetual sorrow man may enter in the next. It is against this sorrow and in the awareness of Mary's perpetual joy and her first joy that the poet appeals to Mary. Help us now so that we do not miss that life of joy which is to come. Implied in the term "þat lif" is the possibility also of being cut off from life, for to miss that life, eternal joy, would be to come to hell, which is not life, but eternal death.

Mother, the poet addresses Mary the second time, in stanza two, describing the joy she had in her motherhood, you were happy when you saw the King of Heaven born of you without pain. Now in the poem, with "þu iseye" we recognize that Christ has become bodily manifest to the world. But "þu iseye" has a double sense, the outer one referring to the joy of Mary at seeing her Child after His birth, and the inner one referring to the mystery of Mary's giving birth without pain. Giving birth to her Child without pain

affirmed her knowledge that this was God Whom she had borne, King of Heaven "þat scop þe and alle þing." With this last phrase the poet echoes the words so frequently used in the summer liturgy to honor Mary's motherhood: "Hail, holy mother, who didst bring forth in childbirth the king who ruleth over heaven and earth for ever and ever"; and also "Blessed and to be venerated art thou, O virgin Mary, who without touch of shame wast found mother of the Saviour. *V.* O virgin mother of God, he whom the whole world cannot contain enclosed himself in thy womb, and was made man." [5] Not only did Mary bear the Child without pain, but the Child she held within her was He Whom the whole world cannot contain: He to Whom you gave birth is He Who made you and every created thing. Thus the poet spells out the full implications of the Child she contemplated then, the knowledge which was the basis of her second joy.

That the appeal of the second half of the stanza is by virtue of this second joy is implicit. As he would appeal to a mother, the poet appeals to Mary to protect us during the interval of this life, that she be our shield from our foe. And, he asks her, give us your "blessyng"; that is, give us the joy that you had—literally, give us God Himself. The same paradox stated in relation to the joy, that Mary bore her Creator, is implied also in the petition. By virtue of the fact that Mary bore the King of Heaven and Creator of all things, now we may ask for Him as our own. The last two lines of the stanza develop the request for protection, extending it to cover every moment of time, every kind of defection from life, "alle-kunnes suneging": Protect us forever from every kind of sinning (or from all mankind's sinning).

Again, in stanza three, the poet addresses Mary as "Leuedi," as he speaks of the joy she experienced when Christ rose from the dead: With good reason were you glad and joyful when Christ through His own power rose from death to life. Mary was right not only to rejoice at the fact that Christ rose from the dead, but that He did it through His own power. According to Brown's edition, the petition in this stanza comprises only the last two lines, and lines twenty-one and twenty-two develop the meaning of Mary's joy. Christ's resurrection is seen to be a second birth which the poet presents in light of the first as another action by the Creator. It was fitting that He "þat scop þe and alle þing," He "þat alle þing con dihte," Who ordained all things, "and wes i-boren of wyue," Whom Mary had seen born from her, should rise. And just as the last stanza contained the paradox that God Who made all things should be born of a woman, so this presents the paradox that a man born of woman should raise himself from the dead.[6] The fact that a

man should rise from the dead prepares the ground for the rest of the joyful events and the final petition of the poem.

In this stanza of joy at the resurrection, the poet recalls in his petition the efficacy of the passion, the necessary condition of the resurrection, as he prays: Let Him make us clean and bright by His five wounds. With its indefinite verb tense, the appeal seems to cover an indefinite time, reaching even into the next life where man will be in the purity and light of eternal joy. But because the poem is a prayer for vision, the petition by the virtue of Christ's five wounds may have a special significance. The *Ancrene Riwle,* for example, applies Christ's five wounds to cleanse the five senses: "Ah, Jesus, grant me Thy mercy; Jesus, hung on the cross for my sins, by those five wounds from which Thou didst there bleed, heal my soul, bleeding from all the sins with which it has been wounded through my five senses. Grant this in remembrance of Thy wounds, dear Lord."[7] The poet here may mean, let the five wounds of Christ purify the five senses that we may be bright and clear and thus see God. Perhaps, too, the poet had in mind the numerical correspondence of the wounds to the five joys which he is using to come to eternal light.

> From þe Munt of olyuete
>   þo þi sone to heouene steyh,
> Þu hit by-heolde myd eye swete,
>   for he wes þin heorte neyh.

When your Son ascended from Mount Olivet to heaven, the poet continues, you beheld His ascension with sweet eye, because He was near your heart. With the fourth joy the poet tells of the climax of Mary's spiritual joy. Her spiritual joy is signified by the joy of her "eye" which is the window of her soul. Beholding Christ's ascension, her eye was "swete." She was gladdened because her Son, near to her heart, went into the glory of His godhood from which He had so mysteriously descended by being born and by dying. Her joy was a spiritual joy, for He was bodily apart from her whose flesh He was, not with her as He had been on earth. Now He has been manifested in His full power, but His power has literally separated Him from Mary.[8]

Just as Christ's resurrection has prepared the ground for man's reunion with God, so this joy prepares for Mary's ultimate joy, and in the structure of the poem there is a modification. In the first three stanzas, complementary to Mary's vision of joy, the poet had juxtaposed man's petition from his present

state of sorrow. But in this stanza and the next there is no direct appeal by man. Instead the poet shuts out the perspective of present time and restricts the view to the past. The next four lines are a prophecy:

> Þer he haueþ imaked þi sete
>   in o stude þat is ful heyh,
> Þer þe schulen engles grete,
>   for þu ert boþe hende and sleyh.

In his imagination the speaker has projected himself into the past moment after Christ has ascended and left Mary on earth. As did the poet of "Als i lay vp-on a nith" who imagined what Mary knew at Christ's birth, he enters the limitations of what Mary must have understood at the moment of the ascension, as she felt joyous for Christ's joy, but sad to be separated from Him. And in place of his petition, the poet speaks to Mary, almost as though to console her for her loss of Christ: There, he says, He has made your seat, in a place that is very high; there angels shall greet you, for you are both "hende and sleyh." [9] Because of her beauty and grace Christ will send for her. She will be assumed into heaven. The poet again describes Mary in courtly terms, as he would speak of a noble lady, as he will speak of her when she is Queen of Heaven (line 41).

By dwelling on the moment of Christ's ascension the poet has effected a pause in the narrative of the five joys. He has emphasized the event in the past when the situation of Mary was most like the present situation of the poet and his audience who now appeal to her. In the place of man's appeal the poet has prophesied Mary's assumption. By prophesying her desire's fulfillment, the poet has uttered the desire of Mary's heart. The language of the foretelling appears as the grammatical inverse of man's appeal in the other stanzas, and the declarative statement could be rephrased into man's supplication to Christ for his own experience of eternal joy: There make our place in heaven. There let us see the court of heaven and Your glory. By virtue of Your five wounds, make us bright that "we ne mysse/ of þat lif þat is to cume" (line 8).

By the fifth joy the prophecy of the fourth is fulfilled: The King Who was born of you fetched you into heaven, to that bliss that was lost, and set you beside Himself. In "Glade us maiden, moder milde" the fact that man had lost his joy was explained at the same time as the poet told of Christ's death which brought back man's joy, in order to show the purpose of His death.

Here, in line thirty-five, man's lost joy is mentioned in order to define the significance of the joy of heaven into which Mary is assumed. At the same time it defines why, in the first stanza, the poet had described the first joy of Mary as "þare blisse/ þat þu heddest at þe frume." The first joy of Mary by virtue of the Incarnation and its consequences literally *was* the beginning again of the joy that had been forfeited by man.

Not only does it define the first joy accurately, but the mention of lost joy defines the meaning of joy itself. Just as the source of sorrow is separation from God, so the source of joy is union with God. Up to this event in the poem the poet has described three aspects of Mary's union, first the nature of the One to Whom Mary will be united, second the completeness of her experience of union, and third the movement of uniting. Throughout the joys of the poem the godhood of Christ, first mysteriously hidden during His birth in the flesh through a woman, yet signified by the fact that the birth was painless and that Mary remained a virgin, has been manifested until in His full glory He ascends to heaven. Mary's experience of joy has increased as Christ's godhood became more manifest, and as He ascended it became most deep. Yet her experience of joy could not be full until she was with Him in body as well as spirit. The means of Mary's final union has been the movement of the events of sacred history which join man to God, the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ, His ascension, and in this stanza, Mary's assumption.

This stanza, then, embodies what Mary's full joy means. Christ has fetched her into heaven. Whereas at the ascension Christ was called Mary's "sone" to heighten the sense of their human separation, now in heaven, to reflect His glory, Christ is called King—yet linked still to His mother and manhood by the relative clause "þat wes of þe ibore," echoing line eleven. The King fetched her to heaven, to the joy that had been lost, and placed her beside Him. For, the poet explains, to express Christ's love for Mary by showing Christ desired her, "he hedde þe icore," He had chosen her. How fairly He greeted her! And "Blyþe were þu þer-vore," the poet claims, echoing the opening of stanza two which described Mary's joy in beholding God both physically and spiritually at His birth.

Now, having prepared both the full definition of Mary's joy and the full definition of man's desire by showing his present state and indicating his joys in the future, the poet concludes his poem on the five joys with an appeal to Mary and an appeal to Christ, in the present, the direct appeal that he had omitted from his description of the ascension and assumption. The poet asks,

as he had prepared his audience to ask by the last four lines of the ascension stanza, for what he and his listeners desire.

> Moder of Milce & mayde hende,
> ich þe bidde as i con;
> Ne let þu noht þe world vs blende
> þat is ful of vre i-von,
> Ac help vs at vre lyues ende,
> þu þat bere god and mon,
> And vs alle to heouene sende
> hwenne we schulle þis lif for-gon.

Mother of Mercy and courteous maid, the poet addresses her, referring both to her maiden motherhood and to her heavenly beauty (line 32): I pray to you as I know how. Do not let the world blind us, the world that is full of our foes. In so far as I can see, I pray that we may see. How fittingly the poet's prayer for vision comes, defining those foes from which he had appealed in stanza two (line 13) that we be shielded. And as he had asked for Mary's blessing then (line 14), now he asks with the implications of the blessing having been made clear: Do not let us be blinded, but help us at our lives' end, you who have borne God and man. Mary's title Mother of Mercy is used in its full sense to mean Mary the mother of Christ Who is our mercy, Who has been fully manifested as both God and man to restore our joy. The last two lines complete the meaning of the help the poet requests at "vre lyues ende": When we shall lose this life, send us all to heaven.

Now in relation to Christ the poet and his audience stand exactly as Mary had stood in the fourth stanza, looking up after Christ Who has ascended into heaven. The second part of the final petition addresses Christ:

> Ihesus, for þire moder bene
> þat is so veyr and so bryht
> Al so wis, so heo is quene
> of heouene and eorþe—& þet is ryht,—
> Of vre sunnes make vs clene
> & yef vs þat eche lyht,
> And to heouene vs alle i-mene,
> louerd, þu bryng, for wel þu Miht.

Jesus, for Your mother's prayer who is so fair and so bright—the poet appeals to Christ through a power of Mary which comes from Christ; that is, through her beauty, which is the radiance of her joyous state. Just as wise she is as she is queen of heaven and of earth—and that is right—the poet continues to describe Mary in terms of her glory. "Wis" is a fitting adjective for Mary in the context of the poem, for the poet has shown that of all creatures she is wisest; [10] that is, in the words of Bonaventure with which we opened this section, Mary has been most perfectly "lifted up" to see herself and the "eternal Truth in itself." Her position as Queen of Heaven is both the source and the fruit of her wisdom.[11] "Wis" is in keeping also with Mary's traditional definition in the liturgy, which applies to her passages from Ecclesiasticus in which Wisdom speaks.[12] For man, folly, which is the sin opposing wisdom, consists in his "plunging his sense into earthly things, whereby his sense is rendered incapable of perceiving Divine things."[13] It was just this sin from which in the previous stanza the poet appealed to Mary to defend himself and his audience, "Ne let þu noht þe world vs blende" (line 43).

In this final petition to Christ the poet has rephrased his appeal, summarizing the petitions of the whole poem into one by using the two fundamental sources of man's distance from joy, his sin—his state—and his distance in time. For the sake of Your mother's prayer, who is beautiful and wise, and thus with right the queen of heaven and earth, he prays, cleanse our sins so that we may have light, so that like Mary we may experience Your joy. And, as You brought Mary into bliss, bring us too in time all to heaven, "for wel þu Miht." As You are God "þat scop . . . alle þing" (line 12), Who "aros from deþe to lyue" (line 20), and "þat alle þing con dihte" (line 21), and by virtue of the fact that You fetched Mary "to þare blisse þat wes for-lore" (line 35), well do You have that power to bring us to heaven if You choose. Mary's full vision and power and Christ's glory and power have been fully defined and invoked to be in turn the power by which man may cross that gap between himself and the sovereign Good.

The Figure of Delight

Not yet, then, have I told or conceived, O Lord, how greatly Your blessed shall rejoice. They will rejoice according as they will love, and they will love according as they will know. How far will they know You, Lord, and how much will they love You? Truly eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man in this life how much they will know You and love You in that life.[1]

ST. BONAVENTURE COMPOSED HIS "BREVILOQUIUM" TO SHOW HOW THEOLOGY discourses about God, that "the truth of Holy Scripture is by God, from God, in accord with God, and because of God, so that this science may deservedly appear to be a single and orderly science and not undeservedly be named theology."[2] After, in the manner of theology, he has described "first, the Trinity of God; second, the creation of the world; third, the corruption of sin; fourth, the incarnation of the Word; fifth, the grace of the Holy Ghost; sixth, the sacramental remedy; and seventh, the state of the final judgment," and after he has defined the glories of paradise, he ends his whole endeavor of formulating the truth of Scripture with St. Anselm's description of the joy of heaven.

To describe heaven Anselm uses all the categories by which language can raise the mind to describe the good of heaven. To teach his reader the idea of the good, he describes all goods man may desire, and shows that all these goods shall be enjoyed: "Why do you wander abroad, little man, in search of

the goods of soul and body? Love the one good in which are all goods, and it is enough. Seek the simple good which is all good, and it is enough. What do you love, my flesh? What do you seek, my soul? There is whatever you love, whatever you seek." Beauty, swiftness, life, satisfaction of hunger and thirst; melody, pure pleasure, wisdom, power, security: "But what a joy and how great it is, where is there a good of such a kind or so great? Heart of man, needy heart, heart acquainted with sorrows, overwhelmed with sorrows, how greatly would you rejoice if you abounded in all these things? Ask your inner self whether it could contain its joy over so great a blessedness for itself."

To teach his reader to contemplate the extent of man's joy, he makes him aware how the heart will overflow with joy and its joy be multiplied in so much and to the degree that anyone else whom his heart loves possesses the same blessedness: "Thus in that perfect love of innumerable blessed angels and sainted men where none will love another less than himself, everyone will rejoice for each of the others as for himself." Then upon this he multiplies the fact that each man will love God beyond comparison and more than himself and all the others with himself: "If they will so love God with all their heart and all their mind and all their soul, still all their heart and all their mind and all their soul will not suffice for the worthiness of this love. Surely they will so rejoice with all their heart and all their mind and all their soul that all their heart and all their mind and all their soul will not suffice for the fullness of their joy."

But here Anselm breaks off his description as the joy exceeds the capacity of his heart and his words, and he turns with the boldness of perfect love of God to ask, as God bids him to ask, to enter into that joy. Approaching the center of the joy opened to man through the redemption, man can no longer speak. As Bonaventure says, having reached the seventh stage of his journey of the mind to God, "De excessu mentali et mystico, in quo requies datur intellectui, affectu totaliter in Deum per excessum transeunte":

> If you wish to know how these things may come about, ask grace, not learning; desire, not the understanding; the groaning of prayer, not diligence in reading; the Bridegroom, not the teacher; God, not man; darkness, not clarity; not light, but the fire that wholly inflames and carries one into God through transporting unctions and consuming affections. God Himself is this fire, and *His furnace is in Jerusalem;* and it is Christ who

enkindles it in the white flame of His most burning Passion. This fire he alone truly perceives who says: *My soul chooseth hanging, and my bones, death.* He who loves this death can see God, for it is absolutely true that *Man shall not see me and live.*

Let us, then, die and enter into this darkness. Let us silence all our care, our desires, and our imaginings. With Christ crucified, let us pass *out of this world to the Father,* so that, when the Father is shown to us, we may say with Philip: *It is enough for us.* Let us hear with Paul: *My grace is sufficient for thee,* and rejoice with David, saying: *My flesh and my heart have fainted away: thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever. Blessed be the Lord forever, and let all the people say: so be it, so be it.* Amen.[3]

The Middle English lyrics which we have discussed are fundamentally prayer. Their aim has been ultimate union with God. Yet there is an essential poverty at the center of man's prayer to God. The theologians are unanimous in identifying it, from the time of Paul: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known" (1 Cor. 13:12). There is a fundamental discrepancy between the world and God no matter how profoundly man searches for God's image in it.[4] The poverty of creation as it confronts God is expressed in different ways. By the mystics it is called darkness.[5] By theologians it is put forth in the fundamental teaching that the world is created for the glorification of God, that nothing is to be loved in itself, but to be used to love God; that all things are signs.[6] At its most creative, the fundamental poverty in the prayer of the world, as in the life of St. Francis, allows the "freedom of the sons of God" and creates a deeper beauty. At its least creative, it produces monotony and ugliness.

Taken as a group, the medieval religious lyrics reflect the essential disproportion between the experience of delight and both the capacity of man's desire for delight and the unknown possibilities of delight. This poverty of experience is a result both of man's faulty desire, his sin and defection, or his condition; and of the gap between the present moment in sacred history and what is yet to come to pass—the event of the second coming of Christ Who will judge the living and the dead and establish whether a man, depending upon the quality of his desire, shall dwell in eternal sorrow or eternal joy. In spite of the fact of a falling short of the full experience of delight, a fall

which reflects the fall of Adam from original joy, the Christian soul can name the delight he most deeply desires. Although neither has he experienced it directly nor does he yet know even the full extent of his desire for it, through the power of grace and with the perspective of theology he can call upon it. Recognizing this gap between the experience of delight and the desire for it which theology defines and the life of the Church bridges, will help us understand why so many of the medieval religious lyrics are unpoetic and flat. The flat lyrics are those which, seeking delight, use both the traditional formulations of theology and the traditional forms of poetry in a way that is not itself a source of delight to the beholder.

For the medieval theologian, the basis of beauty was proportionality, to be found in the ordered unity and diversity of God's creation. The proportions of beauty were reflected in the science of numbers—arithmetic and geometry (time and space)—from which were derived music, the plastic arts and architecture, and poetry.[7] The divine proportioning of creation and history was revealed by God through Christ, the New Testament, and established in its perpetual forms—its order and hierarchy—in the living liturgy of the Church. Each of the lyrics we have considered so far has been constructed in some manner proportionate to the event of sacred history it celebrates (the figure of virgin motherhood for the sequence on the annunciation, the cross for that on the crucifixion) or to the sorrow or joy it effects in mankind (to Mary's experience in "Als i lay," to Christ's in "Þe milde Lomb"). The structural proportions of sacred history transcend the individual arts, finding their definition in the proportions of the creative action of God, which is revealed in His Word, the expression of His thought, or Christ.

Rather than evaluating the religious lyrics as they do or do not effect intensity of the audience's emotion, which has been the tendency of most of the modern critics, I would like to set up a structural criterion and contrast the religious lyrics which are ordered in a unity proportioned by their subject matter to those which are ordered by the poverty of disproportionate dead forms. To illustrate the differences between religious poems which seem flat and unproportioned and the proportioned religious lyrics, and also to show their relationship to the proportioning of sacred history, I would like to compare the form of "Leuedy, for þare blisse" with that of two other works which use the five joys of Mary. The first is a prayer which is not in poetic form, but which uses sacred history to define the third joy of Mary in a way that figures the delight to be experienced in the proportions of the prayer itself; this is the prayer of the third joy in the *Ancrene Riwle*. The second is a

prayer on the five joys which is in poetic form and which uses sacred history, but which does not figure delight in the prayer itself. "Leuedy, for þare blisse" will provide an example of a prayer in poetic form, which uses sacred history, and which at the same time in itself figures forth delight.

> O Lady, St Mary, because of the great joy that thou hadst when thou sawest thy dear and precious Son, after His grievous death, risen to joyful life, His Body sevenfold brighter than the sun, grant me to die with Him and to rise in Him, to die to the world and to live spiritually, to share His sufferings as a companion, on earth, that I may be His companion in happiness, in heaven. Because of the great joy that thou hadst, O Lady, in his blessed resurrection, after thy great sorrow, lead me, after the sorrow in which I live here, to thy happiness.[8]

The purpose of this prayer from the *Riwle* is single: that because of Mary's joy in the resurrection, the soul who prays be united to her Son Who is God. The kind of union is established by sacred history, which defines both where man is in the present and who he is in relation to God. Ultimately the desire of the prayer reaches from the relation with God at this present moment to union with God in body and soul through Christ in heaven. Heaven is embodied by the figure of Mary's happiness, for she is in heaven now. What makes us feel the beauty of the prayer is that the author structures the expression of this specific desire in several ways which are proportioned to each other.

The author structures the prayer by three aspects of sacred history, describing (1) Mary's joy, as it is caused by (2) Christ's resurrection, and (3) man's present desire to be led to future heavenly joy by the power of Mary's joy. First, Mary's joy is defined by her seeing her "dear and precious Son, after His grievous death, risen to joyful life." We recall that in the crucifixion poems Mary's deepest sorrow was caused both by her motherhood, which established the "dearness" of her Son to her, and by the fact that He Who died was God Himself, the "best of alle gode," [9] which established the "preciousness" of her Son to her. His death, which by the crucifixion poems has been shown to encompass all sin and sorrow, is spoken of less fully here because the author concentrates on the second aspect of the prayer, Christ's joyful rising. The joy of the event is revealed by the brightness of Christ's body, "sevenfold brighter than the sun." Using the third aspect of sacred

history's definition of desire, the power of the event in relation to man, the author then forms his prayer in correspondence with the resurrection as he has defined it and in virtue of Mary's joy: As Christ died and rose again, so let me die and live.

But man is different in state and nature from Christ, and the author describes the Christian soul's dying and rising in a mode proper to man who is still in this imperfect life. The author draws two analogies of dying and rising as figures of Christ's dying and rising. The first analogy is in the prayer's asking, Grant that I die and rise with Christ by dying to the world (which is what separates me from Christ in heaven) and living spiritually (which is the life that joins me to Christ until the day of my resurrection). The second is expressed in the next clause, that I die and rise with Christ by sharing His suffering as a companion on earth so that I may be—or my suffering through His merit will merit for me to be—His companion in happiness in heaven. The distinctions are theological. Earth is opposed to heaven. Man's suffering is defined as dying to the world while in the world and his suffering is opposed to the happiness of heaven.[10] The prayer then summarizes the three aspects in relation to Mary's fifth and final joy, as it looks forward to the last of the five prayers: Because of your great joy following upon your great sorrow at Christ's crucifixion, lead me from the sorrow I suffer on earth to your great joy now in Heaven.

In all, there have been five different analogies drawn in the prayer, Mary's sorrow becoming joy, Christ rising from death, the Christian soul rising to live spiritually, the soul rising to heaven as Christ's companion, and finally the soul rising to the final joy Mary now has in heaven. The basis of the different analogies is the distinction in nature and state between Christ, Mary and the soul. These distinctions are formulated in terms of time, now and then; in terms of space, earth and heaven; and, because the focus of these differences is man, in terms of his nature of body and spirit, each with its distinct aspect of suffering or sorrow and of joy. These different analogies are fundamentally a result of the way theological distinctions between sorrow and joy, body and spirit are proportioned by the event in sacred history which is the subject of the prayer.

At the same time, the five different analogies are unified in the prayer as a whole. This becomes evident when we consider the structure of the prayer as a work in itself. By "structure" here I mean simply the principle by which the author has ordered the expression of his purpose in the medium through which he speaks, the figures of thought, the configuration of sentences, the sounds.

Each part of the prayer is built on the figure of rising, rising from depth to height, sorrow to joy, body to spirit, this world to the next, and the reader feels increasing delight as he sees the harmony of these figures together. First, encompassing the whole prayer, is Mary's joy in her Son. Then comes the first figure, her Son rising from death to life with His glory, the source of Mary's joy, shining back to her joy. Then comes the second figure, the Christian soul's death told in three modifications of dying and rising, the first to die with Him and rise in Him (now the soul in grace is in Christ; later the soul in glory will be in Christ); second, to die to the world and to live spiritually; and, third, to share His sufferings on earth as a companion, so that the soul may be His companion in heaven. Finally, there is the great concluding summary motion which specifies Mary's joy then, at the time of her third joy, so that the soul may experience now the happiness she had then —a figure, based on the theological definition of time as sacred history, which applies the whole prayer to the expression of the soul's desire. The rhythm of the phrases adds yet another reflection of the proportion in the prayer.

Because the focus on the event in sacred history is the determining factor— in this prayer it has been the resurrection—the principle of similarity between the analogies used by the theologian will change as the character of the event chosen changes. This can be illustrated by contrasting the above prayer to the one in the *Ancrene Riwle* on the first joy:

> O Lady, St Mary, because of the great joy that thou hadst within thee when Jesus, God, God's Son, after the angel's greeting, took flesh and blood in thee, and of thee, receive my greeting with the same *Ave,* and make me account every outward joy but little. But give me interior comfort, and let me have the joys of heaven through thy merits. And as surely as there was never any sin in that flesh that He took from thee nor in thine own, as we believe, after that taking flesh, whatever there may have been before, cleanse my soul of fleshly sins.[11]

The unifying event in this prayer is the moment *after* the annunciation, the moment of the conception of Christ *within* Mary, as He takes her flesh. Thus in the first part, Mary's joy is described to be within, an inner joy (Christ is within her). Christ is defined both as He was inside Mary, after the angel's greeting, and also as He is God and God's Son. The prayer then defines the joy of the Christian soul in terms of Mary's joy. The greeting that came to Mary is applied to the soul (that he be filled with joy), so that as Mary had

Christ inside her, so may he seek interior comfort (the soul is at war now
with concupiscence) only in order that he may have the joys of Heaven
through Mary's merits. The second part of the prayer develops, again
through theology, how Christ is of Mary's flesh and what the quality of
Mary's flesh is, in order to secure the same quality for the Christian soul.

In each of the five prayers on the joys in the *Riwle* the event determines
the figure by which the theological concepts are organized. The Christian
soul remains the constant element of focus since always there is the corre-
spondence between himself and the aspect of joy in the event, and the whole
series is unified by the fact that these joys are all Mary's joys, seen in the light
of her final joy.

The fourteenth century "Heyl be þou, marie, milde quene of heuene" will
provide an example of a poem which I think is typical of the religious verses
we would hesitate to call poetry.[12] Although the language is in poetic form,
this prayer lacks the proportioned development of its parts. The poem is a
fourteen stanza version of the devotion to Mary's five joys. It is much longer
than the six stanzas of "Glade us maiden, moder milde" because to the
traditional joys the poet has added an introductory stanza and three conclud-
ing stanzas, as well as three stanzas on the passion followed by a stanza of
summary petition. Each stanza is followed by the angelic salutation in Latin.[13]

The poem falls into sections: the first, three stanzas including a stanza of
introduction, contains the first two joys; the second, of five stanzas, names
the third joy of the resurrection, for three stanzas dwells on its complement
the passion, and ends with a summary supplication. The third section, of
three stanzas, includes the ascension, Mary's assumption and a supplication
to Mary in heaven. These last three stanzas ask Mary in three different ways
to help the speaker out of sin and to hear his prayer so that he may go to
heaven. A study of the first three stanzas will be enough to point out
characteristics of this type of poem, since the remaining ones only bear out
the principles embodied by the first three.

> Heyl be þou, marie, milde quene of heuene!
> Blessed be þi name & god it is to neuene.
> To þe i mene mi mone, i preie þou her mi steuene,
> Ne let me neuere deie in none of þe sennes seuene.

There are three theological aspects to the petition, which reflect the
purpose of the poem, (1) a naming of the power the speaker appeals to, (2) a

securing of the energy or the means the speaker desires—the supplication—and (3) the defining of the desired effect of the prayer. As the prayer begins, Mary is named with the words of the angelic salutation, "Heyl be þou, marie," as if the speaker were using the power of the Ave Maria to reach Mary. Then she is addressed by a second title in virtue of the fact she is now in heaven, "milde quene of heuene." As if explaining why the poet has named her twice, and again using part of the Ave Maria to do so, the speaker declares, "Blessed be þi name." Then to be sure there is no ambiguity, he says the same thing in yet a more precise way, "& god it is to neuene." This triple naming suggests that the speaker believes there is power in a name, in a word itself, by its mere enunciation. Mary's name is a special name, and in itself it will bring good.

In the third line the speaker tells his purpose, To you, Mary, I utter sadly my lament. To be more explicit about his purpose he says it a second time, I pray you hear my voice. Then in the last line he makes his request, explaining the effect he desires to achieve by his prayer, Let me never die in any of the seven sins. By specifying "neuere" (and emphasizing it by two negatives), he makes his desire cover all time. It covers both the time of this life and aspires to affect the state of the next: in this life never let me commit a deadly sin; in regard to the next, do not let me leave this life when I am in the state of one of the seven sins. As if to seal his request, to the stanza he adds the angelic salutation in Latin.

> Heil, seinte marie, quene cortas & hende!
> For þe ioye þat þou haddest wan crist þe aungel sende;
> & seide þat þe holi gost scholde in þi bodi wende,
> Þou bring me out of sinne & schuld me fram þe fende.

The speaker identifies the first joy. Again he names Mary by echoing the angelic salutation. Again he addresses her as she is now, Queen of Heaven, "cortas & hende." Now he names her joy, the aspect of her power he is calling upon, For the joy you had when Christ sent the angel and said the Holy Ghost should come into your body. The bare theological facts are given. "Wan crist þe aungel sende" recalls the other poems where the annunciation and birth of Christ have been presented in their profound contrast to Christ's power as King of Heaven. Here, however, no figure of kingship is given. Christ is named directly, and just as directly the means of His coming is named, as the speaker says, "Þe holi gost scholde in þi bodi

wende." To this account which defines the means of power he wishes to secure, the speaker adds his petition: Bring me out of sin (that I am in now), and shield me from the fiend (whom I shall meet in the future). He speaks to secure his present joy and to preserve it into the future. In this stanza, as in the last, each of the three aspects—the naming, the specifying of the power he desires to use, and finally his petition—is said in two ways. Again the stanza is followed by the Ave.

> Ioyful was þin herte with-outen eni drede
> Wan ihesu crist was of þe boren fayrest of alle þede,
> & þou mayde bi-fore & after as we in bok rede;
> Lefdi for þat ioie þou helpe me at nede.

The third stanza is much like the second, except that the order of the naming is varied. The speaker begins by naming first, not Mary, but the joy he uses as the power to gain his desires. Your heart was joyful, without any fear, when Christ was born, the fairest of all men, and you remained a maid before and after. He adds the tag, "as we in bok rede," which, besides completing the line (although it actually disrupts the rhythm), suggests he is adding to his prayer not only the power of precision, but also that of the authority of the written word. "Lefdi," he names her, introducing the name he will use for the next five stanzas, "for þat ioie"—his explicit specifying of the power acts as a repetition—"helpe me at nede." The condition *when,* as it did above, covers all time, both now when I am in need, and whenever I am in need. The Ave follows.

The qualities of the poem are clear. Each stanza contains a triple naming: of Mary upon whom the fulfillment of the speaker's desire depends; of the power by virtue of which she has her power (ultimately Christ) and with which the speaker appeals to her; and finally a naming of the effect the speaker desires.[14] There are three important conditions to obtain the power, which depend ultimately on the willingness and the accessibility of the power to which the appeal is made. The effectiveness of the speaker's prayer depends first upon his knowledge of the power and of its extent. This is the function of theology here, to establish the correctness of the naming. The theology correct, the first condition is fulfilled. There remains then the power of the appeal itself as a condition of the prayer's success, and this will depend upon the second and third conditions, the accuracy of the triple naming and the intensity with which the soul appeals. In this poem, the intensity of the

petition is not based on an intensity of faith, but rather on argument by insistence.

Already in the first three stanzas we have seen these conditions working. Both clarity and intensity are sought through repetition. On the one hand, each stanza has named Mary, the means of power and the effect desired, and each one has named her not only once, but twice, so that each line seems to fall into two halves.[15] Repetition comes also from the fact that each stanza is made an individual block unit of power, sealed, so to speak, by the Ave which follows it, as if not only the events called upon had power, but the fact of naming and the words themselves have power. Then, too, there are the elements of repetition such as the monorhyming of the stanza, which uniformly breaks into four lines, each with two units; the repetition of words from one stanza to the next, such as in the name "Ladi," or the use of "for þe" to introduce the joy; and finally the repetition after each stanza of the Ave. The fact that the Ave is in Latin is an added means of power, as it calls upon the power of traditional phrasing of the salutation in Scripture and in the liturgy, and thus by implication calls on its power in sacred history as the salutation by which all joy came to mankind.

The fundamental source of the poem's poverty of expression is that the elements developed—the naming of Mary, the naming of the joy or power, and the naming of the desired effect—lack any principle of unity or limit proportionate to the subject. The poem develops by what seems to be all-inclusive enumeration, which could stretch to infinity in any direction. The naming of Mary is repetition which is designed to include all namings of her. Mary is addressed "marie" or "ladi" and given her traditional epithets, full of grace, holy, good, lady of counsel, flower of all. But the naming is done for its own power, with no such specific application to the joy mentioned as the naming had above in "Glade us maiden, moder milde."

In regard to the joys by whose power the poet hopes to secure his request, the poet does not relate one joy to the other in any way, but selects only the aspects of each event which make it easy to identify. The principle by which the poet chooses what factors to include is traditional association, which he does not modify into any relationship proportionate to the unity of his poem. The clearest evidence of this is the way the poet includes the prayer of Christ's five wounds. In the two other poems on the five joys discussed above, each poet referred to the passion as it helped to define the resurrection in the context of his purpose for that poem. Here, however, the passion is given three whole stanzas and is used as a source of power independently. The

section is included as a separate devotion which is to add to the power of the speaker's total appeal.

Finally, the third aspect, the effect the poet desires from his prayer, is stated in the same unproportioned way. The poet tries to extend the effectiveness to all occasions: he extends it to the time while he lives, and to the time when he dies, and to the rest of time, forever; he states it negatively—help me out of sin, and positively—bring me everlasting joy; and he states it figuratively—bring me to that high King, to that eternal light. But again he has not defined these appeals in a proportioned relationship to his particular prayer at this particular moment in this particular state.

Quantity, repetition, comprehensiveness are the principles by which the poet selects, and each principle works autonomously. The unity they give to the poem is exterior, independent of any unified configuration of structure, and what we have is a series of petitions unified solely because they are in the same stanza form, organized only in so far as they follow the sequence traditional to the devotion of the five joys and as they articulate the three aspects of the prayer necessary to achieve its purpose.

As a final indication of what sense of unity the poet (or scribe) of this poem had, in the three stanzas which follow the last of the joys, we see that he has given the poem three conclusions. And in the last stanza he has repeated the first. Turning the first stanza inside out, giving it a new end rhyme (but keeping the original rhyme as an inner rhyme), he has repeated the same phrases, the same thoughts, as if to be sure his request were understood by reminding Mary of how it began.[16]

To contrast a theological poem which has proportion to this theological prayer which is in the stanzaic form of poetry but which does not have proportion, let us turn back briefly to describe the structure of "Leuedy, for þare blisse/ þat þu heddest at þe frume." The purposes of the two poems are essentially the same: to enter eternal joy by Mary's five joys. In the fourteenth century poem the speaker has sought to secure his end by directly invoking the power or means without considering his prayer as an object of delight in itself. However, the poet of "Leuedy, for þare blisse" conceives what it is he desires by unifying his poem into a proportioned figure of his prayer to be wise. The fourteenth century poet has used exterior principles of form to organize his poem—similarities of sentence structure, rhyme, stanza, and refrain, organized by the numerical sequence of five—whereas these exterior elements of structure are used by the poet of "Leuedy, for þare blisse" in a proportion reflecting the nature itself of his desire.

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In "Leuedy, for þare blisse" we find the same three theologically defined aspects as in the prayer from the *Ancrene Riwle:* Mary who experiences joy; Christ Who is the joy itself; and the Christian soul who, in virtue of Christ's redemption of man, through the analogy of man's joy with Mary's desires to enter eternal joy. But they are focused in a new proportion. The purpose of the poem is by contemplating Mary's joys to ask for final joy with Mary in heaven. The poem is a movement in time to make the poet and his audience aware of joy, and because it is founded in the imperfect light and darkness of man's present vision, it unfolds into a double awareness—an increasing awareness of joy and a corresponding recognition of darkness, the gap, or lack of joy.

The double vision of the poem is reflected on several levels. The first is manifested in the telling of Mary's first three joys in the first three stanzas. Each account of joy is complemented by a petition which expresses man's separation from and desire for joy: Mary's joy fills the first part of the stanza, man's petition the second.[17] The first joy speaks of Mary's joy because of her inner knowledge of Christ (He was in her body, He was God). The second speaks of her knowledge of Christ by her senses (her joyful giving birth to Him without pain) and again, her inner knowledge of the joyful fact of His Godhood revealed by this. The third speaks of her inner joy at her sight of His rising to life. The statement of each one of these joys is complemented by a petition. The first is: Now while we are here (separated in space from the "there" that is heaven), we sin (the separation in state from God Who is the source of joy); help us not to miss that life that is to come. The second is: Be our shield from our foe (stand between us and death "now"); give us thy blessing (both "now" and "then"); and protect us forevermore (stand between us and death always, that we may live forever) from all kinds of sinning (on every occasion). And the third is: That Christ make us clean (forgive our sins) and bright (pure so that we may see). These three joys, as in the last poem we discussed, are each introduced by an address which names Mary, "Leuedy," "Moder," "Leuedi."

The second reflection of the double vision is in the symmetrical proportioning of the account of the events of sacred history, where Mary's individual joys are seen as partial in relationship to her present joy in heaven, and her present joy in heaven, in so far as man can know it, is the power by which he aspires to his own final joy. The fourth stanza which tells of the ascension, the moment when Christ, Who is the source of Mary's joy, is above in heaven while Mary remains below, relates the event in sacred history by

which the transformation to joy is worked. As in the *Ancrene Riwle* prayer the resurrection prefigures and is the promise of man's resurrection, so in this poem the ascension, Christ's entry into glory, prefigures and is made the basis of Mary's assumption into heaven. The assumption in turn prefigures and is the promise for the present audience of future joy with Christ in heaven. The moment of the fourth stanza, after Christ's ascension and before Mary's assumption, is the time in Mary's life when her state—joyful for Christ's joy, sorrowful for her separation from Him—prefigures man's own present state in which he makes his prayer. And in this stanza on the ascension, the lines of petition are replaced by a prophecy which looks forward in the poem to the definition of the third proportioned figure of the double vision in the last two stanzas; that is, the petition of the poet below to Mary above, as she is now Queen of Heaven. This last proportioned figure will express the present perpetual relationship of man to joy until his death.

By fulfilling the prediction in the last part of the fourth stanza, as it tells how Mary was assumed bodily into heaven, the fifth stanza completes Mary's joy, while it also defines her separation from man. With this joy the poet defines heaven. First he tells how Mary was assumed by Christ. "Þe king þat wes of þe ibore,/ to heouene he þe vette." (There is implicit in the referring back to the second and third joys, to Christ's birth and His resurrection, another corresponding figure: the King Who descended, temporarily separated from His glory, now has arisen.) Next the poet defines heaven by what man has been and will be in relation to Christ. Christ fetched Mary "to þare blisse þat wes for-lore,/ & bi hym-seolue sette."

The first three stanzas each contained a joy and a prayer, the fourth told of Christ's joy and of Mary's future joy (her prayer), the fifth told of Mary's full joy. Now, corresponding to the petition in the latter part of the first three stanzas, the sixth and the seventh complement the joys in the fourth and the fifth by expanding the petition of man by defining man's distance from joy.

The fact that the poem ends with a prayer to Christ following the prayer to Mary completes its structural symmetry. Mary's joy is the basis of the poet's prayer. Yet Christ Himself, being that Joy, is the source of power, for it was in virtue of His resurrection and ascension that Mary was assumed into heaven, and just as Christ "fetched" Mary into heaven, as the poet foretold He would, now the poet says, So let Him bring us to heaven all together, "for wel þu Miht."

To summarize: The poem recounts and embodies a movement into joy through the power of Christ, a movement which both articulates and pro-

vides the power of man's prayer. The central figure according to which the stanzas are built is double. It is the moment of Christ's ascension, when Mary is beholding Him with "eye swete": as it foreshadows the present moment when the audience, after learning of her joy, stands and beholds Mary's joy with vision. This double figure is composed of a joy and an unrealized promise of joy. The first three stanzas, with their first lines of the joy and their last of the petition, prefigure this proportion in the poem in a double way. They reflect the fact that at the time when the poem is composed, Mary has already been assumed and the poet and his listener are looking up at her in petition: at the same time these stanzas move back in the past to tell of Mary's own relation to God, which is the source of her joy, and to prepare for the account of the ascension, which will define man's position now in relationship to Christ and prepare for hers. The ascension figure is defined then in stanza four and fulfilled by the rest of the poem, in which after her assumption, Mary becomes the medium through which man defines the joy he desires and Christ becomes the clear basis of power. But in relation to man the fulfillment of the ascension figure by the last stanza is qualified. His joy is less fulfilled than Mary's present joy which is used to express the fulfillment. Mary's joy as a result of Christ's resurrection, ascension, and her own assumption defines for man the exact condition of his present moment. It defines the power by which he will reach joy, and at the same time as it defines his lack of joy, it brings him to the joy it has prepared. The last stanzas accomplish, too, the formal fulfillment of the poem, as the poet achieves his purpose: by virtue of Mary's five joys he raises an efficacious prayer to her expressing man's desire to enter the final joy Mary has entered.

Whereas the fourteenth century poem was seen to be unified by a numerical series and by a similarity of parts achieved through repetition—organized by the exterior shells of form—we see here that the internal proportions of the thirteenth century poem are further reflected by its stanzaic structure. The shell, or in this case body, of the form—the arrangement of words throughout the whole—has a proportion itself which again reflects the purpose of the whole. The choice of the stanzaic form, a series of octaves, is suited to the deeper form, the double complement of petition and joy. In stanzas one, two, and four the second quatrain is the exact complement of the first quatrain in the octave, as it poses a petition arising out of the definition of joy and man's distance from joy.

In the case of stanza three, the principle of complementary proportion in stanzas one, two and four argues for a revision of Brown's punctuation,

which interprets the petition to comprise the last two lines only. It is possible that the poet meant to break this stanza in the middle as well:

> Leuedi, al myd rihte
>   þu were gled and bliþe
> Þo crist þureh his myhte
>   aros from deþe to lyue.
> Þat alle þing con dihte
>   and wes i-boren of wyue,
> He make vs clene and bryhte
>   for his wundes fyue.

The petition would then begin at line twenty-one, and the poet would be repeating the fact from stanza two that Mary's Child was the creator of all things in order to name Christ. With the revised punctuation, the stanza would paraphrase: Lady, with good reason were you glad and joyful when Christ through His own power rose from death to life. [Let Him] Who created all things and was born of womankind by virtue of His five wounds make us clean and bright. Yet in any event, stanza three differs significantly from stanzas one and two in the fact that these lines are a petition not to Mary but to Christ. Coming at this point in the sequence of joys, the petition to Christ reflects the manifestation of His power in the resurrection, and it prefigures and prepares for the final prayer of the poem in stanza seven, where the poet addresses Christ directly.

In stanzas four and five the complementary four lines of the octave are not petitions by man. They focus instead on Mary: in stanza four they present the poet's prophecy of her future joy; in stanza five they describe Mary's joy fulfilled as she enters heaven. The sixth stanza also shows this same complementary structure. It has a first quatrain of negative statement, I pray to you as I know how, do not let the world blind us; the second of a positive statement, help us at our lives' end and send us to heaven. And, finally, in the last stanza we see the effect of the transformation of the whole poem, as in the first four lines where Mary's joy has been presented, the poet appeals to Christ through Mary's beauty in heaven; and in the last four lines, which have reflected man's distance from joy in past stanzas, the poet expresses the desire that Christ cleanse us from sin and, the complement to cleansing, that He bring us to light, bring us to heaven.

To figure delight, a work must have first of all a principle of unity so that

its parts have a proportionate relationship among themselves, beyond any coherence they may have by principles exterior to the unity of the poem, such as the numerical order of five joys, the acrostic order of *M-A-R-I-A,* or a set stanzaic form. In the poems we have considered, especially "Gabriel, fram evene-king," "Als i lay vp-on a nith" and "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," in the prayer from the *Ancrene Riwle,* and in this last poem, the delight the listener takes in the poem comes from the fact that the poem embodies itself in a reflexive way. Its subject and purpose, its structure and use of stanzaic form all bear a proportionate relationship to each other, unified yet disparate in their reflection. Through this proportioning the listener feels some sense of the poem as an entity in itself. Thus he is affected by it as a unified experience which is part of his general experience, but which, not being identical with it, captures his attention and in so far as it speaks to his desire, its beauty of proportion causes delight. It will be the purpose of the following section to show that, as with the other elements of the poetry we have discussed, in the medieval religious lyric this delight has its specific theological dimension.

conclusion

FOR THE MEDIEVAL CHRISTIAN REALITY WAS FORMULATED BY THE THEOLOGY of the Church, whose center was the liturgy. It was the liturgy which constantly brought sacred history to bear according to the "exigency of human capacity" on the life of the Christian soul.[1] Generalizing from the lyrics we have studied, it is clear that medieval Christian theology informed the reality of the Middle English poet to such a profound extent that it determined his concept of a poem, the purpose of each of his poems, and the structure he used in formulating his poem.

There are several consequences of this for the reader of the Middle English lyrics. In the first place, the religious lyric cannot be fully understood or evaluated as a work of a purely "poetic imagination" which acts independently from the subject matter it considers, because, as we have seen, there is no discontinuity in the lyrics between subject matter and the form and structure of the poems. The purpose, the subject matter, the form and structure of the medieval religious lyric can be discovered only through a knowledge of medieval Christian theology which had a unique subject matter and a unique mode of knowing.

In the second place, theology is not a mode of knowledge which is necessarily opposed to poetry. The "dogma" used by the poets is not a static body of knowledge as it is conceived to have been by such modern critics as Spitzer and Kane. Dogma was formulated and perpetuated by the Church, not principally in the scholastic writings, but in the dynamic forms of the liturgy—the Mass, the sacraments, the Divine Office—which were the points of union between the soul and God during this life. Rather than giving a

static quality to the lyrics, theology provided the poet with innumerable forms and variations of form through which the poet and his audience sought to be united to God.[2]

We have seen, for example, that although one poem may be on the same subject of sacred history as another, the focus of each poem and the unifying principle of formal proportion of structure may vary widely from poem to poem. The contrast between the accounts of the annunciation in the Gospel, in the two poems on the "maiden makeles," and in "Gabriel, fram evene-king" illustrates this point, as do the four very different poems discussed in Part II which focus on the same moment of the crucifixion, the moment just before Christ's death, "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode," the two poems on Mary's sorrow, and "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode."

Not only is medieval theology not opposed to poetry, but it has provided the poets with new ways of formulating reality. Looking at the objective aspect of the Middle English lyric—that is, how the poet presented the actions of God in history—we see how the poet reformulated sacred history in his poem in a way analogous to its reformulation within the liturgy. Looking at the subjective aspect of the lyrics—that is, the response of the Christian soul to God—we see how the poet sought, united with his audience, through his poem to be reformed and joined to God. In the following two sections I will describe some of the forms theology provided for the Middle English lyric, first in their objective aspect of sacred history and then in their subjective aspect of the individual's experience of God. In a final section I will suggest the direction future study might take in developing an aesthetic theory appropriate to the medieval religious lyric.

The Poem: The Sacred History

IN EACH OF THE LYRICS THERE HAS BEEN A SIMILAR POINT OF VIEW IN TIME. The past, present, and future are oriented to the present moment. The present moment is defined by the liturgy of the Church as the perspective from which the events of sacred history are reformulated again and again. The liturgy's orientation in the present is a reflection of the fundamental fact of Christian theology that the plan of redemption is centered on man, and that it is focused on each man as he lives in the present in relation to Christ as He manifests Himself in the present. None of the events of sacred history is told independently of its relationship to the present. In the poems which formulate a past event, the past is used in the present as a power by which to secure the promise of the future:

> Reuful is þe meneginge
> of þis deth and tis departinge,
> þar-in is blis meind with wepinge,
> for þar-þurw us kam alle bot.

There is no attempt to recreate the past for its own sake, because in sacred history no event has occurred only for its own sake. Each event is part of the total plan which has its beginning in creation by God, its end in union with God, and its center in Christ Who, coming into history, is the means of man's union with God:

"Suete sone," þan seyde sche,
"No sorwe sulde me dere,
 Miht i ȝet þat day se
 A king þat þu were."

"Do wey, moder," seide þat suete,
"Þerfor kam i nouth,
 But for to ben pore & bales bete,
 Þat man was inne brouth.

 Þerfore wan to & þretti ȝer ben don
 & a litel more,
 Moder, þu salt maken michil mon
 & seen me deyȝe sore."

In the poems each event in sacred history is used both as a figure and a power. In the same way as the exegetes saw an event of the Old Testament to be fulfilled by an event of the New, the event the poem formulates is both fulfilled by a future event and prefigures the events yet to come. This relationship between events in sacred history is shown explicitly by the poems which end with a petition. The poet uses a figure formulated from his point of view in the present by which to organize the past and to secure for both himself and his audience the hope for the future. In "Gabriel, fram evene-king," it was the figure of Mary's virginal conception and painless childbearing as it delivers mankind in the present from pain to joy; in "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode," the figure of the love that transforms suffering; in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," the intelligible cross; in "Glade us maiden, moder milde," the five aspects of Mary's joy as Queen of Heaven; and, finally, in "Leuedy, for þare blisse," the figure of vision transforming blindness, as mankind on earth appeals to Mary in heaven.

The nature of these figures is one of the most important illustrations of how the forms in the Middle English religious lyric reflect a specifically Christian theology.[3] Each of these figures which provide the basic proportion in the lyrics is taken from the subject matter of sacred history, the redemption of man by Christ, as theology formulated it. The figures are unique to Christian theology. "Gabriel, fram evene-king" uses the paradox of Mary's virgin motherhood. "Þe milde Lomb" is based upon the doctrine that God's

infinite love for man is expressed through the sacrifice of His Son and the affliction of His human mother. "Stond wel, moder" uses the power of the cross as it penetrates and reforms history. "Leuedy, for þare blisse" uses the moment between Christ's ascension and Mary's assumption to define the present position of man on earth in relation to his future joy in heaven.

In the poems which have no explicit prayer of petition at the end, such as "Als i lay vp-on a nith," "Wy haue ȝe no reuthe on my child?" and "Suete sone, reu on me & brest out of þi bondis," the application of the past event in the poem to the listener is implied by the listener's own context in sacred history. It is because the listener is himself living sacred history that he relates himself to the scene as the poet shapes it for his meditation. We saw that the listener's understanding of his context is used by the poet as he structures his poem. In "Als i lay vp-on a nith," for example, the poet used the discrepancy between the listener's present knowledge of the final outcome of sacred history and Mary's ignorance of it at the time of Christ's birth to create a dimension of irony in his poem, and in the last stanza it was by referring to the listener's present celebration of Christmas that the poet transformed the Child's tale into a testimony of truth. In "Lamentacio dolorosa" it was only by recognizing the use the poet made of the listener's part in sacred history that the full meaning of the poem became clear. Contrary to Kane's reading of Mary's appeal as a simple alternative offered to her Son to burst His bonds or to let her die, we came to see that the poem was a carefully developed ballad-like progression of Mary's inner awareness that her Son, Who was God, was dying.

It is the intensity of the meditation in the poems without a petition that determines its value as prayer. The intensity of joy or sorrow with which the listener contemplates the event directly affects the power of the meditation to secure the listener's final joy. The poet of "Þe milde Lomb" said this explicitly in his prayer to Christ:

> He þat starf in hure kende,
> Leue us so ben þar-of mende
> þat he giue us atten ende
> þat he hauet us to ibout.

We have found in the lyrics we have studied that medieval theology's perception of the symmetry and proportion of sacred history is what fundamentally determines how the poets conceive the theological figures by which

they establish the basic proportions of their poems. The redemption of man, the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, is a reformation of the events of the first creation—the creation, temptation and fall of man, and his expulsion from paradise. Christ is the second Adam; the cross the second tree; Mary is the second Eve.

This symmetry of sacred history is repeated in turn in the life of each man, who is related to the events of the first creation and to those of the second, since he is bound by nature to Adam and bound by nature and grace to Christ. Thus his life becomes an imitation of Christ and an overcoming of the sins of Adam. As Christ died and rose, so man crucifies the Adam in himself that he may rise, or from another view, in his baptism dies to sin and enters the life of grace. Through the liturgy of the Church and the sacraments, the correspondences within sacred history and within the life of a man are joined.

A knowledge of the concept of symmetry is fundamental to understanding the thirteenth and fourteenth century Christian's way of ordering and associating events of sacred history. We have seen, for example, how it lies behind the development of the devotion to the joys of Mary and how it is present in the devotions of the *Ancrene Riwle*, where the five wounds of Christ are applied to the five senses of man and where Mary's five corporal joys are organized by the five letters of her name.[4] We have seen that it is the principle by which such poems as the Hours of the Cross and the corresponding Hours of Mary's Compassion developed from the Hours of the Office.[5] The concept of the symmetry of sacred history is strikingly present in the methods of illumination of the Psalters and the *Horae*, as the Psalter of Robert de Lisle illustrates (Figure 5). One of the most interesting examples is found in a thirteenth century York Psalter edited by Eric G. Millar, where, in the illuminations showing the relationship between the life of Christ and that of David, not only are moments of their life made to correspond, but the figures themselves are selected and placed in a mirror-like relationship to each other.[6]

The most fully developed example of the symmetry of sacred history in the poems we have analyzed is that provided by Mary's manner of giving birth. Mary, the second Eve, is the mother of Christ Who was born without pain. Mary's painless giving birth to Christ corresponds by contrast to the law of "kende," the pain womankind suffers in giving birth to her children as a penalty for the original sin of Eve. This painful giving birth of man corresponds in turn to the painful death of Christ which atoned for all sin

and by which man was loosed from pain. Mary's painless giving birth to Christ corresponds to and prefigures the spiritual rebirth of man. Mary's suffering at Christ's painful death makes her the mother of man for whom she suffers birth pangs. Finally, the painless birth of Christ was compared to Christ's rising from the tomb. Christ's rising is the sign and promise of man's final release from pain, for at the end of the world man, too, will be resurrected, and there will be a final dying and rising when he is judged.[7] We have seen how, as well as being a principle of proportion between the events of sacred history, this method of applying one event to another is a principle of the structural organization of the lyrics.

For example, in "Gabriel, fram evene-king" when one stanza was juxta-posed to another, we found that the organization within each stanza corre-sponded: first the event was introduced, then its significance, and then its relationship to sacred history was made. We found that the order of each stanza also corresponded to the order of the development of the poem as a whole, as the first three stanzas told of the event of the annunciation, the fourth told of its fulfillment and made the transition to the fifth stanza, which set the whole poem in its context of the present moment. In "Als i lay vp-on a nith" we saw, when the poem was divided into three groupings of ten stanzas according to Mary's experience of sorrow or joy, that there was a double principle of correspondence, one determined by the alternation of joyful with sorrowful events and one determined by the prophecy of the events and their fulfillment. The symmetrical correspondence between events in sacred history was seen also in "Leuedy, for þare blisse," where Mary's joys were ordered to correspond to the present position of man in relationship to Mary: as man stands on earth below, looking up to Mary who is in heaven, and prays for heavenly joy. The correspondence between the relationship to Christ of Mary and John, the unfaithful disciples, and the listener in "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode" and that between the three moments of sus-pended time in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" provided other examples.

A second aspect of the symmetrical relationships which medieval theology perceived between events of sacred history is that of the ladder of value, where things or events have more value the closer they are to Christ. The ladder of value arises from the principle in sacred history of the fulfillment of all things by Christ. We saw how the event of Christ's coming is prepared for in creation and how Christ's life, because it is the new creation, as well as having direct points of correspondence to the first creation and fall, fulfills the promises of His coming, so that the Old Testament events become

figures for and testimonies to the events of His life in the New. Thus the early events of sacred history are fulfilled by the last events, and all relationships are defined by man's present closeness to or distance from Christ. This hierarchy of value was shown above as it exists in the fixed order of parts in the Mass and Office.[8] In the poems, the principle corresponds both to an increase of awareness of Christ and to the passage of time into Christ, the two central facts of the life of the Christian soul.

For example, in "Als i lay vp-on a nith" and the poems on the joys, we saw how the experience of the joy of Mary at her motherhood of Christ was only completed through time, by her assumption into heaven where she is now most closely united to Christ. In "Als i lay" the principle of the fulfillment of events by later events in sacred history as they draw closer to Christ was used by the poet as a dramatic device in the poem: Mary was constantly deceived, mistaking the incomplete joys in Christ's life for His full joy, which only events would define for her. And it could be seen also in the temporal series of prophecies and fulfillments upon which the poet constructed the poem. "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," with its series of dyings and risings centering in the death and resurrection of Christ, was another example of this, as the final implication of the figure, the second coming of Christ and the last judgment, was yet to be fulfilled.

This same concept of fulfillment of all things in Christ works analogously as a structural principle in the lyrics. The completion of the poet's purpose in the poem stands in the same relationship to the events or parts of his poem as Christ does to the events of sacred history. The significance of the beginning of a poem is only fulfilled at the end and in virtue of the end, just as in sacred history we have seen that the significance of events becomes clearer and clearer through the life of Christ as through His resurrection, the joyful implications of His birth are made clear. Just as in sacred history the end is yet to be fulfilled by Christ's second coming and the last judgment, so the poet uses his poem as a means to obtain the union with Christ which for himself and his audience is still incomplete.

This concept of fulfillment used as a structural principle of the lyrics is especially clear when we consider how the poet develops the meaning of his names for Mary. As we saw in the unpoetic fourteenth century poem on the five joys, theology gives Mary many names: Maiden and Mother, Queen of Heaven, Lady, Mother of Mercy. Each one of these descriptive titles is given to Mary by virtue of her relationship to Christ. Her relationship to Christ is established by the events of her life with Him in time: Maiden and Mother,

her motherhood of Christ; Queen of Heaven and Lady, her assumption by Christ into heaven; and Mother of Mercy, her compassion which has made her the mother of mankind. The poet uses these names, which, when applied to Mary now in her position closest to Christ and highest of creatures, define the source of power by which she intercedes for mankind.

The evolution of the significance of Mary's names within a single poem can be seen best in the poems which praise her or petition her. In these poems, at the same time as the events of sacred history are related, they become the way by which the meaning of her name is gradually revealed. We saw how the full meaning of Maiden and Mother was defined in "Gabriel, fram evene-king." First, through the words exchanged by Mary and the angel at the annunciation, the poet presented the virginal conception and childbearing. Having made the concept clear, in stanza four by telling of the actual birth, death and resurrection of Christ, he showed its consequences for the redemption of man. Only with the meaning of Mary's maiden motherhood fully defined by these events, did the poet then raise to Mary his petition using that name with its full power, "maiden, moder makeles."

We saw this principle of defining a name of Mary by events was the purpose also of the poets of both "Nu þis fules singet" and "I syng of a myden þat is makeles," who by telling of the event of her virgin motherhood defined Mary as the "maiden makeles." "Glade us maiden, moder milde" is an example of a poem which defines Mary in terms of her queenship in heaven, as each event was related in order to describe an aspect of her joy, until finally in the last stanza, with the sum total of the aspects of her joy complete, the poet called her by her personal name "Mary." It is as if the whole poem were for the purpose of defining what her name means.

But very seldom do these thirteenth and fourteenth century poems use her personal name. By identifying Mary through the events that mark her relationship to Christ, Who is the center of sacred history and the means and object of man's redemption, Mary's descriptive titles name her deeper or more literal identity and are an explicit recognition that Christ is the source of her value, glory, and power.

The Poet and His Audience: The Church

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING EFFECTS OF THEOLOGY ON THE MIDDLE English lyric is on the poet's concept of his relationship with his audience. This effect is shown by the poet's constant use of the word and concept "us" in the poems studied above. This "us" unites the poet to his listener in a common endeavor:

> Maiden, moder makeles,
>   of milche ful ibunden,
> bid for hus im þat þe ches
>   at wam þu grace funde,
>   þat he forgiue hus senne and wrake,
>   and clene of euri gelt us make,
>   and eune blis,
>   wan hure time is
>   to steruen,
>   hus giue, for þine sake
>   him so her for to seruen
>   þat he us to him take.
>
> Milsful moder, maiden clene,
> mak þi milce up-on hus sene,
> and brinc hus þurw þi suete bene
>   to þe blis þat faillet nout.

> Glade us marie, to Ioye ibrout,—
> Muche wrchipe crist hau þe i-worut—
>   in heuene brit in þi paleis;
> Þer þat frut of þire wombe
> Be i-yefin us forto fonden
>   in Ioye þat is endeles.

The use of "us" is the result of the fact that the poet defines himself and his audience as medieval theology defines the relationship of man to man within the Church. The "us" as we have seen the context of the poems define it is established by the poet and his listener's own relationship to the events of sacred history, in a way analogous to the origin of Mary's names. The "us" signifies those who have been created by God and redeemed by Christ, set in relationship to Him in present time through the grace and sacraments of the Church. Just as Mary is identified by the coming of Christ in sacred history, as Mother and Maid, Queen of Heaven and Mother of Mercy, so through his context in sacred history each man shares a common identity: as Adam fell, we fell; as Christ took man's nature, so He joined Himself to us; as He died, so we must die to the world; and as He was resurrected, so we must be reborn in Him. The center of man's definition is the present, in his state of sorrow mingled with joy, and in virtue of the past, through Christ he will enter eternal joy. It is this identity of man in relationship to Christ as it is defined by theology that binds the poet to the audience he addresses, so that the poet is himself included in the "us" which is expressed in the petition of the poems and by which both the poet and his audience are bound to the very heart of the poem's subject.

It is this "us" for whose love "Godes sone . . . wile man bicomen" and who will "þur þi swete chiltinge . . . hut of pine" be brought (Gabriel, fram evene-king). It is this "us" for whom Christ says to Mary "hi þole þis ded" (Stond wel, moder, vnder rode), "þole o rode, and deien/ to helen man þat was forlorn" (Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode). And it is this "us" for whom Mary is given her special honor as Queen of Heaven:

> Why was I crouned and made a quene?
> Why was I called of mercy the welle?
> Why shuld an erþly woman bene
> So hygh in heuen a-boue aungelle?
> For þe, mankynde, þe truþe I telle.[9]

In the Middle English religious lyrics we have studied, the first person plural pronoun has rarely been used in the nominative case. As in the poems man is related to the events of sacred history, he becomes the object of the acts of Christ, through Whom, by Whom, and in Whom man is. The basic relationship of man to God defined by these lyrics is that of God, the source of power, to man, the object of the power. Sacred history expresses what God has done for man, and the man who defines himself in relation to God will open himself to be reformed by God. This relationship to events of sacred history is what defines the subjective element in the lyrics. Man is fundamentally oriented by Christian theology to what is beyond himself.

Through sacred history man understands his desires. Through the perspective of sacred history sorrow and joy take on eternal dimensions and are defined in relationship to the soul's union or separation from God. As we saw in Part II, the deepest sorrow for the Christian soul is experienced because of separation from God by sin and because of his compassion for the suffering caused to God Himself by man's sin. As we saw in Part III with the poems on Mary's joys, the fullest joy is experienced as a result of union with God. This is because God Himself is the source of all joy. The relative power of sorrow and joy in a man's life is defined only by the sequence of events of sacred history, which through Christ, if man is willing, ultimately transforms all sorrow to joy.

This essentially optimistic view of the meaning of life is a result of the two events which opposed sorrow and joy and in which joy triumphed, the death and the resurrection of Christ. Christ's death contains the ultimate sorrow. He transforms this sorrow which is the result of all man's sorrow, by His resurrection, to ultimate joy. In each poem the state of joy and sorrow is formulated in relation to man's experience in the present and in the light of Christ's redemptive act. Man sees his life in the present, defined by Christ's death and resurrection, as yet unfulfilled, and he struggles to apply the merits of Christ's suffering to transform his own present sorrow into everlasting joy. Thus in the present he lives both sorrowing and rejoicing. Full and eternal joy will be defined only by the fulfilling of history by the last judgment of man and the fixing of his eternal separation or union with God.

The definition of Mary's joy and sorrow in the poems we have studied provides the clearest example of this. We have seen sacred history's transforming of sorrow to joy to be the organizing principle of "Als i lay vp-on a nith," "Þe milde Lomb," and "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode," and of the poems on the joys of Mary. Ultimately each of these poems revealed its

orientation in the present mixed state of man as we saw man's desire formulated in the petitions of the poems. The petitions were formulated in virtue of the events which contain the promise of joy and which are defined by Christ Who is the transforming power. In the poems we have studied, Mary has been the means of defining the fullest human dimensions of sorrow and joy, the means of expressing the sorrow and joy of both her Son and herself, and of man. In virtue of her final joy which is the fruit of the redemption, she is both the sign of man's joy and his advocate for joy.

This definition of the soul's desires by theology affects the Middle English poet's purpose in composing his poem: the Middle English poet does not desire only to speak to his listener, but to refashion him. The poem must not only be suited to reach the audience to whom he speaks, but through his poem the poet tries as well to form his audience to the One to Whom they speak together. We saw, for example, in "Þe milde Lomb" and "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" how the poet sought to move his listener to live so intensely what Christ and Mary suffered that the intensity of the response would have the power to bring his audience to joy. This purpose was seen most clearly in the lyrics which personify Christ and Mary, such as the two above and the shorter two lyrics of Mary's sorrow, her appeal to the Jews and her appeal to her Son. Here, through having the listener identify with the feelings of Christ and Mary (defined in *both* their theological and human dimensions), the poet sought to move the listener by compassion to change his life.

In the poems we have studied on the events of sacred history the point of view has been "I" only in the two lyrics and in the dialogues which personify Mary and Christ. However, in the many lyrics which are composed from the point of view of the first person singular and which we have not considered, the purpose of the poet is the same: the speaker seeks always to redefine himself in relationship to Christ Who is within yet beyond him. This can be seen, for example, in the lyrics of penitence, or the religious love lyrics, or the lyrics of the school of Richard Rolle which seek explicitly to reform the mind and affections by the passion of Christ.[10]

Yet in four of the poems we have studied, the "I" pronoun has appeared where it was not used in the personification of Mary or Christ and where it referred to a person distinct from the "us" we have seen to be the object of the actions of Christ. In these instances it was used to identify the poet or speaker in his relationship as poet to the audience or to Mary. Just as the "us" in the poems receives its definition in relation to the events of the redemp-

tion, so this "I" receives its definition specifically in relation to the purpose of the poem in which it appears.[11]

This use of "I" occurs in a line from each of the "maiden makeles" poems: "Of on ic wille singen þat is makeles" and "I syng of a myden þat is makeles." In each case the "I" refers to the singer of the poem. The purpose of the poem is to praise the singularity of the virgin mother, and the poet identifies himself with all poets so that he can set his praise of Mary up against all the poets' praises of other women and prove her matchlessness.

> Als i lay vp-on a nith
> Alone in my longging,
> Me þouthe i sau a wonder sith,
> A maiden child rokking.
>
> .   .   .   .
>
> Serteynly, þis sithte i say,
> Þis song i herde singge,
> Als i lay þis ȝolis-day
> Alone in my longingge.

In these frame quatrains of "Als i lay vp-on a nith," the "I" refers to the seer of the vision, and the poet uses the "I" to add a testimony of truth. In the first quatrain "I" acts as a witness who, "alone" and in "longging," can be identified with anyone who might hear the poem. In the last quatrain the speaker is used to set the song in present time, "þis ȝolis-day," the fact of Christmas giving proof that the event seen in the vision has occurred.

Finally, in "Leuedy, for þare blisse" the two stanza invocation to Mary and to Christ at the end of the poem contains the clause, "Ich þe bidde as i con." Here the "I" refers again to the poet, who offers a prayer to Mary for his audience. By means of his poem he has established the limits of man's vision of joy in order to pray for the light of heaven. In the same way, by means of the identity he gives himself in the petition he establishes the limits of his knowledge of prayer in order to secure Mary's sympathy and aid. His limitation represents that of all mankind for whom he prays.

Poetry and the Eternal Art
A Note on the Work of St. Bonaventure

JUST AS THE POEM TAKES ON THE FORMS THROUGH WHICH THEOLOGY CON-siders sacred history and just as the poet, united to his audience through the Church, seeks to refashion both himself and his audience through the sacred history he relates, so the object of poetry itself is transformed by theology. Poetry, when it comes into relationship with medieval theology, is not an autonomous art, but is assumed as part of the endeavor of the Christian soul into being a means by which he may reach eternal delight. An aesthetic theory appropriate to the nature of the medieval religious lyric, including the religious lyrics composed in the ancient classical tradition, can be formed only when beauty is defined in its relationship to the Eternal Art.[12] If this is not attempted, then the aesthetic proportions will always remain hidden, as they have been, in what seems to the modern reader to be the non-poetic activities of the commentator and theologian. The possibilities can only be adumbrated here by using the work of one medieval theologian to suggest the direction such a study might take.

The theology of St. Bonaventure provides an excellent example of how an aesthetic theory appropriate to the medieval religious lyric might be defined, for his theology is a definition of the Eternal Art.[13] According to Bonaventure the end of the Eternal Art in its relationship to man is delight, or union with God in the beatific vision. In discoursing about the Eternal Art, Bonaventure works in a way that corresponds to the aesthetician who discourses about the art of poetry. At the same time, in discoursing about the

Eternal Art, Bonaventure works in a way analogous to the poet, because, like the poet's poem, his theological work provides a figure which is proportionate to the delight he defines and which is the means by which he moves the mind and affections of his reader to God.

Bonaventure's *Breviloquium* is a summa of sacred history in the objective mode of theology. In it the theologian defines the breadth, length, height and depth of Holy Scripture, that through this knowledge his reader may "arrive at the fullness of knowledge and plenitude of love for the Most Blessed Trinity whence the desires of all holy men tend and in whom is found the end and complement of all truth and goodness." As he defines the dimensions of Holy Scripture, Bonaventure orders his discourse according to the beauty of the plan of sacred history, to consider first the Holy Trinity, then the creation, fall, redemption, sanctification and last judgment of man; thus the structure of the work is proportionate to the subject matter of the work, in the same way as we have seen the structure of the religious lyric to be proportionate to its subject.[14]

An example of the subjective mode of theology can be seen in Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum,* where he formulates by a hierarchy of value the seven stages of the soul's contemplation of God.[15] The first three ways of perceiving God are in the mirror of creation: (1) considering creatures *outside* of man as the vestiges of God; (2) considering God *within* creatures in the way the world enters man's soul; and (3) seeing the image of God in man's natural powers, his memory, intellect and elective faculty. After these first three steps of the journey of the mind to God, Bonaventure introduces sacred history, and in the fourth he describes how man's ability to see God through His image imprinted on our natural powers was dimmed by original sin. Man's soul could not be perfectly lifted up had not Christ become a ladder restoring the first ladder that had been broken by Adam. In the last three steps Bonaventure describes the restoration of the soul's spiritual senses through the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, by which the soul may mount up to contemplate the unity and trinity of God. The proportion basic to Bonaventure's discourse is that of man as he beholds and is lifted up to God, a proportion similar to that which we found in "Leuedy, for þare blisse/ þat þu heddest at þe frume." Bonaventure's work, organized into six corresponding ascending parts and a seventh that speaks of how the mind must pass over not only the visible world, but even beyond itself into God, is the proportioned figure of the ascent of the mind to God.[16] The proportion basic to the *Itinerarium* is analogous to the proportionate relationship of the poem to its audience. And like the poet, the theologian

Bonaventure is both the forming agent of his work and united to the audience whom he seeks to refashion through it.

In the *Breviloquium* the categories Bonaventure uses to discourse about theology are those which consider the Eternal Art as a source of delight, and he summarizes theology (the work of the Eternal Art) in terms of three proportionate correspondences which he explains in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* are necessary for a work to cause its beholder delight. These principles given in the *Itinerarium,* which I will describe briefly, are strikingly analogous to the general principles of form in the religious lyric as I have shown them above, and it is in the *Itinerarium*'s definition of Beauty as it leads to Eternal Delight that we can find the outlines of a theory which might provide the basis for an aesthetic theory of the medieval religious lyric.[17]

The definition is put forth in Chapter II of the *Itinerarium,* which concerns the second stage of the journey of the mind to God, "The Consideration of God in His Footsteps in this Visible World." Bonaventure uses man's apprehension of created beauty as the foundation for his theory of beauty in the Eternal Art. (1) The first proportion causing delight is that of formal beauty, a proportionate correspondence between the original and the similitude which emanates from it. In the Eternal Art, Christ is the image of the Father, Who generates Him. (Christ is beauty—*speciositas.*) What we have called the figure of the poem, the proportion of a poem to its theological subject—the coming of the Son of God into history and His redemption of man—can be seen to be defined by this first proportion. (2) The second proportion is that of the fitness of the similitude generated to the one who beholds it. In the Eternal Art, Christ becomes man in order to refashion man to share the life of God. (Christ is sweetness—*suavitas.*) We saw this sweetness of Christ embodied in the "stylle" falling of the dew on the flower in "I syng of a myden þat is makeles." It was embodied also by the Child's tale widening Mary's comprehension of sorrow and joy in "Als i lay vp-on a nith" and by the other poems in Friar Grimestone's preaching book which meditate on Christ's love for man through His suffering the mortality and frailty of His humanity. The religious lyric itself, as it is shaped for and reshapes its audience, demonstrates this proportion. (3) The third proportionate correspondence is a proportion of power, the capacity of the similitude generated to satisfy the needs of its beholder. Christ satisfies man's deepest need, for in Him man experiences Eternal Delight. (Christ is nourishment—*salubritas.*) The representation of Christ as the fruit of Mary's womb expresses this proportion. The proportion was reflected in the petitions

of the poems and their power as prayer to achieve for the poet and his audience "eune blis," "Ioye þat is endeles," the final union with Christ in heaven. And it was reflected in the apprehension of the poem itself in so far as the poem was a figure of delight.

Finally, the work of St. Bonaventure can provide us not only with a theoretical framework, but with a specific illustration of how poetry relates to the Eternal Art. In his meditation *Lignum vitae* he composes a poem through which to meditate on the Tree of Life.[18] The work begins with a Prologue in which the author explains the purpose of the meditation and which also includes an explanation of a visual diagram of the Tree of Life that accompanies the meditation. The Prologue is then followed by the poem, which Bonaventure uses as his table of contents. Using the "wood of the Holy Gospels," the poem describes the mysteries of the origin, passion and glorification of Christ through the figure of the Tree of Life with its twelve fruits, which are aspects of the virtue of Christ. It moves from the past to the present and figures the future, concluding with a prayer for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The meditation itself then follows. This consists of a line by line interpretation of the poem.[19] The principle of *Lignum vitae* suggests our modern method of textual explication, only the poem is conceived to have a far different function;[20] and Bonaventure's conception of poetry will serve to recall again the general points about the relationship of theology to poetry drawn from the preceding study of the Middle English religious lyric.

In his Prologue, describing the purpose of his meditation and his reason for using poetry, Bonaventure says that he works so that man will not be forgetful of the Lord's passion, nor ungrateful. He intends through his meditation to awaken the affections and the senses to God: to vivify the memory, to sharpen and form the intellect, and so to fill the will with love that the soul can truly say the words of the bride in the Canticle: "Fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus mihi, inter ubera mea commorabitur." For the modern exegete the goal of his work is to discover the meaning of the poem. For the theologian of the Eternal Art the goal is beyond the work. The poem and the meditation are a means to bring the soul to God. For St. Bonaventure the endeavor of poetry and theology is single. His poem is incorporated into and becomes the form and the source of the theology with which he explicates and meditates on the Tree of Life. And his poem is used as the proportionate figure of the subject, analogous in sacred history to the created universe reformed by Christ, through which the affections and the mind are raised to God.

Appendixes

I

Ave mundi spes Maria aue mitis aue pia aue plena gracia.
Aue uirgo singularis que per rubrum designaris non passum incendia.

Aue rosa speciosa aue iesse uirgula.
Cuius fructus nostri luctus relaxabat uincula.   4

Aue carens simili mundo diu flebili reparasti gaudium.
Aue cuius uiscera contra mortis federa ediderunt filium.

Aue uirginum lucerna per quam fulsit lux superna hiis quos umbra tenuit.
Aue uirgo de qua nasci et de cuius lacte pasci rex celorum uoluit.   8

Aue gemma celi luminarium.
Aue sancti spiritus sacrarium.

O quam mirabilis et quam laudabilis hec est uirginitas.
In qua per spiritum facta paraclitum fulsit fecunditas.   12

O, quam sancta quam serena quam benigna quam amena esse uirgo creditur
Per quam seruitus finitur porta celi aperitur et libertas redditur.

O castitatis lilium tuum precare filium qui salus est humilium.
Ne nos pro nostro uicio in flebili iudicio subiciat supplicio.   16

Set nos tua sancta prece mundet a peccatis fece.
Collocet in lucis domo amen dicat omnis homo.

II

Stabat iuxta Christi crucem
stabat uidens mundi ducem
   uite ualefacere.   3
Stabat uirgo necnon mater
et quid sit euentus ater
   nouo nouit funere.   6

Stabat uirgo spectans crucem.
et utramque pati lucem
   set plus suam doluit.   9
Illa stabat hic pendebat
et que foris hic ferebat
   intus hec sustinuit.   12

Intus cruci conclauatur
intus suo iugulatur
   mater agni gladio.   15
Intus martyr consecratur.
intus tota concrematur
   amoris incendio.   18

Modo manus modo latus
modo ferro perforatus
  oculis resumitur. 21
Modo capud spinis sutum
cuius orbis totus nutum
  et sentit et sequitur. 24

Os uerendum litum sputis
et flagellis rupta cutis
  et tot riui sanguinis 27
Probra risus et que restant
orbitati tela prestant
  et dolori uirginis. 30

Tempus nacta trux natura
nunc reposcit sua iura
  nunc dolores acuit. 33
Nunc extorquet cum usura
gemitus quos paritura
  natura detinuit. 36

Hec nunc parit nunc scit uere
quam maternum sit dolere
  quam amarum parere. 39
Nunc se dolor orbitati
dilatus in partu nati
  presentat in funere. 42

Nunc scit mater uim meroris
seruat tamen hec pudoris
  uirginalis graciam. 45
Nam pudicos gestus foris
non deflorat uis doloris
  intus urens anxiam. 48

Triduanus ergo fletus
leta demum est deletus
  surgentis uictoria. 51

Leta lucet spes dolenti
nato namque resurgenti
   conresurgunt gaudia.   54

Christi nouus hic natalis
formam partus uirginalis
   clauso seruat tumulo.   57
Hinc processit hinc surrexit
hinc et inde christus exit
   intacto signaculo.   60

Eya mater eya leta
fletus tui nox expleta
   lucessit in gaudium.   63
Nostre quoque letum mane
nocti plusquam triduane
   tuum redde filium. amen.   66

III

Heyl be þou, marie, milde quene of heuene!
Blessed be þi name & god it is to neuene.
To þe i mene mi mone, i preie þou her mi steuene,
Ne let me neuere deie in none of þe sennes seuene.   4
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Heil, seinte marie, quene cortas & hende!
For þe ioye þat þou haddest wan crist þe aungel sende;
& seide þat þe holi gost scholde in þi bodi wende,
Þou bring me out of sinne & schuld me fram þe fende.   8
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Ioyful was þin herte with-outen eni drede
Wan ihesu crist was of þe boren fayrest of alle þede,
& þou mayde bi-fore & after as we in bok rede;
Lefdi for þat ioie þou helpe me at nede.   12
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Ladi, ful of grace, gladful was þi chere
Wan ihesu crist fram deþ aros þat was þe lef & dere;
Ladi, for þe loue of him þat lay þin herte nere,
Help me out of senne þer wile þat i am here.   16
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Ladi, ful of myȝte, mek & milde of mode,
For þe loue of swete ihesu þat don was on þe rode,
& for his woundes fiue þat runnen alle a-blode,
Þou help me out of senne, ladi fayr & gode.   20
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Ladi, seinte marie, fair & goud & swete,
For þe loue of þe teres þat þi-self lete
Wan þou seye ihesu crist nayled hond & fete,
Þou ȝeue me grace in herte my sennes for to bete.   24
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

In counsayl þou art best, & trewe in alle nede,
to sinful men wel prest & redi in goud dede.
Ladi, for þe loue of him þou seye on rode blede,
Þou help me now & euere & saue me at þe nede.   28
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Ladi, flour of alle, so rose in erber red,
To þe i crie & calle, to þe i make my bed;
Þou be in stude & stalle þer i draue to ded;
Let me neuere falle in hondes of þe qued.   32
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Marie, for þat swete ioie þat þou were þan inne
Wan þou seie ihesu crist, flour of al mankinne,
Steye vp to heuene þer ioye is euere inne,
Of bale be þou mi bote & bring me out of sinne.   36
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Marie, for þat swete ioye wan þou fram erþe was tan,
In-to þe blisse of heuene with aungeles mani an,
& i-set bi swete ihesu in fel & flecsch & ban,
Þou bringe me to ioyes þat neuere schal be gon.   40
    Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Marie, ful in grace, þat sittest in trone,
now i þe biseche þou graunte me mi bone:
Ihesu to loue & drede, my lif t'amende sone,
& bringe me to þat heye kyng þat weldeþ sune & mone.　　　44
　　Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

For þi ioies fiue, ladi fair & bryȝt,
& for þi mayden-hede & þi moche myȝt,
Þou helpe me to come in-to þa iche lyȝt.
Þer ioye is with-oute ende & day viþote nyȝt.　　　48
　　Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Ladi, seynte marie, ȝif þat þi wille were,
As þou art ful of ioye & i am ful of care,
Þou help me out of sinne & lat me falle namare,
& ȝeue me grace in erþe my sinnes to reve sare.　　　52
　　Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Ladi, quene of heuene, þou here me wit wille;
Y praye þov her mi steuene & let my soule neuere spille
In non of þe sinnes seuene þorw no fendes wille:
Nou bring my saule to heuene, þer-in a place to fille.　　　56
　　Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.

Notes to the Text and Appendixes

Brown, *XIII*   *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century,* ed. Carlton Brown. Oxford, 1932.

Brown, *XV*   *Religious Lyrics of the XVth Century,* ed. Carlton Brown. Oxford, 1939.

Brown, *XIV*   *Religious Lyrics of the XIVth Century,* ed. Carlton Brown, rev. G. V. Smithers. 2d ed. Oxford, 1957.

EETS, E.S.   Early English Text Society. Extra Series.

EETS, O.S.   Early English Text Society. Original Series.

Legg   *The Sarum Missal: Edited From Three Early Manuscripts,* ed. J. Wickham Legg. Oxford, 1916.

MED   *Middle English Dictionary,* ed. Hans Kurath and Sherman M. Kuhn. Ann Arbor, Michigan, and London, 1952——.

OED   *The Oxford English Dictionary.* 12 vols. and supplement. Oxford, 1933.

PL   Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Latina, ed. J.-Paul Migne. 221 vols. Paris, 1844–64.

S.M.   *The Sarum Missal in English.* Translated by Frederick E. Warren. 2 vols. London, 1911.

S.B.   Sarum Breviary, for *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum,* ed. Francis Proctor and Christopher Wordsworth. 3 vols. Cambridge, 1882, 1879, 1886.

Y.B.   York Breviary, for *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesie* [*sic.*] *Eboracensis,* ed. Stephan W. Lawley. Surtees Society, Vols. LXXI, LXXV. Durham and London, 1880 for 1871, 1883 for 1882.

PREFACE

1. See the work of Emile Mâle, esp. *L'art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France* (8 éd.; Paris, 1948); Otto Pächt, *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford, 1962); Otto Pächt, C. R. Dodwell and Francis Wormold, *The St. Albans Psalter (Albani Psalter)* (London, 1960), pp. 47 ff.; Harry Bober, "In Principio. Creation Before Time," in *Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (2 vols.; New York, 1961), I, 13–28, and II, 5–8; Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral* (New York, 1956); Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York, 1957); Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral: Christ. Mary. Ecclesia* (Baltimore, 1959). See also Manfred Bukofzer, "Speculative Thinking in Mediaeval Music," *Speculum*, XVII (April, 1942), 165–80, and "*Caput:* A Liturgico-Musical Study," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York, 1950). For a recent and very full study of the Holy Week services and medieval drama, see O. B. Hardison, Jr., *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, 1965); also, Mary D. Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (Cambridge, 1963 [1964]); Eleanor A. Prosser, *Drama and Religion in the English Mystery Plays: A Re-evaluation* (Stanford, 1961), and among the articles, especially Mary H. Marshall, "Aesthetic Values of the Liturgical Drama," *English Institute Essays 1950* (New York, 1951), 89–115, and Rosemary Woolf, "The Effect of Typology on the English Mediaeval Plays of Abraham and Isaac," *Speculum*, XXXII (October, 1957), 805–25. See also below, note 8.

2. See Durant W. Robertson, Jr., and Bernard F. Huppe, *Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition* (Princeton, 1951); Morton W. Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1961); and Robertson and Huppe, *Fruyt and Chaf: Studies in Chaucer's Allegories* (Princeton, 1963); Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962); Robert M. Jordan, *Chaucer and the Shape of Creation: The Aesthetic Possibilities of Inorganic Structure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967).

3. Arthur K. Moore, *The Secular Lyric in Middle English* (Lexington, 1951), p. vii. See also John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition* (London, 1957), p. 47.

4. See Frank A. Patterson, *The Middle English Penitential Lyric* (New York, 1911), who conceives of theology as "the cold, intellectual tenets of scholasticism" against which arose the tradition of mysticism from which, he claims, the lyrics sprang (p. 4);

also, George Kane, *Middle English Literature* (London, 1951), who says that the religious subject "as a whole had a restrictive effect" upon its poets (pp. 178–79). Stephen Manning, *Wisdom and Number* (Lincoln, 1962), vii–xi, has well summarized the traditional tendency of critics to find little of interest in the theological quality of the lyrics; however, his book offers a general rhetorical orientation for the Middle English religious lyric rather than a theological one. Rosemary Woolf, *The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968), which surveys the different kinds of religious lyrics and their spiritual background from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, was published while my study was at the printer. Although our two studies are complementary, they approach the subject in a fundamentally different way. See especially pp. 9–11; chap. iv, pp. 116–26, 134 ff.

5. "Sur le *Iesu dulcis memoria*," *Speculum*, III (July, 1928), 322–34.

6. "Wit and Mystery: A Revaluation in Mediaeval Latin Hymnody," *Speculum*, XXII (July, 1947), 312.

7. The religious would be in daily contact with the Mass and the Divine Office. Lanfranc's *Regularis concordia* exhorted their daily reception of the Eucharist, and all the religious said some form of the Divine Office. See David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (2d ed.; Cambridge, 1963), p. 469, and below, pp. 10 ff. Regarding lay participation, see *The Lay Folks' Mass Book*, ed. Thomas F. Simmons, EETS, O.S., No. 71 (London, 1879), pp. 128–47, 596–97, and John Lydgate's poem, "The Interpretation and Virtues of the Mass," *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, ed. Henry N. MacCracken, Part I, EETS, E.S., No. 107 (London, 1911 for 1910), pp. 84–115. Both urge frequent attendance at Mass as an efficacious substitute for the sacraments of penance and communion. For evidence of frequent lay participation, see Walter J. Ong, S.J., "A Liturgical Movement in the Middle Ages," *American Ecclesiastical Review*, CXIV (February, 1946), 104–13, and Natalie E. White, "The English Liturgical Refrain Lyric Before 1450, with Special Reference to the Fourteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1945), pp. 35–41. See also *The Lay Folks' Catechism*, ed. Simmons and Henry E. Nolloth, EETS, O.S., No. 118 (London, 1901), *passim*.

8. See especially Frank Ll. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* (London, 1958); Edmund K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (2 vols.; Oxford, 1903), Vol. II; Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (2 vols.; Oxford, 1933); Hardin Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1955); and Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama*.

9. See Herbert Musurillo, S.J., *Symbolism and the Christian Imagination* (Baltimore, 1962), chaps. vii, viii; Ernst Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 150–51, 458–62.

10. For examples of translations, see Brown, *XIII*, Nos. 4, 22, 42, 44, 47; Brown, *XIV*, the translations of Friar William Herebert, Nos. 12–15, 17–22, 24–25; and also Nos. 37, 38, 40, 41, 44, 45. For a detailed discussion of the development of the Roman rite, see Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (*missarum sollemnia*) (2 vols.; New York, 1951), I, 49–127, and for its prevalence under Norman influence in the collegiate churches of York and Salisbury and in the colleges and grammar schools, see Harrison, chap. i.

11. In Natalie White's "The English Liturgical Refrain Lyric," the concept of refrain lyric includes every kind of repetition based upon a liturgical form, from trope, sequence, versus, Office hymn, salutation, litany, meditation, to the sermon form which she finds to be the basis of the Vernon poems. See also Stuart H. L. Degginger, "The Earliest Middle English Lyrics: 1150–1325, an Investigation of the Influence of Latin,

Provençal, and French" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954). This comprehensive study of the sources of the Middle English religious lyrics' stanzaic forms covers the period from the Godric Songs to the poems of William of Shoreham and concludes that the influence of religious Latin poetry, both liturgical and non-liturgical, was paramount (pp. 190 ff.). For a thorough description of the types and origin of Latin liturgical poetry, see Ruth E. Messenger, *The Medieval Latin Hymn* (Washington, D.C., 1953).

12. See, for example, Brown, *XIII*, Nos. 23, 28, 29, 33-37, 45, 49, 56, 70; Brown, *XIV*, Nos. 1-5, 60, 64, 128.

13. See, for example, Brown, *XIV*, Nos. 34, 55; *The Prymer or Lay Folks' Prayer Book*, ed. Henry Littlehales, Part I, EETS, O.S., No. 105 (London, 1895), and *Horae Eboracenses*, ed. Christopher Wordsworth, Surtees Society, Vol. CXXXII (Durham and London, 1920 for 1919), where the poetic meditations follow each hour; also *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Richard Morris, Part V, EETS, O.S., No. 68 (London, 1878), lines 25487-618; *The Poems of William of Shoreham,* ed. Matthias Konrath, EETS, E.S., No. 86 (London, 1902), pp. 79-85, and *The Lay Folks' Mass Book,* pp. 82-87. See below, Introduction, pp. 14 ff.

14. The phrase is borrowed from Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* Prologue, par. 3 (trans. Erwin E. Nemmers [St. Louis, 1946]), whose work has profound relevance for the study of theology and poetry. See below, Conclusion, pp. 209 ff. The concept is fundamental to his definition and description of Holy Scripture, which describes "the contents of the whole universe" and which human capacity can grasp because man has born in him a "certain most noble mirror in which the universality of earthly things is reflected naturally and even supernaturally." Sacred history's proportioning to man's capacity is a principle also of the lyrics.

15. Following the sequence of the liturgy will at the same time provide a cumulative introduction to the subject matter of the lyrics. Both Patterson (*The Penitential Lyric,* Introduction) and Kane (*Middle English Literature,* pp. 108-10) have chosen a subjective classification by which to consider the Middle English religious lyric. Patterson, believing mysticism is the dominating influence on the poetry, has divided the lyrics by what he calls the inner factor of unity of emotion, according to the different states of mystical progress: purification, illumination, and contemplation. However, his classification fails to distinguish differences between the poems of focus and structure. Kane classifies the lyrics by the religious function the poet desires his poem to perform for the reader, a moralizing or a devotional one. Yet also by taking away the objective aspect of theology, Kane severs the devotional state of the affections from their object which is defined by sacred history and thus makes the poems seem to be autonomous dull exercises needing the reader's separate act of "creative" and "poetic" imagination to make them into poetry. For further discussion, see below, pp. 47 ff., 59 ff., 110 ff., 120 ff., 136 ff.

INTRODUCTION

1. See especially Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* and *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* (The Hague, 1957, 1964); and also Kenneth Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior* (3 vols.; Glendale, California,

1954–1960), who applies structural linguistic analysis analogically to non-verbal behavior, and see below, note 42.

2. See Claude Tresmontant, *Essai sur la pensée hébraïque* (Paris, 1953), especially pp. 216 ff. The books of the Old Testament were arranged in liturgical order as they were read through the year at the great Jewish feasts, a principle found also in the Gospel of Matthew who sought to provide for the synagog worship of Christians commentaries about Christ to correspond with the Jewish readings and to fulfill them. See Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London, 1956), pp. 110 ff.

3. Before the development of the method of disputation in the first half of the twelfth century, the teaching of theology was indistinguishable from that of Scripture; theology *was* the study and exegesis of Scripture. The two methods are described in detail by Henri de Lubac, S.J., who shows the profound consequences for theology of the contrast between the biblical method and the rationalistic method of Dominican and Franciscan scholastics. *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture* (4 vols.; Paris, 1959, 1961, 1964), Vols. I and II, especially chap. i, sec. 5. See also David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (2d ed.; Cambridge, 1963), pp. 515–16, and Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (2d ed.; Oxford, 1952), *passim*. On the consequences for the theology of the Eucharist and the Church, see also Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: l'Eucharistie et l'Église au moyen âge, étude historique* (Paris, 1944), Part I, chap. ii; Part II, chap. x.

4. In early catechesis theology was summed up by a narrative called the *historia,* from the Fall to the Last Things, and interspersed with *theoria,* symbolic explanations of different stages of the story to explain the meaning to the catechist. See Herbert Musurillo, S.J., "Symbolism and Kerygmatic Theology," *Thought,* XXXVI (Spring, 1961), 59 ff. See also Ernst Curtius' description of the medieval concept of universal history, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. Willard Trask (New York, 1953), pp. 450 ff.

5. For the table of contents see Part V, EETS, O.S., No. 68 (London, 1878), pp. 1–6. The first age is from the creation to the offspring of Cain; the second, Noah to Babylon; the third, Abraham to the coming of David; the fourth, David to the building of the Temple of Solomon; the fifth, prophecies, the conception and birth of Christ; the sixth, the baptism of Christ, His ministry, passion and death, the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles, Mary's assumption, the finding of the Holy Cross; the seventh, Antichrist, the Judgment, Hell, Heaven and the end of the world.

6. For a succinct summary of the development of biblical typology and a gathering of types, see Johan Chydenius, *The Typological Problem in Dante: A Study in the History of Medieval Ideas,* Societas scientiarum Fennica, commentationes humanarum litterarum, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (Helsingfors, 1958). See also Erich Auerbach, "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York, 1959), 11–76, and below, note 8.

7. The distinction between Scripture and tradition was not clearly made until the Reformation, to counter the Protestant emphasis on ancient tradition. Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale,* I, 44–56. See above, note 6.

8. This principle of the divine *ratio* has been described and analyzed from many points of view and is central to any understanding of the relationship of medieval theology to literary form. It is fundamental to both Scriptural exegesis and the forms of the liturgy. See below, pp. 15 ff. The most profound analysis is the monumental study by Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture.* Many studies have discussed its significance for literature. See Durant W. Robertson, Jr., and Bernard

F. Huppe, *Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition* (Princeton, 1951); Morton W. Bloomfield, "Symbolism in Medieval Literature," *Modern Philology*, LVI (November, 1958), 73–81; Huppe, *Doctrine and Poetry: Augustine's Influence on Old English Poetry* (New York, 1959); the three "Essays on Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature" in *Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature: Selected Papers from the English Institute 1958-1959*, ed. Dorothy Bethurum (New York, 1960); Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962), pp. 6 ff., 52 ff., 286 ff.; Robert M. Jordan, *Chaucer and the Shape of Creation: The Aesthetic Possibilities of Inorganic Structure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967). See also Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux de XIII⁰ siècle en France* (8 éd.; Paris, 1948), Book IV, chap. i. Especially useful is Erich Auerbach's essay "Figura," which traces the history of the concept as it combines Greek and Hebraic methods and was adopted by the early Church Fathers, and then uses it to interpret the *Commedia*. Auerbach points out that the doctrine of fourfold meaning was given by Augustine a realistic historical and concrete character, "for three of the four meanings became concrete, historical, and interrelated, while only one remains purely ethical and allegorical" (p. 42). The approach to meaning through *history* is fundamentally the method of my study which moves one step behind the particular applications made by the exegetes and shows how the liturgy formulated and established the proportions of the events of sacred history. On the common activity of the liturgy and of exegesis, see Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, I, 155 ff.

9. In the work of the Fathers and scholastic theologians *sacramentum* had a wider meaning and was used interchangeably with *mysterium* to refer to the actions by which God communicates Himself to man. Thus the sacraments were defined in their relation to the Old and the New Testaments, which were seen, by actual origin of their names, as two instruments of salvation, two legislations, two institutions which are both, although differently, sacramental institutions. Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, pp. 74–76. See for example, Innocent III's introduction to his *Mysteriorum Evangelicae Legis et sacramenti Eucharistiae*, PL, Vol. CCXVII, esp. cols. 763–73, and chap. i, Book IV of G. Durandus' *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, ed. Jean Beleth (Naples, 1859). For medieval commentary on the Mass as the fulfillment of Old Testament types, see Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (missarum sollemnia)* (2 vols.; New York, 1951), I, 109 ff. See also Jean Daniélou, S.J., *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1956) for the definition of the sacraments by catechesis and commentary of the early Church as they "carry on in our midst the *mirabilia*, the great works of God in the Old Testament and the New" (p. 5).

10. As representative of the Mass in the medieval English Church I have chosen the use of Sarum, which differed only in particulars from the uses of York and Durham. For the texts of the liturgy of thirteenth century Sarum and earlier I will refer to *The Sarum Missal*, ed. J. Wickham Legg (Oxford, 1916), and for a translation of the Mass and for the liturgy of fifteenth century Sarum I will use *The Sarum Missal in English*, trans. Frederick E. Warren (London, 1911). A thorough history of the development and particulars of the Sarum ritual is given by Legg in *The Sarum Missal*, pp. v-xvii, and by Walter H. Frere in *The Use of Sarum* (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1898-1901), II, xii ff. See also *The Sarum Missal Done into English*, trans. A. Harford Pearson (2d ed. rev.; London, 1884), where Pearson gives valuable information on the rubrics and a history of the forms of the High and Low Mass from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, pp. xxxvii-lxix. *History of the Holy Eucharist in Great Britain* (2 vols.; London, 1881) by T. E. Bridgett provides an excellent introduction to the writings of English theologians on the Eucharist and to the spirit of the liturgy from the earliest times of the Church in England to the Reformation. A useful source for the types of books in which the texts

of the liturgy were kept during the Middle Ages is Christopher Wordsworth and Henry Littlehales, *The Old Service-Books of the English Church* (London, 1904). See also J. Wickham Legg, *Tracts on the Mass,* Henry Bradshaw Society, Vol. XXVII (London, 1904), and William Maskell, *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of England According to the Uses of Sarum, York, Hereford and Bangor and the Roman Liturgy Arranged in Parallel Columns* (Oxford, 1882), which uses fifteenth century MSS. For two works specifically on lay participation, see *The Lay Folks' Catechism, or the English and Latin Versions of Archbishop Thoresby's Instruction for the People,* ed. Thomas F. Simmons and Henry E. Nolloth, EETS, O.S., No. 118 (London, 1901), and *The Lay Folks' Mass Book or the Manner of Hearing Mass with Rubrics and Devotions for the People,* ed. Thomas F. Simmons, EETS, O.S., No. 71 (London, 1879).

11. In the Gregorian Sacramentary the Canon was understood to begin with the prayer, "Te igitur clementissime pater." The conception of the place of ending varied. Jungmann, II, 103 ff. See Legg, pp. 221–29; *S.M.,* I, 42–56. For the significant structure of the Tiptoft Missal (Figure 2), see descriptive note. For the various methods of considering the Mass in the history of the commentary on the Roman rite, see Jungmann, especially I, 86–91, 109–17, and for a popular treatise on the necessary understanding and fitting behavior of the layman during the central part of the Mass, see *The Lay Folks' Mass Book,* lines 247 ff., and pp. 128–47.

12. There is no provision in the Sarum rubrics for the congregation's communion, and according to Jungmann during this period lay people communicated rarely (II, 361 ff.). However, this did not mean that the layman did not participate in the Mass. See Walter J. Ong, S.J., "A Liturgical Movement in the Middle Ages," *American Ecclesiastical Review,* CXIV (February, 1946), 109 ff., and above, Preface, note 7.

13. For Trinity Sunday, see Legg, pp. 170–73. There is no Mass of Corpus Christi in Legg. The observance of the feast was instituted by the Bishop of Liège in 1264 and a few years later extended to the whole Church. See Herbert Musurillo, S.J., *Symbolism and the Christian Imagination* (Baltimore, 1962), pp. 161 ff. According to Frere, *The Use of Sarum,* II, xvii ff., the festival seems to have been deferred in Salisbury until about 1312–19. For its institution elsewhere in England, see Frere, also *S.M.,* II, 630.

14. The saints' feasts were listed in the *Calendarium* (see Legg, pp. xxi-xxxii), and the lives of the saints read during the Divine Office were collected in the *Martyrologium* and *Legenda.* See *The Old Service Books,* pp. 133–51.

15. Legg, pp. 354–83.

16. Legg, p. 33.

17. Legg, p. 243.

18. Legg, pp. 392–412.

19. *The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English,* ed. and trans. Justin McCann, O.S.B. (London, 1952), p. 61. The saying of the Divine Office was the central occupation of the monastic communities. See for example, David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* pp. 538–60.

20. Referring to the words of Psalm 118: 164, 62, Benedict divides the Office into seven day Hours and an eighth night Hour. The Hour of early morning, which is now called Lauds, was originally called Matins, or the Morning Office, and the Night Office, which now is called Matins, was originally called Nocturns whereas now the term "nocturns" is used rather to refer to the several divisions within the Night Office. For a listing of Middle English versions of the Rule and an edition of three fifteenth century texts, see *Three Middle-English Versions of the Rule of St. Benet and Two Contempo-*

rary Rituals for the Ordination of Nuns, ed. Ernst A. Kock, EETS, O.S., No. 120 (London, 1902).

21. Benedict's Rule is the first complete detailed description of the Office of the western Church. In 528 the Emperor Justinian had decreed that the clergy throughout the empire should recite the night, morning and evening Offices. In the early Middle Ages in monastic communities, the Psalter, the Bible and the homilies of the Fathers used for the readings, and an Antiphonary and Responsale were found with their musical setting in separate texts. These were combined, the readings shortened, into a single book for the convenience of the officials of the Roman Curia, called *Breviarium secundum consuetudinem Romanae Curiae.* As the Franciscans began to use it on their missionary journeys, it became the predominant form of the Office of the secular clergy. For a brief history, see Pius Parsch, *The Breviary Explained* (St. Louis, 1952), pp. 10 ff. See also David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England,* chap. i, and *The Religious Orders in England* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 173 ff., p. 318. For a detailed discussion of choir service books and a history of the customs of Sarum, see Frere, *The Use of Sarum,* I, xi-xii, and for the Offices themselves, see II, *Ordinale Sarum.* See also *The Old Service-Books,* pp. 26–35.

22. Matins, Mass and Vespers were said daily in the churches. The whole population attended on Sundays and feast days, probably Matins and Vespers as well as the Mass. Natalie E. White, "The English Liturgical Refrain Lyric Before 1450, with Special Reference to the Fourteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1945), pp. 35–41. The liturgy, Dr. White holds, was the life of the people, and the lay people of the medieval Church understood the liturgy in a personal way. She uses information from William Maskell, *Monumenta ritualia ecclesiae Anglicanae* (Oxford, 1882); Cardinal Gasquet, *Parish Life in Medieval England* (New York, 1906); and Edward L. Cutts, *Parish Priests and Their People in the Middle Ages in England* (London, 1898). See also Ong, *American Ecclesiastical Review,* CXIV, 104–13.

23. For the readings, antiphons, responses and hymns of the Divine Office as said at Sarum, I will refer to the *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum,* ed. Francis Proctor and Christopher Wordsworth (3 vols.; Cambridge, 1882, 1879, 1886). The outlines of the Office can be found on the First Sunday of Advent, in the fourteenth century *Ordinale Sarum,* pp. 208–33, where Frere prints material omitted from S.B.

24. For Benedict's description of the Divine Office, see the Rule, chaps. viii-xix. Matins begins with an opening verse with the invitatory, interlaced with Psalm 94, and a hymn. This is followed by a series of three nocturns, each made up of (1) the recitation of six psalms preceded and followed by antiphons, and (2) lessons taken from the Old and New Testaments, from the lives of the saints and the homilies of the Fathers of the Church. These lessons begin with a blessing from the Abbot and end with a response and a verse which interlace and repeat. On Sundays and feast days are added three canticles. The Gospel of the day with its commentary, and the *Te Deum,* Nicetas' rhythmical prose hymn of praise to the Holy Trinity, would conclude Matins. Throughout the year according to the solemnity of the feast and the spirit of the season, the number of nocturns increases or decreases and the hymns change or are omitted.

25. Vespers actually anticipates Matins, introducing the theme of the next day's feast, and each of the greater feasts has a Proper for the first and for a second Vespers said on the feast. Lauds and Vespers have four psalms, and having four or more antiphons which are proper to the individual feasts, they reiterate during the day the themes of Matins and Mass. Lauds is more complex than Vespers, for each day includes besides the psalms a canticle from the Old Testament followed by the *Laudate* psalms 148, 149 and

150. Both Lauds and Vespers end with a chapter (short lesson), hymn and New Testament canticle (Lauds, the *Benedictus;* Vespers, the *Magnificat*) and additional prayers. The simpler Hours begin with a hymn, have only one proper antiphon to introduce their three psalms, and end with a short chapter and prayers. From the second through the sixth day of the week the psalms of Prime, Terce, Sext and None do not vary. The evening hour, Compline, begins with a short lesson and the *Confiteor,* has no antiphons, and remains the same for every day of the week.

26. The Rule, chap. ix. For the Roman Curia Breviary, the lessons were shortened. See Parsch, pp. 88 ff. for a description of the lessons. See also *The Old Service-Books,* pp. 129–45.

27. See *Ordinale Sarum* for Advent, pp. 8–9; for Septuagesima, pp. 53 ff.

28. *Ordinale Sarum,* p. 63.

29. *Ordinale Sarum,* pp. 90 ff. Until the season of Pentecost the spirit of the liturgy "is correlated with the story of Christ's life. . . . In the time after Pentecost, in presenting the kingdom of Christ, the liturgy employs a prototype, taken from the annals of the Old Testament theocracy. As unfolded in the liturgy, the historical account of the *civitas Dei* is accordingly a prophetic vision, fulfilled in the course of the ages by the Church of Christ," Parsch, p. 92, quoting Herwegen, *Alter Quellen neuer Kraft.*

30. The Rule, chaps. xvii-xviii. In addition to the recitation of the Hours of the Office, through the Middle Ages and especially in the monasteries the devotional practice grew of reciting daily the seven Penitential Psalms, the fifteen Gradual Psalms as well as Matins, Lauds and Vespers of All Saints and of the Dead. See *The Prymer,* Part II, EETS, O.S., No. 109 (London, 1897), pp. xxii-xxiii; also *The Monastic Order in England,* pp. 540 ff.

31. S.B., Vol. II, col. 37. For Terce, see "Nunc sancte nobis Spiritus," col. 57; Sext, "Rector potens verax Deus," col. 61; None, "Rerum Deus tenax vigor," col. 65; and Compline, "Te lucis ante terminum," col. 224. See *Ordinale Sarum,* pp. 4, 12, 15.

32. Peter Wagner, *Introduction to the Gregorian Melodies,* trans. Agnes Orme and E. G. Wyatt (2d ed.; London, 1901), Part I, pp. 260–71. See also, *Analecta hymnica medii aevi,* ed. Guido M. Dreves, S.J., Vols. V, XIII, XVIII, XXIV-XXVII, XLVa.

33. In the Proper of the thirteenth century Crawford Missal as edited by Legg in *The Sarum Missal,* the Conception is not indicated on December 8, but is combined on September 8 with the Nativity, *In natiuitate et concepcione sancte Marie,* and in the Calendar on December 8 is entered, "Concepcio sancte mariae. ix lec. Sarum nichil." The Calendar of Paris, Arsenal MS 135 (about 1300), however, lists the feast (Legg, p. 510). Legg gives no information about the early fourteenth century Morris and Bologna Missals. Preconquest liturgical texts show the Feast of the Conception was being celebrated in England from about 1030. Although under Lanfranc's Statutes the feast was excluded from the calendar, it was reintroduced by Anselm the younger from about 1121 and was defended strongly against Bernard's attack in 1140 by the English. *The Monastic Order in England,* pp. 510 ff. See the full discussion by T. R. Bridgett in *Our Lady's Dowry* (London, 1875), pp. 25 ff., 231–34, and *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception: History and Significance,* ed. E. D. O'Connor, C.S.C. (South Bend, Indiana, 1958), chaps. iv, v.

34. Legg, pp. 259–60, 27 ff., and see below, Part I, "Gabriel fram Evene-King," note 3. The Feast of the Visitation, first celebrated by the Franciscans, was instituted only in 1389 by Urban VI, the date of July 2 fixed in 1441. However, the account of Mary's visit

to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39–47) was read at Mass and Matins on Saturday the Fourth Week of Advent (Legg, p. 20; S.B., Vol. I, col. xxii), and Elizabeth's greeting to Mary combined with the angel's salutation was incorporated into the liturgy. See below, Part I, "Nu Þis Fules Singet hand Maket Hure Blisse," note 10. On the incorporation of the feast, see *Our Lady's Dowry,* p. 235, and *The Old English Service-Books,* pp. 190–93.

35. Legg, pp. 246–50. The Gospel selection read at Mass was Luke 2:22–32, which ends before the prophecy. The theme of Mary's sorrow was developed in the lessons of Matins (see the commentary on Luke by Ambrose, S.B., Vol. III, cols. 137–39) and in sermons and meditations on the passion. See below, Part II.

36. For the Propers of the vigil, the feast, and the octave, see Legg, pp. 307–9, and for a discussion of the meaning of the feast, see below, Part III, *passim.* The Assumption was reckoned by Lanfranc as among the five principal festivals of the year. *Our Lady's Dowry,* p. 228, also chap. vi.

37. The Saturday Mass of Mary was introduced by Alcuin in the ninth century with the six other Votive Masses, one for each day in the week (Jungmann, I, 220 ff.), and from 1225 a Votive Mass of Mary was said daily in the Salisbury Lady Chapel (Frank Ll. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* [London, 1958], pp. 77–78). See *S.M.,* II, 74, which points out the significance traditionally attributed to having the Saturday Mass.

38. Legg, pp. 387–91. *Music in Medieval Britain,* pp. 79 ff.

39. The Hours varied little, also, from region to region. By the twelfth century the Hours had been so generally adopted by the secular clergy that saying them became an obligation of custom. At Salisbury they were said daily by 1230. Perhaps as early as 1323, and certainly by the later part of the fourteenth century, the saying of the *Horae* in English became a popular lay devotion. The English *Horae,* or Prymers, were the means by which many of the phrases and concepts of the liturgy were repeated outside of the Churches. For the origin and background, see Edmund Bishop, *The Prymer,* Part II, EETS, O.S., No. 109, xi-xxxviii; William Maskell, *Monumenta ritualia ecclesiae Anglicanae, The Occasional Offices of the Church of England According to the Ancient Use of Salisbury, The Prymer in English, and Other Prayers and Forms, with Dissertations and Notes* (2d ed., 3 vols.; London, 1882), III, i-lxvii; and Christopher Wordsworth, *Horae Eboracenses, The Prymer or Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, According to the Use of the Illustrious Church of York,* Surtees Society, Vol. CXXXII (Durham and London, 1920 for 1919), pp. xiii-xlvii.

40. See above, Preface, note 2, and Brown, *XIV,* Nos. 34, 55; *XV,* Nos. 93, 94. *The Index of Middle English Verse,* ed. Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins (New York, 1943) lists 16 versions of the Hours of the Passion. Many of these are translations or versions of the eight stanza Latin poem, "Patris sapientia veritas divina" of the *Horae,* attributed to various authors in the fourteenth century (Wordsworth, *Horae Eboracenses,* p. xxiv). However, the example from *Cursor Mundi* is strikingly different. Each Hour is structured by several levels of correspondence: of a moment of the passion with a moment of the birth or the resurrection of Christ, of these with the falling into sin and cleansing of the soul as they lead, in turn, to the resurrection at the last judgment and to heavenly joy (EETS, O.S., No. 68, lines 25487–618). On the origin of the devotion, see especially Wordsworth, *Horae Eboracenses,* pp. xxiii-xxv, xxxii.

41. See the Hours as separately printed by Maskell in his introduction to *Monumenta ritualia,* III, ix-x, and by Wordsworth in his notes to *Horae Eboracenses,* after each Hour, pp. 47 ff. Of interest also is Maskell's listing of the reasons traditionally given for the division of the day into seven Hours, p. viii.

42. In his "Speculative Thinking in Mediaeval Music," *Speculum*, XVII (April, 1942), 165–80, Manfred Bukofzer demonstrates a significant analogy between the method of composition of music in the Middle Ages, and of poetry and philosophy as well, and the medieval theologian's method of glossing Scripture, where his additions were "generally in the nature of commentaries upon the original, and if these commentaries were themselves subjected to interpolation, the additions became comments on the commentary" (p. 172). His interesting plate of a MS which demonstrates the glossing technique provides us with a graphic embodiment of the ladder relationship of the readings of the Mass. There is also a profound analogy to be made between this structuring by the liturgy and Noam Chomsky's "transformation machine," a kernel of theoretical structural sequences from which other grammatical sentences can be derived, *Syntactic Structures, passim.* The medieval mind would move one level deeper in the analogy, from the exterior structure manifested, to the meta-language itself, the Person of the Word through Whom the language of creation comes into being and is understood.

43. With certain exceptions (to be noted), Warren's translation of the Proper parts of the Mass of the Annunciation will be used for the following description of the ladder of value. *S.M.,* II, 319–22.

44. Vulgate, trans. Douay-Rheims (London, 1914). Warren does not include an English translation of the Gospel readings and the Lessons. Although the Missal readings were not based on a standard text of the Latin Bible, because my object is to show principles by which meaning is established and not to analyze sources, I will supplement the texts of Legg and Warren with the above English translation of the Vulgate.

45. The liturgical unit was the basis, for example, of Bernard of Clairvaux' four sermons on the glories of the Virgin Mary *(Super missus est)*. This unit was defined by the liturgy before the chapter divisions of Scripture had been uniformly established in hermeneutical practice and provides another example of how the liturgy formulated the medieval concept of sacred history in relation to Holy Scripture. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages,* pp. 221–24; Jungmann, I, 459.

46. See *S.M.,* II, 591–613, Scriptural Index. For the basis and development of the choice of readings, see Jungmann, I, 393 ff. and 419.

47. See also Matt. 1:22–33. Regarding the choice of Old Testament passages for prophetic value and as illustration of the New Testament, see Jungmann, I, 396–99. See also Innocent III, who compares the Lesson's relationship to the Gospel reading to John being sent before Christ: "Epistola vero vox legis est, suam imperfectionem Joannis testimonio profitentis, et ad perfectionem evangelicam transmittentes," PL, Vol. CCXVII, col. 816; also Aquinas, *Summa theol.,* III, Q 83, Art. 4; Durandus, Book IV, chap. xvi, sec. 3; and in English, Lydgate, "The Interpretation and Virtues of the Mass," in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* ed. Henry N. MacCracken, EETS, E.S., No. 107 (London, 1911), lines 216–40, 257–64.

48. *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesie Eboracensis,* ed. Stephan W. Lawley, Surtees Society, Vols. LXXI, LXXV (2 vols.; Durham, London, and Edinburgh, 1880 for 1871, 1883 for 1882), Vol. II, col. 237. The same correspondence between Mary and Eve can be found in the second stanza of the hymn for Vespers on the feast, "Ave maris stella": "Sumens illud Ave/ Gabrielis ore, funda nos in pace,/ mutans nomen Evae," S.B., Vol. III, col. 233. The parallel is used as a structural proportion in the lyrics.

49. See especially Bernard's second sermon, *Super missus est.* For an English translation, see *St. Bernard's Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Festivals of the*

Year, trans. Mt. Melleray (3 vols.; Westminster, Md., 1950), I, 68 ff. See also Honorius of Autun, *Speculum Ecclesiae,* PL, Vol. CLXII, cols. 904 ff.

50. See especially the sequences for Mary's feasts, Legg, pp. 522–23; *The Liturgical Poetry of Adam of St. Victor,* trans. Digby S. Wrangham (3 vols.; London, 1881), II, Nos. 8, 73, 74; III, No. 89; and in Middle English, see William of Shoreham, Brown, *XIV,* No. 32.

51. The Introit, for example, for the Saturday Mass of Mary to be said from the Purification to Advent is by Sedulius, *S.M.,* II, 95. See Jungmann on the origin and relation of these passages to feasts of the day, I, 421 ff., esp. 434.

52. Although in the Sarum Missal "Introit" referred to the entrance of the clergy and "Officium" or "Office" to the chant, to avoid confusing this "Office" with the Office of the Hours of the Day, I will use the term "Introit" to refer to the text chanted. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain,* p. 60; *S.M.,* I, 23.

53. Warren's translation (*S.M.,* II, 319) has lost some of the connotations of the Latin: "Rorate celi desuper et nubes pluant iustum aperiatur terra et germinet saluatorem. *Ps.* Et iusticia oriatur simul ego dominus creaui eum" (Legg, p. 259).

54. The process of rearranging texts and omitting parts to give the word of God to the people is called *centonization,* or "patchwork," Jungmann, I, 403.

55. Tropes were additions to the texts of the liturgy: either words added which dissolved a melisma (an extended melody sung on one syllable) into a syllabic melody, or both words and music which extended older chants, or combinations of both methods. See Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1940), pp. 186–89. The final vowel, called the *jubilus,* was prolonged, and melodic strophes were developed for the sake of the choir's taking a breath. Each strophe was repeated. Words could be added, perhaps to guide the singer in remembering the music, and the strophes fell into parallel lines. A collection of melodies grew, with or without words, under parts of the melody, which usually modulated to the dominant halfway through.

56. For a history and description of the Latin sequence, see Ruth Ellis Messenger, *The Medieval Latin Hymn* (Washington, D.C., 1953), especially chap. iii. Around 1100 there were about 54 sequences in use in the Sarum Rite, and in the later liturgy as many as 101. In the reform of the Mass books under Pius V (1570) only four were retained, Jungmann, I, 437. For those in Legg, see pp. 461–96. For other Latin sequences, see Guido M. Dreves, S.J., *Analecta hymnica medii aevi,* where Jungmann estimates 5,000 are collected. Troping or farsing of certain other parts of the Mass was a widespread practice. Legg includes 19 farsings of the Kyrie (pp. 1–6, 538–40), 15 of the Sanctus (pp. 540–43) and 17 of the Agnus Dei (pp. 544–47). The later Sarum Missal has a farsed Lesson from Isaiah 11:2, 6, 7 on Christmas Day (*S.M.,* I, 96–97) and mentions in the rubrics farsings for the Gloria appropriate to the feasts of Mary (*S.M.,* I, 25–26). See Reese, pp. 190 ff., also Natalie White, "The English Liturgical Refrain Lyric," pp. 71 ff., and Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain,* pp. 64–76.

57. For an edition of both the Latin texts and an English translation, see *The Liturgical Poetry of Adam of St. Victor,* trans. Digby S. Wrangham (3 vols.; London, 1881).

58. For a discussion of the sources and development of this type of poem, see Natalie White, "The English Liturgical Refrain Lyric," pp. 116–95. Warren's translation of the sequence (*S.M.,* II, 320–21) deprives it of power. Appendix I gives the Latin text found in Legg, p. 480.

59. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain,* p. 63; *S.M.,* II, 321.

60. *The Mass of the Roman Rite,* I, 379. The following description is based on Jungmann, pp. 359–90.

61. Jungmann, I, 382.

62. Jungmann, I, 383–84.

63. Part of the Preface also varies according to the season and the day, but to a lesser extent than the texts of the Proper, and the variations are to be found in a separate section of the Missal with the corresponding variations to be made in the *Communicantes* prayer of the Canon. See Legg, pp. 211–15; *S.M.,* I, 34–41.

64. *The Prymer,* Part I, pp. 18, 21, 24, 27, 29, 35. For differences between antiphons used by the rites of York, Durham and Sarum, see *Horae Eboracenses,* p. xxviii.

PART I

"GABRIEL, FRAM EVENE-KING"

1. Only the opening words appear, *Canterbury Tales,* I (A), line 3216. The English version exists only in Arundel MS 248, leaf 154, and is presented here from Brown, XIII, No. 44. The MS contains as well the Latin sequence and musical setting. For the Latin and English with a facsimile of the music, see Frederick J. Furnivall, Chaucer Society, 1st Ser., No. 73 (London, 1885), Appendix II, pp. 695–96. See also Guido M. Dreves, S.J., *Analecta hymnica medii aevi,* Vol. VIII (Leipzig, 1890), No. 51, "De annunciatione B.M.V."

2. The association of Mary's fear with her conception is made by the juxtaposition of the responses and verses to the readings of Matins; for example, S.B., Vol. III, col. 237; Y.B., Vol. II, col. 237. Homilies on Luke 1:26–38 traditionally maintained the Gospel's distinction between Mary's being troubled at the salutation and her simply questioning at the announcement of the virginal conception and birth. See, for example, Bede, S.B., Vol. I, col. lxxiv, and Vol. III, col. 235; see also Bernard's third sermon on the glories of the Virgin Mother (*Super missus est*) in *St. Bernard's Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Festivals of the Year,* trans. Mt. Melleray (3 vols.; Westminster, Md., 1950), I, 104–5.

3. The theme that Mary's childbearing was painless is developed especially in the Christmas liturgy. See Legg, p. 389 and *S.M.,* II, 84. See also the homilies for Advent and Christmas, of Origin, S.B., Vol. I, col. clviii; Augustine, S.B., Vol. I, cols. civ-cvii, and Bernard, Fourth Sermon for Christmas Eve, *Sermons,* I, 346–48. See Vespers antiphon, *The Prymer,* ed. Henry Littlehales, Part I, EETS, O.S., No. 105 (London, 1895), p. 29.

4. The tradition of Mary as the second Eve has its roots especially in the Vulgate translation of Gen. 3:15–16, where God proclaims enmity between the seed of woman and the serpent and that Eve shall bring forth her children in sorrow. The parallel between Eve and Mary is developed fully in the homily of Ambrose on the Annunciation, Y.B., Vol. II, cols. 236–39. See above, Introduction, pp. 18 ff. The poets' application of the contrast between the law of motherhood and Mary's painless childbearing to Mary's becoming the mother of man through the compassion she suffered at the death of her Son will be developed below, especially in Part II.

5. Gradual, Masses of Mary from Purification to Advent, *S.M.,* II, 95; "Uirgo dei genetrix quem totus non capit orbis in tua se clausit uiscera factus homo," Legg, p. 390. The same verse was used later on the Visitation, *S.M.,* II, 390, and is the basis later also for the third lesson of Matins in *The Prymer,* p. 6.

6. The *OED* lists as the earlier meaning of the word "peerless," derived from "make," an (or one's) equal, peer, match. The first citation given for its later denotation of "mateless" is 1425. For examples of *singularis,* see Legg, first sequence for the Purification, lines 23-24, p. 466, and sequence in commemoration of the BVM, lines 13, 21, p. 493; *The Liturgical Poetry of Adam of St. Victor,* ed. and trans. Digby S. Wrangham (3 vols.; London, 1881), Vol. I, No. 3, lines 59-61; Vol. II, No. 66, lines 1-4, No. 73, lines 29-30, 43-45, 63-66, and Vol. III, No. 90, lines 65-68. For the restricted application to Mary of *specialis* or *specialiter* when her uniqueness is to be distinguished from the singularity of every man in relation to the Church, see Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Méditation sur l'Église* (3° éd.; Paris, 1954), pp. 301 ff. For fuller discussion of "makeles," see below, "I Syng of a Myden Þat Is Makeles," note 17.

7. The meaning of "figure" used in this study in regard to the Middle English lyric will be made clearer below as it is illustrated by the poems in later chapters. It has been chosen in order to point out the analogy between a structural principle of the lyrics and the liturgy and homilists' method of formulating the proportions of sacred history. (See above, Introduction, pp. 5 ff., 10 ff., and 17 ff.) For an especially useful analysis of the term, see Erich Auerbach's comprehensive essay, "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (New York, 1959), pp. 11-76.

8. The Latin version of the sequence, Arundel MS 248, leaf 154, differs considerably from the simpler English version, containing more abstract, even witty, theological language and manipulation of syntax. In contrast to the English poem, the ideas of virginal conception and parturition are introduced in stanza 1 ("concipies,/ & paries/ intacta"). The actions and concepts are presented as logical paradoxes. The grammatical constructions flow tensely against the stanzaic form, as, in contrast to the more rigid conformity of thought to stanzaic structure in the English version, the thought moves without break from the opening to the closing lines of each stanza.

9. Furnivall, Chaucer Society, p. 696, lines 46-48. The variation from the Latin by the English poet emphasizes Christ's death as being man's rebirth into hope.

10. See Jean Daniélou, S.J., *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1956), pp. 5, 21, 53. For a development of the parallel in a Middle English work of instruction, see from the Vernon MS, "A Treatise of the Manner and Mede of the Mass," as printed in *The Lay Folks' Mass Book,* ed. Thomas F. Simmons, EETS, O.S., No. 71 (London, 1879), especially pp. 483-508. For a short description of sacred history in these terms, see Bonaventure's *Breviloquium,* trans. Erwin E. Nemmers (St. Louis, 1946), and below, Conclusion. In various ways the proportions of the poems to be discussed below embody the principles of the symmetry of sacred history.

11. "Jésus-Christ fait donc l'unité de l'Écriture parce qu'il en est la fin et la plénitude. Tout y a rapport à Lui. Il en est, finalement, le seul Object. . . ." Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Exégèse médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'Écriture* (4 vols.; Paris, 1959, 1961, 1964), I, 322. The conception is fully developed by medieval theologians in relation to the unity of the Old and the New Testaments. See *Exégèse médiévale,* "L'Acte du Christ," I, 318, *passim.*

12. Brown, *XIII,* No. 47, "Our Lady Sorrows for Her Son," lines 31-42, also from Arundel MS 248.

13. *S.M.*, II, 319.

14. For the facsimile of the monodic setting, see Furnivall, Chaucer Society, plate facing p. 695.

15. Repetition of each melodic unit with a variation in the words is the characteristic structural development of the sequence which was originally sung by two groups in alternation. See above, Introduction, pp. 20 ff., also Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1940), pp. 187–89, and Frank Ll. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain* (London, 1958), pp. 64–70.

16. The syntactic unit begun in the couplet of stanza 1 extends through line 9, and the generally offered translation of "þis euene lith" is, in apposition to "godes sone," "this light of heaven." See, e.g., Brown, *XIII*, glossary, "liht," R. T. Davies, *Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology* (Evanston, 1964), p. 100. However, one can argue, on the strength of the couplet rhyme and the melodic unit and by analogy to the handling of the couplet in stanzas 3–5, that the phrase means, God's Son "will descend this evening." "Lith" according to the *OED* had a tradition of use in relation to the Incarnation, and the unetymological *e* of "euen" (*MED*) could be taken as a dative in adverbial use, in which case lines 5–9 would read: "Hail be thou, truly full of grace, for the Son of God this evening will descend,/ for love of man/ will become man,/ and take/ flesh of thee, maiden bright."

17. The effect suggests that of the Latin poem, which in its handling of the syntax and greater complexity of thought has a greater unity and suspense. The clearer, more consistent divisions within the stanza of the English poem allow the symmetry of proportion in development, to be described below, pp. 44 ff.

18. The principle of development is analogous to the medieval conception of *proportio* fundamental to many kinds of structure. For a discussion of this idea and sources, see below, Part III, "The Figure of Delight," note 7.

19. See note 16.

THE "MAIDEN MAKELES"

1. *Middle English Literature* (London, 1951), pp. 177–78.

2. Brown, *XIII*, No. 31, from Trinity College Cambridge MS 323.

3. Brown, *XV*, No. 81, from Sloane MS 2593.

4. *"Explication de Texte* Applied to Three Great Middle English Poems," *Archivum Linguisticum*, III (1951), 159. See W. W. Greg, *Modern Philology*, VII (October, 1909), 165–67. See also Kane's evaluation: "I would not have this lyric thought too bad; it has the charm of the archaic, but its author is over-explicit and will not assume knowledge or readiness to cooperate in the reader. His elaborate demonstrations of the obvious detract from the quality of the poem. Moreover, his attitude to the subject is mainly religious, and little affected by the operation of the creative imagination," *Middle English Literature*, p. 162.

5. See below, p. 53 and note 12.

6. The kingship of Christ is a theme especially of Advent and Christmas, when the Church relives the coming of Christ in the Incarnation and anticipates His second coming as Judge and King from His place in glory. See especially Isa. 1–10; the homilies of Gregory on Luke 21 (S.B., Vol. 1, cols. lxxxvii ff.) and Matt. 11 (S.B., Vol. 1, cols.

cvii ff.); the Christmas liturgy, S.B., Vol. I, cols. clv-clvi, *S.M.*, I, 100; and Bede, S.B., Vol. III, cols. 237 ff. See also Figure 4 and its descriptive note. In a sermon for the Second Sunday of Advent, Acquinas compares the second coming of Christ to Proverbs 19:12, "As the roaring of a lion, so also is the anger of a king: and his cheerfulness as the dew upon the grass," saying that the anger of God in His second coming will be like the roaring of the lion, but His mildness now is like the gentleness of falling dew. See Jean Leclercq, O.S.B., *L'idée de la royauté du Christ au moyen âge* (Paris, 1959), p. 104.

7. The themes are liturgical. See Introit, Mass of the B.V.M., Purification to Advent: "Hail, holy mother, who didst bring forth in childbirth the king who ruleth over heaven and earth for ever and ever," *S.M.*, II, 95. Mary is celebrated as both mother and spouse of God through the application to her of passages from Canticles and Ecclesiasticus in the antiphons of Vespers and Matins for the Assumption, S.B., Vol. III, cols. 685 ff., 687 ff., and in the Lessons of the Mass, Legg, p. 308, *S.M.*, II, 465. For a full discussion of Mary's queenship of heaven, see below, Part III, "The Joy of Mary."

8. For the development of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, see above, Introduction, note 33.

9. See, e.g., S.B., Vol. I, cols. viii, xxxiv, xxxvii, clv. See also, S.B., Vol. III, cols. 235, 238, and homily attributed to Fulbert, col. 774; Gradual, Mass of Mary's Nativity: "The nativity of the glorious virgin Mary, sprung from the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, from the famous root of David," *S.M.*, II, 491, also Legg, p. 319; Gradual, Mass of B.V.M., Saturday after Easter, Legg, p. 390, *S.M.*, II, 97; and antiphon for None, *The Prymer*, ed. Henry Littlehales, Part I, EETS, O.S., No. 105 (London, 1895), p. 24. Matt. 1:1-16, the generation of Christ from David, is read at Matins, Christmas Day, S.B., Vol. I, col. clxxxvi, and on Octave of the Nativity of Mary, Legg, p. 319, *S.M.*, II, 493. See also *The Liturgical Poetry of Adam of St. Victor*, ed. and trans. Digby S. Wrangham (3 vols.; London, 1881), Vol. I, Nos. 2, 5; Vol. III, Nos. 90, 96.

10. Legg, pp. 259, 388; *S.M.*, II, 95, 321, 391, 462; S.B., Vol. III, col. 236; *The Prymer*, p. 4.

11. "Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck" (Luke 11:27). See below pp. 53 ff. and note 15.

12. See Brown, *XIII*, xx-xxii.

13. Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien* (6 vols.; Paris, 1955-1959), Vol. IV, pp. 129-40. For a detailed discussion of the tree of Jesse in medieval commentary, drama and illuminations up to the twelfth century, see Arthur Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (London, 1934).

14. For examples, see Eric G. Millar, *English Illuminated Manuscripts of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (Paris, 1928), especially pl. 15.

15. *S.M.*, II, 95; Legg, p. 389.

16. Legg, p. 391; *S.M.*, II, 98.

17. The primary meaning in this poem, in "Gabriel, fram evene-king," and in "Nu þis fules singet" is "without an equal, matchless." See above pp. 34 and p. 34, note 6. See also the careful distinction made as the maiden in *Pearl* (ed. E. V. Gordon [Oxford, 1953]) plays on the words "makeles" and "maskelles," lines 721-88. Addressing Mary (line 435) and referring to Christ (line 757) as "makeles," she refuses for herself the title "makeles quene," classing herself as one of "a hondred and forty fowre þowsande flot" who are "maskelles," "unblemyst" (lines 781-86). See, however, Stephen Manning,

Wisdom and Number (Lincoln, 1962), pp. 160–61, and note 23, pp. 168–69, who gives primary importance to its later denotation of "mateless."

18. See W. W. Greg, pp. 165–67; Kane, p. 165; John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition* (London, 1957), pp. 67–69; Barbara C. Raw, " 'As dew in Aprille,' " *Modern Language Review,* LV (July, 1960), 411–14; Stephen Manning, pp. 158 ff., J. Copley, "I Syng of a Myden," *Notes and Queries,* IX (April, 1962), 134–37; and R. T. Davies, *Medieval English Lyrics: A Critical Anthology* (Evanston, 1964), pp. 18–19.

19. From Bernard's fourth sermon on the glories of the Virgin Mother in *St. Bernard's Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Festivals of the Year,* trans. Mt. Melleray (3 vols.; Westminster, Md., 1950), I, 118.

20. See *OED,* "still," adv.

21. The few examples given by *OED* of this meaning are from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, e.g., *King Horn* (Camb. MS, line 287), "Þu schalt wiþ me to bure gon,/ To speke wiþ Rymenhilde stille."

22. See John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry,* p. 68, for an exaggerated development of the natural and pagan imagery in this poem. According to R. T. Davies, April may suggest the month which begins the new age of man's redemption, *Medieval English Lyrics,* pp. 18, 335.

23. *S.M.,* II, 139; Legg, p. 259. For text and discussion of the Mass, see Introduction, "The Ladder," pp. 15–25. See also verse and response for Vespers, S.B., Vol. II, col. 234; antiphon for Matins, S.B., Vol. III, col. 235; and in Advent, antiphon for Lauds, S.B., Vol. I, col. cxviii.

24. *The Prymer,* p. 21; S.B., Vol. I, cols. cvii, ccxcii. Judges 6:34–40 tells how Gideon twice asked God for a sign that the Israelites would overcome the enemy. Twice he put a fleece on the threshing floor. The first morning he found that miraculously God had cast dew on the fleece while the ground remained dry. The second morning the fleece remained dry while the ground was found wet with dew. The sign of the fleece was applied to the fact that Mary bore Christ while remaining a virgin. Associated often with this story from Judges was Ps. 71:6, "Descendet sicut pluvia in vellus." See F. J. E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 371 ff. The figure was common in the hymns to Mary, e.g., Adam of St. Victor, *Liturgical Poetry,* Vol. II, No. 66; Vol. III, No. 95.

25. See the second and third antiphons and the first nocturn of Matins, Feast of the Annunciation, Y.B., Vol. II, col. 236, *passim;* S.B., Vol. III, col. 235, *passim.* The association of these figures with the conception and birth of Christ is made especially by the sequences and hymns. See Visitation, Y.B., Vol. II, Appendix II, col. 739, and Adam of St. Victor, Vol. I, No. 4; Vol. III, No. 96.

26. Stephen Manning, *Wisdom and Number,* pp. 158–67, points out the numerical symbolism of the poem's structure, the five stanzas suggesting Mary's five joys, the five letters in her name *Maria,* and finds in the threefold occurrence of the dew image a sign of the Holy Trinity's operation in the incarnation.

27. "Bour," according to *MED,* n. 2 (b), referred often to a lady's bed chamber where a lover came; in the *Ormulum* the word was used of Mary's chamber at the annunciation. For examples of its figurative application to Mary's womb, see 3 (a).

28. Cant. 4:12, from the Lesson of the Octave of the Assumption, *S.M.,* II, 465. See also John Mirk, "Crist sayde to hur: 'Com, my swete, com my flour, com my culuer,

myn owne boure, com my modyr, now wyth me; for Heuyn qwene I make þe!' " *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies, by Johannes Mirkus (John Mirk)*, ed. Theodor Erbe, EETS, E.S., No. 96 (London, 1905), p. 224. See above, note 7.

29. Millar, *MSS of the XIVth and XVth Centuries,* pl. 15.

30. S.B., Vol. III, col. 233. See also the Vespers antiphon of the Second Sunday in Advent, after the chapter, "In die illa erit germen Domini in magnificentia et gloria; et fructus terrae sublimis: et exultatio his qui salvati fuerint de Israel" (Isa. 4:2), and the verse, "Rorate caeli . . . ," S.B., Vol. I, col. lxxxi. This antiphon and the following passage from the Canticle of Moses (Deut. 32), sung regularly at Saturday Lauds, bear a close relationship to the image of the poem: "Concrescat ut pluvia doctrina mea: fluat ut ros eloquium meum. Quasi imber super herbam, et quasi stillae super gramina: quia nomen Domini invocabo." S.B., Vol. II, cols. 187–88.

31. Lesson for Octave of the Assumption, *S.M.,* II, 465, and for the Visitation, *S.M.,* II, 389—quoted from Douay-Rheims Bible, Cant. 2:1–2. Legg indicates other passages from the Canticles. See also S.B., Vol. III, cols. 47, 391–92, 413, 785. Flowers are applied to Mary especially in the sequences, e.g., Annunciation, *S.M.,* II, 320–21 (see below, Appendix I), and the many sequences for the Assumption, *S.M.,* II, 466 ff., Adam of St. Victor, Vol. II, No. 73.

32. For liturgical sources see above, note 9; also Raw, pp. 412–13; Manning, p. 165; Davies, p. 18. The poet, too, may here have had in mind the Old Testament figure of the burning bush which Yahweh caused to be a sign for Moses: "Bi þe buysch þat moises siȝ vnbrent, we knowen þat þi preisable maidenhede is kept. modir of god, preie for us!" (antiphon for Sext, *The Prymer,* p. 24) a figure frequently used with that of the flowering rod and the fleece in sequences. See Advent, Mass of Mary, *S.M.,* II, 78 ff.; and Adam of St. Victor, Nativity, Vol. II, No. 74.

33. *Archivum Linguisticum,* III, 158–59.

34. *Middle English Literature,* pp. 164–65.

"ALS I LAY VP-ON A NITH"

1. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* trans. Erwin E. Nemmers (St. Louis, 1946), Prologue, sec. 2, 4.

2. Brown, *XIV,* No. 132, lines 17–19.

3. Brown, *XIV,* No. 56, from Edinburgh Advocates Library MS 18. 7. 21.

4. Besides relating the poem to the genre of vision poetry, the setting is typical also of the formal opening identified by Edmund K. Chambers as the *chanson d'aventure,* which begins with a narrative preface in which the poet pretends he witnesses the action he reports. Chambers and Frank Sidgwick, *Early English Lyrics, Amorous, Divine, Moral & Trivial* (London, 1907), p. 266. For fuller discussion, see Helen E. Sandison, *The "Chanson d'aventure" in Middle English* (Bryn Mawr, 1913). The function of the setting for this poem will be discussed below.

5. Although *OED* lists "withouten wone" as an idiom meaning "without delay" (citing a single example) and in his edition Richard L. Greene glosses the phrase with the same meaning (*The Early English Carols* [Oxford, 1935], p. 383), the context of the phrase in this poem is the mystery of the virgin birth, and I prefer Brown's gloss of "wone" with its primary denotation as "custom" or "accustomed." Taken as a whole,

Mary's statement means that the angel prophesied she should bear man's bliss without womankind's penalty of pain (see above, "Gabriel, fram Evene-King," notes 3 and 4) and implicitly makes the relationship between her painless giving birth and the redemption of man. This translation is borne out in line 51, by the actual birth "in maydened with-outen kare."

6. The word "see" with its connotations of ecclesiastical power, although seeming to be anomalous, perhaps is used to suggest by contrast the falsity of Mary's later assumption that her Son will be an earthly king, whereas the words mean He is to be a king in the context of a spiritual kingdom or priesthood.

7. The four events are those celebrated by the Christmas and Epiphany season liturgy: the Circumcision on January 1, the Octave of Christmas, Legg, pp. 35-36; the Epiphany on January 6, Legg, pp. 37-39; the Purification on February 2, Legg, pp. 246-50; the finding of Jesus in the Temple is not a festival, but the account in Luke is the Gospel reading for the First Sunday after Epiphany, Legg, p. 41. See below, pp. 85 ff.

8. "Tria sunt munera preciosa que optulerunt magi domino in die ista et habent in se diuina misteria. In auro ut ostendatur regis potencia. In thure sacerdotem magnum considera. Et in mirra dominicam sepulturam." Response on Epiphany, Legg, p. 37, and S.B., Vol. I, col. cccxxiv. This was the traditional homiletic application. See, e.g., "In epiphania Domini," *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth Century,* ed. Richard Morris, EETS, O.S., No. 53 (London, 1873), p. 45; *Cursor Mundi,* Part II, EETS, O.S., No. 59 (London, 1875), lines 11492-506; and A. Harford Pearson, *The Sarum Missal Done into English* (2d ed. rev.; London, 1884), p. 38. See also Figure 5.

9. Besides the manifestation of Christ to the gentile Kings, two other events are classed as epiphanies: the baptism of Christ by John (Stanza XXIII), which is commemorated in the Gospel for the Octave of the Epiphany (Legg, p. 39), and Christ's changing of the water into wine at the wedding at Cana, commemorated in the Gospel for the Second Sunday after Epiphany (Legg, p. 42). The three epiphanies are the subject of the hymn "Hostis Herodes impie," sung at Vespers from the Epiphany through the Octave. Text, S.B., Vol. I, col. cccxix. See also *St. Bernard's Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Festivals of the Year,* trans. Mt. Melleray (3 vols.; Westminster, Md., 1950), II, 1-14.

10. John 19:31-37 and I John 5:6-8. See below, p. 128, and Figures 2 and 6.

11. Greene, *Early English Carols,* p. cxxv, classifies this poem as a "Lullay Carol" in the Anglo-Irish Franciscan tradition, although in its narrative and dramatic qualities it seems to have ballad-like characteristics. It is difficult to believe that the refrain was repeated after each of the 37 stanzas as would be characteristic of a carol (see Greene, pp. cxxxii ff.). The story might have been sung consecutively, breaking according to the tale into the regular units of five stanzas, each followed by the "lullay" refrain.

12. George Kane, *Middle English Literature* (London, 1951), pp. 178 ff. See this attitude, for example in R. T. Davies' anthology, *Medieval English Lyrics* (Evanston, 1964). No. 38 is an abridged edition of "Als i lay vp-on a nith," in which the angel's prophecy and sign that the Child is to be the Messiah (Stanzas IX-XI) are omitted as well as the entire tale told by Christ up through His passion (Stanzas XVII-XXI). The implication is that since these parts of the tale are the standard story of the life of Christ, for the understanding of the poem they need not be repeated.

13. So regularly measured are the stages of the telling in each of the five units, that one is tempted to look for further correspondences between them. Putting the units of

five side by side one can see, for example, (1) in the first part of each unit the developing figure of birth and baptism: annunciation and birth of Christ, circumcision (traditional Old Testament type of baptism) and resurrection (fulfillment of Christ's birth, traditional figure for man's rebirth in baptism); (2) in the second part of each unit, Christ's Divinity: His conception by the Holy Spirit, His painless birth, His epiphany to the Magi, the overthrow of Satan, His purpose to liberate man, His ascension into the glory of His godhood; (3) in the third part, the Church: the presentation in the Temple, the sending of the disciples, the sending of the Holy Spirit; (4) in the last part, the development of the poem's narrative.

PART II

"Þe Milde Lomb Isprad o Rode"

1. From *Lamentatio St. Bernardi de compassione Mariae*, a sermon attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, as printed from the Antwerp ed. (1616), cols. 156 ff., in G. Kribel, "Studien zu Richard Rolle de Hampole II," *Englische Studien*, VIII (1885), 98.

2. PL, Vol. CLIX, cols. 271–90. For a general description of Mary's laments in Middle English poetry up to the fifteenth century, see George C. Taylor, "The English 'Planctus Mariae,' " *Modern Philology*, IV (April, 1907), 605–37.

3. My references to sources differ from those given by Brown. For the source of the two thirteenth century poems and the fourteenth century "Wy haue ʒe no reuthe on my child?" Brown refers to the Migne edition of the Bernard dialogue, *Liber de passione Christi et doloribus et planctibus matris ejus*, PL, Vol. CLXXXII, cols. 1133–42. See Brown, *XIII*, pp. 200–201, 204, and *XIV*, p. 265. However, the Kribel version will be the source used for this study, because it is fuller, provides more parallels to the English poems, and uses the fulfillment of Simeon's prophecy in a way identical to Brown, *XIII*, No. 47, lines 31–36. According to Brown, who refers to the words immediately above the poem in the MS, the fourteenth century "Suete sone, reu on me & brest out of þi bondis" is based on a meditation ascribed to Bede. See Brown, *XIV*, p. 266, note on No. 64. However, we shall see below its close relationship to the *Lamentatio* attributed to Bernard.

4. See, e.g., the two versions also published by G. Kribel, pp. 67–114, also *Cursor Mundi*, ed. Richard Morris, Part V, EETS, O.S., No. 68 (London, 1878), lines 23945–4730, and *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and His Followers*, ed. Carl Horstman (2 vols.; London, 1895–96), II (1895), 274–82.

5. Brown, *XIV*, Nos. 67, 128.

6. For a full definition of the theological concepts relevant to the following poems, see the sermon on Christ's passion, *St. Bernard's Sermons for the Seasons and Principal Festivals of the Year*, trans. Mt. Melleray (3 vols.; Westminster, Md., 1950), II, 135–53.

7. Brown, *XIII*, No. 45, from Arundel MS 248.

8. This is the manner also in which Mary portrays Christ in *Lamentatio St. Bernardi:* "Et ipse me videns fuit in cruce eleuatus et ligno durissimis clauis affixus. Stabam et ego videns eum, et ipse videns me plus dolebat de me quam de se. Ipse vero tanquam agnus coram tondente se vocem non dabat, nec aperiebat os suum. Aspiciebam

ego infaelix et misera Deum meum et filium meum in cruce pendentem et morte turpissima morientem. Tantoque dolore et tristitia vexabar in mente quod non posset explicari sermone. . . ." Kribel, p. 90. See also below, note 11.

9. The Paschal Lamb as a figure for Christ is defined most fully by the liturgy of Passiontide and Easter. The Eucharist was instituted in the framework of the Feast of Passover (Exod. 12). See especially Maunday Thursday readings commemorating the institution of the Eucharist, the Good Friday readings of Exod. 12:1–11 and of the Passion according to John 18, 19:1–37 (Legg, pp. 102 ff. and pp. 109 ff.; *S.M.,* I, 236 and 251 ff.), and the Easter Preface (Legg, p. 213, *S.M.,* I, 36). In the Canon of the Mass the figure is used after the fraction of the Host, when the words of John the Baptist (John 1:29) are applied in the Agnus Dei (see Figure 2 and descriptive note). For a presentation of the Lamb suggestive of this poem, see stanzas 6 and 7 of Venantius Fortunatus' hymn, "Pange lingua gloriosi," sung during the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday (Legg, pp. 113–14; *S.M.,* I, 259–61, also S.B., Vol. I, col. dccxxix). For commentary, see Innocent III, PL, Vol. CCXVII, col. 853; Aquinas, *Summa theol.,* III, Ques. 73, art. 6. The ultimate revelation of Christ through the figure of the Lamb is in the Apocalypse, especially chaps. 5, 14, 19, 22.

10. "Christ's afflictions ought to be of such a kind that He could suffer nothing without His consent. This is so not only because of the blessedness and omnipotent divinity united in Him by which He was able to repel all, but also because of His most perfect innocence which in the order of natural justice is not allowed to suffer anything unwillingly." Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* trans. Erwin E. Nemmers (St. Louis, 1946), Part IV, chap. iii, sec. 4. "He was offered because it was his own will, and he opened not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7). See also Bernard, *Sermons,* II, 137–38, and "He alone had power to lay down his life: no man could take it away from Him: He offered it of His own will," pp. 138–39.

11. This carries out the suggestion from Isaiah 53:2–3 of the suffering servant: "There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness: and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of him: Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity: and his look was as it were hidden and despised. Whereupon we esteemed him not." Mary develops the theme also in the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi:* "Erat enim aspectu dulcis, colloquio suauis et omni conuersatione benignissimus. Manabat namque sanguis eius ex quatuor partibus rigantibus undis, ligno manibus pedibusque confixis. De vultu illius pulchritudo effluxerat omnis, et qui erat prae filiis hominum speciosa forma, videbatur omnium indecorus. Videbam quod complebatur illud propheticum in eo: Vidimus eum et non erat ei species neque decor. Vultum enim illius iniquorum Judaeorum foedaverat liuor." Kribel, pp. 90–91.

12. For the evolution of the concept "corpus mysticum," the mystical body, as it first referred to the sacramental Body of Christ and later, through scholastic defense of the Eucharist and especially at the time of Boniface VIII, came to be distinguished from the "Real Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist and to refer to the body *"ecclésial"* of the Church, see Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Corpus Mysticum: l'Eucharistie et l'Église au moyen âge, étude historique* (Paris, 1944).

13. The tradition begins with the Gospel of John himself. See John 13:23, 19:25–27 and John 21:19–24 which was read at Mass and Matins on December 27, John's feast day (Legg, p. 31; *S.M.,* I, 109; S.B., Vol. I, col. ccxxiii). The theme is developed in the antiphons and responses of his feast, first nocturn (S.B., Vol. I, cols. ccxv ff.), along with the theme of John resting his head on Christ's breast at the Last Supper (John 13:23), of John's virginity, and of Christ's commending Mary to John's care. See also Y.B., Vol.

I, cols. 103 ff. According to Bede, John was worthy of this title because of his special chastity: "Diligebat autem eum Jesus: quia specialis praerogativa castitatis ampliori dilectione eum fecerat dignum." His chastity also made him a fitting servant of Christ's mother (S.B., Vol. I, col. ccxxiv; Y.B., Vol. I, col. 109). Bede's statement and the themes of Matins are the basis of the sequence for John's feast day (Legg, pp. 463–64; S.M., I, 109). See also the Apostrophe to St. John following the English metrical version of the *Lamentatio* in *Cursor Mundi*, lines 24659–730.

14. Brown, *XIII*, Nos. 47, 49, see below, pp. 130–31, 142–45. In the *Lamentatio* the prophecy's fulfillment is used not to show the justice of Mary's suffering, but to convey its intensity: "Nec lingua poterit loqui nec mens cogitare valebit, quanto dolore afficiebantur pia viscera Mariae. Nunc soluis virgo cum usura quod in partu non habuisti a natura. Dolorem pariendo filium non sensisti, quem millies replicatum filio moriente passa fuisti. Juxta crucem stabat emortua mater, quae ipsum ex spiritu sancto concepit." Kribel, pp. 98–99 (the reference is missing from Migne, *Liber de passione Christi*). In chap. xii of the Anselm dialogue the virtue of faith is stressed, as it is Mary's faith in her Son's godhood that causes the sword to pierce her soul: "Tunc matri potuit dicere: *Audi filia, et vide* (Ps. 44:11), audi voces blasphemantium filium tuum, et vide dolorem meum. Scis enim quod de Spiritu sancto concepisti me, et quod virgo genuisti me, et qualiter aluisti me. Unde ex quo isti non credunt in me, tu tamen crede in me, et compatere. Tunc iterum gladius Simeonis animam pertransivit." PL, Vol. CLIX, col. 284.

15. The Gospel simply states: "When Jesus therefore had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his mother: Woman behold thy son. After that, he saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own." John 19:26–27. These verses are included in the Gospel read for the Mass of Mary during Paschaltide, Legg, p. 391; S.M., II, 98. The *Lamentatio* has: "Et quo ego vado, tu non potes venire modo, venies autem postea. Interim Joannes, qui est nepos tuus, reputabitur tibi filius, curam habebit tui et erit solatium fidelissimum tibi. Inde dominus intuitus Joannem ait: Ecce mater tua! El seruies, curam illius habebis eam tibi commendo, suscipe matrem tuam, imo magis suscipe matrem meam!" Kribel, pp. 96–97. See also above, note 13.

16. The past event of sacred history, the focus of the first part of the poem, is applied to the present moment as defined by the point of view of the Church, as in virtue of the past event, the poet formulates man's present petition for future joy. The reformulation is analogous to the form of the Collect of the Mass, above, Introduction, pp. 22 ff.

17. The indirect naming follows the same principle as seen in "Nu þis fules singet," Part I, p. 52–53. The One spoken of is identified by His unique and special act for mankind. The significance of this identifying of Christ, Mary and mankind by virtue of their relationship to the events of sacred history is developed below, pp. 163 ff., 204 ff.

18. These three aspects of beauty correspond generally to those systematically described by Edgar de Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale* (3 vols.; Brugge, 1946), especially to Hugh of St. Victor's definition of beauty (II, 203, *passim*). They are fully defined also by Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum,* chap. ii (see the trans. by Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. [St. Bonaventure, New York, 1956]). The third aspect, the power to achieve delight, is the key proportion for the definition of beauty in terms of theology and will be discussed more fully in Part III, "The Figure of Delight," and in the Conclusion.

19. These connotations are borne out by commentary. See, e.g., Bede who, commenting on John the Baptist's "Behold the Lamb of God . . ." (John 1:29), explains how

Christ washed us from sin in His blood: not only did He do so when His blood was given for us on the cross or when by means of His passion we are washed by the waters of baptism, but truly He washes our sins in His blood, "cum ejusdem beatae passionis ad altare memoria replicatur, cum panis et vini creatura in sacramentum carnis et sanguinis ejus ineffabili Spiritu sanctificatione transfertur." PL, Vol. XCIV, col. 75.

20. Although having a different significance for each poem by virtue of the differing subjects of each, this proportioning of the components of a stanza to the components of the following stanzas is analogous to the proportioning of stanzas in "Gabriel, fram evene-king" and "Als i lay vp-on a nith." See above, pp. 44 ff., 81 ff.

21. It is interesting to note the poet's exhortation in relation to Jungmann's comment that in Eucharistic piety from the end of the twelfth century the idea of spiritual communion replaced that of sacramental reception of Christ: "With an appeal to the Augustinian *Crede et manducasti,* this form of piety, when one turned with loving faith to Christ, contemplated His Passion with profoundest love, devoutly assisted at Holy Mass or looked up at the Sacred Host, was explained as a work scarcely less valuable than sacramental Communion itself." *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development (missarum sollemnia)* (2 vols.; New York, 1951), II, 364.

MARY'S SORROW

1. For a longstanding definition of lyric, see Francis Turner Palgrave: "Lyrical has been here held essentially to imply that each Poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation. In accordance with this, narrative, descriptive, and didactic poems, —unless accompanied by rapidity of movement, brevity, and the coloring of human passion,—have been excluded." *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language,* edited and revised by C. Day Lewis (London, 1954), p. 21. For a view more influential on the present generation of critics, see Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* (2d ed.; New York, 1953), especially "The Dramatic Aspect of Poetry," p. lix, and how poetry tends towards concentration for an effect of greater intensity, p. 71. See also 3d ed., 1960, pp. xiii–xiv. In *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962), Durant W. Robertson, Jr., points out the incorrectness particularly of reading medieval love poetry with the romantic idea that poetry is to arouse and express emotions, pp. 14–17. He also discusses the non-dramatic quality of medieval poetry, pp. 37–51. In *Wisdom and Number* (Lincoln, 1962), Preface and Chapter I, Stephen Manning warns about reading Middle English lyrics with such concepts as those of Palgrave or Brooks and Warren, putting the lyrics in the broader classification of songs. But his approach through the categories of rhetoric does not seem to me to account adequately for the essential unity of form with its theological content.

2. *Middle English Literature* (London, 1951), p. 129. See the following pages in Kane for a discussion of the meditative lyric.

3. *Middle English Literature,* pp. 148–49.

4. *Lamentatio St. Bernardi de compassione Mariae,* ed. G. Kribel, *Englische Studien,* VIII (1885), 92–93.

5. Brown, *XIV,* No. 60.

6. The transcription of these two poems omits Brown's indications of emendations of the texts.

7. " 'Why,' as Bernard said, in the character of Mary, to the Jews, 'if it does not

please you to pity the Son do you not pity the mother!'" Brown, *XIV*, p. 265, note on No. 60.

8. *Middle English Literature,* pp. 148–49.

9. *Middle English Literature,* p. 149.

10. Kribel, pp. 85–86.

11. Kribel, p. 87.

12. Kribel, pp. 109–10.

13. Brown, *XIV*, No. 64.

14. Noting that immediately above this poem is written in the MS, "Beda. Audi cum Maria quae dixit," Brown points out a general similarity between the poem and *De meditatione passionis Christi per septem diei horas libellus* (PL, Vol. XCIV, cols. 561–68) sometimes ascribed to Bede. Brown, *XIV*, p. 266. The passage Brown quotes is Mary's prayer, first to her Son to remember her and all His servants and then to God the Father to accept her Son. Brown himself indicates the parallel is not verbal, and it seems to me the mode of Mary's lamentation is closer to the spirit of the following section of the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi* than to the passages ascribed to Bede: "O fili carissime, o benignissime nate, misereri matri tuae et suscipe preces eius! Desine nunc mihi esse durus, qui cunctis semper fuisti benignus! Suscipe matrem tuam in cruce ut vivam tecum post mortem semper! Nihil mihi dulcius est quam te amplexato, in cruce tecum mori; et nil certe amarius quam viuere post tuam mortem. O vere Dei nate, tu mihi pater, tu mihi mater, tu mihi filius, tu mihi sponsus, tu mihi anima eras. Nunc, orbor patre, viduor sponso, desolor filio, omnia perdo. . . . Fili dulcissime, omnia tibi possibilia sunt, sed etsi non vis ut moriar tecum, mihi saltem relinque aliquod benignum consilium!" Kribel, 93–94.

15. Matt. 27:40. See also Mark 25:29–32 and Luke 23:35–43. It is precisely this context which is given in the Anselm dialogue when Christ explains to Mary that now is the moment that the sword foretold by Simeon pierces her soul. It is in contrast to those who challenged Christ to come down from the cross and they would believe, that Mary stands beneath the cross and suffers. PL, Vol. CLIX, cols. 283–84.

16. Matt. 26:56. See also Mark 14:50.

17. *Middle English Literature,* p. 148.

18. Mary will take this same position again after Christ's ascension. In the poems on Mary's joys the situation of man in present time in relation to heavenly joy is included explicitly in the poems, as, after Mary's assumption, man raises his prayer to her. See below, pp. 149 ff., 162–64, 187 ff.

"STOND WEL, MODER, VNDER RODE"

1. George Kane, *Middle English Literature* (London, 1951), p. 148.

2. Brown, *XIII,* No. 49. My transcription of this poem omits indications of Brown's emendations. In his notes to the poem, Brown lists four known texts, one incomplete: Digby MS 86 (Brown's A text), British Museum Royal MS 12 E. I (Brown's B text), Harley MS 2253, and St. John's College Cambridge MS E. 8. Of the several editions of Harley 2253, the text I have referred to in comparing the versions is that included in Bruce Dickins and R. M. Wilson, *Early Middle English Texts* (New York, 1951), pp. 129–30. Both the Royal and the incomplete St. John's College texts are accompanied by music. Of the three complete versions I use the Royal (Brown's B text). This choice is

in agreement with Brown (p. 205); that is, although it is a later text than Digby, it appears to be the more authentic of the two. As Brown says, lines 37-39 of Digby seem to miss the purpose of the poem and lines 43-44 to be a perversion of the same lines in Royal. On the other hand, in Harley 2253 the stanza which is in Royal as stanza six is used as stanza three. I find Royal preferable to Harley because in this stanza the two appeals, of Christ to Mary to let Him die and of Mary to Christ that He let her die before Him, come as a climax reached just before Christ uses Mary's suffering to make her mother of mankind.

3. *Lamentatio St. Bernardi de compassione Mariae,* ed. G. Kribel, *Englische Studien,* VIII (1885), 91.

4. "Nam gladius mortis Christi animas utrorumque transibat. Transibat saeuus, saeuus perimebat utrunque. Quo magis amabat, saevior fiebat in matre. Vulnera Christi morientis erant vulnera matris dolentis." Kribel, p. 97.

5. This motif of Mary's tears of blood is neither in the Latin *Lamentatio* nor in the *Cursor Mundi* version of it, but is in the English metrical versions of the school of Richard Rolle. See the versions printed by Kribel, lines 81-96, and that in *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and His Followers,* ed. Carl Horstmann (2 vols.; London, 1895-1896), II, 274-82, lines 49-64. Compare this theme to the stanzas in "Als i lay vp-on a nith," lines 117-24, where to the sword piercing Mary's heart Christ opposes His own heart's blood to be shed for the redemption of man. See above, pp. 79-80.

6. See also *Lamentatio St. Bernardi,* Kribel, p. 90.

7. See above, "Þe Milde Lomb Isprad o Rode," pp. 99-100 and note 14; see below, pp. 142-45.

8. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* trans. Erwin E. Nemmers (St. Louis, 1946), Prologue, sec. 6, 4, develops both this statement and his definition of theology from Eph. 3:14-19. A considerable symbolic tradition, following from the earlier Fathers, especially Augustine, was based on Paul's description of these four dimensions of the charity of God and the idea of the universe as an intelligible cross. For a gathering of commentaries, see Anton E. Schönbach, *Altdeutsche Predigten* (2 vols.; Graz, 1886-1888), II (1888), 177-89; see also Jacob Gretser, *Opera omnia* (17 vols.; Ratisbon, 1734-41), Vols. I-III. A celebrated example of the tradition is Rabanus Maurus, *De laudibus sanctae crucis,* PL, Vol. CVII, cols. 133-294, in which the mysteries of the Christian faith are figured in poetry whose words are emblematically diagrammed in the form of the cross and then explicated. For a re-evaluation of the poem, and a comparison of it to the vision of Teilhard de Chardin, see Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Ecriture* (4 vols.; Paris, 1959, 1961, 1964), I, 161 ff. In "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" man's life in present time is proportioned to the cross. See below, pp. 135 ff.

9. Montague Rhodes James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the MSS in the Library of St. John's College Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1913), No. 111, p. 145. See also Brown, *XIII,* pp. 203-4.

10. A version of the sequence is printed in Guido M. Dreves, *Analecta hymnica medii aevi,* Vol. VIII (Leipzig, 1890), No. 58, and with slight variations another is found in the Paris, Arsenal MS 135 of the Sarum Missal, printed in Legg, p. 530. For the version from the Sarum Missal, see below, Appendix II. For an edition of the music, see John Stainer, *Early Bodleian Music: Sacred & Secular Songs, Together with Other MS Compositions in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ranging from about* A.D. *1185 to about* A.D. *1505* (2 vols.; London, 1901), II, 8-9. Contrasting to the music of "Gabriel, fram evene-king," this music develops in a continuous progression, with the second

three lines of the two parts of the stanzas an approximate repetition of the first, corresponding to the movement of thought in the series of more and more intense oppositions which are resolved finally in the last three stanzas by the succession of events.

11. Brown, *XIII*, No. 4, from Tanner MS 169 *. After the section relating Mary's present grief to her painless child-bearing, both the incomplete English version and the Latin sequence have an additional stanza summarizing Mary's sorrow (Brown, No. 4, lines 19–24, "Stabat iuxta Christi crucem," lines 43–48). In the final prayer both the incomplete English version and the Latin sequence address Mary as mother (the English has both mother and maid, "Milde moder, maiden oa"). See also Arthur S. Napier, *History of the Holy Rood-tree . . . with Notes on the Orthography of the Ormulum and A Middle English Compassio Marie*, EETS, O.S., No. 103 (London, 1894), pp. 75–86. Napier points out the similarity of "Iesu cristes milde moder" to the Latin sequence.

12. Brown, *XIII*, No. 47, from the same Arundel MS 248 as "Gabriel, fram evene-king" and "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode." Both the complete English narrative and the English dialogue versions omit the stanza summarizing Mary's sorrow and add a stanza before the last one so that the last two stanzas are very similar. The next to the last stanzas of both begin by referring to the bliss Christ brought by His resurrection and then invoking Mary to make "us" happy as well. The last stanzas begin in both with an address to Mary, Queen of Heaven, and then ask her, for the blood Christ shed, to bring us to heaven.

13. The correspondence is made in the Latin and the incomplete English version, the English adding a fourth correspondence, "For, so gleam glidis þurt þe glas" (line 33).

14. *XIII*, p. 204.

15. "O mater mollis ad fluendum, mollis ad dolendum, tu scis quia ad hoc veni et ad hoc de te carnem assumpsi ut per crucis patibulum saluarem genus humanum. Quomodo ergo implebuntur scripturae? sic enim oportet me pati pro salute generis humani. Die namque tertia resurgam, tibi et discipulis meis patenter apparens; desine flere et dolorem depone, quia ad patrem vado et ad gloriam paternae maiestatis percipiendam ascendo! Congratulare mihi, quia nunc inueni ovem errantem quam tam longo tempore perdideram. Moritur unus ut totus inde reuiuiscat mundus. Vnius ob meritum cuncti periere minores, et nunc saluantur unius ob meritum. Quod placet Deo patri, quomodo displicet tibi? Mater dulcissima, calicem quem dedit mihi pater, non vis ut bibam illum? Noli flere mulier, noli flere mater speciosissima! non te desero, non te derelinquo. Tecum sum et tecum ero omni tempore saeculi. Secundum carnem subjaceo imperio mortis, secundem diuinitatem sum et ero semper immortalis et impassibilis. Bene scis unde processi et unde veni. Quare ergo tristaris, si illuc ascendo unde descendi? Tempus est ut reuertar ad eum qui me misit." Kribel, pp. 95–96.

PART III

THE NAMES OF JOY

1. Aelred of Rievaulx, "In Assumptione B. Mariae," PL, Vol. CXCV, col. 309, trans. T. E. Bridgett, *Our Lady's Dowry* (London, 1875), pp. 107–8.

2. To see again the variety of ways in which an author can use the events of sacred

history, contrast these words of Aelred, which seek to expand man's comprehension of the meaning of Mary's joy by multiplying joy upon joy, to those, quoted above, pp. 115 ff., by the author of the *Lamentatio St. Bernardi*, who uses the quality of Mary's present great joy in heaven to indicate by contrast the intense degree to which she must have suffered at the crucifixion. See also how Aelred develops Mary's joy by contrasting to each earthly joy a heavenly counterpart, cols. 309–10, and compare Aelred to Anselm, quoted below, pp. 175 ff., on heavenly joy.

3. " . . . Ita non est ei tantum creatura, ancilla, amica, filia, sed etiam mater," Aelred, col. 309.

4. See Aelred, cols. 310, 313–14. Aelred affirms the possibility of Mary's bodily assumption, but leaves the question open as he applies to Mary's state phrases from Canticles and Paul's description of Christ's revelation to him: "But one thing I dare most surely affirm, that to-day the Blessed Virgin—'whether in the body or out of the body I know not, God knoweth'—ascended into heaven. . . ." Bridgett's translation, p. 109. See also the letter ascribed to Jerome read at Matins on the Assumption, S.B., Vol. III, cols. 687 ff.

5. "De Anunciacione dominica sermo breuis," *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies by Johannes Mirkus (John Mirk),* ed. Theodor Erbe, Part I, EETS, E.S., No. 96 (London, 1905), pp. 109–10.

6. "De Assumpcione Beate Marie Uirginis . . . ," *Mirk's Festial,* Part I, pp. 224–25.

7. "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode," line 45. See also "Gabriel, fram evene-king," line 50. This title of Mary is behind the words with which in "Stond wel, moder, vnder rode" Christ cries out to Mary, "Moder, merci! let me deyen" (line 31), so that He may buy Adam out of hell and Mary may become full of pity for mankind.

8. Paris, 1932. For the variety of numbers, see Wilmart, pp. 327 ff. and p. 328, note 1. For evidence of the popularity of the five joys, see also Brown, *XIII,* p. 179, note on No. 18, and J. Vincent Crowne, "Middle English Poems on the Joys and on the Compassion of the Blessed Virgin Mary," *Catholic University Bulletin,* VIII (July, 1902), 304–16. There was a strong devotion to Mary's seven celestial joys, which according to tradition were shown by Mary to Thomas à Becket because he had repeated her five earthly joys so faithfully. See *Mirk's Festial,* p. 232; *Horae Eboracenses,* ed. Christopher Words-worth, Surtees Society, Vol. CXXXII (Durham and London, 1920 for 1919), p. 64, note 4; Bridgett, *Our Lady's Dowry,* pp. 65–66; and Wilmart, p. 329. For additional texts of English poems on the seven joys, consult *Index of Middle English Verse,* ed. Carleton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins (New York, 1943), Nos. 462, 465, 896, 1025, 1033. The *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse,* ed. Rossell Hope Robbins and John Cutler (Lexington, 1965), lists none. See Brown, *XV,* 304, note to No. 33. Finally, there was also wide devotion to Mary's fifteen earthly and heavenly joys. See, for example, Wilmart, pp. 339–58, and two poems by Lydgate in *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate,* ed. Henry N. MacCracken, EETS, E.S., No. 107 (London, 1911 for 1910), pp. 260–79.

9. The *Supplement* records only an additional fragment on Mary's five joys.

10. *Horae Eboracenses,* pp. 63–64.

11. The seven heavenly joys are Mary's matchlessness, the brightness of her glory, the honor she receives from all beings, the willingness of her Son to grant her request, her place next to the Holy Trinity, her rewarding of those who serve her, and, finally, the fact that her joy is endless. *Horae Eboracenses,* pp. 64–66; *Mirk's Festial,* pp. 232–33.

12. For example, the initials of the verse beginning each Hour in the fourteenth

century *Horae* for Humphrey de Bohun (Bodleian MS Auct. D. 4.4) depict the joys of Mary and include the crucifixion and resurrection. *The Bohun MSS,* ed. Montague R. James, Roxburghe Club, No. 200 (Oxford, 1936), pls. 31–35. The fourteenth century *Horae* for Joan II of Navarre begins each Hour with a joy. *Thirty-Two Miniatures from the Book of Hours of Joan II, Queen of Navarre,* ed. Henry Y. Thompson, Roxburghe Club, No. 137 (London, 1899), Part II, pls. 14–19 (the reproduction is not comprehensive). Also there are evidences of the joys in association with the tree of Jesse. For example, in the fourteenth century Gorleston Psalter, below in the illumination, woven into the design of the tree, is the series of five of Mary's joys during Christ's childhood. Eric G. Millar, *English Illuminated MSS of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (Paris, 1928), pl. 15. For other examples of joys in the Psalters, see Millar, pls. 8 and 35. The most clear example of the concept is in the fourteenth century Peterborough Psalter (Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 53), where before each psalm are two pages of joys, a joy to each page, followed by two pages of figures, an Old Testament Prophet and a New Testament Apostle. The sequence of joys is the annunciation, nativity, resurrection, ascension, and the coronation of the Virgin. Mary's joys are followed by Christ's passion. *A Peterborough Psalter and Bestiary of the Fourteenth Century,* ed. Montague R. James, Roxburghe Club, No. 178 (Oxford, 1921), pls. 2–3, 6–7, 10. This same pattern is followed by other artists. See Millar, pls. 28–29, 37–39.

13. Wilmart, pp. 331 ff.

14. Bridgett, p. 67. For other examples of the joys and a discussion of their origin and popularity, see pp. 65–73. On their application to Christ's wounds, see also Wilmart, pp. 331–32.

15. *The Ancrene Riwle (The Corpus MS: "Ancrene Wisse"),* trans. M. B. Salu (London, 1955), pp. 17–18. This edition is a modern English rendering of the Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 402.

16. *Ancrene Riwle,* p. 195.

17. "Gaude dei genitrix uirgo inmaculata./ Gaude que gaudium ab angelo suscepisti./ Gaude que genuisti aeterni luminis claritatem./ Gaude mater./ Gaude sancta dei genitrix uirgo./ Tu sola mater innupta./ Te laudat omnis factura domini [genitricem lucis]./ Pro nobis supplica./ [Sis pro nobis, quesumus, perpetua interuentrix]." Wilmart, p. 331.

18. "The English Liturgical Refrain Lyric before 1450" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1945), p. 60. In a footnote Dr. White says it was used at Matins for the Fourth Week of Advent and that it appeared also in the liturgy of the Assumption and Purification. She gives no evidence for the direct connection of this antiphon with the joys. See S.B., Vol. II, col. 286; S.B., Vol. III, col. 143; Y.B., Vol. I, col. 690; Y.B., Vol. II, col. 501.

19. Brown, *XIII,* No. 22. The poem is from the same Trinity College Cambridge MS 323 as "Nu þis fules singet hand maket hure blisse." For a description of the MS, see Brown, *XIII,* pp. xx–xxi.

20. According to Brown, *XIII,* p. 181, the English poem is a literal rendering of "Gavde virgo, mater Christi," which he says is to be found in Guido M. Dreves, S.J., *Analecta hymnica medii aevi,* Vol. XXXI, No. 172. However, the English differs considerably from the *Analecta hymnica* version, which is an expanded six six-line stanza version, the first three lines of each stanza taken together corresponding to the stanzas of the English poem. The above York version represents the Latin equivalent of the English poem and will be used as the basis of comparison. The York Latin stanzas

and the English version seem to represent the core of the devotion to which various elements could be added, such as commentary on the meaning of each joy, as in the case of the expanded *Analecta hymnica* version; or such as an Ave after each stanza, as the note to "Gavde virgo, mater Christi" indicates (p. 63). The two poems on the five joys to be discussed below reflect these methods of expansion. For another expanded version in English see that in *The Minor Poems of the Vernon MS*, ed. Carl Horstmann, Part I, EETS, O.S., No. 98 (London, 1892), pp. 25–26. For Latin hymns on the joys, see esp. *Analecta hymnica*, Vol. XXXI, Nos. 86–91, 170–95.

21. *Horae Eboracenses*, pp. 63–64. The poem is followed, to complete the devotion, by a verse, response and prayer:

V. Benedicta es a Filio tuo, domina.

R. Quia per te fructum vite communicauimus.

Oremus.

Deus, qui beatissimam virginem Mariam in conceptu et partu [dilecti Filii tui] virginitate seruata duplici gaudio letificasti: quique eius gaudia Filio tuo resurgente et ad celos ascendente multiplicasti: presta, quesumus, vt ad illud ineffabile gaudium, quo assumpta tecum gaudet in celis, eius meritus et intercessione valeamus peruenire. Per [eundem] Christum Dominum nostrum.

22. The Latin *gaude*, the imperative of *gaudeo*, is intransitive and means "rejoice," as in line 1, "Rejoice, virgin, mother of Christ." "Gladen" according to *MED* had both an intransitive and transitive use. The transitive use was frequent, meaning, to make joyful, fill with joy or bliss.

23. "*R.* Suscipe verbum virgo Maria quod tibi a Domino per angelum transmissum est: concipies per aurem Deum paries et hominem. Ut benedicta dicaris inter omnes mulieres. *V.* Paries quidem filium: sed virginitatis non patieris detrimentum: efficieris gravida et eris mater semper intacta. Ut benedicta dicaris." Matins for the Annunciation, S.B., Vol. III, cols. 236–37. See also Matins for Christmas Day, S.B., Vol. I, col. clxxvi.

24. Brown glosses "gode" as the dative of "god" meaning "good." Yet because the Latin says "quia Deo plena" and the second joy celebrates Mary's painless giving birth not to an abstraction, "good," but to God incarnate in the flesh, "gode" appears to be the dative of "god," meaning "God."

25. See *OED*, "with" 15, "In the same way as; as—does or did, is or was, etc.; like." This poem provides an example of the use earlier than those cited (by Richard Rolle, Langland). The epithet "castitatis lilium," closer to the English poet's rendering here, is applied to Mary in the sequence used for the Annunciation (see Appendix I, line 39), and used also on the second day during the Octave of the Assumption. Legg, p. 479.

26. The use in this poem of the word "clos" is the only example cited by the *MED* of the word used to signify heaven. The other examples indicate the word was normally used to denote a tangible dwelling of some sort on earth. The absence of other examples reinforces my opinion that the author appropriates the word to stress the concept of space. Conceiving of Christ's "clos" with physical concreteness is a particularly English characteristic in illumination. For examples of the ascension, see Millar, *English Illuminated MSS from the Xth to the XIIIth Century* (Paris, 1926), pls. 61, 98; *MSS of*

the XIVth and XVth Centuries, pls. 25, 28, 35. A particularly interesting example is found in the Tiptoft Missal, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 163ᵛᵒ. Below the clouds which cut off the top of the ascending Christ, Christ's feet are visible on either side of the trailing hem of His garment, and His right hand is lowered below the clouds in the sign of divinity. On earth, with the disciples grouped in two clusters behind them, kneel Mary and Peter facing each other. Christ's ascent has left a gap in the center of the group, bridged only by the praying hands of Mary. In the Pentecost illumination, fol. 168ᵛᵒ, the gap is filled entirely by the figure of Mary around whom the disciples cluster as the dove of the Holy Spirit descends on her. See also Meyer Schapiro, "The Image of the Disappearing Christ: The Ascension in English Art Around the Year 1000," *Gazette des beaux-arts,* 6th Ser., Vol. XXIII (1943), 134-52. For a possible relationship to English drama, see Mary D. Anderson, *Drama and Imagery in English Medieval Churches* (Cambridge, 1963), Part III.

27. It is the figure used by Elizabeth as she salutes Mary at the visitation, "Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb," joined often by the liturgy with the angel's salutation at the annunciation. Legg, pp. 259, 388; *S.M.,* II, 95, 321, 391, 462; S.B., Vol. III, col. 236. The same figure concludes the antiphon "Salve regina": "Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,/ Nobis post hoc exilium ostende," *Horae Eboracenses,* p. 62. And it is developed also on the Assumption by Bede, who interprets the birth of Christ as a fulfillment of the psalm verse: "Etenim Dominus dabit benignitatem: et terra nostra dabit fructum suum," S.B., Vol. III, cols. 693-94.

28. This is the position characteristic of man until Christ comes again. See the readings, verses and prayers of the Ascension liturgy, which use Acts 1:10-11. Legg, pp. 154-58; *S.M.,* I, 328-34. The Introit, for example, is: "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? alleluya. He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven, alleluya, alleluya, alleluya. *Ps.* And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said: Ye men of Galilee . . ." etc. *S.M.,* I, 329. For the representation in illuminations, see above, note 26.

29. The same coupling of joys is found in the prayer following the York "Gavde virgo, mater Christi."

30. See for comparison, Tiptoft Missal, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 163ᵛᵒ, fol. 231ᵛᵒ, and fol. 253ᵛᵒ. See also, Millar, *MSS from the Xth to the XIIIth Century,* pl. 83, and *MSS of the XIVth and XVth Centuries,* pls. 8, 15, 22-25, 28, 29, 37, 38.

THE VISION OF JOY

1. *St. Bonaventure's "Itinerarium mentis in Deum,"* trans. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1956), chap. iv, secs. 1-2.

2. Brown, *XIII,* No. 41, from Jesus College Oxford MS 29.

3. The title "leuedy" is used in poems which emphasize Mary's position as Queen of Heaven, and it is when the religious poet addresses her in heaven that he often adapts secular courtly love lyric terms. The contrast between the religious and courtly poems is fundamentally the difference between what is the object of the poet's desire rather than between the expressions of it. In this poem the fundamental prayer is that man both recognize and obtain the real object of his desire as theology defines it, the joy of heaven. In the famous poem from this same MS, "Friar Thomas de Hales' Love Ron"

(Brown, *XIII*, No. 43), the difference between the earthly and heavenly objects of love provides the structural and dynamic basis of the poem. See also below, note 9.

4. "Frume" according to *MED* is derived from the OE "fruma" and can mean both first in time (*MED* cites this line as an example) and at the beginning or at the start. Thus it can refer both to the first of the five joys and to the beginning of the heavenly joy once lost by Adam (line 35).

5. Introit and Gradual of the Vigil of the Assumption, Legg, 307; *S.M.*, II, 462, 463; also Gradual for the Mass of Mary from the Purification to Advent, *S.M.*, II, 95; and in *The Prymer*, third lesson for Matins, antiphon for Lauds and Prime, chapter for Lauds and Vespers.

6. For an alternative reading of this stanza, see below, "The Figure of Delight," pp. 189–90.

7. *The Ancrene Riwle* (*The Corpus MS: "Ancrene Wisse"*), trans. M. B. Salu (London, 1955), p. 11.

8. See above, p. 150 and note 4. For another example of the distinction between Mary's bodily and spiritual joy, see the prayer of the fourth joy in the *Riwle*, where it is the basis for the application of the prayer to the human soul: "O Lady, St Mary, because of the great joy that thou hadst when thou sawest thy fair and blessed Son, whom the Jews had thought to shut away in the tomb, rising on Ascension Thursday, in such glory and power, to His happiness in His heavenly kingdom, grant that I may, with Him, cast all the world underfoot and rise now in heart, at my death in spirit and at the day of judgement all bodily, to the joys of heaven" (p. 16).

9. These terms, meaning "courteous," "kind," "graceful," were often applied to both Christ and Mary. See Brown, *XIII*, No. 55, "Iblessed beo þu, lauedi so feir and so hende" (line 25); for other thirteenth century examples, see Nos. 60, 61, 65. No. 43, "Friar Thomas de Hales' Love Ron," defines Christ by comparing Him to an earthly king. See above, note 3.

10. Among the corrections he suggests of Carleton Brown's *English Lyrics of the XIIIth Century*, Kemp Malone would, it seems to me incorrectly for the reasons above, emend "wis" (line 51) to "iwis." "Notes on Middle English Lyrics," *Journal of English Literary History*, II (April, 1935), 60.

11. See the relevant definition of folly and wisdom in John Conley's "Pearl and a Lost Tradition," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, LIV (1955), 332–47. Folly, he quotes Aquinas, "denotes the dulness of sense in judging, and chiefly as regards the highest cause, which is the last and the sovereign good," p. 344, and for a full discussion see pp. 344–47. There are, in fact, similarities between the concerns of these two poems. The dramatic center of each is the distance between the object of desire and the one who desires, as they move through a prompting to vision, to a knowledge of heavenly bliss. In the case of *Pearl* the prompting is done by the maiden who makes possible the speaker's inner journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. In "Leuedy, for þare blisse" the prompting is done by a series of joys which are defined in terms of Mary's vision of God and which lead, through the events of sacred history, into heaven, increasing the poet's and the audience's knowledge of the nature of happiness. Like the speaker in *Pearl*, the poet in this poem reaches a gap he cannot cross. For the speaker in *Pearl* it is a river which separates him from the maiden. For the poet and his audience in "Leuedy, for þare blisse" it is the gap between their experience and the experience they desire of God, the gap of time and state, to be resolved only "hwenne we schulle þis lif for-gon" (line 48).

12. Ecclus. 24 is applied to Mary on the Feast of her Nativity (Legg, 319) and her

Conception (*S.M.*, II, 256), and also for the Vigil and Feast of the Assumption (Legg, 307, 308; *S.M.*, II, 463, 465).

13. Conley, p. 344.

THE FIGURE OF DELIGHT

1. Anselm, quoted by Bonaventure in *Breviloquium,* trans. Erwin E. Nemmers (St. Louis, 1947), Part VII, chap. vii, sec. 9.

2. *Breviloquium,* Prologue, sec. 6, 6. The following quote is taken from Part I, chap. i, 1, and the quotes from Anselm are from Part VII, chap. vii, secs. 7–8.

3. *St. Bonaventure's "Itinerarium mentis in Deum,"* trans. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1956), chap. vii, sec. 6.

4. A classic example of this is Augustine's *De Trinitate,* Book XV, chaps. xxiii–xxiv, where, after defining the Holy Trinity, then seeking It in all created things, even in the deepest soul of man, Augustine reveals the discrepancy between his words and the reality, which man will contemplate only in eternity. PL, Vol. XLII, cols. 1090–91.

5. See above, Bonaventure. The dedication of the life of St. Francis to poverty, to the infancy and suffering of Christ, expresses this spirituality. The classic expression of the darkness is the *Cloud of Unknowing.* See EETS, O.S., Nos. 218 (London, 1944), 231 (London, 1955 for 1949).

6. Again see Augustine, his *De doctrina Christiana,* Book I, chaps. xxiii–xxvii. PL, Vol. XXXIV, cols. 27–30.

7. In seeking for the aesthetic foundation of liturgical poetry, the theory of musical and numerical proportions is of much more value than theories of rhetoric deriving from classical precedent. See Ernst R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* trans. Willard Trask (New York, 1953), chaps. viii and xii. The principle of music was a movement of numbers from unity to diversity in a series of proportionate ratios. The entire universe was described in terms of the proportion of numbers, for which the Holy Trinity was the divine pattern. The mathematical conception was the basis of the discussions of music by Augustine and Boethius who influenced the later theorists. See Augustine, *De musica,* Book I, PL, Vol. XXXII, cols. 1081–100. For a general survey of this concept and the various definitions of proportion in number, see Edgar de Bruyne, *Etudes d'esthétique médiévale* (3 vols.; Brugge, 1946), especially "L'harmonie universelle," I, 9–26, on Boethius, also 306–16, 323 ff., 367 ff.; II, on Hugo of St. Victor, 205 ff., 216; and III, on Grosseteste, 126 ff., and Bonaventure, 189–226. For modern studies, see Leo Spitzer, "Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung,'" *Traditio,* II (1944), 409–69 and III (1945), 307–64. Otto von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral* (New York, 1956). Harry Bober, "In Principio. Creation Before Time," *Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky,* ed. Millard Meiss (2 vols.; New York, 1961), I, 13–28 and II, 5–8. Durant W. Robertson, Jr., *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962), pp. 114 ff. Robert M. Jordan, *Chaucer and the Shape of Creation: The Aesthetic Possibilities of Inorganic Structure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), chap. ii.

8. *The Ancrene Riwle (The Corpus MS: "Ancrene Wisse"),* trans. M. B. Salu (London, 1955), p. 16.

9. See "Suete sone, reu on me & brest out of þi bondis," Brown, *XIV,* No. 64, line 8.

10. Notice how because the author shifts the object of man's desire from being Christ to being the world, sorrow has an inverse definition: to "suffer" is to detach

oneself from the object of love which is not God Himself. When the object is Christ, to "suffer" is to be separated from Him.

11. *Ancrene Riwle,* p. 15. "Whatever there may have been before" is interpreted by the editor to refer to the twelfth century controversy about the Immaculate Conception of Mary. See above, Introduction, note 33.

12. Brown, *XIV,* No. 26, from St. John's College Cambridge MS 256. For full text, see Appendix III.

13. It was common in the devotion to pause after each joy and say other prayers. See, for example, the instructions to the anchoresses in the *Riwle,* where each prayer, as above, is followed by the "Ave Maria Dominus tecum," then further an antiphon, a psalm, and five Aves. See also above, "The Names of Joy," note 20, as well as "Mary moder, wel þe bee" in the *Minor Poems of the Vernon MS,* ed. Carl Horstmann, Part I, EETS, O.S., No. 98 (London, 1892), pp. 25-26, and the fifteenth century "Gawde, to whom gabryell was sent" in *Anglia,* XXVI (1903), 257-58.

14. The poet names Mary in stanza four: Lady, full of grace (the second element of the Ave); in five: Lady, full of might, meek and mild in aspect; in six: Lady, holy Mary, fair and good and sweet; in seven: Lady, best in counsel, true in need, prompt and quick with good deeds for sinful man; in eight (the climax): Lady, flower of all, as a red rose in a garden; then in nine: echoing the beginning, Mary; in ten: again Mary; in eleven: Mary, full of grace who sits on a throne; in twelve: Lady fair and bright; in thirteen: Lady, holy Mary; and finally, in fourteen: Lady, Queen of Heaven. He defines the power in virtue of which he appeals in stanza four: for the joy you felt when Christ rose, for the love of Him Who lay close to your heart; in five: for the love of Jesus sweet Who was killed on the cross, for His five wounds that ran blood; in six: for the love of the tears you shed when you saw Christ nailed hand and foot; in seven: for the love of Him Whom you saw bleed on the cross; in eight: (because) to thee I cry and call, to thee I make my prayer; in nine: for that sweet joy you were in when you saw Christ ascend to heaven wherein is everlasting joy; in ten: for that sweet joy when you were taken from earth by angels into the bliss of heaven and set by sweet Jesus in flesh and bone; in eleven: (because) I pray you, grant my prayer; in twelve: for thy five joys, for thy maidenhood, and thy great power; in thirteen: if it were thy will, as thou art full of joy and I am full of care; and finally in fourteen: hear me with will, I pray you hear my voice. And as the third element, the poet specifies the effect he desires in stanza four: help me out of sin while I am here; in five: help me out of sin; in six: give me grace in my heart to amend my sins; in seven: help me now and forever, save me in necessity; in eight: be in the place where I draw to death, never let me fall into the hands of the evil one; in nine: be my remedy for pain, bring me out of sin; in ten: bring me to joys that will last forever; in eleven (the most precise prayer): grant that I may fear and love Christ, that I amend my life soon, bring me to that high King Who wields sun and moon; in twelve: help me to come into that eternal light where joy is without end day and night; in thirteen: help me out of sin and let me fall no more, give me grace on earth sorely to rue my sins; and, finally, in fourteen: let my soul never spill in any of the seven sins through any fiend's will, and bring my soul to heaven to fill a place there.

15. Occasional inner rhyme emphasizes their binary nature, as, for example, the rhyme of "heuene," "steuene," "seuene" and again "heuene" in the last stanza (see discussion below).

16. In two of the four versions of the poem this stanza is lacking. See Brown, *XIV,* p. 254.

17. The complementary structure reflects also the traditional practice of adding to the core of each joy commentary or an additional prayer, such as the angelic salutation in "Heyl be þou, marie, milde quene of heuene." See also above, "The Names of Joy," note 20, for a development of this idea and examples.

CONCLUSION

1. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium,* trans. Erwin E. Nemmers (St. Louis, 1946), Prologue, 3. See Preface, note 14, and below.

2. See above, especially Part I, "The 'Maiden Makeles,'" Part II, "Mary's Sorrow," and "The Dialogue Form."

3. For a discussion of the nature of these figures, see above, especially Part III, "The Figure of Delight," and also Part II, pp. 142 ff.

4. See above, Part III, p. 152.

5. See Introduction, pp. 14–15.

6. *A Thirteenth Century York Psalter: A Manuscript Written and Illuminated in the Diocese of York about A.D. 1250,* Roxburghe Club, No. 216 (Oxford, 1952). See pls. 3, 5, 6, and for other examples of this type of correspondence, especially pls. 8, 10.

7. See above, pp. 18 ff., and also "Gabriel, from Evene-King," pp. 33, 34 ff.; "Þe Milde Lomb Isprad o Rode," pp. 99–100 and note 14; "Stond Wel, Moder, vnder Rode," pp. 129–31, 142–45.

8. See above, Introduction, "The Ladder," pp. 15 ff., and also below, descriptive note to Figure 2. For a discussion of the general medieval tendency to think in symmetrical patterns, characteristically arranged with reference to an abstract hierarchy, see Durant W. Robertson, Jr., *A Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives* (Princeton, 1962), pp. 6 ff.

9. Brown, *XIV,* No. 132, lines 81–85.

10. Brown, *XIII,* Nos. 2, 5, 32, 64, 65, 84, and 3, 34, 50, 63, 78; Brown, *XIV,* Nos. 80, 83–85.

11. On this subject, see Leo Spitzer, "Note on the Poetic and the Empirical 'I' in Medieval Authors," *Traditio,* IV (1946), 414–22. For analogous examples, see above, "Nu Þis Fules Singet hand Maket Hure Blisse." pp. 52–53, and "Þe Milde Lomb Isprad o Rode," pp. 102–3 and note 17.

12. For a full survey of the development and modification of classical aesthetics and the rhetoric of the schools, see Edgar de Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale* (3 vols.; Brugge, 1946). The Church's principle of adapting pagan elements, as Gregory the Great urged his missionaries to do, penetrated almost every area, from the allegorization of Virgil and the classics to the transformation of Greek science and math in the schemata used to illustrate text books and to illuminate Scripture. Although the lyrics we have been discussing had their origin in the liturgy, the poetry which continued to use classical forms shared their purpose and use in a way fundamentally defined by Christian theology. For two relevant studies, see Peter D. Scott, "Alcuin as Poet: Rhetoric and Belief in His Latin Verse," *University of Toronto Quarterly,* XXXIII (April, 1964), 233–57, and Philip W. Damon, "Style and Meaning in the Mediaeval Latin Nature Lyric," *Speculum,* XXVIII (July, 1953), 516–20. The idea is shown clearly

in relation to MS illumination by Harry Bober, "In Principio. Creation Before Time," *Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky,* ed. Millard Meiss (2 vols.; New York, 1961), I, 13-28; II, 5-8.

13. For a full development of this idea, see Sister Emma Jane Marie Spargo, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1953).

14. *Breviloquium,* Prologue, 5 and *passim.* Also, see above, "The Figure of Delight," pp. 175 ff. My quoting has, for the sake of brevity, eliminated the central fact, that Bonaventure has stated the purpose of his work by means of an invocation to Christ, the knowledge and love of Whom is the basis of knowledge of Scripture.

15. *St. Bonaventure's "Itinerarium mentis in Deum,"* trans. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1956).

16. See above, "The Vision of Joy," pp. 167 ff.; "The Figure of Delight," pp. 176 ff.

17. For a full discussion of Bonaventure's aesthetic theory, see Edgar de Bruyne, III, 191 ff. In defining the medieval theory of beauty, Robertson focuses on the first proportion *speciositas,* thus losing its relationship to *suavitas* and *salubritas.* These two proportions he considers in the separate contexts of figurative expression and the use of beauty. See *A Preface to Chaucer,* pp. 114 ff. In his chapter "Elements of Medieval Aesthetic Theory," Robert M. Jordan also concentrates on the nature of formal beauty. See *Chaucer and the Shape of Creation: The Aesthetic Possibilities of Inorganic Structure* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 10-43.

18. *Opera omnia* (10 vols.; Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi], 1882-1902), Vol. VIII, Opusculum III, pp. 68-86.

19. The tradition corresponds to the methods of exegesis. The tradition, followed by Dante in the *Vita nuova,* goes back to the early Middle Ages and Prosper, Aldhelm, Bede, Alcuin, Sedelius Scottus and Gauthier de Spire. The *Carmen Paschale* of Sedelius, for example, is doubled by an *Opus Paschale.* See also Rabanus Maurus, who, using Sedelius as his authority, follows the same principle in *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (PL, Vol. CVII, cols. 133-294). For details and the relationship to exegesis, see Henri de Lubac, S.J., *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture* (4 vols.; Paris, 1959, 1961, 1964), I, 164, note 6.

20. I refer here to the tradition influential in American criticism defined by Brooks and Warren, used by the New Critics, and the method normally taught to students of literature. In their "Letter to the Teacher (1938)," Brooks and Warren took their stand against the different substitutes for study of the poem: (1) Paraphrase of logical and narrative content; (2) Study of biographical and historical materials; (3) Inspirational and didactic interpretation. "The poem in itself, if literature is to be studied as literature, remains finally the object for study." *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* (rev. ed.; New York, 1953), p. xi.

APPENDIXES

1. Legg, p. 480.
2. Legg, p. 530.
3. Brown, *XIV,* No. 26.

Notes to Illustrations

FIGURE 1 (FRONTISPIECE)

God the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Full folio miniature preceding Genesis of a Moralized Bible written for St. Louis (d. 1270). Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. 1179, fol. 1vo.

God is shown creating and encompassing the universe. Seated on a throne and surrounded by a four-lobed aureole which is borne by angels, the Creator holds the universe in His lap. His head bends meditatively, and with the geometer's tool in His right hand He designs His creation. Above the square frame (out of the picture) an inscription appears comparing Him to the potter: "Hic orbis figulus disponit singula solus." See Alexandre de Laborde, *La Bible moralisée illustrée* (5 vols.; Paris, 1911–1927), Vol. IV, pl. 672; Vol. V, pp. 86–93.

The miniature precedes a narration of sacred history from Genesis through Job, in which the scene of an event of the Old Testament is coupled with an illustration of its allegorical interpretation in light of the New. Each scene is accompanied by a paraphrase of the Vulgate. Job is followed by a moralized Apocalypse of St. John.

The figure of the Creator is the same as that of Christ in the New Testament scenes, as is the case also in the Moralised Bible, Oxford, Bodleian MS 270 b. For Christ's role in the creation of the world as defined in Hebrews 1:1–3 and medieval commentary upon the text, see R. E. Kaske, "The Character 'Figura' in *Le Mystère d'Adam*," *Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Urban Tigner Holmes, Jr.*, ed. John Mahoney and John E. Keller (Chapel Hill, 1965), pp. 103–10. On the subject of the Creator being represented as Christ on Chartres, see Sister Emma Jane Marie Spargo, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1953), pp. 22 ff.

FIGURE 2

The Mass, Elevation of the Host. Illuminated "T" of the first words of the Canon "Te igitur . . . ," from the Sarum Missal ascribed to Ely Cathedral, commissioned by

Hawyse Tiptoft and her husband John Clavering, ca. 1315. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 142 (see Fig. 4).

The priest is raising the Host over the altar while a deacon raises the veiled paten. Springing from out of the Tau which forms two arches over the priest and deacons is the cross on which the dead Christ hangs, the sacramental blood flowing down its stem from Christ's side, hands, and feet. Mary stands on Christ's right, the gesture of her arms expressing her grief and suggesting an attitude of prayer. The disciple John stands on Christ's left, holding the Scriptures and seeming by his attitude to be both listening and pointing towards Christ. John Clavering kneels to the left of the Tau. Out of the photograph are three other figures. On the left border just below John Clavering kneels his wife, Hawyse Tiptoft. On the right border of the folio, in larger size, are John the Evangelist and below him John the Baptist. They gaze on the Host, holding emblems to signify that Christ is the Lamb of God (John 1:29; Apoc., chaps. 5, 14, 19, 22).

The Tiptoft Missal is of particular interest, for its organization strikingly exemplifies how the liturgy reformulates sacred history, according to the divine *ratio,* to center on the actions of the Church in present time. The Ordinary (fols. 138-49), which contains the Canon of the Mass, has been placed, so that it interrupts the Proper of the Seasons, just after the texts recounting the passion. Here, it stands in its position of theological significance as the re-enactment of the passion in the present. The illumination of the elevation of the Host serves in the Missal as the principal image of the crucifixion. Continuing by analogy to the events of the redemption, the Ordinary of the Mass is then followed by the Easter Mass of the resurrection, and the proper texts for the Easter season. See Legg, pp. xx and 227 note 3, and also Legg's *Tracts on the Mass,* Henry Bradshaw Society, Vol. XXVII (London, 1904), p. xi. The two other illuminations in the Ordinary develop aspects of the Mass: one, preceding the collection of Preface texts, depicts the blessing of the chalice (fol. 139); and the other, illuminating the "Per omnia saecula saeculorum" formula preceding every Preface, portrays the sacrifice of Isaac (fol. 141vo), an event traditionally interpreted to prefigure Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

The principle, furthermore, by which certain feasts in the Proper have been singled out to receive large letter illuminations reflects a consistent focus on the theme of the Church, with Mary as the main figure. These are the Annunciation (fol. 231vo), Christmas (fol. 23), the Presentation (fol. 226vo), the Ascension (fol. 163vo), Pentecost (fol. 168vo), and the Assumption (fol. 253vo). Each illumination depicts the event being celebrated, and it is composed in relationship to the others as the event prefigures or develops the foundation of the Church.

Finally, the Introit for Trinity Sunday (fol. 176) has an especially beautiful illumination of the perpetuation of Christ's redemptive sacrifice in present time. Within the "B" of "Benedicta" the Father sits enthroned, holding in His outstretched arms the cross on which Christ hangs. The Father gazes out at the observer. Christ's eyes are open also, signifying His eternal life. His hands, in counter direction to those of the Father, are open wide as if to manifest Himself or to uplift the observer. In the form of a dove, His wings spread out also along the arms of the cross, the Spirit issues from the Son to the Father, representing the perpetual renewal of Christ's oblation of Himself to the Father for mankind.

Also contained in the Tiptoft Missal are four illuminations of saints and one of the dedication of a Church. See fols. 179, 180, 181, 216, and 218.

FIGURE 3

The Annunciation. First of four miniatures preceding a Psalter written for a nun of Amesbury Abbey, Wilts, ca. 1250. Possibly from a Salisbury atelier. Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 3 (see Figs. 6 and 7).

The approaching angel remains separated from the Virgin by the central column of the two arches, his right hand raised in proclamation. The salutation, inscribed on the scroll opening from his left hand, penetrates down into the Virgin's space. At the same time, from the center of the arch above her, a dove bearing the nimbus of divinity descends to the Virgin's ear, signifying Mary's virginal conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit. In her left hand the Virgin holds the Scriptures foretelling the coming of the Messiah.

The miniatures of the Amesbury Psalter are designed in a proportionate relation to each other. A scene of Mary and Christ on earth is contrasted and alternated by a scene of Mary and Christ in glory, so that the sequence presented is: the Annunciation, fol. 3 (Fig. 3), contrasted by the Virgin and Child Enthroned, fol. 4 (Fig. 7); the Crucifixion, fol. 5 (Fig. 6), contrasted by Christ in Majesty, fol. 6.

See below, pp. 58–59, and Eric G. Millar, *English Illuminated MSS from the Xth to the XIIIth Century* (Paris, 1926), pp. 96–97, pls. 81–83.

FIGURE 4

The Birth of Christ and the Tree of Jesse. Illuminated "P" from first words of the Introit, "Puer natus est . . . ," Third Mass on Christmas Day. Tiptoft Missal, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 23 (see Fig. 2 and descriptive note).

The visual center, contained in the letter "P," depicts the theme of the present feast, the celebration of the birth and humanity of Christ Who is God. The reclining Mary receives the Child from a midwife, while at the foot of her couch Joseph meditates. The "P" springs as the central branch from the tree of Jesse, which, setting Christ's birth in the context of the past, reveals Christ's kingly lineage in the Old Testament. At the bottom of the page Jesse reclines, meditating. The two side branches which embrace the page support the Old Testament kings and prophets who preceded and pointed to Christ. At the branches' summit, ruling over the page, is Christ as He is in present time, Redeemer and King of Heaven, bearing the wounds of His humanity and crucifixion: on Christ's right an angel bears the crown of thorns, on His left one bears the cross. Enthroned below at the base of the tree of Jesse, in a position that corresponds to Christ's above, Mary reigns as she is in present time, Queen by virtue of her motherhood of Christ. See also below, pp. 53–54, 58.

FIGURE 5

The Birth of Christ and the First Events of His Childhood. From the Psalter of Robert, Baron de Lisle, given to his daughter Audere in 1339. Probably from a court atelier at Westminster. British Museum, Arundel MS 83, fol. 124.

The events, the nativity, the annunciation to the shepherds, the circumcision, the adoration of the Magi, the presentation in the Temple, and the flight into Egypt, are ordered from left to right by sequence of time into three groups of two panels; the corners of all the frames, knotted together by flowers, unify the events into a whole. Counter to the sequence of narrative, the scenes are also ordered into two groups of three panels by the contrast in color between the square settings, panels 1, 4 and 5, panels 2, 3 and 6. The scenes are ordered in yet a third proportion by theme. Those on

the left, from top to bottom, depict the events that concern Christ in the Temple, those on the right depict the events that reveal Christ to the world.

The thematic proportioning is evident from the correspondences in design and meaning. The panels on the left show a similar grouping of figures in the two lower Temple scenes; there are parallels between the priest (in 3) and Simeon (in 5) in type, gesture and garment; a repetition of the lamp and altar motifs; and a repetition in Mary's gesture of offering her Child. The elements in the nativity scene can be seen to foreshadow the Temple scenes, as the figure of Joseph is developed by the figures of the priest and Simeon; the traditional iconographic parallel is made between the box-like manger and the two altars, and the motif of the star is repeated in the lamps. Finally, the cloth which covers Mary's couch in the nativity appears in the circumcision covering the altar; while in the presentation the altar is bare and a veil of respect, suggesting the veil used by a priest to handle the sacred vessels, covers the hands of Simeon. The panels on the right develop a consistent theme, beginning with the incursion of the angel who announces the Christ Child, moving through the manifestation of the Child to the Magi, and ending with the collapse of a devil before the Child as He departs into exile. The figure of the old man—the shepherd, the king, Joseph—dominates each of the compositions, and the motif of a figure upon a base is repeated in the young piping shepherd, in the mother and Child enthroned, and in the idol falling from its pedestal.

In panels 3 through 6 there is an interplay between the Child's humanity and His divinity. In the circumcision scene the Child is naked, His nimbus bears no rays, and He draws back with a gesture of pain. By contrast, in the presentation He is robed, crowned by a rayed nimbus, and, holding His mother's veil, He reaches towards Simeon's welcoming veiled hands. In the adoration of the Magi, dressed in a full-sleeved garment, crowned by a rayed nimbus and standing on His mother's lap (with Mary herself shown as a crowned queen), He blesses the king and takes the gift of gold which signifies His kingship. In the flight into Egypt, the Child again is robed and bears a rayed nimbus as Mary carries Him into exile, led by Joseph. Turned entirely back towards the shelter of His mother, the Child reaches to her to be nourished.

See below, pp. 81 ff., also Eric G. Millar, *English Illuminated MSS of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (Paris, 1928), pls. 7-13, and Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Psalter of Robert de Lisle* (3 vols.; Ph.D dissertation, New York University Institute of Fine Arts, 1964).

FIGURE 6

The Crucifixion. Third of four miniatures preceding a Psalter written for a nun of Amesbury Abbey, Wilts, ca. 1250. Possibly from a Salisbury atelier. Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 5 (see Figs. 3 and 7).

Although the artist has chosen different iconographic elements to reveal the death of Christ as the moment of mankind's redemption, certain aspects of the portrayal can be compared to stanzas one and two of "Þe milde Lomb isprad o rode" (see above, pp. 103 ff.). The harsh violence of the event is minimized and its significance is revealed both by the elements and the artist's handling of the composition. The scene is proportioned geometrically into four sections by the cross, which, rising out of the hill, is backed by a plain crosspiece set into the rectangular border of the miniature. Christ hangs in the center, dead, His body bowed to the right, the blood flowing from His right side and from the wounds of His head, hands and feet. Symmetrically, under the arms of the cross, Mary stands on Christ's right and John stands on His left, both

bowed meditatively by grief. On either side above the arms of the cross are the darkened sun and moon. Slanting over the top of the cross is the placard reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" (John 19:19). But the symmetrical, still-seeming figures also reveal life. Christ's head bears the rayed nimbus of divinity, His garment is richly decorated, the knotted end blows, His blood pours abundantly. The cross itself bears stumps of branches to signify that it is in fact the Tree of Life, and its placard, tilting precariously, joins the cross with heaven above. The garments and limbs of Mary and John are caught in motion, and all the figures break out beyond their borders.

The fact that the moment of crucifixion is the moment of redemption is embodied here in the actions of the figures represented in the framing borders. At the four corners in circular medallions incensing angels kneel, perpetually adoring the Divine Redeemer. Into the center of each of the frame's sides, four other arch-like medallions are woven. In the medallion above Christ, between two other adoring angels, is God the Father. Crowned by a rayed nimbus and gazing out of the frame at the observer, He holds the Spirit to His breast, Who in the form of a dove appears to have just ascended to Him from His Son (see the Tiptoft Missal, fol. 176). In the corresponding medallion below Christ, thrusting up into the hill of the cross, is Adam who rises out of his grave with two other souls, having been redeemed by Christ's blood which is flowing down from the cross upon them. On the right side of the frame, towards which Christ leans, and just beyond Mary (who is herself a figure of the Church), the triumphing Church is represented. She bears her standard of victory and holds the sacramental chalice of Christ's blood. On the left, beside John (who is traditionally a figure of the Synagog), the Synagog swoons, her standard breaking, her vessel turned down and spilling out its contents.

FIGURE 7

The Virgin and Child Enthroned. Second of four miniatures preceding the Psalter written for a nun of Amesbury Abbey, Wilts, ca. 1250. Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 4 (see Figs. 3, 6).

The enthroned Virgin and Child are seated in the center of the frame, within an arch suggestive of a church or the heavenly Jerusalem. According to the promise of power to those who trust in the Lord (Compline Psalm 90, verse 13), the Virgin treads underfoot the lion and the dragon. With the head and body of a boy or young man and crowned by the rayed nimbus of divinity, the Child relaxes on His mother's knee and is nourished by her. The Virgin bends over Him, supporting Him with her left hand and with her right offering Him her breast; yet it is the Child Who lifts and guides His mother's hand.

Within the arch kneels the figure of a praying nun. Her prayer, issuing from her hands on a scroll, repeats the angel's salutation at the annunciation (see Fig. 3), adding the incomplete syllables "bene" of "blessed." As the angel's words descended from heaven to earth then, so the nun's words ascend from earth to Mary in heaven. But in the context of present time, this salutation sounds as a prayer confirming Mary's blessedness and an invocation of Mary's power in virtue of her closeness to her Son. Above the arch, penetrating down through it with their censors, are two adoring angels. All eyes, even those of the infernal lion and dragon, contemplate the mother and Child, while the Virgin contemplates the Child. With the eternal gaze of God, the eyes of the Child stare out of the miniature at the observer, drawing the observer's eyes to Himself, and through His hand, to His mother's breast, to her inclining head, which bends down over her Child, leading the observer's gaze back to the eyes of the Child.

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