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# Conceiving the Word: Patristic and Early Medieval Sources for Franciscan Discussion of Mary's Active Motherhood

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*Conceiving the Word*

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CONCEIVING THE WORD: PATRISTIC AND EARLY  
MEDIEVAL SOURCES FOR FRANCISCAN DISCUS-  
SIONS OF MARY'S ACTIVE MOTHERHOOD

James Roger Bell, Ph.D.\*

The key texts for understanding the changing nature of medieval academic discussion and instruction in the thirteenth century are the *Commentaries* on Peter Lombard's *Book of Sentences*. In Book III, questions concerning the incarnation of Christ were examined by generation after generation of scholars. The changing nature of the *tabulae* of questions mirrors the shifting interest of scholarly discussion. A significant phenomenon in the thirteenth century was the gradual intrusion of questions about Mary into Christological discussions on the Incarnation. This can be strikingly illustrated by comparing the *tabula* of questions of the Dominican Robert of Kilwardby (ca. 1254-1261) to those of his contemporaries Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Richard of Middleton, or William of Ware.<sup>1</sup> Kilwardby's *tabula* contains only one question containing a direct reference to the Virgin. Question twenty-three asks "whether

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\*James Roger Bell, Ph.D., teaches in Lansing, Michigan. His doctoral dissertation (Catholic University of America, 2001) was "Conceiving the Word: Mary's Motherhood in the Oxford Franciscan School, 1285-1315—Peter Lombard, John Duns Scotus, Robert Cowton, William of Ware."

<sup>1</sup>Robert Kilwardby, *Quaestione in Librum Tertium Sententiarum*, Tiel 1: *Christologie*, ed. Elisabeth Gössman (2 vols.; Munchen: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1982-85), 1:248-254. Many, but not all manuscripts written or copied during the High Middle Ages included a *tabula*, which indexed the questions with a numerical listing of either, or both, *distinctiones* and *quaestiones*. Some were even of greater detail, including subsidiary divisions of the *quaestiones*. The usefulness to the scholar or researcher is that the *tabulae* give a historical picture of the intellectual milieu when the author wrote. A comparison of these *tabulae* can emphasize both the common points of discussion and singular points of interest to specific scholars (e.g., the former as evidenced in the addition of questions on Mary's Immaculate Conception after the time of Ware and Scotus, and the latter as shown in Robert Cowton's question concerning "whether this sacrament [Eucharist] ought to be given to actors . . .").

it ought to be conceded that a divine nature should be born from a virgin."<sup>2</sup> Robert Kilwardby's approach reflected a generally more traditional and conservative approach among the Oxford community. Although a contemporary of Aquinas and Bonaventure, because he was outside many of the more innovative activities of his Parisian contemporaries, his *quaestiones* often reflect the traditions and format of earlier authors.

By contrast, Bonaventure's *tabula* in his *Commentary* contains several questions about Mary. Distinction three, article one [*De sanctificatione Virginis*], question one, asks "whether the flesh of the Virgin would have been sanctified before its animation?" This pivotal point concerning sanctification of Mary's flesh was to be gradually transformed into a discussion of the moment of sanctification, and eventually to a discussion of the possibility of her conception without sin. Distinction four, article one, examines the conception of Christ in comparison to the Holy Spirit as an efficient cause. Distinction four, article two, explores the conception of Christ in relation to intervening grace and contains a subsidiary question asking whether the Blessed Virgin Mary merited to conceive Christ. Distinction three, article three, examines the conception of Christ in relation to the Virgin who had borne him. This article is further subdivided into three separate questions concerning the Virgin Mary. First, whether she had cooperated with the Holy Spirit in this conception. Second, whether this cooperation on the part of the Blessed Virgin was natural or miraculous. Third, whether the Blessed Virgin ought to be called the *genetrix* of God. A comparison of Thomas Aquinas' presentation of these issues with Bonaventure's further illustrates the increasing depth of presentation concerning "Marian" issues. In these questions Bonaventure set a pattern for the commentaries of Franciscan scholars who followed.<sup>3</sup>

An area which was to receive deeper analysis was the question of Mary's conception by the Holy Spirit. This grew into discussions of the nature of Mary's active motherhood. What was the impact of this growing interest in Mary's role in the Incarnation? What was the impact

<sup>2</sup>Kilwardby, *Quaestione in Librum Tertium Sententiarum*, 1:251—"Quaeritur utrum concedendum sit quod divina natura sit nata de Virgine."

<sup>3</sup>Bonaventura, *Opera Theologica Selecta*, Tomus III, liber III, *Sententiarum* (Florence, 1941), 898 (*Index Quaestionum*: Distinctio III, IV).

of patristic and early medieval theological sources upon the structure of arguments increasingly focused upon "natural science"? I will focus primarily upon William of Ware who was to play such a pivotal role in the development of the immaculist account of Mary's conception. I hope to illustrate his vital importance in the development of an activist account of motherhood. Before examining William of Ware's patristic and medieval sources, it is necessary to briefly sketch out the problems inherent in a field of argumentation where devotional and liturgical traditions collide with theological, philosophical and biological discussion, at a time when the influence of Aristotle was waxing full.

### Views of Mary's Active Motherhood among Early Oxford Franciscans

As feminist historians readily point out, the emphasis upon Mary's humility and passive acceptance of her role in the incarnational drama was a high-minded model for a religious and monastic ideal of selfless service, as well as a model of passivity and acceptance in a social order which was fundamentally paternalistic at best and intensely misogynist at worst. It can be granted that all scholars at the turn of the fourteenth century, working in an intellectual environment which was exclusively male, accepted the view that *in statu viatoris* women were subordinate to men. Furthermore, there is plentiful evidence to pillory even thinkers like Aquinas for belittling the capacity of women's reasoning or others for defending an Aristotelian position that described a woman as little more than a *vas*, a receptacle for the fetus whose every positive attribute and strength derived from the male. Nonetheless, to paint all the medieval thinkers with the same brush is quite unfair. There were countervailing trends. The same devotees of Mary's Immaculate Conception and her elevation to a status unlike any other human being, male or female, were also great defenders of her humanity in the motherhood of Christ. This defense of her humanity did not limit itself to a discourse on her passivity and humility or to praise of Mary as receptive vessel, but it emphasized her active participation in the Annunciation, her active role in the generation of Christ (and, therefore, a similar active power in all human women), and it served as an explicit rejection of the concept of woman as *vas*, a passive receptacle.

The familiar visual image of the Annunciation, depicting the youthful maiden with the dove fluttering above her head, became emblematic of humble acceptance of God. This image often carried vivid symbols of receptivity. The Chevalier de Rohan's depiction of the Annunciation in his *Book of Hours* "shows Gabriel kneeling to Mary while the child Jesus wings his way towards her down a beam a light. The Virgin is holding a baker's tray in her hand, for she is the oven in which the bread of life—the baby Jesus himself—is to be baked."<sup>4</sup> In this visual depiction, Mary becomes the symbol of humble acceptance before a mystery beyond human understanding. The strength of this image of passive acceptance was powerful. This makes it all the more remarkable that certain Franciscans of the thirteenth and fourteenth century promoted an image of Mary's activity which ran counter to the prevailing tendency to promote her passivity. Peter John Olivi's *Quaestiones Quatuor de Domina*<sup>5</sup> examined the Annunciation, emphasizing that Mary's acceptance was to be understood as an *active* choice, not as blind receptivity. Olivi, who was not a supporter of the Immaculate Conception, wrote this treatise outside the normal scholastic setting and it may be regarded as one of the first "Mariological" studies during a time when Mariological issues were usually subsumed in Christological discussions.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983, c1976), 40, n. 28; The Rohan Master, *The Book of Hours* (Bibliothèque National, Paris), described by Marcel Thomas (New York, 1973). Warner also makes an interesting observation on the iconography of the Annunciation and the conception of Christ: "The Holy Ghost presents such a pitfall for theologians and has tumbled so many into heresy that the visual imagery has been remarkably static and uninventive. Christian artists prefer to play it safe with the traditional white bird . . ." This artistic trepidation may mirror the trepidation of scholars when they talked about when physical processes met the divine conceptive virtue.

<sup>5</sup>Petrus Ioannis Olivi, O.F.M., *Quaestiones Quatuor de Domina*, Bibliotheca Franciscana Ascetica Medii Aevi, 8; ed. D. Pacetti, O.F.M. (Quaracchi, Florence: Typ. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1954). This work certainly deserves closer examination as to its impact and dissemination during the fourteenth century.

<sup>6</sup>Olivi's study on Mary, although restricted in scope and limited to the Annunciation and Mary's role in the conception of Christ, is unique in having preceded by over 300 years the work of Francisco Suarez (d.1617), who might be considered Mary's first "systematic" theologian.

While Olivi was composing his innovative Marian treatise, William of Ware seems to have been one of the earliest scholars to move the question of Mary's cooperation with the Holy Spirit from its position as a subsidiary question into a new status as a separate *distinctio*. This fact highlights the centrality of the issue of Mary's active motherhood to William of Ware and his "Marian" interests. An examination of the Oxford Franciscans Duns Scotus and Robert Cowton reveals that, in their *Commentaries*, they followed Ware's lead on this issue and added to growing evidence that Ware's work functioned as a "school text" which served as a template for later Franciscan students.

What was the foundation for Ware's Marian interests? In 1957, the German Franciscan Aquila Emmen published a study of Mariology within the Oxford Franciscan School in the thirteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Emmen attempted to trace the development of a Mariological tradition within the Franciscan school at Oxford.<sup>8</sup> The Oxford "Mariological" tradition, in Emmen's view, had

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<sup>7</sup>A. Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie der Oxforder Franziskanerschule" [Historisch-systematische Untersuchungen zur Mariologie der Franziskanerschule], *Franziskanische Studien* 39 (1957): [99]-217 (hereafter: Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie"). Also: A. Emmen, "Wilhelm von Ware, Duns Scotus' Vorläufer in der Immaculatalehre," *Antonianum* 40 (1965): 363-394.

<sup>8</sup>The greatest number of these works concerned the Immaculate Conception, although not always exclusively so; see E. Longpré, "Father Bernard de Deo, O.F.M. (d.1318), et l'Immaculée Conception," in *Archivum Franciscanum historicum* 26 (1933); C. Balic, *Ioannis de Polliaco et Ioannis de Neapoli, Quaestiones disputatae de Immaculata Conceptione* B.M.V. (Sibenici, 1931), LIV-110; *Ioannis Duns Scoti, Doctoris subtilis et Mariani, Theologiae marianae elementa* (Sibenici, 1933), CLVI-452 + 28 *tabulae codicum*; M. Schmaus, "Le Commentaire des Sentences de Richard de Bromwych, O.S.B.," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* (1933); J. Lechner, "Beiträge zum Schriftum des Martinus Anglicus (Martin von Alnwick), O.F.M.," *Franziskanische Studien* 19 (1932): 1-12; J. Alfaro, ed., "La immaculada concepción en los escritos inéditos de un discípulo de Duns Escoto, Aufredo Gontier" [Alfredus Gonterus, O.F.M., *Sent.*, III, d. 3, p. 1, q. 3], *Gregorianum* 36 (1955); and E. Buytaert, ed. of P. Auroli's "Reportatio in III *Sent.*, dist. 3, 1-2," *Franciscan Studies* 15 (1955): 159-174. A. Emmen edited several related texts on the Immaculate Conception in his own studies: "Immaculata Deiparae Conceptio secundum Guillelmum de Nottingham" [in *III Sent.*, d. 3, q. 1: "Utrum Mater Christi concepta fuit in originali ita quod contraxit originale peccatum," pp. 245-260], *Marianum* 5 (1943): 220-260; Alexander de Alexandria, "Quaestio de Conceptione B. V. Mariae" [*Lectura in III Sent.*, d. 3, q. 1], *Antonianum* 40 (1965): 392-394.

emphasized Mary's active participation in the Incarnation and Christ's mission of redemption. During the thirteenth century a steady growth and elaboration of these ideas had occurred. Thus, in Emmen's thesis, the discussions of Mary's active motherhood and the discussions of the conception of Mary were mutually reinforcing intellectual ideas.

Emmen saw the origin of this nascent "Mariological" tradition within the Oxford school in the Christological views of Robert Grosseteste.<sup>9</sup> The Bishop of Lincoln's Christology was the source, Emmen argued, of the often-discussed Franciscan question: "If Adam had not fallen, would Christ have been incarnated as a human being?" Arguing positively for this proposition, many Franciscan theologians emphasized that the motive of Christ's incarnation was not necessarily predicated on the human fall from grace, but on the probability that Christ would have become a partaker in our humanity even if Adam had not fallen. This focus upon the humanity of Christ led inevitably to a focus upon the most human of all relationships, that between a mother and her child.

Emmen noted that the thirteenth-century Franciscans incorporated into their studies of the Incarnation questions from earlier traditional sources with a more devotional style. Issues of Mary's suffering, her knowledge, her joys—which in previous generations had been discussed in a more devotional atmosphere of the monasteries—were now addressed within the more rigorously intellectual atmosphere of the schools.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie," 115-118 [R. Grosseteste].

<sup>10</sup>These works, such as Pseudo-Jerome's *Liber de Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis* [PL 40, 1141-1148] and Eadmer's *Tractatus de Conceptione S. Mariae*, were influential in the English schools through the time of William of Ware. Roger Marston, O.F.M., wrote a *quodlibetal* question on Mary's suffering at the foot of the cross. Duns Scotus made significantly less use of such writing than his predecessors. In questions which tended more toward theological problems, these writings had more currency. When the question of Mary's active motherhood turned in the direction of natural science and generation, these sources faded from the discussion.

Emmen found evidence of a slowly evolving intellectual sophistication in discussions on Mary. He noted that Richard Rufus advocated a view of Mary as active participant, a sharer with Christ in God's work, and quoted a passage from Roger Marston comparing Mary's own experience of the divine presence as more "eminent" than the experiences and visions of Moses or Paul.<sup>11</sup>

Emmen also addressed the specific question of Mary's active motherhood.<sup>12</sup> Emmen surveyed the early Franciscans at Oxford for their understanding of the intersection of the divine actions of the Holy Spirit with the physical realities of Mary's generation. Richard Rufus had said that it was through the Holy Spirit that the pure blood of Mary became the body of the Christ child, but this did not mean that Mary played only a passive part in the Incarnation. This was especially true of the spiritual and personal elements in Mary's motherhood.<sup>13</sup> The difficulty for Rufus was that in her assent Mary surrendered herself willingly to the Holy Spirit, which implied passive acceptance. Rufus attempted to circumvent this difficulty by arguing that the Virgin contributed the "drops" (*guttas*) of substance from which Christ's body was formed, and that she had aided in the growth and nutrition, as did other mothers, with these elements which came from her body.

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For a discussion of Ware, Marston and the interests and sources of thirteenth-century Oxford Franciscans, see A. Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie," 112-115.

<sup>11</sup>Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie," 129: "Amplius credo eam quotidie divinis splendoribus illustratum et pluries in extasim mentis raptam in paradysum . . . multo eminentius quam Paulum vel Moysen, ad divinam essentiam . . ."

<sup>12</sup>Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie," 130-143. Emmen specifically addressed the question of Mary's active cooperation with the Holy Spirit in some detail. He addressed first whether Mary was true mother of Christ; second, he discussed the question of Christ as Mary's son, which entailed the problem of the "dual filiation."

<sup>13</sup>Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie," 131: ". . . aber das bedeutet nach ihm keineswegs, dass Maria bei der Menschwerdung keinen aktiven Anteil gehabt hätte. Besonders auf das geistige und persönliche Element in Marias Mutterschaft."



In this sense she can be said to have “generated.”<sup>14</sup> Richard Rufus set the pattern for several later arguments over the difficult question of whether Mary’s motherhood was univocal or equivocal to the motherhood of other mothers, when he wrote:

She herself is mother univocally with other mothers, because truly the body of this man (Christ) is formed from the nature and substance of her body; and there in the womb it is both nourished and augmented; nor does this happen through equivocal means because the body of this kind is from the blood, but other bodies are from the “sperm,” for one situation requires a father and a mother, the other the mother only and a divine operation.<sup>15</sup>

Emmen argued that the emphasis upon the “active” motherhood continued in an indirect and partial manner in the work of Nicholas of Ockham (c.1280). Nicholas emphasized that a natural, motherly efficacy and Mary’s unique virtues were retained in this miraculous generation, and that they were brought into action by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Mary was “active” and a true mother. Although Nicholas thought that Mary acted just as other mothers, still her mothering was more “noble, pure and abundant.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Emmen, “Einführung in die Mariologie,” 131, n. 23 [In *Sent. III*]: “Aut forte ipsa Virgo voluntarie ministravit de suo dictas guttas ad constructionem corporis Christi et hoc fuit ei forte in principio ‘generare’ . . .”; n. 24: “Deinde vero usque ad terminum partus nutrimentum et materiam augmenti corpore suo praestitit illi homini, et hoc etiam potest dici ‘generare’ . . .”

<sup>15</sup>Emmen, “Einführung in die Mariologie,” 131, n. 24: “Est ipsa univoce mater aliis matribus, quia vere de natura et substantia sui corporis constructum est corpus illius hominis; et hoc in utero, et ibi nutritum et augmentatum; nec hoc facit aequivocationem quod corpus istius de sanguine, aliorum vero corpora de spermate, sed unum requirit patrem et matrem, alterum matrem tantum et divinam operationem.”

<sup>16</sup>Emmen, “Einführung in die Mariologie,” 132, n. 26: [Nicholas of Ockham, *Quaestiones disputatae Oxoniae*, q. 165, a. 5, ad 3-6 (fol. 264a)] “Cum enim ipsa fuit vera Mater, videtur mihi quod . . . excitata virtute Spiritus Sancti, naturaliter ministravit materiam loco embryonis . . . quae quidem materia forte vocatur a sanctis ‘purissimi sanguines,’ quia de purissimis sanguinibus fuit illa materia digesta in semen opere tertiae digestivae . . .”

Emmen argued that Rufus's and Nicholas Ockham's work stimulated a leap forward to the new level of Mariological inquiry evident in the teachings of William of Ware, who brought a more thorough discussion of the Galenic theories of generation into the discussion and directly addressed the Aristotelian view of passivity of women in generation. Perhaps the most significant of Emmen's claims was that, unlike his predecessors, William of Ware utilized a Marian "general rule" (*regula generalis*) around which he structured his arguments about Mary's conception. Emmen was hesitant to claim whether this could be called a "Marian principle" (at least in the modern sense of that term) or whether this was merely a medieval "Christological principle" with Marian elements. Nonetheless, Ware's innovation was an analytical tool for viewing Mary's sinless conception through the lens of three principles, "first the possibility, then the congruity and third the actuality of the privilege."<sup>17</sup> Thus, Emmen proposed that with Ware a shift had taken place in which certain logical "principles" could be applied to Marian discussions.

Is this picture of thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century Marian thought accurate? Does promotion of a devotional ethic that stressed Mary's active human involvement in the Incarnation form a foundation for promoting a doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception? Are these two separate Mariological issues inevitably mutually reinforcing? This would seem to be the case if one focuses upon theological developments. However, if one places these issues in the context of conflicting theories of natural science, a different picture emerges. The general trend in the thirteenth century was towards Aristotle's depiction of human generation in which there was a strict correspondence between male as active principle and female as passive principle. To followers of Aristotle's natural science, the Aristotelian account of female

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<sup>17</sup>Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie," 144: "Darum lässt Ware in seiner Immakulata-Frage unmittelbar nach der Formulierung seiner 'Regula generalis' die Worte folgen: 'Unde primo volo ostendere possibilitatem, secundo congruentiam, tertio actualitatem.'"

passivity was to trump both William of Ware's critique of Aristotelian accounts of generation and his use of traditional patristic and early medieval authorities. A few scholars, such as Ware's student Duns Scotus, adopted the Galenic view of generation in which the female was not strictly passive, but operated in an active, but lesser, manner than the male.

Theoretically, a scholar could have accepted a passive view of Mary (and women in general) and still held a belief in the Immaculate Conception.<sup>18</sup> One could also adopt a strongly activist view of Mary's involvement in the Incarnational drama and be opposed to the Immaculate Conception. Peter John Olivi focused upon the assent of Mary at the Annunciation as evidence, not of "passive" acceptance, but the highest and most pure form of active operation of the human will.<sup>19</sup> While Olivi had a very strong "activist" account of Mary's role, nonetheless he rejected the Immaculate Conception. It was also possible that one could accept Mary's role in generation as completely passive, except for the material contribution, and also oppose the Immaculate Conception. This was the position of Thomas Aquinas and most of the Dominican school, who viewed Aristotle more favorably than the Franciscan order did.

Considered schematically, one could draw two axes. One axis would indicate active and passive and the other axis would be demarcated with the terms, masculinist and immasculinist. The result

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<sup>18</sup>This would seem to be the implication of a great deal of feminist historical criticism. Such a position is evident in Maria Warner's *Alone of Her Sex* (New York, 1976), in her discussion of the Virgin Birth and the Immaculate Conception, in which she seems to posit the theory that the Immaculate Conception and the passive (and inferior) view of women were two sides to the same coin. In both instances, there is the creation of an "impossible perfection," unattainable by normal women. Such an idea reinforced existing societal and patriarchal controls on women. Woman was merely an empty vessel, either for the divine or the human seed. This, however, Duns Scotus directly refuted in his discussion of Mary's motherhood. The actual situation, although perhaps bleak from any modern feminist perspective, was not completely plunged into misogynist darkness.

<sup>19</sup>Pierre Jean Olivi, *Quaestiones quatuor de Domina*, ed. by Dionisio Pacetti; Bibliotheca Franciscana ascetica Medii Aevi, 8 (Florence-Quarracchi: Typ. Collegii s. Bonaventurae, 1954).

might be described in terms of four quadrants in a circle, comprising the following categories: first, one could be a “pure” activist and an immaculist, a position which might be assigned to Duns Scotus; second, one could be a passivist and supporter of the Immaculate Conception; third, one could be an activist, as to Mary’s participation with the Holy Spirit, and a maculist when it came to Mary’s contraction of original sin (Olivi); fourth, one could be both a passivist and a maculist (Aquinas, Giles of Rome, etc.).

### William of Ware’s Tangled Legacy

As noted earlier, the more attention has been paid to the dynamics of late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth-century Franciscan scholarship in the medieval universities, the more obvious it has become that William of Ware’s writings were a “school text,” used as a point of departure for those students who followed after him.<sup>20</sup> This is evident in the tangled genealogy of the Ware manuscripts.<sup>21</sup> Joseph Lechner, relying upon an examination of variant *tabula*

<sup>20</sup>Concerning the life and works of William of Ware, see E. Longpré, “Maitres Franciscain de Paris. Guillaume de Ware,” *La France franciscaine* (1922): 71-82. See also J. M. Bissen, “Quaestiones inédite du Guillaume de Ware, O.F.M., sur le motif del’ incarnation,” *Etudes franciscaines* 46 (1934): 218-222; E. Magrini, “La produzione letteraria di Guglielmo di Ware,” *Miscellanea Franciscana* 36 (1936): 12-32, 38 (1938): 411-429; A. Emmen, “Mariologische ideen bij Willem van Ware,” *Studia Catholica* 21 (1949): 134-173, and “Wilhelm von Ware, Duns Scotus’ Vorläufer in der Immaculatelehre,” *Antonianum* 40 (1965): 363-394; F. Pelster, “Die Kommentare zum vierten Buch der Sentenzen von Wilhelm von Ware, zum ersten Buch von einem Umbekanntem und von Martin von Alnwick im cod. 501 Troyes,” *Scholastik* 27 (1952): 344-367; G. Gal, “Gulielmi de Ware, O.F.M., Doctrina philosophica per Summa Capita Proposita,” *Franciscan Studies* 14 (1954): 155-180, 265-292

<sup>21</sup>J. Lechner, “Die mehrfachen Fassungen des Sentenzenkommentars des Wilhelm von Ware, O.F.M.,” *Franziskanische Studien* (1949): 14-31. For modern bibliography on William of Ware up to 1938, see J. Lechner, “Wilhelm von Ware,” in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (10 vols.; 2. neubearb. Aufl.; herausg. von M. Buchberger; Freiburg im Br.: Herder, 1930-38), 10: 910. For bibliography up to 1949, see “Die mehrfachen Fassungen . . .” (pp. 14-15, n.\*), for bibliographical references to Ware manuscript studies and a complete list of the twenty-three Ware manuscripts examined by Lechner. In his study, Lechner mentions all manuscripts, although the two Oxford Merton Mss. 103 and 104 seem not to have been examined in as much detail as other manuscripts on his list. Lechner relied on F. Stegmüller’s *Reportorium Commentatorium* (p. 307). P. V. Doucet, O.F.M., in *Commentaires sur les Sentences* (p. 41), added eight further manuscripts including a manu-

readings<sup>22</sup> and marginal notations, proposed a series of Ware manuscripts, not unlike the various *reportatio*, *ordinatio* and *lectura* attributed to Duns Scotus.<sup>23</sup> As a result of this rather convoluted situation, Lechner proposed at least three manuscript traditions to explain the extant Ware commentaries and the wide range of variant readings. Lechner postulated that two versions could be attributed to an Oxford and a Paris *ordinatio*. In addition, Lechner speculated that a separate tradition may be derived from scribal transmission of lecture notes.<sup>24</sup> Thus, he proposed that at least three recensions were possible.

(continued)

script of Book II translated into Greek [Florence Laurenziana Plut. 24, cod. 8]. Richard Sharpe, in *A Handlist of Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Brepols, 1997; pp. 815-816), notes that Stegmuller and Doucet acknowledged 50 copies or partial copies, to which he adds one fragmentary commentary and notes five other attested commentaries. For a description of Ware's corpus, see also: E. Magrini, "La Produzione letteraria di Guglielmo di Ware," *Miscellanea Franciscana* 36 (1936): 312-332; 38 (1938): 411-429. I have examined the following Ware manuscripts: A Recension—Oxford Merton College ms. 103, Oxford Merton College ms. 104; Florence Bibl. Laurenziana cod. lat. Plut. 33, dext. 1; Florence Bibl. Nazionale, Conv. Soppr. (S. Croce) C4, 991; Vienna Bibl. Nat. ms. 1424; and B Recension—Leipzig Univ. Bibl. (Bibliotheca Albertina) cod. ms. 527; Florence Bibl. Nazionale, Conv. Soppr. (S. Croce) A4, 42; Vienna Nat. Bibl. cod. lat. 1438.

<sup>22</sup>For a list of questions, see A. Daniels, "Zu den Beziehungen zwischen Wilhelm von Ware und Johannes Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien* 4 (1917): 221-238.

<sup>23</sup>The list of titles applied to these works covers the spectrum of manuscript designations in use during the scholastic period including *Summa*, *Reportatio*, *Opus*, *Dicta*, and *Lectura*. Both Florence manuscripts from S. Croce are described as an *opus*: Fl. C4, 42 [Iste liber est Conventus Sancte Crucis ad Florentinae ordinis minorum]—Opus Guarre super Quatuor libros Sententiarum; Fl. C4991—Opus Guaronis magister Iohannis Scotti doctoris subtilis. Lechner observed a textual connection between these two manuscripts and Padua Bibl. Antoniana Scaff VI, n. 115 [Pad. I]. Leipzig Ms. 527 is described as a *Summa*. See Lechner, *ibid.*, pp. 22-23: *Reportationes*- [Med] Milan Ambrosiana cod. C 78; Todi, Bibl. comunale cod. 88; *Lectura*-Cesena Bibl. comunale Plu. dext. 18 cod. 1; *Dicta*-Vienna Nat. Bibl. cod. lat. 1438 [Vind. II].

<sup>24</sup>A. Emmen, "Wilhelm von Ware, Duns Scotus' Vorläufer in der Immakulatslehre," *Antonianum* 40 (1965): 363-394. Aquila Emmen based his chronology of Ware's academic career on Lechner's thesis. In this view, there were three drafts: the first around 1300, the second shortly after 1300 (likewise in Oxford), and a third written in Paris around 1304-1305. A similar view was taken in F. Stegmuller's *Reportorium Commentatorium in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, 1, n. 307.

Additional analysis of the Ware texts was undertaken by the German Franciscan, Aquila Emmen. Emmen, following the general proposals of Lechner, proposed three text redactions, deriving from two Oxford texts (circa 1295 and 1300) and a Parisian text. This particular situation was then further complicated by the possibility of a *reportatio* and an *abbreviatio*. Thus, Emmen proposed the possibility of three different sets of lecture notes which raised the possibility of the three different *reportationes* from three different lecture series.<sup>25</sup>

Lechner's and Emmen's theories have been recently reexamined by Ludwig Hödl.<sup>26</sup> Hödl suggested that Lechner's theory was unnecessarily cumbersome and that the Ware manuscript tradition could be more easily explained as variations upon two versions of Ware lectures. Hödl's examination of Book II (dist. 1, q. 6) revealed a number of false attributions and other minor errors which suggested an attempt at correction and reworking done within the schools. This evidence suggested that the Ware manuscripts are a *reportatio* of Ware's letters, and Hödl argued that the reworkings and elaborations were not done by Ware himself, but by other scholars. Hödl proposed two recensions as the basis of our present collection of Ware manuscripts. The first set derived from earlier lecture notes which were incomplete and probably set for later revision. The second set descended from a later version which attempted to correct the errors and lacunas of the

<sup>25</sup>Emmen, "Einführung in die Mariologie," 160.

<sup>26</sup>L. Hödl, "Literatur-und problemgeschichte Untersuchungen zum Sentenzenkommentar des Wilhelm von Ware, O.F.M. (nach 1305)," (Liber II, d. 1, 1. 7—Edition und Eileitung) in *Recherches Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 57 (1990): 96-141. For other recent examinations of William of Ware, see G. Gál, "Guilielmi de Ware, O.F.M., Doctrina Philosophica per Summa Capita Proposita," *Franciscan Studies* 14 (1954): 155-180; S. Dumont, "William of Ware, Richard of Conington and the *Collationes Oxonienses* of John Duns Scotus," in *John Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, ed. L. Honnfelder, R. Wood and M. Dreyer; *Studien und texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 59-85; L. Hödl, "Untersuchungen zum scholastischen Begriff des Schöpferischen in der Theologie des Wilhelm von Ware, O.F.M. (1304)," in *Historia Philosophiae Medii Aevi*, ed. B. Mojsisch and O. Pluta (Amsterdam: B. R. Gruner, 1981), 1:387-406.

previous version. There also is some indication of variant manuscripts which do not fit easily into either stream and may represent a hybridization of the two transmission streams. Hödl argued that the Ware manuscripts constitute a work-in-progress (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), not a completed, revised final edition (*Werdeggeschichte*). Hödl summarized his understandings of the Ware manuscript tradition in three theses. First, the commentaries of William of Ware on the *Sentences* were transmitted in lecture notes (*reportatio*) which were not reworked or edited by the author. The earliest written form was faulty and corrected in the Franciscan school. Second, the corrected "correct" text of the school, which is attested to in the best hand-written manuscripts, shows clear indication of a school corrector. The nature of these corrections did not require the author's own hand. Third, the numerous marginal notations, additions and corrections in the manuscripts are an indication of a "work in progress," not a final edition. The final solution to this dilemma will remain elusive until such time as a critical edition of Ware's works is attempted.<sup>27</sup> These difficulties must be borne in mind in the discussion that follows concerning the structure of William of Ware's arguments.

### Sources and Structure of Ware's Discussion of Mary's Active Motherhood

For the purpose of his arguments Ware began with a listing of those positions that refute the idea that Mary had cooperated actively in the generation of Christ. The A recension spoke of the

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<sup>27</sup>Stephen Dumont has proposed that the Ware manuscripts perhaps contain elements of Lechner's theory and Hödl's more recent analysis. Ware's writings "reflect both different recensions (Lechner) and successive corrections associated with school texts (Hödl)." See S. Dumont, "William of Ware, Richard of Conington and the *Collationes Oxoniensis* of John Duns Scotus," in *John Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, ed. L. Honnefelder, R. Wood, and M. Dreyer; *Studien und Text zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* (New York: Brill, 1996), 59-85, n. 13. For the purposes of this study, one should always remain cognizant of the unresolved textual problems. For a more thorough examination of these issues in relation to Ware's *Sententias*, Book III, dist. 4, see J. Bell, "William of Ware: Textual Problems," chap. 3 in "Conceiving the Word: Mary's Motherhood in the Oxford Franciscan School, 1285-1315" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 2001; hereafter: Bell, "Conceiving the Word").

*formatio corporis Christi*, while the *B* recension spoke of the *conceptio filii sui*. The former reading is perhaps the more appropriate reading for the nature of the discussion which was to follow; the latter may have been influenced by the previous question in Book III which discussed Mary's conception and the validity of celebrating the feast of Mary's conception. Both terms, *formatio* and *conceptio*, seem to be expressing the same general idea; however, we should note that *conceptio* is being used very loosely and in an extremely broad sense. This reflects the common medieval opinion that there were two different conceptions: the conception of the "bare seed" (conception in our modern sense of the term) and the later conception of the infused soul (which was also referred to as the "birth in the womb"). The intervening physical processes of coagulation of the material elements, the provision of nutritive material from the mother, and the augmentation of the material and formation of the "members" in the period between the two conceptions is more precisely the *formatio*.

The *formatio prolis* is at the crux of the dispute between the Galenic and Aristotelian positions. According to Aristotle, the male seed is the only active potency which, when it acts, consists of the formative principle. The Galenic position argues that there is also a contributive active element arising from the female seed. Galen admitted that the female contribution was of a lesser power than the male; nonetheless, Galen proposed that the formation was a dual formative action.

The *A* recension of William of Ware's manuscript listed four elements in the generative process: first, the administration of the matter (i.e., the drawing of material elements from the body to the locus of generation, the womb); second, the formation of the body (i.e., the formative power introduced by the seed of the male); third, the rearing of the child (*prolis*) in the womb; and fourth, the "production" of the child out of the womb.<sup>28</sup> The *B* recension, on

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<sup>28</sup>For a thorough examination of the Ware text, see Bell, "Conceiving the Word," 155-156, citing Ware, *Sent. lib. III*, dist. 4, par. 9: "Ad questionem, dico quod ista benedicta generatione sunt quatuor consideranda, scilicet, materiae administratio; corporis formatio; corporis prolis in utero eductio; et prolis ex utero productio."



the other hand, contained an egregious error. Four causes are proposed (*possumus quattuor invenire*), but then only three are listed (i.e., the administration of the matter, the formation of the body and the education of the child in the womb).<sup>29</sup> It may seem that this error arose from incompetence by the scribes, but I think that it is also indicative of terminological difficulties arising from the intersections of differing intellectual “genealogies.” Some terminology and its arrangement derived from depictions of generation from patristic and early-medieval theological traditions. Other terminology derived from Galenic medical traditions filtered through medical texts and Avicenna’s medical writing. Still other usage derived from Aristotelian natural science.

William of Ware’s arguments give primacy to theological sources for his understanding of human generation. These are then supplemented from Aristotle, Avicenna and Galen. Ware cited two theological sources directly: St. Ambrose’s *De incarnatione verbi* and Augustine’s *In Ioannis evangelium Tractatus*.<sup>30</sup> William of Ware’s Franciscan contemporary, Richard of Middleton, exhibited a similar tendency to maintain a balance between the theological and philosophical sources. Richard listed two elements in the *rationem maternitatis*. First, there is a generative potency in the sanguineous humors of the female seed which is converted into the material substratum of the child. Second, there is a process of conservation and nutrition of the child in the womb. If one then adds the formative virtue of the male seed into the process, Richard has a three-fold explanation of human generation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Bell, “Conceiving the Word,” 177, alternate recension (Ware, *Sent. Lib. III*, dist. 4, par. 9): “Et respondeo quod in productione illa, sive in generatione hominis, quattuor invenire oportet: materiae administrationem, corporis formationem, et prolis in utero educationem, et quantum ad duo ultima cooperabatur Beata Virgo.”

<sup>30</sup>Bell, “Conceiving the Word,” 155: Ware, *Sent. Lib. III*, dist. 4, par. 9-10 (Ambrose), and p. 163: par. 19-20 (Augustine).

<sup>31</sup>Richard of Middleton, *Commentarium super Sententias*, Lib. III, dist. 4, art. 2(p. 42): “Quia quicquid requiritur ad rationem maternitatis, fuit in virgine respectu Christi per virtutem enim generativam humorem sanguineum in membris digestum in semen convertit, eo modo quo semen est in mulieribus, et illud semen decidi sine quacunque de ordinatione,

Thomas Aquinas employed a similar three-fold presentation of actions involved in the conception of offspring. The principal action is the *formatio* and *organizatio*. In this process the father acts, while the mother only passively provides the material. The second action is the *virtus praeparatoria* of the mother, which precedes the formation and organization of the body by the father's active principle. The third action follows the principal action and concerns the good disposition and protective qualities of the mother's womb (*bona dispositio matricis*).<sup>32</sup> In both Aquinas and Richard of Middleton, the divisions roughly corresponded to William of Ware's first three categories, but neither master included the *productio ex utero*. The anomalous usage of Ware's four-tiered argument, in the midst of a more traditional three-fold description of generation in the mother, may partially explain the failure of some scribes to pick up on the error in the text which they were copying. If they were used to the schema of administratione, formatione, *eductione* or *praeparatione*, *organizatione*, *conservatione*, then Ware's fourth element would not immediately come to mind. But why had Ware placed this in his own schema?

The major source in the Franciscan tradition for Ware's argumentation on this issue seems to be St. Bonaventure. Bonaventure began his discussion of the cooperative activity between the Holy

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et ad debitum locum conceptionis tranmisit et in conservatione et in nutritione pueri in utero cooperata fuit perfectius et excellentius quam aliam matres. Plura autem non requiruntur ad rationem maternitas."

<sup>32</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia* (25 vols.; New York: Musurgia Publ., 1948), 7:43 (*Sententiarum* Book III, dist. 3, art. 2): "In conceptione prolis invenitur triplex actio. Una quae est principalis, scilicet formatio et organizatio corporis et respectu hujus actionis, agens est tantum pater mater vero solummodo ministrat materiam. [2] Alia actio est praecedens hanc actionem et praeparatoria ad ipsam; cum enim generatio naturalis sit ex determinata materia, eo quod unusquisque actus in propria materia fit sicut in 2, *De anima* dicit Philosophus oportet ut formatio prolis fiat ex materia convenienti et non ex quacumque . . . et ideo virtus quae praeparat materiam ad conceptum est imperfecta respectu ejus quae ex materia praeparata prolem forma. Haec autem virtus praeparans est matris quae imperfecta est respectu virtutis activae quae est in patre . . . [3] Tertio actio est concomitans vel sequens actionem principalem. Sicut enim locus facit ad bonitatem generationis; ita et bona dispositio matricis operatur ad bonam dispositionem prolis . . . Et in secunda vero et tertia actione beata virgo active operata est."

Spirit and Mary with the elements a woman brings to motherhood (i.e., woman as material, receptive principle and as active, vegetative principle).<sup>33</sup> Bonaventure's presentation of the generative process in his *Commentary on the Sentences* contains three major points of departure. First, there is the administration of the matter (*administratio*), second, the induction of the final form (*inductio*), and third, the sufficiency of virtue for the production of offspring. The last of these Bonaventure addressed when he raised the issue of the process of fetal development over time. It would appear that William of Ware's inclusion of the phrase *productio ex utero* may be drawn from Bonaventurian language, but he has extended or bifurcated the meaning into two terms, *eductio* and *productio*. The former would refer to the gradual development of the fetus (Middleton's conservation and nutrition [*conservatione et nutritione*] and Aquinas's healthy disposition of the womb [*bona dispositio matricis*]), while the latter would refer to the actual delivery of the child in the birth process. It is in the "eduction" and the "sufficient virtue to produce" a child in her womb that Mary actively cooperated.

With Bonaventure's arguments in mind we can return to Ware's position. Ware, after presenting his four elements of generation, offered Ambrose's proposal of two possible ways of speaking about the generative process. One concerned the substance of the administered material and the other referred to the mode of its administration.

The A family of manuscript's lengthy citation illustrates Ware's reliance upon theological sources as a foundation for his view of generation and Mary's role in the conception of Christ. This citation was comprised of a long quotation drawn verbatim from Ambrose. The A recension manuscripts contain the full quotation, while the B recension manuscripts retain only the title and the central point of the argument:

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<sup>33</sup>Bonaventure, *Sententiarum*, Lib. III, dist. 4, art. 3, q. 1 (p. 104): "Ergo non solum habuit potentiam receptivam, sed etiam generativam, non solum se habuit Virgo Maria per modum recipientis, sed per modum agentis et cooperantis."

Concerning St. Ambrose's book, *The Incarnation of the Word*, you find many things in him [Christ], both according to nature and from outside the natural order. For, in relation to the condition of the body that was in the womb, it was born, nursed and placed in a manger. But, in relation to supernatural activity, a virgin conceived and bore a child so that you might believe in what way God is He who entered into nature and was man, who according to nature was born of a human being.<sup>34</sup>

William of Ware patterned his arguments upon Patristic and biblical sensibilities in his understanding of the question of Mary's motherhood. For Ambrose and Ware, the question of motherhood included birth, nursing the child and showing loving affection, illustrated by the placing of the Christ child in a manger. The supernatural or miraculous element he equated with the fact that a virgin conceived and gave birth. Ware's use of the phrase *productio ex utero* was part of a larger theological intellectual tradition which included biblical citation from the infancy narratives and patristic exegesis of these biblical sources as found in Ambrose, Augustine and John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*. Thus, Ware's language may have been drawn from Bonaventure, but his four-tiered schema for the generative process was derived from Ambrose's presentation. It would seem to follow that scribes who were accustomed to the presentation of Middleton, Aquinas and others approaching the issue from a similar Aristotelian perspective could easily have transcribed the passage incorrectly.

A second crucial patristic source, frequently referred to in medieval discussions of generation, was Augustine's exegesis of the book of Genesis, *De Genesi ad litteram*.<sup>35</sup> This book contained his

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<sup>34</sup>See Bell, "Conceiving the Word" (citing Ware, Lib. III, dist. 4, par. 10): "De hoc Ambrosii, *De incarnatione verbi*" 'multa in eodem et secundum naturam invenies et ultra naturam secundum conditionem corporalem in utero fuit natus, lactatus, et in praesaepto collacatus. Sed supra corporis conditionem virgo concepit, virgo generavit ut crederes quia Deus est qui innovabat naturam et homo erat qui secundum naturam nascebatur de homine'" (English translation and alternate B recension, p. 132).

<sup>35</sup>Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram*, ed. J. Zycha, CSEL 28; PL 34.

theory of the *ratio seminalis* and served as a foundation for an Augustinian perspective on philosophical discussion of generation. Ware's Ambrosian reference and also his later reference to the Gospel of John and its discussion concerning the "bloods" (*ex sanguinibus*), which are normally mixed from the male and female in procreation, did not appear in the writings of his students or successors at Oxford. William of Ware represents a unique figure in the intellectual dynamic of the late-thirteenth century because his writings on Mary contain a mix of earlier traditions in which the theological and devotional traditions still remain in a delicate balance with the discussions from natural science and philosophy.<sup>36</sup>

After his presentation of these theological arguments, Ware presented arguments from natural science, contrasting the opinions of Avicenna in the *Canones* and Aristotle in the *De animalibus*.<sup>37</sup> In both recensions a quick summation is given of the basic Aristotelian position that the mother is only the passive

<sup>36</sup>Ware's discussion of the conception of Mary in many ways had its origin in the liturgical issues surrounding the celebration of the feast of the conception. Within his discussions, Ware often includes arguments from stories of miraculous legends and even "dream literature," as in the case where he tells of the monk who has a dream in which he sees Saint Bernard with one black spot on his pure white Cistercian robe. When the saint is asked by the dreaming monk why he has this black spot, he is told that it is because of his opposition to the feast of Mary's conception. Such intrusions from legend into a scholastic argument are completely alien to Ware's pupil, Duns Scotus. See J.-F. Bonnefoy, *Le Ven. Jean Duns Scot, docteur de l'Immaculée-Conception, son milieu, sa doctrine, son influence* (Rome: Herder, 1960), 195-201. Bonnefoy pointed out the contrast between Ware and Scotus on the conception: Ware's five citations (from Grosseteste, Alexander Neckham, Eadmer [Pseudo-Anselm], Richard of St. Victor [Pseudo-Richard] and Augustine) are, in Duns Scotus, reduced to a lone Augustinian quotation from *De natura et gratia*. Bonnefoy explained that this did not mean there was no literary dependence between the two texts, nor that Scotus was unaware of these witnesses and their arguments, but rather that it could be explained by the prudent reserve of Duns Scotus.

<sup>37</sup>Avicenna in the *Canones* described the Galenic and Aristotelian positions and, although he leans in many instances toward the Galenic positions, he also makes significant use of Aristotle. This ambivalence in adhering strictly to one position is evident also in the Salernitan medical tradition and that of the medieval encyclopedists, who often presented conflicting positions in the same work. A work that has not received perhaps enough investigation is Albertus Magnus's *De animalibus* (Lib. IX, tract. II, *Opera omnia*: "Qui totus est de disputatione Galeni et Aristotelis de principiis generationis hominis"), where he devoted an entire chapter to the disputed issues between the two traditions.

principle ministrating the matter, while the male is the sole active principle containing the total formative power which is derived from the semen of the male.<sup>38</sup> The B family of manuscripts contained an elaboration of Aristotle's explanation of the activity of the male seed and the manner of its transmission through the *spiritus* (life force) and *calor* (heat).<sup>39</sup>

Ware then presented a problem which arose from the normal understanding of contraries determined in any relationship between active and passive potencies. He understood that in the action of the male principle, entirely active, to that of the female principle, entirely passive, the female seed through a causal event acts (or more exactly, reacts) from determined contraries. The passive principle is moved because it cannot "react" until the active principle has initiated the event. Thus, the male is both moving and active (formative) in generation while the female is *per se* moved, but moving through some causal event. However, Ware points out that, given this Aristotelian position, the Blessed Virgin would not act *per se* anymore than any woman does.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Bell, "Conceiving the Word," 157-158, citing Ware, *Sent.*, Lib. III, dist. 4, par. 11: "Opinio Philosophi est quod mulier est solum principium passivum et tota substantia materiae est ministrata a muliere. Et vir est solum principium activum et tota formatio activa a parte virtutis decise in semine viri."

<sup>39</sup>This term, *spiritus*, is somewhat difficult to translate easily into English and should not be equated with "spirit" in the sense of spiritual entities or forces of a non-material nature, but rather as a force functioning in the physical world. Sexual pleasure arises first from thought which stimulates the spirit in the heart which is communicated to the male sex organ which results in stimulation and arousal. A common opinion held that the semen arose from the brain, reflecting the perception that thoughts of desire were the source initiating the *spiritus*. The powers of the male sex organ aided in the "digestion" of the material which made up the male semen which was viewed as more completely "digested" and hence purer than the female menstruum. This purity was reflected in the whiteness of the semen; while the foamy quality reflected as well the more "windy" quality of spirit which contained the life force. A simple physical analogy to this thought process can be found in the aeration of water in a stream producing frothy, white water.

<sup>40</sup>There is a certain parallel with this *per accidentia* activity, as Ware described it, and Albertus Magnus's attempt to understand and accommodate to the Galenic two-seed theory by speaking of a "formative" force in the male seed (which is moving and formative) and an "informative" force in the female seed (which is moving and moved), while the menstrual blood is more purely passive and is moved and formed. In the

Ware then presented the Galenic counterpoint that a man and a woman act together in the formation of the body. The male seed is primary and has greater *activitas* and lesser passive potency. The female seed has more potentiality, a material role in generation, and a lesser degree of activity. This is proved through two examples. First, children resemble their mothers as well as their fathers and, second, the female has an active formative cause just as the father does.<sup>41</sup> This is further supported by the example that a mother has a greater involvement in the full “substantial” elements of the development of a child than the father, who is less directly involved in this process. This is evident from simple observation in human society of the greater love and concern between mother and child. Ware supported this observation with a reference to Pseudo-Anselm (Eadmer) in the *De excellentia beatae virginis*, and his discussions of the degree of the love between Mary and Christ.<sup>42</sup>

Ware’s argument moved quickly to Damascene’s commonly cited discussion of the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and the *donum*

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Galenic understanding of generation, it is this “moving” portion of the “moving and moved” pair that is informative and occurring *per accidentia*, that is to say, it could not “react” until the male had “acted.” The distinction between Ware’s and Albertus’s positions might be thought a question of semantics; however, Ware seems more determined to emphasize Galen’s conceptualization of generation as shared activity. See Albertus Magnus, *De animalibus*, Lib. XV, tr. ii, c. I (*Opera omnia* [Paris, 1891]): “Redit ergo dictum Galeni ad hoc quod duo sint spermate quae sunt principia generationis animalium: unum quidem maris, quod per seipsum est faciens et formans propter multum spiritum, qui intra viscositatem ejus continentur: et hoc ideo dicitur habere virtutem formativam. Alterum autem quod est informativam dicitur habere virtutem. Tertium autem est sanguis menstruus, ex quo non sumitur nisi caro foetus, quae supplet vacuitates quae sunt inter membra radicalia. Primum igitur istorum principiorum est movens tantum et formans. Secundum autem est movens et motum. Et tertium est motum et formatum tantum. Haec igitur est sententia Galeni.”

<sup>41</sup>Ware, Lib. III, dist. 4, par. 15: “Alia est opinio Galeni quod mulier et vir similiter agunt. Et semen mulieris agit ad formationem corporis sicut semen viri. Ex parte tamen seminis viri est principalitas et maior activitas et minus de potentia passiva; ex parte seminis mulieris plus de multiplicitate, et minus de activitate. Istud ostendunt aliqui per duas rationes. Prima talis: generati aliquando magis assimilantur mulieribus, quam patribus. Ergo virtus matris est causa formationis activa, sicut virtus patris.”

<sup>42</sup>It is interesting to note that when Scotus raised this same point in his discussion, he did not quote Eadmer. Scotus turned instead to Aristotle’s discussion of the relationship of the benefactor to the benefited in the 8<sup>th</sup> book of the *Nichomachean Ethics*.

(giving to Mary the capacity to take up the Word of God and the generative virtue to form a human child). It is through this gift that Mary was active. Ware continued to seek support for the Galenic position of a modified complementarity between the male and female in generation, by appealing to another frequently cited theological authority, Hugh of St. Victor. Ware quoted, from Hugh of St. Victor's *De sacramentis*, that the substance of both the father and mother join together in the making of children. This, however, is not what happens in Mary's generation, because of divine intervention.<sup>43</sup> Hugh of St. Victor spoke of the "joining of flesh" in which the flesh of the male transmitted by the male seed joins with the flesh of the female to produce offspring. Hugh, of course, did not have Aristotelian views of generation in mind when he wrote this description of human generation, but rather he drew from biblical descriptions of two flesh becoming as one. This image of the "joining of flesh" served as both a metaphorical expression of marriage and an explanation of physical generation.

Ware next quoted from Augustine's *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus*. Augustine explained the chapter in John's gospel about the Word becoming flesh (Jn. 1:12-13). John had written, "Any who did accept him he empowered to become children of God. These are they who believe in his name, who were begotten *not* by blood, nor by carnal desire, nor by man's willing it, but by God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."<sup>44</sup> Ware quoted from Augustine's gloss on this passage. Augustine's discussion of this passage included an interesting digression about why blood was translated using the plural form in the phrase *neque ex sanguinibus*. Augustine argued that metaphorically the plural is

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<sup>43</sup>Hugh of St. Victor, *Opera omnia*, in PL 176, Lib. II, pars 2, cap. 8 [391-392]: ". . . non aliud nisi substantiam carnis ad generandum carnem per carnis coitum suscepisse memoratur et haec quidem carnis substantia de carne viri per ipsum carnis coitum transfusa cum carne mulieris, uno caro efficitur, ut id nasciturum est ex utriusque substantia veraciter originem sumens ab illo, per istam ab ista generatur."

<sup>44</sup>Jn. 1:12-14. See also, St. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* (Fathers of the Church, 78, trans. by J. W. Rettig; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), *Tractate 2*, pp. 60-74.



used because two generations are being referred to (i.e., the generation of the spiritual man and the generation of the carnal man). In the generation of the carnal man, the blood of the father and the mother join together to generate a child.<sup>45</sup>

Ware had focused upon Hugh of St. Victor's and Augustine's discussion of flesh and blood not just to affirm the joint process that comprises generation from male and female, but also to address another concern evident in John Damascene's frequently cited passage about the "chaste and most pure blood" of Mary. The discussion of Mary's pure blood was somewhat incongruous in the context of the Aristotelian discussion of female semen, menstrual blood and the more refined blood stimulated by the excitation of the male, which serves as the foundation for fetal growth. How can one reconcile the spiritual discussion of chaste and pure blood with the more mundane discussion of normal physiological processes including sexual excitation? Both A and B recensions contain very similar accounts on this issue. Ware presented Aristotle's schema of the three elements to consider in the generative process and adapted it to the traditional Damascenean discussion. The first element, the menstrual blood, is an impurity that is sloughed off by the body. The second, the pure semen, is not part of the fetus either. It is the third element, the purified blood, that

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<sup>45</sup>St. Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV* (CCL 36 [Brepols, 1954]), Tractate 2. Also: Tractate 2, 14:1-3, in *Tractates on the Gospel of John 1-10* (Fathers of the Church, 78:71-72). "Bloods is not Latin, but because in Greek it is put in the plural, the translator preferred to put it so and, as it were, to use improper Latin according to the grammarians, but nonetheless to set forth the truth according to the ability of weak men to hear. For if he were to say 'blood' in the singular number, he would not express what he intended; for men are born of the bloods of male and female. Let us say it, and not fear the rods of grammar teachers then, provided we reach a solid and more certain truth." The next passage reveals Augustine's understanding of the symbolic import of the usage of words such as flesh and blood. He writes, "Not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man.' He put 'flesh' for 'female' because, when she had been made from his rib, Adam said, 'This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh' and the Apostle says, 'He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh.' Therefore, 'flesh' is put for 'wife,' just as sometimes 'spirit' is put for 'husband.' Why? Because the latter governs, the former is governed; the latter ought to rule, the former to serve."

makes the child.<sup>46</sup> Ware's own conclusion that there were natural and supernatural elements in the "blessed" generation. Mary acted naturally as other mothers, but supernaturally through the gifts given by the Holy Spirit to bring about the formation of the body and the eduction to the substantial form mediated through the material process. The actions of the Holy Spirit supercede that of the normal male process, thus one can judiciously skirt the issue of the "excitation" necessary to induce female activity, especially if one posits an instantaneous event. Ware boldly concluded that Mary had actively cooperated despite the disparity between the "supernatural" and "natural" activities involved in Christ's generation.

In addressing this problem of proportionality between active and passive principles and their manner of functioning in the order of nature, Ware conceded Aristotle's point that the inception of the active principle derived from the male. However, if it was then insisted that there was no basis for any active principle in a woman, he denied that position. If one had to choose between Aristotle the philosopher and Galen the physician, then he would yield to Galen's greater expertise in the area of medical knowledge.<sup>47</sup> There is no requirement, in Ware's opinion, that there be an exclusively active and exclusively passive arrangement of ordered terms (Aristotle). It seems feasible that a father act *principaliter* and the mother act less *principaliter* (Galen).

Ware closes his arguments with a brief discussion of Augustine's ideas about the "augmentation" of Adam's body. Ware summarily

<sup>46</sup>Bell, "Conceiving the Word," citing Ware, Lib. III, dist. 4, par. 21: "Tamen istud semen non est materia corporis nisi originaliter et remote. Secundo, muliers habent sanguinem menstruum, qui est impurus et iste totaliter emittitur et non cedit in formationem corporis. Sed tertio, habet sanguinem purum de se, qui tamen redditur impurus ex hoc quod excitatur a viri semine. Et iste sanguis sic excitatus est principalis materia corporis cum aliqua portione seminis viri. Iste sanguis ultimus non redebatur impurus in Beatae Virgine per excitationem viri, unde corpus Christi formatum est ex castis et purissimis sanguinibus Beatae Virginis per opus Spiritus Sancti . . ."

<sup>47</sup>Bell, "Conceiving the Word" (Ware, Lib. III, dist. 4, par. 21). The A recension reads: "Ad auctoritatem Philosophi, dico quod si intelligant quod principalitas principii activi sic a parte viri, concedo eas. Si autem quod nulla ratio principii activi, sic a parte mulieris, nego eas. Magis enim concedo Galeno quantum sibi sicut magis experto."

dismissed the former problem because Augustine had said that Christ did not come according to seminal reasons, because the generation of the body of Christ had not occurred in the “natural mode.” As to the related issue—that the body of Christ was augmented in the womb in the way that Adam’s body had been augmented—William stated that this should be understood in the sense that as the angels had cooperated with God in the formation of Adam’s body, so too had Mary cooperated in the formation of the body of her son. In Adam’s case, God the Father acted as principal operating agent; in Christ’s conception from Mary, the Holy Spirit operated as the principal operating agent.<sup>48</sup>

### The Impact of Ware’s Arguments on Discussions of Mary’s Motherhood

The importance of William of Ware’s arguments cannot be attributed to their overpowering depth of presentation. The actual presentation of his own position is at times brief and rather sketchy. It is obvious that Ware’s devotional attitude toward Mary had stimulated his novel presentations of her conception and motherhood. His zeal for promoting Mary’s active role in the *conceptio corporis filii sui* is evident throughout. The sword with which Ware cuts the Gordian knot of difficulties attendant upon Mary’s active participation in such a miraculous and instantaneous event is the “gift” given to Mary by the Holy Spirit. To Ware, once the gifts of being able to take up the Word and generate the Word were given to Mary, they belonged to her in much the same way that she was “filled with grace.” This fullness of grace implied certain active qualities inhering within her. In Ware’s view Mary can be said to be active through these gifts, which would have been naturally

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<sup>48</sup>Bell, “Conceiving the Word” (Ware, Lib. III, dist. 4, par. 29), A: “Ad aliud cum dicit Augustinus quod augmentate qua formavit corpus Adae formavit sibi corpus in utero Virginis, dico quod verum est principaliter, non quin Beata Virgo aliquid cooperabatur in formatione. Unde signanter dicit Augustinus augmentate naturali, ‘sed angeli cooperati sunt in formatione corporis Adae auctoritate Dei principaliter agentis,’ ita Beata Virgo cooperata fuit in formatione corporis filii sui auctoritate Spiritus Sancti principaliter agentis operantis.”

hers in a normal generation, although in the normal generation the participation of a male initiatory action would be required.

Ware's acceptance of Galen's cooperative two-seed theory should be seen in the context of the surrounding arguments from Eadmer, Damascene, Hugh of St. Victor, Ambrose and Augustine's treatise on John's gospel. Ware seems to have accepted Galen, not because he was interested in doing an exhaustive analysis of the disputed views of generation held by Aristotle and Galen, but because Galen's general theory ran parallel to Ambrose's discussion of "two fleshs," Augustine's observation of "two bloods," and Hugh of St. Victor's description of the joining in generation of partial substance from the mother and partial substance from the father. The fact that Ware accepted Galen's general principle that the female was active, but shifted the activity from Galen's "seed" to Aristotle's "purer blood" illustrates an eclectic, if not perhaps slightly strained, use of sources from natural science. This is confirmed by a comparison with Albertus Magnus. Albertus Magnus had devoted an entire *tractatus* of book IX of his *De animalibus* to the disputation between Aristotle and Galen. Albertus's discussion and attempt to explain Galen in terms of formative virtues from the father and informative virtues from the mother did not enter into Ware's discussion.<sup>49</sup> William of Ware treated these subjects as common opinion, used them as tools of his presentation, and was not overly concerned by the inconsistencies that arose from an eclectic picking and choosing from both Galenic and Aristotelian traditions.

Ware can be said to be in the Mariological tradition that Aquila Emmen proposed had grown in the Franciscan school at Oxford.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>It would seem possible, if not probable, that Ware would have had at least some acquaintance with Albertus's ideas on generation. Whether Ware was intentionally avoiding a discussion of Albertus's use of formative versus informative activity, preferring to focus upon the Galenic picture of shared activity of greater and lesser degrees, is a difficult question. A much more thorough examination of his use of Albertus's *De animalibus* in other contexts would be needed to determine his intentions in this specific case. The impact of this work on medieval discussion within the universities needs further examination.

<sup>50</sup>A. Emmen, "Die Bedeutung in Franziskanerschule für der Mariologie," *Franziskanische Studien* 36 (1954).

Ware did contribute in a vital way to the development of an activist promotion of Mary. His position on Mary's motherhood was a logical, but not necessarily essential, corollary both delineating the nature of the controversy and formulating the basic foundation of an activist position. Ware's "activist" view of Mary's role and, by analogy, an activist view of other women, relied primarily upon his understanding of the gift given by the Holy Spirit. Mary functioned naturally as other women, partially because of her normal activity as provider of the material which was used for the formation of the body of her son, and partially because of this miraculous gift. Ware's position was that this miraculous gift merely gave to Mary what she would have had if she had given birth to other children in a normal way. Mary was given a gift which in other women functioned upon the arousal of the male seed. In the absence of the male seed, it was necessary that the Holy Spirit provide the role normally played by the male seed.

Ware's insistence upon the Galenic theories of female activity, which he understood as logically consistent with Ambrose, Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor's writings, was in significant contrast to the followers of an Aristotelian view of generation. Thomas Aquinas and his disciples said that Mary was a mother like other mothers because she passively provided the material (Kainz labeled this as Aquinas's *positive potency*).<sup>51</sup> This was the commonly held view of the natural process of generation in action. All other activity derived from the active, formative male principle, while the Holy Spirit acted in lieu of the male seed and its formative virtue. To use Prudence Allen's terminology, William of Ware has the semblance of a weakened complementarity

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<sup>51</sup>H. P. Kainz, *Active and Passive Potency in Thomistic Angelology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972). Kainz's presentation of Aquinas's ideas on active and passive powers and his view that Aquinas's view of the woman's generative potency as "positive," but not initiatory, reflects how the medieval Aristotelian would not deny to woman (at least as he interpreted it) an "active" role. However, this activity is not primary, nor capable of the initiating act, for this is reserved to the male principle in generation. This view is also evident in Albertus's distinction between formative and informative virtues. Ware seems to strive for a slightly stronger description of female activity.

between men and women on this question of generation, while Aquinas has the strictest possible presentation of a superiority/inferiority relationship between men and women.<sup>52</sup>

In the milieu of the late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century university, where Aristotle could perhaps be said to have "cornered the market" on ideas, especially in the areas of natural science, Ware's superficial examination of Galen was not as thorough as Albertus Magnus's in-depth analysis and Aquinas's skilled blending of Aristotle into his theological writing. The appeal to the greater expertise of Galen as a physician was meant to be persuasive on the basis of a common Aristotelian principle which required a recognition of the uniqueness of each intellectual discipline, but it did not present a concrete critique of the intellectual merits of Aristotle's position on generation *per se*.<sup>53</sup> Two authorities were merely presented of approximately equal influence on biological issues, and Ware attempted to choose between the two by making it an issue of intellectual territories and expertise. It was certainly not the strongest method to attack Aristotle's impact in the male-dominated university milieu, where the Aristotelian view both seemed to reflect valid intellectual arguments from natural science and also a world-view in which male superiority in numerous areas of life seemed to be a common-sense fact. Nonetheless, it cannot be disputed that William of Ware did

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<sup>52</sup>P. Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 B.C.-1250 A.D.* (Montreal and London: Eden Press, 1985).

<sup>53</sup> While Ware does not cite Aristotle directly, medieval readers would have understood that raising the issue of conflict between fields of knowledge was an appeal to Aristotle himself, who was suspicious of proving arguments from another "genus" (*Posterior Analytics* I.7,75a38-b6). Aristotle's ideas about the "subalternation" of the sciences and his principle that, given an issue in which two fields of expertise result in conflicting opinions, one should operate from the premises and accept the conclusions of that science most directly related to the issue at hand is the backdrop to Ware's brief mention of preferring the medical expert on questions of human generation. Thus, Ware was using Aristotle's own principle to reject Aristotle's view of generation from "natural science" and to privilege the position of Galen the physician. See S. Livesey's "Metabasis: The Interrelationship of the Sciences in Antiquity and the Middle Ages" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; the University of California, Los Angeles, 1982), chap. 1.

attempt to lay the groundwork for a strong and positive account of Mary's active motherhood. It was to be a foundation that his pupil, John Duns Scotus, would build upon in his account of Mary's active motherhood.